USE OF THESES

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CREATION IN AL-TAFSİR AL-KABİR OF FAKHR AL-DIN

AL-RĀZĪ

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A Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Australian National University

April 1992
DECLARATION

Except where otherwise indicated, this Thesis is my own work

L P Fitzgerald

April 1992
I dedicate this Thesis to my family and to my brothers and sisters in
the Dominican Order
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks, in the first place, must go to Professor A.H. Johns, a personal friend of many years, who went far beyond the call of a Supervisor's duty in frequent, almost daily, contact with a struggling student, both of Arabic and of Rāzī. I could not have been more fortunate than to have had as a colleague Dr. Tony Street, who himself recently trod the Rāzī path to the doctorate here at the ANU. He helped me enormously with technical aspects of Arabic, the mentality of Rāzī and the philosophical scene in medieval Islam. His thesis (see Bibliography) has been a constant companion since it gained him the Laurea and has enabled me to gauge the acceptable level of doctoral research in this field. He and fellow-student, Tim Drury, gave me invaluable help and much time as I struggled with the mysteries of word-processing. Mr Robert Barnes (Classics, The Faculties) has been a reader of this Thesis. I appreciated his quietly incisive comments and friendly encouragement. I was fortunate, also, to have had profitable sessions with Richard Frank during his stay at the ANU. He alerted me to some of the major potential pitfalls in a study of this kind.

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In a particular way, I am deeply grateful to three Dominican Provincials, Fathers Peter Galvin, Nicholas Punch and David Halstead, who successively supported this project.
The specific intention of this thesis is to study *The Great Commentary, Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb (The Keys to the Unseen)*, of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī to find out what he has to say about the creation of the universe. This commentary on the *Qurʾān* cannot be taken in isolation from his other writings, but the spotlight will be explicitly on the *Tafsīr*. Thus, my purpose is not to examine in depth all Rāzī’s pertinent works; nor to study the influences that contributed to his own intellectual and spiritual formation and the influence that he, in turn, exerted on others; nor yet, finally, to present a general picture of Muslim creation theology in the medieval period. It is about the *Tafsīr*: to see a) how he "takes off", so to speak, from the creation texts of the *Qurʾān*, verse by verse; and b) what his preoccupations and emphases are in this particular work.

The character of the thesis, then, is not so much analytical and philosophical as textual and descriptive. I would hope that, if I do make some contribution to Rāzī studies, it is in the close scrutiny of his creation vocabulary and in the substantial body of translation, not hitherto available in any degree to an English readership. I have also provided in an Appendix the first *Tafsīr-Qurʾān* Concordance.

In rendering pericopes of the *Qurʾān* into English, I have kept my eye on standard English translations or "interpretations", such as Sale, Arberry, Pickthall, Dawood and M. Asad, together with Blachère’s French and Paret’s German versions. However, I take full responsibility for the final form in which the pericopes appear. References are given according to the traditional arrangement in the Royal (Khedival) edition of Cairo.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Fakhr al-Din al-Râzi

Fakhr al-Din Abû 'Abd Allah Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. al-Ḥusain al-Râzi, ibn al-Khatîb, is undoubtedly one of the towering figures in the history of Muslim culture. Since his death (ca. 1209 CE), he has not had as generous a press as his encyclopedic erudition and his vast output deserve. Whereas the names of Avicenna (Ibn Sina), Averroes (Ibn Rushd) and Al-Ghazâli are household words amongst Western students of Islam, how many have ever heard of Râzi or read anything that he wrote? He did not score an entry in the first edition of the Encyclopedia of Islam. St Thomas Aquinas, who was born about fifteen years after Râzi died, showed broad familiarity with Muslim thought, looked on Averroes as the Commentator par excellence; yet seems never to have mentioned Râzi.

Born in the Persian city of Ray about 1149, son of a renowned preacher (hence the name, Ibn al-Khaṭîb, by which Fakhr al-Din was also known), his initial commitment was to the Shâfî'ite school of law and the Ash'ârite tradition in philosophy and theology. Ibn Sinâ also had a tremendous influence on his intellectual formation. Râzi was profoundly analytical.

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1 F. Kholeif, in A Study on Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzî (1966), follows some of the classical biographers in including his tribe (Taimî), his clan (Bakrî) and his ancestry (Tabârisînî) (p. 15).
2 An omission since redressed in EI2 (Anawati) and SEI (Kramers).
3 Ibn Khalîlûn, whose treatment of Râzi has been the most familiar to Westerners, generally refers to him by this name.
and independent and did not hesitate to question, and even disagree with, the teaching of his predecessors. Conversely, though he saw as integral to his vocation the stiffest possible opposition to, and condemnation of, the doctrines of the Mu'tazilites (he said they were "more odious than the Jews"!), he was nevertheless still able to admire the conclusions reached by certain of their exegetes.

So energetic and erudite were his public lectures, so sincere and moving his preaching, and so sharp and provocative was he in attacking his opponents, that Rāzī drew huge crowds to hear and follow him; at the same time, however, bringing upon himself the odium of not a few. It was even said that some of his enemies finally poisoned him. From Ray, he went successively to Marāgha, Khwārizm, Bukhāra, Samarqand, Ghazna, Hind and ultimately Herat, where a school was founded for him and the title, Shaykh al-Islām, conferred upon him. Here he passed his last twelve years or so in great comfort and security, and after his death he was buried near the city where, in many ways, fortune had smiled on him so generously.

His Tafsīr, which is the focus of this study, is, by far, his longest work, the climax of an impressively productive writing and teaching career. He never loses sight of the distinction between Kalām6 and the exegetical exercise which is Tafsīr, and this work often contains his most minute and mature discussion of points raised in the Kalām. By Jomier's calculations, the earliest date for its commencement is 1198, when Rāzī would have been just over fifty. He notes Ibn Khallikan's statement that Rāzī had not finished the Tafsīr when he died ca. 1209 at about the age of sixty. It was probably completed by the combined efforts of Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Khalil al-Khuwaiyi (d.1242) and, considerably later, Najm al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥ. al-Kamūlī, or according to Kholeif (196), al-Qamūtī, (d.1375). Jomier identifies al-Khuwaiyi as the author of the commentaries on Sūras 29-36 and points to one Ms which questions the authenticity of the Tafsīr on Sūras 46-57. I have used the Beirut third printing of the Cairo edition of 1933 and subsequent years. It was

5 Kholeif (190-203) lists 119 works, of which 12 were written originally in Persian and all the rest in Arabic. They cover such disciplines as astrology, chirognomy, ethics, grammar, history, jurisprudence, logic, mathematics, medicine, mineralogy, philosophy, Qur'anic commentary, rhetoric and theology. Jomier ("The Qur'anic Commentary..." 93) believes that there are as many as 130 distinct works.

6 Useful summaries of the nature and development of this discipline may be found in Gardet, "Ilm al-Kalām", EI, 1141-50, and Macdonald, "Kalām", SEL 210-14. Tony Street, Angels in Medieval Islamic Theology (1988) 9-15, outlines Rāzī's approach to Kalām as it unfolds in the Maʿālim fi Uṣūl al-Dīn.

7 J. Jomier, "Les Mafāṭīḥ al-Ghayb" 253-4. The title is taken from Q 6:59 (the only time it occurs) and is quoted by Rāzī in TK 27:43.

8 See Biogr. Dictionary 2,652.

prepared by Muḥ. Muḥyī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd, 32 volumes bound in 16, but has yet to find an editor.

Other works of Rāzī, relevant to the topic of this Thesis, are:

1. *Asās al-Taqdis fī ʾIlm al-Kalām*. Cairo 1935. Treats of the knowledge of God by the *via remotionis* and of His incorporeality.

2. *al-Jawhar al-Fard*. An early work in which he appears to refute atomism, although it is difficult to ascertain what position he adopts here or later on this subject.10

3. *Kitāb al-Arbāʾin fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*. Hayderabad 1934. Amongst the 40 basic questions covered are the temporal beginning of the world, the existence of God, the nature of the human soul, the Resurrection and the distinction of proofs based on reason and tradition.


5. *al-Māʾālim fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*. Contemporaneous with *al-Taṣfīr al-Kabīr*. The excellent summary of its contents in *Street* 9–15 shows its relevance to a study of creation in the *Taṣfīr*.

6. *al-Mabāḥith al-Mashriqiyya*. Hayderabad 1923, 2 vols. of 726 and 550 pp. (resp.). Also edited by Dār al-Maʿārif al-Nizāmīyya 1924. It is earlier than the *Munāzarāt*, which makes reference to it, and deals with the fundamental metaphysical concepts of being, including the Necessary Being, substance and accidents and many other matters. It is critical of the doctrine of emanation and is directed principally against the Avicennan peripatetic school.12

7. *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliyya*. This is one of R’s most important works on speculative theology and contains a lengthy treatment of the creation of human acts. Part of it has been recently published (No.5 in the *Min Turāth al-Rāzī* collection, Cairo, no date) as *al-Nubuwwāt wa-mā yaṭaʿallaq bi-hā.*

8. *Muḥāṣṣal ʾaṣfār al-Mutaqaddimīn wa l-Mutaʻakhkhirīn min

10 Cf. Street 10; *Maʿālim*30.
11 See Anawati, "Un traité" (Bibliog.).
12 For a brief summary and plan of this work, see Anawati, "Classification." 61–70. See also Fakhry, *History* 319–22.
al-‘Ulamā’ wa l-Ḥukamā wa l-Muakallimin, i.e. A Compendium of the Ideas of Scholars, Philosophers and Theologians, Ancient and Modern. My copy is vol. 4 in the collection, Min Turāth al-Rāzi. Cairo, al-Ḥusainiya n.d. The Talkhīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣal of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī is included at the bottom of the page, but, in this printing, the Maʿālim, which in many ways is a compendium of this compendium, is not included in the margin. Kraus describes it as "a sort of Summa of the problems of the Ashʿarite Kalâm expounded in the light of philosophy" (The Controversies 134). It covers such matters as our thought processes, the nature of proof, being and non-being, the Necessary Being, cause and effect, and many more. There is difficulty in determining the chronological place of this work in the Rāzī corpus.13

9. al-Munāzarat fī Bilād mā warū al-Nahr. Kholeif’s translation and edition (see Bibliogr.) is to hand. The work comes after the Mabāḥith, the Mulakhkhas and the Sharḥ al-Ishārāt which are referred to in the text (Kholeif 82) and before the Muḥaṣṣal and the Tafsīr. Of the 16 controversies reported here, relevant in varying degrees to this study are those dealing with Takwīn, Mukawwān and Takhlīq (nn.3,4), Qiyās (nn.6,7,8,11) and the eternity of the world (n.16).

10. al-Qaḍā’ wa l-Qadar. Presumably, the same as the K. al-Jabr wa’l-Qadar referred to in TK 13:122.


Rāzī’s extraordinary intellectual activity, both in writing and in public lecture and debate, make him the most impressive exponent of rational, scholastic theology, the Kalâm, in Islam’s history. Like al-Ghazālī before him, he came to have a distaste for rational discourse in the pursuit of divine knowledge, but in rejecting the mentality of the philosophers, he could not altogether avoid using their methods. His inner conflict did not reach crisis proportions, as it did in al-Ghazālī, but in his last years, despite his affluence and fame, his bent became more mystical; and like St. Thomas Aquinas, with whom he bears comparison at many points, and who said he learned more at the foot of the Crucifix than from his books, Rāzī declared at the end of his life: "Thus says the slave Muḥammad Ibn ‘Umar al-Rāzī, who returns to God’s mercy, trusting in the benevolence of his Lord, and is about to end this life and enter the next; in the moment when the hard heart is softened and every sinner turns to his Lord...: know that I was a lover of knowledge, and I wrote about every question that I

might know its quantity and quality, irrespective of whether it was true or false... I have examined the methods of theology [Kalām] and philosophy, and I did not find in them the profit which I found in the Qur'ān; for the Qur'ān ascribes glory and majesty to God, and forbids preoccupations with obscurities and contradictions.\textsuperscript{14}

1.2. Apologia for Kalām and for the Tafsīr

Among the concerns treated at length early in the Tafsīr is the need to justify the use of the techniques of Kalām to prove the existence of God. Thus, when Rāzī comes to verses 21 and 22 of "al-Baqara", "Mankind! Worship your Lord Who created you, and those who came before you, and so be devout; Your Lord Who has made the earth a place of rest for you", verses which give an account of God's creative power, he sees them as providing an occasion for setting out proofs for the existence of God. It is the first time he does so in the Tafsīr and, by way of introduction, he presents a series of arguments to justify submitting the sacred text to the techniques of Kalām, arguing that such techniques are used by the Qur'ān itself, and that very many of the prophets and messengers presented in the Qur'ān are shown as doing so too.\textsuperscript{15} The Literalists (qawm al-ḥashwiyya) consider this pursuit, viz. seeking knowledge of Almighty God by speculative reasoning and argumentation (naẓar, istidlāl), to be innovation (bida).

His apologia for the use of Kalām is lengthy. It proceeds in orderly fashion, by way of heading and subheading, but one discrepancy, on the part either of Rāzī or the editor, should be noted. He promises at the outset three maqāmāt, or stages in the development of his remarks. He delivers, in fact, only two, after the second of which he begins another set of maqāmāt which are the counter-arguments of his opponents.\textsuperscript{16}

Perhaps he intended the third maqām to be these counter-arguments or the actual study of the proofs that follow this text. It may be useful, in any case, to give here a précis of what is contained in his apologia.\textsuperscript{17}

"There are three maqāmāt":

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Kholeif's translation (pp.21–2) of Ibn Abī Usaybi'ā's words in 'Uyun 2,23.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} TK 2:87–97 (on 2:21–2). For a presentation of the proofs that follow this text, see below, 5.3.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid. 92. Such inconsistency regarding headings, numbers, etc., is not infrequent in the two available printings of the Tafsīr.
  \item \textsuperscript{17} Ibid. 87–96
\end{itemize}
1.2.1. Maqâm I: The excellence of this kind of study

1. The nobility of a body of knowledge, or science, is measured by the nobility of its object, in this case the Essence of God and His Attributes.

2. Religious knowledge is superior to other kinds of knowledge, all of which depend on the science of Usūl.19

3. The nobility of a thing is manifested by the baseness of its opposite; in this case, infidelity and heresy (bid'ah).

4. The nobility of a thing may be in proportion to:
   
   a) the nobility of the subject-matter: In this context, the knowledge of the Essence, Attributes and Actions of God; and all knowables, existent or not. (This seems to repeat no. 1 above.)
   
   b) the greatness of our need for it. This is two-fold. In the first place, a great reward in the Hereafter awaits those who have this knowledge; and, secondly, the present world will lapse into chaos unless we have faith in the Producer,20 the Resurrection and the Last Day.
   
   c) the cogency of its proofs. The premises of this science are certain.

5. This science is not open to abrogation or alteration, as other sciences are.21

6. The Qur'anic verses dealing with the needs of, and proofs for, this science are nobler than those relating to Fiqh. To say, for example, "Say: God is One" (Q 112:1) is surely more elevated than the words of Q 2:222: "They will ask you about menstruating!"

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18 ʿIlm basically means knowledge. Historically, it has been distinguished from maʿrifah, taken as experiential knowledge, and fiqh, knowledge through use of reason. Gradually, this latter came to refer to the study of legal, canonical matters, and ʿilm was appropriated to scientific knowledge, including the rational discipline of theology or the study of revelation. See L. Gardet, "ʿIlm al-Kalām", E12 III 1141-1150; D.B. McDonald, "ʿIlm", E11 III 469-70; A.J. Wensinck, The Muslim Creed 111ff. et passim.

19 Usūl here refers to Usūl al-dīn, the science of the root-principles of religion, i.e. Kalām. Muslims distinguish two other studies of basic principles: Usūl al-ḥadīth, the science of Tradition, and Usūl al-fiqh, jurisprudence.

20 This translation of ʿĀmiri is discussed below in 1.3.1.

21 This is stated simply, without proof: "In contrast to other sciences, ḥadīth ʿ-ilm lā yatafa raqāʾi layhi ʿilm wa lā al-tagḥhyir, wa lā yakhalifu bi khitālif al-umam wa ʿilm al-nawāhi [it is not subject to abrogation or alteration from nation to nation and region to region [or viewpoint to viewpoint]."

yatafa raqāʾu
7. Such verses as the former are also more numerous. The Qurʾān is full of those that prove the existence of the Producer, whereas there are fewer than six hundred dealing with legal judgements (al–ahkāmi ′l–sharʿiyati).

Rāzī sets out to show how the various elements in the argumentation about God relate to one another (maʿāqid al–dalaʿil). In the first place, the Qurʾānic verses under discussion here (2:21–2) list, but do not in this place expand upon, five objects of creative power, viz. the Mukallafs (those put under moral obligation by God), their predecessors, the Heaven, the Earth and the Fruit resulting from the rain. From these, the Qurʾān argues to the existence of the Producer.

Then, looking beyond the present Qurʾānic text, Rāzī shows how the Qurʾān employs Kalām in establishing the attributes of God. First, His knowledge. In the manner of the Theologians (the Mutakallimūn), the Qurʾān itself argues (istadalla ′alā) from the divine fashioning of mankind in the womb to God's knowledge: "Nothing in the earth or the heavens is hidden from God. He it is Who forms (fawwara) you in the wombs as He wishes" (3:5–6). Elsewhere, God asks: "Does He Who created not know? He the Subtle, the Knowing One (lattīf, khabīr)?" (67:14)22

Secondly, the power of God is evidenced by everything mentioned in the Qurʾān (R. gives no particular references) about the innovation23 of all kinds of fruits and animals and the balance in them of the elements (tabāṭī). These facts are indications that God is powerful, free and not necessitated by nature (mūjābhi–dhāthi) to act in a determined way.

Thirdly, God is transcendent (ama ′l–tanzih). Rāzī invokes the words of Q 112:1, "Say: He is the one God", and argues that to be non-composite means that God is not a body and not in place.24

Fourthly, as we have just seen, God is One, and the Qurʾān itself argues to this belief: a) because the heavens and earth would fall into ruin, if there were in them gods other that Allah (21:22); b) rival gods would surely look to challenge the Lord of the Throne (17:42); and c) some of them would be superior to, or would overcome (′alā), the others.

As for Prophecy, fifthly, Rāzī comes back to our opening pericope from "al–Baqara" (2:23). The challenge thrown down to bring a Sūra like

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22 And in Q 6:59, whence Rāzī draws the title of his Tafsīr, God says: "With Him are the keys to the unknown, and none but He knows them."

23 See 1.3.1.

24 This seems to be Rāzī′s Kalām, not the Qurʾān′s. Or perhaps we could say that Rāzī draws out of the text a Kalām argument that he sees as implicit therein.
Muḥammad's is a rhetorical way of saying that this is impossible and that, therefore, the nubuwwa of Muḥammad is God–given.

Finally, the Resurrection.25 Perhaps because he will treat of the Resurrection in many places later in the Tafsīr,26 Rāzī here simply quotes one text of the Qurʾān (36:79), saying that He Who gave life in the first place will restore to life at the Resurrection.

Having shown how the basic beliefs of Muslims are justified by argument in the sacred text itself, Rāzī then generalizes. If you investigate Kalām, he says, you will find in it nothing but the establishment (taqrīr) of proofs of this kind, their defence and the rebuttal of invective and harmful sophistries directed at them. Do you think, he asks, that Kalām should be held at fault because it includes argumentation of the kind that God Himself mentions; or because it includes rebuttal of the criticism of flaws supposedly found in these proofs? His reply is that he cannot conceive any intelligent Muslim being content to say such a thing.

He then moves on to show how, in the context of the angels, Iblīs and many prophets, God Himself approves of, and engages in, Kalām. The angels, for instance, question God's decision to appoint a vicegerent on earth, saying, "Are You going to put on [earth] one who will do evil thereon?" (2:30) Rāzī says that the underlying logic of their question is: Creation of something like that is sinful (qabīḥ); but He Who is wise does not do what is sinful. God's answer is: "I know what you do not know", meaning: Since I know all intelligibilia, in their creation and their bringing–into–being (takwīn), I possess a wisdom which you do not have. There is no doubt, says Rāzī, that God is here engaging in disputation (munāṣara). Likewise, in the passage–of–arms with Iblīs.27

Coming to the first of the Prophets, God argues the excellence of Adam from the fact that he knew the names of the angels before they did themselves (2:31–3). God puts into the mouth of Noah's unbelieving companions the accusation: "Oh Noah, you have disputed with us (jādaltānā) endlessly" (11:32). Since these arguments were not about details of jurisprudence, but rather about the doctrines of Tawḥīd and Nubuwwa, Rāzī concludes that this dispute in the defence of the truth (which is Kalām) pertains to the role (ḥirfā) of the prophets who are specialists in this.

Abraham could merit a lengthy study, since there is so much evidence of

25 As a fact, the Maʿād is not an attribute of God. It is rather the act of God resurrecting that is intended here.
26 See Chapter 7 below.
27 He does not elaborate on this example here.
munāṣara, or Kalām, in his story. In the first instance, he disputed with himself. Following what was to become the procedure of the Theologians, he argues from the fact that things change to the conclusion that they were created. Observing the stars, the moon and the sun, he thought they were God. But when they set, a thing that saddened him, he realised that they could not be. God says that this was His argument (hujja) which He gave to Abraham (6:76-83). The prophet also engaged in disputation with his father, explaining to him that a being which does not hear or see cannot be God (19:42). Both by word and direct action, he argued with his people: first, by pointing out that their statues were created things, not gods; and then, following this up, he smashed most of them (21:52-67). He argued (hāja) with his king who claimed power over life and death (2:258). Finally, Rāzī mentions without elaboration that Abraham also discussed with God the doctrine of the Resurrection (2:258).

Moses walks squarely in the footsteps of Abraham in arguing with Pharaoh, particularly with regard to Tawḥīd. In giving the explicit words that Moses addressed to Pharaoh, he relates them to the words of Abraham which we have seen. For Rāzī, this shows that, in carrying out their hīrfa, the prophets were having recourse both to reason (uqūl) and to authentic tradition handed down from their ancestors (minaslāfihim). In the case of Nubuwwa, Moses uses miracle as proof (istiḍālā) when he turns his staff into a serpent.

Finally, a brief note that the Qurʾān is replete with examples of Muhammad using argumentation to establish Tawḥīd, Nubuwwa and Maʿād. "His concern [with these] is too evident to need discussing at length".

He had to put up with (had to suffer from, was afflicted by: mubtalan) all manner of unbelievers. First, the Materialists (al-Dahr[iya). Without specifying, Rāzī says that God shows the falsity (abtala) of this position with various kinds of arguments.

28 At this point, R. remarks again that, by common consent, the rôle of Kalām is to establish proofs (dalā'il) of this kind and to rebut (da'f) queries and objections (as'ila, muʿaraḍān) raised against them. Abraham, he says, studied (baṭḥah) all these matters from basic principles (fi 'l-mabda').
29 Q 20:50 (26:78); 26:26 (2:258) and 26:28 (2:258).
30 Ibid. 89-90
31 Q 26:30
32 There is no reference here to Jesus engaging in Kalām.
33 TK 2:90
34 Cf Q 45:24. Fakhry, A History, xviii and passim translates the word thus. Goldziher, in SEI 67–8, indicates some of the difficulties of finding one suitable word in English.
Secondly, those who deny that God is all-powerful and free are rebutted by God’s action of creating all sorts of plants and animals from the same constituents.\(^{35}\) There are those, thirdly, who assert that God has a partner, either in the heavens (and God answers this, as we have seen, in the mouth of Abraham, \(Q\) 6:76), or on the earth. The Christians, who teach the divinity of the Messiah, and the Idolaters, who attribute divinity to graven images, are in this latter category.\(^{36}\) Fourthly, there are those who discredit (\(q\)'\(a\)'\(ana\) \(fi\)) prophecy: by challenging either prophecy as such (referred to by God in 17:94); or the particular prophethood of Muhammad. These are the Jews and the Christians. They challenge the Qur’\(\text{\textasciitilde}n\) as a whole (2:26), ask for additional miracles (17:90) or cast doubt on the Qur’\(\text{\textasciitilde}n\) because it was revealed in piece-meal fashion (25:32).

A fifth class of opponent rejects the Last Judgement (\(al-\text{\textasciitilde}Hashr wa 'l-Nashr\)), and, finally, some say it would be futile for God to impose a moral obligation on anyone (\(takl\(\text{i\textperiodcenterdot}\))\), since He\(^{37}\) is \(al-Jabr\), the author of predestination. Rāżī adduces two pericopes from the Qur’\(\text{\textasciitilde}n\) by way of responding to this objection, viz.: "If you do good, you do good for your souls..."(17:7; \(T\ K\) 20:157-8), and "He is not asked about what He does; whereas they are" (21:23; \(T\ K\) 22:149-150). His commentary on these verses adds little clarification.

Of these opponents of Muḥammad, the second and sixth have some affinity, in denying that God is a free Agent. The third and fourth deal with the sacrosanct trilogy of doctrines, viz. \(Taw\(\text{\textasciitilde}h\)id, \(Nubu\(\text{\textasciitilde}w\)wa\) and \(Ma\'\(\text{\textasciitilde}d\)\). He had around him, then, adherents of the philosophical schools of materialism and predestination, the idolaters, whether worshippers of the stars or of graven images and members of the two great Semitic religions, \(i.e.\) the Jews and the Christians, these last being cited both for setting up here on earth a Messiah as partner to God, and for impugning the prophethood of Muḥammad.

There is little specific answer in this place to the difficulties raised against the teaching of Muḥammad. Rāżī reiterates that the Qur’\(\text{\textasciitilde}n\) provides a variety of answers, and that he himself will be dealing with them throughout the \(Tafs\(\text{\textasciitilde}r\).

The main point is that, in all cases, it is God Himself (even if once through the mouth of Abraham) Who engages in \(K\(a\)l\(a\)m. This first \(M\(a\)q\(\text{\textasciitilde}m\) provides us with what Rāżī calls brief pointers (\(al-\text{\textasciitilde}ish\(\text{\textasciitilde}r\)\(\text{\textasciitilde}r\)\(\text{\textasciitilde}t\) \(\text{\textasciitilde}al-mukht\(\text{\textasciitilde}a\)\(\text{\textasciitilde}s\)ara\)) — it is, in fact, a rich tapestry of Quranic quotations — to

\(^{35}\) This harks back to \(T\ K\) 2:88, 1.24, referred to above.

\(^{36}\) Again, without particularizing, R. says that God gives many proofs in rebuttal of these views.

\(^{37}\) Designated here as \(al-\text{\textasciitilde}Haaqq\)
establish that not only do angels and prophets support revelation with reasoned proof, but that, in a striking fashion, so does God Himself. It follows then, for Rāzī, that to challenge this must proceed either from disbelief or ignorance.38

1.2.2. Maqām II : The Obligation to Master This Discipline39

This can be established, according to Rāzī, by the use of rationally-derived doctrine (ma'qūl) and by the testimony of authoritatively transmitted doctrine (manqūl).

His argument from reason may be paraphrased as follows: A Muslim must acquire knowledge of divine truths. But this can only be achieved by mastering (taḥṣīl) the use of speculative reasoning (i.e. the discipline of Kalām). The major premise is taken as already established (cf. 1.2.1. above) and hence not stated. The minor is proved by excluding the opposite of speculative reasoning, viz. taqlīd.40 This is done by a reductio ad absurdum. If taqlīd were conceded, it would be necessary to allow the taqlīd: a) either of all, including, therefore, unbelievers; b) or of some and not others. But there would be no criterion for choosing one taqlīd and not another.

There are two channels for the authoritative transmission of doctrine, viz. the Qurʾān itself and the Traditions (akhbār).41

A. THE QURʾĀN

1. The Holy Book calls us to employ discussion and proof, i.e. Kalām, when God says to Muḥammad, "Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom (ḥikma) and good exhortation (mawʾiẓa); and dispute with them in the better way" (16:125). Rāzī is clear that ḥikma means proof and

38 It is to be noted that the Uṣūl al-dīn (Kalām) and the Uṣūl al-fiqh differ in this that the manāẓara described and illustrated here-above is confined to doctrine. The Law is not subject to this discipline.
39 "Taḥṣīl ḥadāthī 'l-ilm min al-wāḥibāt."
40 Qallada means to invest with an office, award a decoration, adorn with jewellery, give authority, imitate, follow blindly another’s opinion. Thus taqlīd comes to mean uncritical acceptance, unquestioning faith, slavish imitation.
This complicated question has been dealt with, as extensively as the sources allow, by R. Frank in his article, "Knowledge and Taqlīd: the foundations of religious belief in classical Ashʿarism", in JAOS 109.1 (1989) 37-62.
41 Another name for Ḥadīth. According to C. Glassé, The Concise Encyclopedia, 141, khabar/akhbār, are favoured by the Shiʿites.
argument, i.e. Kalām. God, then, commands us to argue with the best possible means about the best possible matters, viz. Tawhīd and Nubuwwa; not on details of the Law, "because this is profitless with anyone who rejects prophecy; and anyone who accepts it does not contradict the Law [anyway]."42

2. In the Qurʾān, God condemns those "who dispute about God without knowledge ('ilm)" (22:3). By implication, Rāzī says, He is praising those who argue with knowledge.43 In a second example, Rāzī uses a different kind of argumentation per oppositum. Now it is the unbelieving people who accuse him of arguing incessantly with them (11:32). The implication is that such argument should be praised by believers.

3. God Himself, in many places in the Qurʾān, enjoins the use of speculative reasoning, e.g. to reflect on (yatadabbarūna) the Qurʾān (4:82), and to think about (unzuru) how camels were created (88:17). He promises to show them signs, calculated to evoke a rational response in the far heavens and in themselves (41:53). He asks them if they do not see that He comes into their land and reduces its borders (13:41); and He gives this message for Muḥammad to deliver to the people: "Think about (unzuru) what is in the heavens and the earth" (10:101. Cf. also 7:185).

4. God speaks in praise of the benefits to be derived from reflection (tafakkur). In the actions of God and His creation, there are signs for those who have intelligence (al–albāb: Q 24:44), eyesight (al–absār: 3:13) and reason (al–nuḥā: 20:54). On the contrary, He condemns those who avert their eyes, so that they will not have to exercise their minds on the signs in the heavens and earth. "They have hearts that do not understand it" (7:179; cf. 12:105).46

5. God condemns taqlīd, insofar as He cites with disapproval many statements of the unbelievers which indicate their reliance on taqlīd and their consequent refusal to accept the message of the Qurʾān. God speaks to Muḥammad of the people in olden times who slavishly followed their...
fathers and were left in ignorance without a scripture (43:22). Many of
the Prophet's contemporaries refused to accept his message for the same
reason (31:21). They conceded that, had it not been for their loyalty to
their gods, they might well have followed Muḥammad (25:42). Abraham,
too, was rejected by his father, who even threatened to stone him (19:46),
and by other of his contemporaries, on the grounds that, while their gods
might be lifeless, worship of them was the religion of their fathers (26:74).
Rāzī's selection of evidence from the Qurān, then, centres on God's direct
experience, so to speak (43:22), and that of Muḥammad (31:21, 25:42) and
Abraham (26:74, 19:46). The major premise in the argument of this
section is the indisputable truth of Muḥammad's message, leading to the
conclusion that whatever would lead to a rejection thereof, which
taqlīd does, is necessarily wrong and condemned by God.

Hence, Rāzī's conclusion is that "whoever calls for speculation and
reasoning is in agreement with the Qurān and the religion of the Prophets.
But whoever calls for taqlīd is at odds with the Qurān and sides with
('alā wāḥiq) the religion of the unbelievers".47

B. THE TRADITIONS (AKHBAR). Three authors are cited:

i) al-Zuhri48 traces back to Abū Hurayra 49 the story of the man from
the tribe of Fazāra who came to tell the Prophet that his wife had given
birth to a son who was black! In answer to Muḥammad's question about
the colours of the man's camels, he said that they were mainly red, but
some were greyish (awrāq). "How did that happen?" asked Muhammad.
To which the man replied: "It may be that some hereditary factor ('irq)
brought it about". Rāzī concludes: "Note that this is to rely on (tamassuk)
reduction and analogy (ilzām, qiyyās)"50 methods which are the
stock-in-trade of Kalām.

ii) Abū Hurayra, according to whom Muḥammad quotes God as
saying: "The son of Adam has called me a liar (yukadhdhibuni) [saying
that the first creation is more difficult than the second, i.e. the
Resurrection], and he has no reason to do this. He has insulted me

47 Ibid.
48 Abū Bakr M. Ibn Muslim Ibn Ubaid Allāh Ibn 'Abd Allāh Ibn Shihāb Ibn 'Abd
Allāh Ibn al-Hārith Ibn Zuhri (ca 671-742). Quraysh tribe. Played significant rôle in
the earliest codification of the Traditions. May have introduced the isnād, or chain of
authorities authenticating the Ḥadīth. See Ibn Khallikān II 581-3.
49 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Ibn Sakhr ad-Dawsi, or 'Umar b. 'Amir (d.676/8). Nicknamed
Abū Hurayra, 'Father of the little Cat'. A Companion and zealous supporter of
the Prophet. About 3000 Ḥadīth are attributed to him, but caution needs to be exercised
in accepting his authorisation thereof. Died aged ca 78. See EI I 93-4.
50 TK 2:91
(shatamani) [saying that God did take a son, nor is there reason for doing this either].

Razi notes that "God argues in the first case from the power to create to the power to resurrect; and, in the second, from Unity to the refutation of the view that He was corporeal, that He fathered a son or was Himself begotten." A classic instance, surely, of God using Kalâm.

iii) 'Ubāda bin al-Šāmit, according to whom the Prophet said: "Whoever loves to meet God, God loves to meet him. And whoever hates to meet God, God hates to meet him". ʿAʾisha put the question to her husband: "O Messenger of God, we hate death. Does that mean we hate to meet God?" In his answer, Muḥammad, after the manner of a good Scholastic (!), distinguishes between the believer, who loves to meet God, and the unbeliever, who hates to do so.

"All this," says Razi, "is evidence (yadullu ‘alā) that we are commanded to speculate and reflect on the proofs (dalā’il)."

1.2.3.

In what may well have been intended as Maqām III, Razi then sets out the arguments used against the position he adopts on Kalâm. This range of objections may be listed either as part of a formal exercise, according to standard Mutakallim procedure, or as a record of the controversies in which Razi had taken part, reflecting the intellectual ferment of the age. During his life-time, the Caliphate in Baghdad was under constant threat. Saladin put an end to the Fatimid Caliphate in 1173. In 1187, he captured Jerusalem and authorised the execution of Suhrawardi. These ferments and tensions, as well as those of a more strictly academic kind current in the schools, are part of the background to what we find in the Tafsir.

The objectors' argument is five-pronged. The first and second arguments

51 fi ‘l-maqām li-awwal should read, fi ‘l-maqām al-awwal. Also maqām here is not a reference to the two main divisions of this pericope, but rather to God's first point, viz. takdhib. Razi uses this ḥadīth qudsī to support his argument above in TK 2:88.
52 TK 2:91.
53 'Ubāda bin al-Šāmit al-Anṣāri. Prominent member of the Qawāqila clan. Sided for a time with the Jews, but returned to become a staunch supporter of the Prophet, after whose death he distinguished himself in several campaigns. Many ḥadīth attributed to him may be found, e.g., in the Mishkāt-ul-Maṣābīh of Tabrızī. Died some time after 640. See M. Watt, Muḥammad at Medina 168, 180-82, 209f.
54 TK 2:92.
55 Maqāmāt. Maqām can mean a position, standpoint, location, etc. Razi's opponents argue from five angles.
present the classical difficulties posed by the sceptic in regard to the possibility of rational knowledge, the remaining three invoke revelation and religion.\textsuperscript{56}

\textbf{1.2.3.1.} In the \textit{first} place, they say, deductive reasoning (\textit{naẓar}) does not lead to knowledge. Five reasons are given for this, three from logic/epistemology and one each from experience and psychology.

\begin{itemize}
  \item[a)] The progress (path) from reflection (\textit{təfəkkur}) to belief (\textit{i'tiqād}) involves, in fact, a vicious circle.\textsuperscript{57} The reasoning here, which is subtle, seems to be: If reflection leads to belief, this latter is either necessary or speculative knowledge. It cannot be necessary, because in comparison with the belief that, for example, one is half of two, the belief that this belief is knowledge is weaker. This weakness, which precludes necessity, will also preclude the belief from being speculative knowledge as well. This is the first of the arguments from logic.
  \item[b)] We know, as a matter of experience, that learned men sometimes repudiate their convictions acquired by reflection. This means that they can never really have certainty.
  \item[c)] The second logical–epistemological argument is that what is sought by reflection can neither be known already (for obvious reasons), nor unknown (for how could we seek what we are unaware of?).
  \item[d)] The third in this category argues that knowledge produced by reflection would be either necessary or speculative (\textit{naẓari}). But both are impossible.\textsuperscript{58}
  \item[e)] The objection from psychology is based on the fact that two premises, which are prerequisite for a conclusion, cannot be in the mind simultaneously.
\end{itemize}

Rāzī notes that some of his opponents may not be absolutely sceptical, but \textbf{they do hold that \textit{naẓar} cannot lead to knowledge in}

\textsuperscript{56} Rāzī follows Avicenna in neglecting to identify individuals and schools who held these views. Gutas, \textit{Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition}, writes "His [Avicenna's] focus shifted to presenting Knowledge independently of tradition and Customary practices, with scant attention to theories which by then had become, to him, irrelevant, outdated, or misguided, and with even less concern for the names of individuals who had held them" (p.296).

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{58} TK 2:92. Not \textit{necessary}, because then all minds would accept it. Not \textit{theoretical} or \textit{speculative}, because since the essence (the subject of necessary knowledge and of disagreement) cannot be the premise of the reasoning, the thing must be demonstrated by itself, and thus be known before it is known.
theological–metaphysical matters (al-īlāhiyyāt). God cannot be conceived either in se, nor in His attributes: neither as necessarily-existent and transcendent, since these are negations; nor as characterized by knowledge and power, since these relate to essence, which cannot be known in itself. The general conclusion is reinforced by the fact that we cannot even know our own reality; hence, how can we come to know more remote, metaphysical, matters?99

1.2.3.2. The second argument of the sceptics is that the kind of speculation which might produce knowledge is beyond our power. This for three reasons:

a) Since we cannot form conceptions (tašawwurāt),60 then we are incapable of self-evident judgements (al-tašdīqāt al-badīhiya), and consequently of all judgements or affirmations.

b) Man cannot work towards knowledge from either the known or the unknown. (This seems to have been used already.)

c) The necessity for deductive reasoning is at the level either of the intellect (reason: ‘aql), or deductive reasoning itself or of tradition (sam'). But all three are false (bāqil).61

1.2.3.3. Coming to the first of the three theologically–based arguments, Rāzī's opponents say that God Himself rejects the idea that those legally responsible should be required to engage in deductive reasoning.62 They offer four reasons for this: a) it leads to ignorance or folly (jahl), which is repugnant to God; b) the intellect is likely to fall for sophistries and, hence, is unreliable; c) it reduces the certainty of religious knowledge (yaqīn) to the level of opinion (zann), if, in the course of nazār, a premise underpinning a tenet of faith is called into question; and d) even to dualism (tazandaqa).63

These arguments may not do justice to the objectors in that they are presented as making gratuitous assumptions, e.g. that the end-result of Kalām will be a folly that is not specified, a loss of faith–certainty

59 Ibid. 93
60 Ibid. The reason for this is that, if we already know them, we cannot obtain them; and if we do not know them, how do we know how to go about obtaining them?
61 I must confess I find this obscure.
62 Ibid. 94
63 This seems to be an appeal, not so much to a rational principle as to opinio communis, invoking what was probably a familiar maxim (ishāhara fi 'l-alsina) as a parallel, viz. that seeking riches by alchemy leads to bankruptcy.
through doubt about premises from which faith-statements are derived, and dualism on the basis of a comparison with alchemy.

1.2.3.4. The second theological argument is that God and His Prophet have at least not commanded it. Accepting the Ash'arite distinction, they admit that to engage in Kalâm may not be evil or repugnant (qabîh) in itself, but it is to be considered so if this absence of a divine or prophetic command is taken to express God's will that it is qabîh. Logic, the experience of error and the difficulty attached to laborious study are all marshalled to explain why God and Muḥammad did not command this intellectual exercise. In summary, it would mean that the acceptance of religion would be based on an intelligence test and that, because of the limitations of the human mind, the tenets of the faith, which must be yaqiniyya, would in fact be only zaniyya.

1.2.3.5. Finally, the opponents say that to engage in Kalâm is religious innovation bid'â, and they support this claim by recourse to: a) the Qur'ân; b) Tradition (khabar); c) Consensus of the faithful; d) Their forebears (salaf); and e) Legal prescription (hukm).

a) Two passages of the Qur'ân are cited. In Q 43:58, after telling Muḥammad how Pharaoh was punished for not accepting Moses, God is said to condemn those who propose Jesus as God, calling them a contentious people who argue for the sake of arguing ("Mâ ʿarabûhu laka illâ jadalân. Bal hum qawmun khaṣīmûna"). And in 6:68, God advises Muḥammad to segregate himself from those who plunge into an examination of His revelations (ayatinâ). In these two places, then, God is seen by the objectors to Razi's thesis, to discountenance as religious innovation the use of reason and argument in religion.

b) As for the Ḥadîth, three sayings of Muḥammad are quoted: 1) "Reflect on Creation, not on the Creator"; 2) "It is incumbent on you to accept the religion of [your] elders"; and 3) "If Predestination is mentioned, then accept it [i.e. without naẓar]."

64 Ijmā' is one of the usûl al-fiqh, or principles of Islamic Law. Its basis is in the Ḥadîth, "My Community shall never agree on error". It is not an absolute consensus of all believers, but rather a general agreement amongst the Ulumâ', the learned scholars of Islam.

65 Yakhūdûna is variously translated into English as, e.g., 'meddle with' (Pickthall) and 'cavill at' (Sale). Arberry's 'plunge into our signs' comes closest to the basic meaning of khâḍa.

66 For a discussion of this, see below 4.8.

67 "Alaykum bi-dîn al-ʿajāʾiz"
c) Regarding the Consensus of the faithful, the Companions of the Prophet, say the objectors, do not speak about the science of Kalām, as is clear from the fact that not one of them is said to have devoted himself to argumentation about these things; rather they were amongst the most vehement in their denunciation of anyone who became absorbed (khāda) in such pursuits. Hence to do so is religious innovation and thereby forbidden.

d) As for Tradition, the objectors cite Mālik b. Anas, Sufyān b. 'Uuyayna and al-Shāfi'i, all jurists and contemporaries.

"Beware of religious innovation!", Mālik ibn Anas is reported to have said. When asked what this was, he said that those who engaged in Kalām (yatakallimūna) about God’s names, attributes and speech were guilty of religious innovation; as were those who refused to remain silent about matters which the Companions and Followers forebore to discuss. Likewise, Sufyān ibn ‘Uyayna, when asked about Kalām, said: Follow the Sunnah and abandon religious innovation. Finally, al-Shāfi'i is cited for the view that, if God were to tempt man to every sin, except, of course, polytheism, that were better for him than to throw himself into anything related to Kalām. He also says, according to the objectors, that if someone were to bequeath his scientific books to another, and amongst them were volumes on Kalām, these latter would not be included in the bequest. The implication is, presumably, that nothing evil should be contained in a bequest, and that dispositions with immoral purposes are not binding.

e) As to Prescriptions of the Law (Hukm), the objectors simply state that were Kalām enjoined on the 'Ulumā', the Mutakallimūn would not be included in the injunction.

1.2.3.6.

Rāzī then briefly replies to the specious arguments assembled by his
1. With regard to their first claim, viz. that *al-nazar* does not lead to knowledge (*ilm*), he addresses only one basic distinction involved in two of the five supporting arguments, i.e. that of necessary and speculative knowledge. He says they condemn as false all forms of *nażar* on the grounds that some forms of knowledge are necessary. In this, he says, they contradict themselves, presumably because it is by *nażar* that they come to this conclusion.

2. As to such speculative knowledge being beyond our power of free choice, this is false because the objectors themselves are exercising free choice (*mukhtārūn*) in making these very exceptions. Rāzī does not take up the three aspects of their argumentation.

3. It is also contradictory for them to say that to place one's reliance (*ta'āwil*) on *nażar* is repugnant (*qabiḥ*), because the same could be said about the specious argumentation that brought them to this conclusion.

4. To argue from the fact that Muḥammad, whose words and actions were binding, did not command his followers to practise *Kalâm* is also illogical (*bāṭil*) because, according to Rāzī, all the Prophets are shown to perform commands, *nażar* and argumentation.

5. He makes a brief comment on each of the five arguments of the objectors designed to prove that *Kalâm* is religious innovation.

   a) *The Qur'anic verses.* First, the *jadal* condemned by God in 43:58 is false (*bi 'l-bāṭil*) argumentation. It is clear from 16:125 that there is a 'better way' of argumentation that is approved by God. With regard to the second text, which warns us to keep clear of those who plunge into God's revelation, Rāzī points out that this does not refer to *nażar* but to obstinate, persistent argumentation (*lajāj*).

   b) The three *Ḥadīth.* First, his prohibition against reflecting, or meditating, on the Creator. The objection proves our case, says Rāzī, because reflection on Creation leads to the knowledge (*nażar*) that we have been discussing. Secondly, to be faithful to the religion of the elders means to leave (*tafwiḍ*) all things in the hands of God. But, says Rāzī, to repose such confidence in (*'timād*) God is what we are talking about. He describes the third *ḥadīth*, which seems to approve blind adherence to a doctrine enunciated, as a weak basis for an argument by the opposition, because, he says, a partial prohibition does not imply a general one.

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70 *Shubahun,* plural of *shubhatun.*
71 Rāzī, or the editor, quotes the *ḥadīth* here misleadingly, as "Reflect on the Creator".
c) **Consensus.** Rāzī is prepared to admit that the Companions did not use the language of *Kalām*. But he does not allow that *Kalām* is therefore to be vilified (*qadā'); Likewise, it is no reflection on *Fiqh* if the Companions did not use legal terminology. So, if it is shown that they did not come to a knowledge of God by reasoned argument (*dalā'il*), this likewise proves nothing.

d) The *Salaf*. Rāzī does not deal individually with the three views cited, but simply says that they are to be interpreted as directed to those guilty of religious innovation.

e) **Hukm.** The bequest of *Kalām* books is not prohibited in the case of recipients who have knowledge of God's essence, attributes and acts and of His Messengers and Prophets. The prohibition would apply only to one who was purely a jurist. This, however, is no reflection on *Kalām*. It simply makes the point that it is useless to give such books to such a person.

Rāzī embarks then on the proofs for the existence of God, which we shall examine in Chapter 5 and to which reference has been made above in 1.2.72

1.3. **Creation Vocabulary in the *Tafsīr***

Throughout the *Tafsīr*, in the context of creation, Rāzī applies to God as many as 28 words, mostly from specifically distinct roots. It will be indicated in this section whether or not each has a Qur'anic origin and to what extent Rāzī superimposes levels of meaning that cannot with certainty be applied to the Qur'anic original. One needs to be aware that the words of the *Qurān* are being seen through Rāzī's eyes, and, in turn, his use and choice of these titles and descriptions must be understood against the backdrop of his own philosophical and theological position. The lexicographers can point us to the way the terms may have been used amongst the Arab scholars, but the internal evidence of the *Tafsīr* must be the basis for our conclusions about how Rāzī understands the various terms and for our translations thereof.

Many of these expressions are treated by contemporary Orientalists as synonyms. Rāzī himself may give this impression. It can be argued, however, that there is no such thing as a true synonym. In order, then, to bring out the richness of the concept of God—the Creator, albeit with some

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72 This whole defence of *Kalām* can be understood in the context of a larger battle between the jurists and the theologians, described by G. Makdisi in his article, "Ash'arī and the Ash'arites" (see Bibliogr.).
loss of literary elegance, this thesis will give to each distinct term a distinct English rendering.

1.3.1. Terms Indicating Creation

1. *BD'.* Rāzī uses derivatives of these radicals to express the concept of *beginning*, or giving a beginning to. This is the generally accepted basic meaning, and is to be found in the Qur'ān in several places, e.g. 10:4; 21:104; 27:64; 29:19; 30:11,27; and 32:7. In all these cases, the object of the verb is *khalq*. In 87:13, we find *yubdī'u*, without object. In commenting on Q 21:104, Rāzī repeats the word *bada'na*, but he does not discuss its etymology. The fourth form means to create or produce and is close in meaning to the next entry, *bd*.

2. *BD'.* Rāzī describes *al-ibdā* as the "bringing-into-being (*takwīn*) of something which has no previously-existing exemplar (*mathal*). "So", he says, "if someone introduces into a discipline (*fann*) a way of doing things (*tariqa*) which no one else has done before, we say: 'Abdā' fihi"." In this same place, the *ibdā* of Jesus, as understood by some of Rāzī's opponents, would be an *ihdāth* without sperm or father; and the *ibdā* of the heavens and earth would be without preceding matter. Rāzī takes *ibdā* to be a specific kind of *ihdāth*. Elsewhere, for example: in *TK* 14:112 (on 7:54), he mentions them in the same breath without, however, indicating that they are synonyms.74

In Rāzī, *bādi* and *mubdi* are synonymous, "except that *bādi* has a rhetorical quality about it (*ji bādi* *mubālagha* li 'l-'udūl *fihi*). *Ibdā* is like *inhā*... It also has the sense of *ikhtīrā*". One who says or does something which has not been [said or done] before is commonly called a *mubtadi*." God is described as the "*Mubdi* of all possible things (*mumkināt*)".75

In *TK* 27:102, Rāzī does not distinguish between *khāliq* and *mubdi*, but elsewhere he indicates that *khalaqa* is broader in its connotation and application than *abda'a*. In *TK* 8:55, he writes: 'God's words ['He it is Who created (*khalaqa*) for you all that is on the earth'] (Q 2:29) point to the past. So, if we were to interpret His words, 'He created', as *ijād* and *ibdā*, they would mean that God existentialised everything on the earth in

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73 *TK* 13:118 (on 6:101)
74 Likewise *TK* 13:120, where Rāzī says that the Qur'ān gives many proofs that creatures stand in need of a *khāliq*, a *mājid*, a *muhdi*, a *mubdi* and a *mudabbir*. See also *TK* 27:86.
75 *TK* 4:25
76 *TK* 17:14
the past. That is commonly agreed to be false. So then, in order that the sentence (kalām) may be valid, we must interpret ‘creation’ as a taqdīr, i.e. God measured-out (qaddara) in the past everything which now exists (wujida) on the earth.”

Immediately before this passage, Rāzī points out that creation, as a measuring-out (taqdīr), is not peculiar to God, but in the sense of a takwīn or ibdā’, it does belong to Him alone. Again, in 27:196, he writes: "The Theologians explain that the first thing we know about God is that He is the Muḥdīt of the universe (‘ālam) and its Fā’il. For this reason, He begins by saying that He is the Khāliq. This, however, only expresses the full truth if we interpret khālq as iḥdāth and ibdā’.

Finally, we find mubdī‘āt in TK 12:145 and badā‘i (the original creation, or more likely, the marvels of creation) in TK 14:121.

Badi‘ occurs twice in the Qur'ān, in 2:117 and 6:101, both in reference to the heavens and the earth. The only other derivatives are found in 46:9, where Muḥammad denies that he is a ‘new thing’ (bid‘an), and in 57:27, where the Christians are said to have invented or established (ibtada‘ū) monasticism.

Lane cites the following renderings of the fourth form of the verb: originated; invented; devised; excogitated; innovated; made; did; produced; caused to be or exist; brought into existence newly, for the first time, it not having been or existed before, and not after the similitude of anything pre-existing.” According to Nasr, Ibn Sīnā understands ibdā’ as the production without intermediary of incorruptible and eternal things, whether corporeal or not. The eminent Ash‘arite, Juwainī (1028–1085), uses abdā‘a and mubradā‘ in the sense of produce and producer.

If we allocate to the derivatives of ḥāth (see below) the notion of newness, we may perhaps render badi‘ as Originator, and other forms accordingly.

3. BNW (BNY). Rāzī uses a derivative of these radicals in the basic sense of building or constructing an edifice. He does say that we conclude the heavens and earth were constructed (baniya) by God from the fact that they needed a Muḥdīt, Šāni‘ and a Mukhassīs. Otherwise, however, he does not use such a word in a technical creational sense.

4. BR’. Rāzī writes: "Then the Qur‘ān says: al-bā‘i‘, which is on a par (bi-manzila) with our expressions, Šāni‘ and mūjid; except that it signifies

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77 Lane, Lexicon 1 166
78 See Nasr, Islamic Cosmological Doctrine 213, and Allard, Textes Apologétiques 180.
the devising (ikhtirā) of bodies. Thus we can say of creation (al-khalq) that it is a bāriya, which we cannot say in regard to accidents (a'raḍ), such as colour or taste". He goes on to distinguish three of the words dealt with in this section of the thesis, and, in doing so, brings out nuances in these three descriptions of God. He says that khāliq comes first because the act of creating is a preponderating act (tarjih) of His will; bāri second because, described thus, God is exercising His power; muṣawwir third, because whereas the bāri existentialises essences (dhawāt), the muṣawwir existentialises attributes (ṣifāt). al-Bāri', meaning Fashioner in the sense outlined, is used several times in TK 14:101-105.

Derivatives of br' connoting production, creation and fashioning are to be found in Q 2:54 (bār'ikum, used twice in this verse); 57:22 (nabra'ahā) and 98:6 and 7 (bāriya). All other words in the Qur‘ān derived from these radicals signify freedom-from, innocence-of.

The Theologians and Philosophers use al-bāri' to refer to the Creator. Some authors, e.g. Bayḍawī, derive its connotation of 'create' (especially 'create from pre-existing material') from the fact that the thing created is now free of that material. Khalaqa is sometimes applied to the creation of inanimate things, and bara'a to animate things from pre-existent matter.

al-Bāri' will be rendered Fashioner, since the context in which Rāzi uses it suggests that God is working on pre-existent material of the essential, not the accidental, order.

5. DHR'. Rāzi generally gives no commentary on derivatives of these radicals, but in one place (15:60; on Q 7:179) he takes it as synonymous with khalaqa; in another (23:114; on 23:79) he simply notes that some commentators, e.g. Abū Muslim, do the same; and in a third (27:147, on 42:11) he sees yadhra'ukum as meaning to multiply (yukatāchirukum).

In the Qur‘ān, these radicals convey the notion of creating, as in 6:136 ("They allot to Allah a part of the crops which He created <dhara'a>); 7:179 ("We have created [dhara'nā] many of the jinn and mankind for hell"), and 16:13 ("Whatever different colours He has created <dhara'a> for you"). The dhara'akum fi'il-ard of 23:79 and 67:24 has been variously interpreted as disseminate, produce and multiply.

81 See Nasr 210, Allard 180 and Afnan, A Philosophical Lexicon 29.
82 Lane I 178
83 For an account of Bāri', see R. Arnaldez, "Kalḳ", in EI2 IV 980.
84 Abū Muslim al-Isfahānī (868-934), a Mu'tazilite who wrote a 20-volume commentary on the Qur‘ān. Often called simply, as here, Abū Muslim. See Jomier, art. cit. 155
6. *F'L. Fā'il can be applied to God and creature (cf. TK 19:32), but only in God can it be taken as denoting creation in the strict sense. It will be rendered as Agent.

7. *F'R. In his commentary on Q 6:1, where God is said to have created (khalaqa) the heavens and earth, Rāzī refers the reader to the first verse of Sūra 35 ("al-Fātîr", or "al-Malā'ika"), where God is described as fātîr of the heavens and earth: "It may be asked: What is the difference between the khāliq, the fātîr and the rabb [from "al-Fātiha"]? And also, why does the Qur'ān say here: 'He created (khalaqa) the heavens and earth', as an action in the past (bi-ṣīghati 'l-jiil al-mādi'), whereas in the Sūra, "al-Fātîr", It says: 'Praise be to God, fātîr of the heavens and earth', with an active noun connoting the present (bi-ṣīghati 'l-ism al-fā'il)?"

"In answer to the first, we say: Al-khāliq means a measuring-out (taqdir), and in the case of the Truth, this refers to His knowledge, which penetrates to (nāṭidh fi) all things, both in their totalities (kulliyāt) and their parts (juz'iyāt) and reaches to the essences of all actually and possibly existing things. For God to be fātîr [on the other hand], means îjād and ibdā'. So the fact that He is khāliq points to His knowledge, whereas being fātîr points to ('ibāra 'an) the attribute of power. Being rabb and nourisher (murabb) includes both these attributes. So this is more perfect.

"The answer to the second question is: al-khāliq [as we have said] means a measuring-out, and when applied to the Truth, this refers to His knowledge of things that can be known. Now it is true [to say] that knowledge about a thing precedes the thing which is known. Isn't it true that we can know (yumkinunā an na'lama) a thing before it comes into existence?"85

"Îjād takes place only while the effect (athar) exists, according to our doctrine that the attribute of power has influence on the existence of a particular possible thing (maqdür) while that thing exists. It is for this reason, then, that the Qur'ān says: 'He created (khalaqa) the heavens', meaning that He knew about them before they existed. [On the other hand] He says: 'Fātîr of the heavens and earth', meaning that God is their fātîr and mâjid when they are [actually] existing."86

*Fa*ṭara is found once in Q 30:30 (with ḥitra as the cognate accusative). Here it can mean both the act of creating, i.e. the bringing of a thing into existence initially, and the natural constitution with which a child is endowed in its mother's womb. For Muslims, this generally implies the

85 The only way to understand this is say that the 'We' refers to God.
86 TK 12:145-6 (on 6:1)

Following the lead of the Qur'ān, various traditions in Islam accept the creational sense of faṭara. The radicals convey the idea of cutting in two or breaking. To begin or make commence is another meaning. They can also be translated, even in the first form, as create, especially in the sense of bringing something into existence for the first time, to give a thing its beginning.

In the text, *al-fāṭir* will be translated as **Maker**, in the sense outlined here, and *al-ﬁṭra* as natural constitution or disposition.

8. *HDTH*. In Rāzi, derivatives of these radicals can appear to be synonymous with several other words. As we saw in 1.3.1. above, he says, for example: "Note that in this Sūra [6:102], God shows in many ways how the creature (creation) stands in need of a khāliq, a mūjid, a muḥdith, a mubdi' and a mudabbir" (*TK* 13:120). In 14:123, he writes: "Everything other than God is muḥdath and makhluq", and in 1497-8: "Hazdāh is a khāliq and a taqdir". Also 24:47. In 14:99–100, khliq and ḥdth would seem to be interchangeable: "If a thing is uḥdith at one stroke, then this process (tariq) ceases at that stroke. Some would perhaps conclude from this that it happens by coincidence (ittifaq). But if things are innovated successively ('ala ta'āqub) and continuously (tawâṣul), with a view to the general interest (maṣlaḥa) and wisely, then this provides a stronger argument that they came about by the ihdāth of an eternal and wise muḥdith". Again, 14:101: "The specification of all such things with a determined measure (al-miqdār al-mu'ayyan) would result from the operation of a Mukhassṣīṣ and a Muqaddir. And all such things are muḥdath."

Certainly, ihdāth can be by way of takhlīq: "The heavenly bodies' motion is ħāditha by God's takhlīq, taqdir and takwin. This is a recognition (i'tiraf), then, of the fact that everything is from God and as a result of
His *ihdāth* and *takhlīq*.

The heavens and earth themselves come about by way of *ibdā*, but 'what is between them' does not *(TK 13:118).*

Rāzī quotes al-Qāḍī as saying that *ahdatha* and *khalaqa* are not coterminous: "Al-Qāḍī says: Although we say the creature (*'abd*) acts (*ya'alu*) and innovates (*yuhdithu*), we do not however claim that he creates (*yakhluqu*). If we were to do so, we would not say that he creates in the way God does, because each of us acts by the power of God and only for the motive of reaping benefit or repelling harm. But that He acts with these motives cannot be predicated in any way of God [lit.: God is entirely free of this]."

In the *Qurʾān* we find three forms of the word which express newness of being: *yuḥdithu* in 65:1 ("Perhaps after that God will bring something new to pass"); *muḥdath* in 21:2; 26:5 ("a new reminder") and *ḥādith*, meaning event or happening, in 4:78; 12:6, 21:101 and 66:3.

Amongst scholars pre-dating Rāzī, temporal arrival, or appearance, and the creation of contingent things in time are widely accepted understandings of terms built on the radicals *ḥdth*. As well as meaning to tell a story, relate a tradition, speak, engage in conversation and so on, they are used to indicate newness of existence and to come into being for the first time. The fourth form connotes bringing—forth, originating or establishing.

In this thesis, the element of newness will be expressed in variations of the word 'innovate'; not, admittedly, taken in its day—to—day meaning in English, but with the sense of making to occur for the first time.

9. **HQQ.** There are two derivatives in Rāzī that have a creational sense: *taḥqīq*, which will be translated as *actualising*, or bringing to realisation; and *haqīqa*, the reality or essence of a thing. While in Rāzī *taḥqīq* in an epistemological context signifies verification,* it is associated with *wujūd* in *(TK 14:103).*

These radicals, which evoke the notions of reality, truth, correctness and even justice, are found many times in the *Qurʾān*. Al-Ḥaqq, after all, is one of the Beautiful Names of God. And, as we shall see, God is frequently said to create the heavens and earth *bi 'l-ḥaqq.*

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87 *TK* 20:3. As we saw under *bd*, in Rāzī's terminology *ihdāth* is more general than *ibdā*.

88 *TK* 19:32


90 See, for example, *TK* 3:52: "Wa ḥādhā ṭaḥqīq qawli 'l—mutakallimin".
10. J'L. Commenting on Q 6:1, Rāzī writes: "The expression ja'ala takes one object if it means ahdatha or ansha'a, as in the words of the Sacred Text, 'And He has created darkness and light' [here taken as one object]. It takes two objects if it means sayyara [make, make become, call, pronounce to be91], as in His words: 'And they made female [first object] the angels [second object] who are the servants of the All-Merciful' (Q 43:19)."92

The passage makes a further precision: "The distinction between al-khalq and al-ja'l is that al-khalq means measuring-out (taqdir), whereas al-ja'l means al-taqdim [make to comprise] and al-tasyir [make become]; like the initiating-in-being (insha') of one thing from another, and making-one-thing-become another (tasyir)" (ibid).

11. KDHB. Basically, this means to lie or deceive, and is included here only because such an action is occasionally referred to as a creation (khalq).93

12. KWN. Rāzī appears to equate takwin and takhlīq: "We say: Before the khalq of the worlds, God had the power to do this (takhlīq) and to bring them into being (takwin)."94

Again, takwin and ijāḍ seem to be synonymous: "Every possible-existent (mumkin) can only come into existence by God's ijāḍ and takwin."95

"The creature," writes Rāzī, "is not a khāliq in the sense of takwin or ibdā...[but rather] in the sense of taqdir and taswiya."96

No parts of the second form of the verb are to be found in the Qur'an. Nasr understands Ibn Sīnā to mean by takwin the production, through intermediaries, of corruptible things (p.213). 'Abd al-Jabbar follows Mu'tazilite tradition in restricting kā'in to "being, in a given place", occupying a specified amount of imaginary space (Peters 109). Taken absolutely, kawn refers to an accident which inheres in the subject only when it is actually coming into existence (129).

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91 See Lane I 430
92 T K 12:150. The same double-object construction appears also in Q 19:30: "Ja'alanī nabiyyan."
93 See, for example, Q 29:17.
94 T K 14:116. See also 19:32: "We say that al-khalq means ijāḍ, takwin and drawing-forth from non-existence (al-ikhraj min al-adām)."
95 T K 12:145. See also 19:32 (in previous note) and 20:3. Also 30:66: "al-Khalq means al-ijāḍ and takwin intentionally (alā sabīl al-qasd)".
96 T K 8:55. See also 12:145 and 13:118. In 21:218, Rāzī relays various views involving the concept of takwin, but he does not state his own position clearly. See below, in No.17 of this current list, for Rāzī's understanding of words derived from swy.
The radicals convey the sense of being, existing. Thus kā'in (pl. kā'ināt) is an existent thing. The second and fifth forms have the sense of bringing-into-being. They will be rendered thus in the present work.

13. **KHLQ.** Rāzī reminds us often that *khalq* is a kind of *taqdir*, which we shall render as a measuring-out.⁹⁷ In *TK* 12:150, Rāzī expresses quite emphatically the relationship between creating and measuring out: "*Khalq* can have no other meaning but *taqdir* (lā ma'nā li 'l-*khalq* illa 'l-*taqdir*).

In a passage, which is almost verbatim repeated in *TK* 8:55, Rāzī writes: "On the subject of *khalq*, and basing his view on the authority of Ibn al-Anbārī, al-Azhari, author of the *Tahdhib*, relates that [creation] is a measuring-out (*taqdir*) and a levelling-out (*taswiya*). As arguments for this, they adduce (*iḥtajjū*): verses [of the *Qurʾān*]; poetry; and [non-scriptural] testimony (*istishhād*). The Qur’ānic verses are: 1) ‘The best of creators’ [*23:14 et al.*], i.e. of measurers (*muqaddirin*); 2) ‘You create a lie’ (*iḥfān*) [29:17], i.e. *you taqdirūn* a lie; and 3) ‘When you created from clay’ [*5:110*], i.e. when you *tuqaddiru* [from clay].

"As for poetry, we have Zuhayr’s words:

‘You fabricate (*tafrī*) what you create; Whereas (wa) some people create, And then (*thumma*) do not fabricate’⁹⁸

"Another says:

‘Into the hands of those who create⁹⁹ He givesⁱ⁰⁰ nought But what is for the good of Adam’. 

"As for the [non-scriptural] testimony, people say: ‘He created a sandal’, if he measured it out (*qaddarahu*) and made it conform (*sawwāhu*) to a pattern or model (*qiyyās*). Again, for sayings to which they give no credence, Arabs have the expression ‘fabricated sayings’ (*ahādīth al-*khalq*)."

After one or two other examples, Rāzī sums up by saying: "So it is clear

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⁹⁷ Just a few of these references are: 2:155; 14:119,198; 19:223; 20:13; 28:2; 32:186.
⁹⁸ Lane I 800 relays another rendering of this: "And thou indeed cuttest what thou hast measured (*khalaqta*); But some of the people measure, then will not cut." He understands this to mean: "When thou determinest upon a thing, thou executest it; but others determine upon that which they do not execute".
⁹⁹ The *khāliqin* and the *khawāliq*
¹⁰⁰ The *yuṭī* here should probably read *yūṭī*, as in the parallel text, *TK* 8:55.
that 'creation' means measuring-out and levelling." He goes on: "Al-Qāḍi `Abd al-Jabbār says: 'Creation is an action which signifies measuring-out. The language does not require (lā taqtaqī) that this [measuring-out] should originate only from God. In fact, the [Sacred] Book expresses the opposite when It says: 'So blessed be God, the best of creators' [23:14]; and 'When you [i.e. Jesus] created from clay something in the shape of a bird' [5:110]. But since God without exception performs actions because He knows (li-'ilmihī) what their outcome will be, and what kind of usefulness they will have, it follows (lā jarama) that this name [Creator] be appropriated to Him.

"However (wa), his [al-Jabbār’s] professor, Abū `Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī, says: 'It is logically impossible (muḥāl) to apply the name Creator to God because measuring-out and levelling imply thought (fikr), speculation (naẓar) and calculation (husbān), none of which is possible for God." 101

Rāzī rounds off the discussion by noting that the Ash’arites (the ahl al-sunna wa ‘l-jamā’a) do not agree that khalaq is taqdīr, but rather ijād and inshā’. Their reason is that, for Muslims, there is no creator but God, whereas taqdīr is possible even for created beings.

For Abū Muslim, according to Rāzī, the basic meaning (aṣl) of khalaq, in the linguistic usage (kalām) of the Arabs, is taqdīr. God’s acts are described in this way. "Since all of them are in accordance with His intentions (ṣawāb), God says: ‘He created all things and then (fa) measured


Abū Bakr M. b. al-Qāsim Ibn al-Anbārī (885-940), one of the most scholarly grammarians and philologists in Baghdad. Said to have known by heart 300,000 verses of poetry illustrating the meaning of Qur’anic words. See Jomier, art. cit. 165.


'Abd al-Jabbār (932-1024). Referred to frequently in Rāzī simply as al-Qāḍī, his full name is Abūl-Ḥasan `Abd al-Jabbār b. `Abd al-Ḥamaḍānī. Lived in Isfahān (where he followed al-Ash’arī), Baṣra, Baghdad and Rayy (where he was Chief Judge). As a convert to Mu’tazilism, he was hostile to the Ash’arite tradition. See Jomier 155-6.

Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī. Lived in Baghdad, but was member of the Baṣrān Mu’tazilite school. Not to be confused with al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who is usually referred to by Rāzī simply as al-Ḥasan. See Jomier 149-50.

them out exactly (qaddarahu)' [25:21]. And people say about every accurate, well-planned (muḥkam) matter: 'It is done 'alā taqdir'.

In another place, Rāzī cites Abū Muslim as saying: "We have explained that creation is measuring-out and levelling. This refers to God's knowledge of how [a thing] happens and His will to make it happen in a specific way."

The link between taqdir and knowledge has already been seen in Rāzī's treatment of fīr in 12:145. Elsewhere in the Commentary, he writes: "And just as we have established that the Creator must have knowledge of the essence of the creature, so must He also know about its quantity (kammīʿāya), because the fact that the [creature] occurs with this measure (miqḍār), not larger nor smaller, must be due to the Agent's (fāʿīl) intention and choice. But intention presupposes knowledge. So He must have known that [particular] measure and intended (arāda) existentialising (iḍād) it, so that (hāṭā) it was more appropriate (preferable, awlā) for this measure to occur (wuqūṭ) rather than a larger or a smaller one. Otherwise, it would follow that the occurrence of this specific measure, not larger or smaller, would mean coming down in favour of one of two possibilities (tariḍān) li 'aḥadi tarrṭay al-mumkin 'alā 'l-akhir) without an agent to bring about this preference. And that is logically impossible."

As khalqtaqdir has to do with God's knowledge, it leaves no room for negligences or lack of attention to detail (sahw, ghafila). And in His case the evaluating and other processes of discursive thought, which measuring generally implies, have no place; so that taqdir in God simply means accurate knowledge, without these deficiencies.

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102 These words have been rendered variously: "He ordained it [them] very exactly" (Arberry); "Et en a fixé le destin" (Blachère); "And disposed the same according to His determinate will" (Sale).

103 TK 4:179

104 TK 8:76

105 Wolfson's words, 'preponderation' and 'preponderator', will be used later to express tariḍ and murajjih.

106 TK 30:66-7

107 TK 23:85: "Linguistically (fi 'l-lugha), creation is every action which has existence (wujiḍa) from its agent by [a specific] measure (miqḍūrān), not as a result of negligence (sahw) or inadvertence (ghafila). Men may do actions of this kind. Al-Ka'bi says that, even though this verse (23:14) shows (dallat) that men are creators, yet the name 'creator' is not applied to them without qualification".

Abūl-Qāsim al-Balkhī al-Ka'bi (d.929/31), disciple of al-Khayyāt and his successor as leader of the Baghdad Mu'tazilites, was a prominent exponent of atomism and influenced al-Ash'arī. See Jomier 154.

108 TK 24:47: "He measured them exactly and arranged them in order (hayya'ahu [sic])...Measuring-out depends on probable knowledge or opinion (zann) and calculation, [whereas] in the case of God, it can only mean knowledge of them all and [correct] information about them. In this, then, we agree with the Mu'tazilites. So if
The necessity for a Preponderator (murajjih) in the course of measuring-out entails the exercise of God's will, as well as His knowledge: "Al-khalq literally means taqdir, as we have established in this book. Now God's measuring-out means His knowledge of things and His will to specify (takhṣīṣ) everything with its particular (determined: mu'āyyan) measure. So His words, 'We created you', indicate (refer to) God's judgement (ḥukm) and His measuring-out in the context of innovating (ḥḍāth) man in this world. And His words, 'We formed you (ṣawwarnā), point to the fact that God set (athbata) on the Preserved Tablet (al-lawh al-maḥfūz) the form (ṣūra) of all things that exist (kā'īn) and are innovated up to the Last Day (iša qiyām al-sā'ī)... So God's khalq refers to His judgement and His will, whereas [His] taqwār means putting the forms of things on the Preserved Tablet."

By far, the words for creation most commonly found in the Qur'an are those built on the radicals khlaq, specifically khalqa, khalq and khaliq. The juxtaposition in the Scripture of the words sawwā and qaddara with khalqa, as parts or stages in the Divine action, throw some light on the Qur'an's understanding of khalqa itself. This is to be seen in such expressions as "Alladhi khalaqaka fa-sawwāka" (Q 8:7); "Alladhi khalaqa fa-sawwā" (87:2) and "Khalaqahu fa-qaddarahu" (80:19). Here the fa indicates a closer relationship to the khalqa than the thumma does, when this latter is linked to the action of taqwār. See, for example, Q 7:11: "Wa-laqad khalaqnākum, thumma sawwarnākum".

He were to know that something did not exist, when in fact it did, His 'knowledge' would become ignorance and His 'true information' about the thing a lie. But that is logically impossible."

109 Whether the maḫfūz of Q 85:22 agrees with 'Qur'an' or with 'lawh', the sense is much the same. The Qur'an here seems to be referring literally to a tablet upon which, for all eternity, the prototype, as it were, of the Q. is written. It can also be understood metaphorically, as pointing to the incorruptibility of the Q. R. here seems to take it metaphorically, but as referring also to God's will and decree regarding the forms that all existents would have. In TK 2:170 (on 2:30), R. considers the possibility that the angels knew God's plan by looking at the Preserved Tablet. Ibn 'Arabi refers to the general and particular principles inscribed in the Tablet, allowing that despite their inscription therein, the particular principles are subject to abrogation in the course of time. Tabarsi takes it the same way, describing it as "The Mother of the Book". Likewise Ṭabarsi. For pertinent references, see M. Ayoub, The Qur'an and its Interpreters (passim). If the Tablet is the depository of the Qur'an and of God's decrees, it must be eternal. How is this reconciled with R.'s listing of all created things (the 'ālam) in 12:147 (on 6:1) which includes the Preserved Tablet (see below 5.1)? Is it significant that, in a parallel schema in 15:78 (on 7:185), it is not included (see below 4.5)?

110 TK 14:30 (7:11). See also 29:294: "Al-Khalq is taqdir, and it means that God measures out His actions in specific ways, so that the attribute of creativity (khaliqīya) has reference to (derives from) the attribute of will". In another place, as we have seen above, R. describes khalq as the "composing of forms (tarkīb al-qawālib) and bodies" (22:64).
In the Qur'an, khalaqa can be followed by prepositions such as min and fi, and we shall consider later to what extent the Qur'an may thereby be indicating production from pre-existent material or the state in which the newly-produced thing finds itself. The Qur'anic khalaqa has, certainly, a degree of elasticity that does not restrict it to creation ex nihilo, nor even to an exclusively Divine activity.

It is not intended to beg the question by claiming here that khalaqa means to create out of nothing. Arnaldez notes that amongst the Arabs al-khalq is used for the production of a new thing (ibtidā') according to a new pattern. Al-Anbārī (d. 940) sees it either as an inshā' according to an invented model (abda'a), or it is the specifying of the proportions (taqdir) of what is to be actualised. ‘Abd al-Jabbar (d. ca. 1023) reflects the general understanding of the root meaning of khalq when he says that its primitive context was the manufacture of leather. Thus, khalaqa meant to measure leather before it was cut. Qaddara and other derivatives of qdr were also used to describe this operation. Hence the constant refrain in the Mafatlh al-ghayb, that al-khalq is nothing other than al-taqdir, has a long tradition in Arabic. We have seen Rāzī acknowledge this here-above.

Khlaq, then, is aligned with br', qdr and šwr. It will be uniformly and exclusively translated as create.

God is described as al-Khāliq and, in the intensive form, as al-Khallāq. "People differ," Rāzī writes, "about the expression [khāliq]. Abū 'Abdullah al-Baṣrī says: It cannot conceivably be applied to God in reality, because taqdir and taswiya imply opinion (zann) and calculation (husbān), and these are impossible in God. [On the other hand], the Ash'arites say that al-khāliq can only be God, proving it by His words: 'God is khāliq of all things' (Q 13:16). Some of them use another verse: 'Is there any creator (min khāliqin) other than God, Who provides for you?' (Q 35:3). This is a weak argument, because God says [in this verse]: 'Is there any creator, other than God, Who provides for you from the sky?' What the text means is: Is there any creator, other than God, who is described as providing—from-the-sky? Now our statement that there is no khāliq but God does not depend for its truth on our statement that only God is described in this way [i.e. as being provider—from-the-sky]. To Abū 'Abd

111 See R. Arnaldez, "Khalq", in E12 IV 980-88; Lane I 799-803; T. O'Shaughnessy, Creation, passim. "Khalq means the composition (mašdar) of forms (arkib al-qawālib) and bodies" (TK 22:64). "What is intended [here] by khalq is the figure (shakti) and the form (qūra) best-suited (mušābqaq) to its interests" (TK 22:66).

112 See Arnaldez, loc.cit. and Peters 118-119.

113 Both of these are included in the 99 Names. See Q 6:102; 13:16; 15:86 and 36:81. Others with a creational reference are al-bāri' (2:54; 59:24), al-badi' (2:117; 6:101), al-mubdi' (non-Qur'anic) and al-muṣawwir (59:24). Creator—words that occur in the Qur'an, but are not amongst the 99, are: fāṭir, mājid and muḥdith.
Allāh’s proposition, viz. that taqdir and taswiya signify (‘ibāra ‘an) knowledge (‘ilm) and probable opinion (zann), they [the Ash‘arites] reply: In God’s case, opinion is impossible, but His (lit. ‘the’) knowledge is certain (thabīt).”

When Rāzī speaks of the proofs for the existence of the ṣānī’i found in Q 16:3–5, he seems to look on ṣānī’i as interchangeable with khāliq. Elsewhere, he seems to equate khāliq with the usual list of creator-words, viz. mūjud, muḥdith, mubdī’ and mudabbir.

Khalaq is sometimes used to signify religion. In TK 11:48, R. presents the understanding of many commentators regarding the words, “I will surely command them and they will change God’s khalaq” (Q 4:119). They say: “Changing God’s khalaq means changing God’s din”. And they establish this in two ways, the first of which runs thus: “God endowed khalaq [creation, here, presumably] with Islam on the day when He drew them out of Adam’s back like tiny particles (ka ‘l-dhārī), and called on them to witness in themselves (‘alā anfusihim) that He was their Lord. And they believed Him. So whoever does not believe changes the natural disposition (fitra) which God bestowed on the people. This is what Muḥammad meant when he said: ‘Every newborn baby (mawlüd) is born with a natural disposition’, but his parents make him Jewish, Christian or Magian. The second way that God’s religion may be changed is by the interchange (tabdīl) of what is permitted and what is prohibited.”

Khalaq can also stand for creation, i.e. not only in the verbal sense, but meaning creatures, all created things. Rāzī uses it several times in this way in one paragraph of TK 11:147. Again, as we have seen, it can mean a

114 TK 8:56. Under ftr we also saw that al-khāliq points directly to God’s knowledge, whereas al-fāṭir is a more fundamental creational word, linked with tādār and ibdā’.
115 TK 19:222,224. See also 4:178.
116 TK 13:120; 19:32. See also 17:14; 20:3.
117 A brief note on the authors mentioned, all contemporaries (see Jomier, art. cit. 148–151; Ibn Khalikān 1 568–70): 1) Sa`īd ibn Judayr, native of Kūfa, studied under Ibn ‘Abbās. Executed by al-Hajjaj in 714; 2) Sa`īd b. al-Musayyab (636/7–709/10), Quraysh tribe, one of the “Seven Lawyers of Medina”. Pupil of Abū Hurayra; 3) al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (642–728), eminent for piety and scholarship. Qatāda amongst his disciples; 4) al-Ḍaḥḥāk (d.723) wrote comm. on Q. Taught at Kūfa, influenced by Ibn ‘Abbās, Abū Hurayra; 5) Muḥṣīd b. Jabr Abū l-Ḥajjāj (642–722). Comm. on Q, lived at Mecca, a disc. of Ibn ’Abbās; 6) ‘Īsābīl b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suddī (d. ca 745). Kūfa. Comm. on Q; 7) Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī (d.714), one of the earliest prominent Kūfan scholars. A Qur’anic authority, supporter of ‘Ali and opponent of the Murji‘ites; 8) Qatāda (679–735), Baṣrān, disc. of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Comm. on Q; quoted 3000 times by Ṭabarī. It was he who dubbed those who left his circle “Mu’tazilites”.
118 See also 30:67 and 27:259. In 19:9 he uses khalāriq in the same sense.
lie or fabrication. We have seen how the radicals ʿiš and khlq relate to each other. Another derivative used by Rāzī is khallaqiyya, which we have already translated as the attribute of creativity.

14. KHR. Rāzī looks on ikhtirāʾ, the only derivative of these radicals that he seems to use, as fairly interchangeable with a number of other creation words. He describes it as "another meaning of ibdāʾ" (4:25). Again, "Al-bāriʾ means the ikhtirāʾ of bodies" (29:294). And "the Ash'arites say that 'God' means one who has the power to create (khalq), originate (ibdāʾ), existentialise (iḍā) and ikhtirāʾ" (13:123).

No derivatives of khr are to be found in the Qurʾān.

Peters understands 'Abd al-Jabbār to be using ikhtirāʾ to mean a real making, an immediate production, particularly of bodies, which can be effected only by God. The Muṣjbira also take it in this sense of an invention, or production, without intermediary agents. Others translate it as 'invent' or 'create'.

It will be rendered in the thesis as 'devise' or 'invent'.

15. NSH'. As we saw under bdʾ, Rāzī likens inshāʾ to ibdāʾ and ikhtirāʾ in TK 4:25. Also, in 12:150, to jaʾl and iḥdāth (above, under ʿiš).

In the Qurʾān the fourth form is found more often than not with the sense of producing, bringing forth, raising up, e.g. gardens (6:141; 23:19), eyes and ears (23:78), clouds (13:12). Closer to the idea of creation is the production of another generation of people (6:6; 21:11); another khalq (23:14); creatures from a single being (6:98), from earth (11:61; 53:32), from seed (6:133); the first production (36:79). See also the brief mention in D. Masson, Monotheisme. 124. Cf. TK 2:97; 4:25 and 23:114.

119 TK 8:55. R. refers to the kihluq of Q 26:137, which has been variously translated as 'device' (Sale), 'habit' (Arberry), 'conduite' (Blachère), 'that to which our forebears clung' (M. Ali); the yakhlūqunna ʾifikān of Q 29:17, and the ikhtilāf of Q 38:7. He continues: "A liar is only called a khāliq because in his mind he measures out (yusaddiru) the fiction and then forms it (yusawwiru).

120 TK 14:113–4: "When Pharaoh asked Moses about who God really was (ḥaqqata ʾl-llāḥ), Moses three times only makes reference to the attribute of creativity. Thus, when Pharaoh asked, 'And what (mā) is the Lord of the Worlds (Q 26:24), M. first replied: 'The Lord of the heavens and earth and all between - if you believed [lit: if you would be certain (muqinīn)] [A.H.Johns: you would be aware of this]' (26:24). Secondly, he said: 'Your Lord and the Lord of your fathers of old' (37:126). And the third time he said: 'The Lord of the East and the West and all between - if you used your minds (šaʿqīlūna) [A.H.Johns: you would believe in Him]' (26:28). Now all this refers to [the attribute of creativity]." See also TK 29:294.

R. also uses the expressions mukhlaqa and ṭahhīqāt e.g. in 23:7–9 (on 22:5).

Some authors see *nash* as having a wider connotation than *khalq*, others consider them synonymous. 122

Rāzī's *inshā* will be translated as the act of *initiating in being*.

16. QDR. It is in the sense of measuring-out in a specific way that Rāzī uses *taqdīr* throughout his treatment of creation. In *TK* 14:97–8, he spells out the characteristics of this creation–measuring. The determination or specification (*takhṣīs*) of the heavens and earth to be thus large and not larger or smaller; that the motion of the heavenly bodies should begin at a particular time, and that it should be in a specified direction; the specific colours of the stars and planets; the determined moment when the tiny particles, of which the heavenly bodies and elements are composed, are innovated; and the determination that bodies, which are all basically alike, shall have different attributes: all these are a *khalq* and a *taqdīr*. Commenting on *Q* 13:8, 'And everything with Him is by measure (bi–miqdarîn)', R. says that everything is measured (*muqaddar*) in its essence and its attributes (29:73). See also 31:139.

As we have seen, *taqdīr* can involve a process of calculating, assessing and moving from doubt to certainty (*hushān, zann* etc.). Needless to say, God's *taqdīr* does not entail these imperfections. 123

First–form derivatives, which by universal agreement, refer in one way or another to power, ability or possibility, are found in many places in the *Qurʾān*. Qādir, applied frequently but not exclusively to God, is the one who is able, who has power to do something, and *qudra* is that power. While *Qadīr*, on the other hand, refers only to God, 124 it is Qādir that we find included in the 99 Beautiful Names. In five places (viz. 6:96; 25:2; 36:38; 41:12 and 76:16) we find the word *taqdīr*. In each case, it refers to God's act in setting up the heavens and making dispositions regarding their purpose. It has been understood by translators as a measuring, a determination, a disposition, something laid down by the will of God. Another of the 99 Names, *al–Muqaddir*, which is usually translated as 'Omnipotent', occurs in *Q* 18:45; 43:42 and 54:12.

Apart from applying to a determined, and decreed, measuring–out, *taqdīr* is sometimes to be translated in Rāzī as 'what is intended' or, in the phrase 'alā *taqdīr*', 'on the supposition that'. 125

122 O'Shaughnessy, *Creation* 71.
123 *TK* 20:13; 24:47. See also 23:85: "God's words, 'The best of creators', mean the best of measurers (*Muqaddar*).... The Creator is one who measures. Measuring, however, involves (yarji'u) opinion and calculation, which, in respect to God, are impossible."
125 *TK* 19:8; 14:97
17. SWY. Derivatives of these radicals do not strictly refer to creation, but they frequently occur in the Qur'ān in the same breath, as it were, with words denoting creation.126 This is echoed in Rāzī when, after citing examples of Arabic usage, he concludes: "It is established that creation means measuring-out and taswīya"127. It is only in the sense of taqdir and taswīya that a creature can be said to create.128

In his commentary on the opening verses of Sūra 87, Rāzī presents several opinions as to what taswīya might mean: "The words, 'Khalaqa ja-sawwā', may be interpreted to refer in a particular way (khāṣṣatan) to:

A. Mankind

B. Living things

C. Every part of His creation (kulla shay'in khalaqahu)

"A. Those who see them as applying to mankind refer to (dhakara) taswīya in several ways:

i) He makes [man's] stature [frame: qāma] upright [even, regular: mustawīya], symmetrical, in proportion (mu'tadila); and His creation (khalqahu) is fair (ḥasuna), according to His words, 'We have created man in the best stature (taqwīm)’ (95:4). And He praises Himself (athnā 'alā) for creating him [man] and says: ‘Praise be God, the best of creators’ (23:14).

ii) Each living thing is inclined to one kind of action and not to others, whereas man is created in such a way as to be able, by means of different instruments (ālāt), to do all the acts of living things. Taswīya indicates this.

iii) He prepares for (hayya'a) [man's] commissioning (taklīf) and the honouring of his responsibilities (qiyyāma) by the performance of acts of worship.

"B. Those who see [God's words] as applying to all living things say that the meaning of taswīya is that God gives each living thing the limbs, organs and senses that it needs. We have studied this extensively in many places in this book.

127 TK 2:97. See also 8:76; 24:47 and 31:139. Some pertinent texts are translated above in the treatment of khālq.
128 TK 8:55.
"C. Those who interpret [God's words] as referring to all created things ('alā jāmī' al-makhluqāt) say that *taswiya* means that God has power over all possible things (munkināt) and knows all knowables. He creates what He wills, as He wills, wisely [powerfully: *bi-waṣf al-ḥakam*] and perfectly (*ittiqān*), free of weakness (*faskh*) or disorder (*iḍīrāb*).\(^{129}\)

For Rāzī, then, the second form has the meaning of levelling, proportioning, making even or smooth, making or creating one thing equal to another, arranging. It will be rendered, generally, as *levelling*. The meaning attached to *istawā* is discussed in 2.4. below.

18. \(\text{§DR.}\) To *emanate*, return from. Creation is an issuing–forth: "Everything that emanates from a holy spirit, angel, Jinn or human being is in reality created [active here: *khāliq*] by God and by no other" (TK 14:122). From this passage, and from so many that we shall study in the thesis, it is clear that the meaning of *ṣudūr* in Rāzī bears little resemblance to its use by Ibn Sīnā and the neo–Platonic emanationist philosophers.\(^{130}\)

19. \(\text{§N'.}\) In Rāzī, *šāni* seems practically synonymous with *khāliq*. Long series of arguments, which we shall examine later, are given to prove the existence of the *šāni*. "It is only the created thing (makhluq) which proves (yadulū *'alā*) [the existence of] the *šāni* (TK 4:178). "The *bāri* is on a par with *šāni* and *mūjīd*" (29:294).\(^{131}\)

In the Qur'ān the most common meaning is simply to do, e.g. 11:16 and many others. It is used also in the sense of building a ship, e.g. 11:37;38; 23:27. *Mašāni* appears in 26:129, meaning castles or strongholds.

We shall translate it throughout as *Producer*.

20. \(\text{§WR.}\) Rāzī glosses *Q* 3:49 with a reference to Jesus 'creating' (*yakhlūq*) a bird from clay (*Q* 5:110), concluding that 'all this shows that *khālq* is *tašwīr* and measuring–out (*taqdir*)'.\(^{132}\) He does not restrict this *tašwīr* to God: "If it is correct to describe Jesus as creating, it is also correct to describe others who are *mušawwarin* as creating" (TK 23:85). In *Q* 7:11, we are told that God created Adam and then formed him (*ṣawwāna*). Rāzī refers to the view of Muḥḥīd which interprets this to mean that God created Adam and then formed his progeny from his back

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129 TK 31:138–9
132 TK 8:55.
(min zahrihi) in the form of a tiny particle (zarr).\textsuperscript{133}

Rāzī justifies the order, Creator–Fashioner–\textit{Muṣawwir} (in Q 59:24 and included among the 99 Names) in this way: “The term \textit{Muṣawwir} means that God creates the forms (ṣuwar) of creation [created things: khalq] as He wills. God is described first as Creator and then as Fashioner because the preponderating of the will (tarjīḥ) precedes the exercise or influence (ta’thīr) of [His] power. He is described as Fashioner and then as \textit{Muṣawwir} because the existentialising (iṣād) of essences precedes the existentialising of attributes.”\textsuperscript{134} So while for Rāzī form–giving is part of the creative process, its special rôle is that of bringing [accidental] forms or attributes into existence.

\textit{Muṣawwir} will be rendered as the \textbf{Form–giver} or the \textbf{Former}.

21. \textit{WJD}. In general, Rāzī seems to use \textit{iṣād} and other derivatives of \textit{wjd} as interchangeable with the usual list of creation words.\textsuperscript{135}

Once, at least, he does distinguish between creating and \textit{iṣād}: “God’s words [‘He it is Who created for you what is on the earth, all together’ (2:29)] point to the past. So if we were to interpret His words, ‘He created’, as \textit{iṣād} and originating (\textit{ibdā’}), they would mean that God \textit{awjada} everything on the earth in the past. But that is commonly agreed to be false. So then, in order that the sentence may retain its veracity, we must interpret creation as a measuring–out, \textit{i.e.} God measured out (\textit{qaddara}) in the past everything which now \textit{wujida} on the earth.”\textsuperscript{136}

Rāzī refers to the \textit{iṣād} both of essences and of attributes\textsuperscript{137} and observes that to give existence, or make to exist, is the highest of favours and God’s ultimate beneficence (\textit{nihāyatū ‘l–iḥsān}).\textsuperscript{138}

It is generally accepted that the principal meanings of the first form (active) is to find, find out (\text{i.e.} know by experience), to attain. In the passive it can mean, obviously, to be found. These are the only meanings that occur in the Qur’ān. This passive can also mean to exist. The fourth form then means to cause to exist, create, imagine and invent. The expressions \textit{iṣād}, \textit{mawjiḍ}, \textit{mājīd}, \textit{wujūd} are not found in the Sacred Text.

\textit{Iṣād} will be rendered consistently as ‘existentialise’. Thus God is (with

\textsuperscript{133} \textit{TK} 14:30
\textsuperscript{134} \textit{TK} 29:294–5
\textsuperscript{136} \textit{TK} 8:55
\textsuperscript{137} \textit{TK} 9:159 and 29:295
\textsuperscript{138} \textit{TK} 9:159
apologies to Him!) the **Existentialiser**, the *Mūjid*; *wujūd* is **existence** and *mawjūd* an **existent**.

22. **WLD. Tawallud** occurs many times in Rāzī. He also uses *tawilid* and *tawālud* in 4:199. The first form means to generate, procreate or beget. It is found in this sense in the Qur'ān.

‘**Generation**' will be used to convey the meaning of expressions found in Rāzī.¹³⁹

1.3.2. **Terms Associated with Creation**

1. **'THR.** For Rāzī, *Athar* has the sense of an **influence** or an effect; *ta'thir* is influence, in the verbal sense of influencing; *ta'thirāt* influences or effects, especially of a physical kind; *mu'aththirīya* is the attribute of influencing or being influenced.

In his recent doctoral thesis, *Angels in Medieval Islamic Theology* (Canberra 1988), Dr. Tony Street strikes a note of caution when he writes: "I understand 'influence', not as being a cause of an event, but as something contiguous and co-terminous with it. These are terms found in Rāzī and Ghazālī which demand further study to see if there is a denial of occasionalism implied" (p.142, n.44).¹⁴⁰

The *mu'aththir* is the influencing-agent, usually God, but the influencing is not confined to the original act of bringing into being. It can, for example, explain why some colours and qualities, rather than others, occur in a particular body.¹⁴¹

In the Qur'ān we find only *āthara*, having the sense of choosing or preferring (12:91; 79:37), *athar* and *āthār* meaning footsteps or traces (20:84,96; 30:50). Peters (221) understands ‘Abd al-Jabbār to mean by *iṭhār* the will to choose one thing in preference to another, thus to equate it with *ikhtiyār*.

Lexicographers report a common use of *athara* to be making an incision in the foot of a camel in order to follow its tracks.¹⁴² Hence the nouns impression, footprint, track, trace. The second form then means to make

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¹³⁹ Peters, *God's Created Speech* 206, translates the Mu’tazilites’ use of these words in the same way.
¹⁴⁰ See Afnan, *Philosophical Lexicon* 2, s.v. *ta’thir*.
¹⁴¹ TK 20:3-4.
¹⁴² Lane I 18
an impression, produce an effect, have an influence.

2. **DBR.** In Rāżī, the most commonly used derivatives are mudabbir and tadbir. As we shall see later, the proofs for the existence of God—the-Creator show Him as having a complex rôle expressed by a variety of words. *Mudabbir* occurs in many of these creation-related lists.\textsuperscript{143}

The need for a *mudabbir* is demonstrated by the forms and attributes of the heavenly spheres. Since they are contingent, they could have been in any order. The fact that they are arranged and disposed in a particular way points to a *Mudabbir*\textsuperscript{144}. This makes *mudabbir* practically synonymous with mukhassšš and murajjib.\textsuperscript{145}

God is not described in the Qur'ān as Mudabbir, but in 10:3,31, both creation contexts, He does direct or govern (yudabbiru) the course of things. The fourth form (like the first) can mean to turn one's back, as in Q 70:17 and 9:25. The masā'ir of this form appears in 52:49, referring to the setting of the stars. The fifth form is found in the Qur'ān (4:82 and 23:68) with the sense of pondering or reflecting. Thus *tadabbur* is an accepted word amongst the theologians for meditation or consideration.

*Mudabbir* will be translated throughout as Director, despite the overtones, and *tadbir* as direction or management, in the active sense.

3. **GHYR.** Mughayyir, the most common derivative of ghyr used by Rāżī, is linked with Muhawwil (see here below), in reference to God. In TK 23:87 (on 23:17), Rāżī writes: "This verse points to the existence of the Producer (Ṣāni'). Despite the fact that they could have remained [unaltered], some qualities in these bodies are replaced (inquilāb) by their opposites. This indicates that [the Producer] is certainly the *Muhawwil* and the Mughayyir".

In Q 47:15, God is described as not being a mughayyiran of grace which He has bestowed on a people, but the expression is not found in a positive title as for God.

Afnan (211) records only one use of al-mughayyir, and that is as a rendering of Aristotle's *tó metablētikón* in *Metaph.* 1013a 32. However authors may understand what really constitutes 'otherness', there is general agreement that the second form means to modify, alter, change, make

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\textsuperscript{143} To mention only a few: TK 4:187/ff; 9:159; 17:14. Typical is what we read in 13:120 (on 6:102): "Note that God explains in this sūra, with many proofs, that creatures need a Creator, an Existentialiser, an Innovator, an Originator and a *mudabbir*.”

\textsuperscript{144} TK 179

\textsuperscript{145} TK 4:187/ff
something other than it is.

*Mughayyir*, in the text of Rāzī, will be rendered as the **Changer**.

4. **หลากหลาย.** Rāzī uses *muḥarrik* of God, alongside *mudabbir* and *mukhaṣṣiq*, as the external *Muḥarrik* responsible for the motion of the heavenly bodies: "And so, in their motions, the heavenly bodies need a *muḥarrik* from outside, who is ... the *mudabbir* of the fixed stars and the revolving planets."¹⁴⁶ *Mutaharrik* in 14:97 is used to describe the motion or mobility of all the heavenly bodies in a specific direction.

A derivative of these radicals is found only once in the *Qur'ān*: "Do not move *(lā tuḥarrik)* your tongue." (75:16).

Ibn Sīnā follows Aristotle in his general understanding of motion (*ḥaraka*) as "going from potentiality to actuality in time either in a continual or a non-immediate manner". It is practically synonymous with change and hence includes, not only change of place, but change also of quantity, quality and substance.¹⁴⁷ For 'Abd al-Jabbar, movement is defined as the "being" (*kawn*) which comes into existence immediately after its opposite. Thus the being-in-this-place which immediately succeeds the being-in-that-place is described as *ḥaraka*.¹⁴⁸

In the second form, it means to move or touch something, to cause an emotion. In the context of Rāzī's *Tafsīr*, *Muḥarrik* will be rendered **Mover**.

5. **헨.** The most common derivative of these radicals is *ḥal*, 'state', which has both an ontological and a grammatical signification. Under *ghyr* above, we saw that in the second form, as for example, *muḥawwil*, its meanings refer to alteration or change. The *Qur'ān* has *ṭahwil* three times, with the sense of changing, but the participle, which Rāzī uses frequently to describe God—the-Creator, does not appear in the Scripture.

*Muḥawwil* is rendered here as the **Transformer**.

6. **카시.** According to Rāzī, for the same reasons that there must be a God Who is the *Mudabbir* and the *Muḥawwil*, He is also the *Mukhaṣṣiq*.¹⁴⁹ In 9:140, we find *khusūṣ*, meaning specificity or specialness. He also uses *takhsīṣ* and *ikhtiṣās* (14:98), as well as *khāṣṣatan* (31:138, et al.).

¹⁴⁶ *TK* 4:188. See also 17:9; 20:2.
¹⁴⁷ Nasr *op. cit.* 226-9
¹⁴⁸ Peters 130-131
Derivatives are found only four times in the Qur'an, but Mukhaṣṣis is not amongst them.

The second form, in particular, seems to have been accepted generally in classical times as meaning specify, particularise, itemise, single out, appropriate, and so on. The Philosophers, the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites use the term Mukhaṣṣis, translated by Wolfson as Particulariser, in the context of creation.

Rāzi's Mukhaṣṣis will be rendered throughout the thesis as Specifier.

7. QDÝ. Rāzī notes various glosses of qadā' as it occurs in the Qur'an. They include: cutting or deciding (qaṭ'), creation (khalq), command or decree, judgement, informing, finishing, or completing.

The expression, al-qadā' wa l-qadar, has also been open to variant interpretations. It is widely understood to mean the absolute and eternal divine decree, as well as its realisation in time. In TK 29:73, Rāzī refers the qadā' to God's knowledge and the qadar to His will. The discrepancy between this passage and 23:85, where taqdir is closely related to knowledge, may support the evidence of one manuscript that questions the authenticity of the commentary on this Sūra. In TK 17:14 (on 10:3), he writes more generally: 'Nothing in the upper or lower worlds is originated... except by God's taqdir, tadbir, qaḍā' and ḥukm. This shows the extent (nihāha) of His power, wisdom, knowledge, comprehension (iḥāta) and direction; and also that God is the Originator of all possible-existents.'

Qadā' appears frequently in the Qur'an where generally, but not exclusively, it refers to God.

The first form means to terminate, complete, accomplish, perform, decree. Applied to God, it has the sense of pre-ordain, decide, predestine, judge.

Kaldy Nagy lists some of the classical definitions of qaḍā' in E12 IV

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150 Q 2:105; 4:74; 8:25 and 59:9
151 The Philosophy of the Kalam 434-44
152 TK 4:25-6
154 See Gardet, art. cit. 366. The phrase sometimes appears as al-qaḍā' wa l-taqdir, as in 14:96.
155 See above, under Khalqa, 1.3.1.
156 Q 2:117; 3:47; 19:35; 40:68. See also 33:36.
Applied to God, the term will be taken as meaning to **decrees**, **pre-ordain**, **decide**.

8. **RJH.** Rāzī describes God the Creator frequently as the *Murajjih*. The contingency of things calls for a *Murajjih*, just as it does for a **Specifier**.\(^1\) We find in Rāzī also *tarjīh* (29:295) and *tarajjuh* (12:130).

The root is not Qur’ānic.

Ibn Sīnā uses the term *tarjīh*, meaning to give preponderance, and from this, according to Wolfson, Ghazālī introduces the expression *murajjih* as equivalent to *mukhasṣiṣ*\(^2\)

The classical understanding of derivatives of these radicals differs little from current usage, according to which the first form means to tip the scales, surpass, predominate, be of greater weight, be very likely; and the second to cause the scales to come down on one side and not the other, to prefer, favour, cause one thing to preponderate over another.

With the blessing of Wolfson, Rāzī’s *murajjih* will be rendered as **Preponderator**.

9. **RKB.** The second form is found many times in Rāzī as *murakkab* and *tarkīb* in the context of assembling, putting parts together, composing, combining.

Afnan (112) cites several translators who render Aristotle’s *sunthesis* as *tarkīb*, a combining.

Riding (e.g. an animal), travelling, climbing are virtually the only sense that these radicals convey in the *Qur’ān*.\(^3\)

Rāzī’s usage will be rendered as variants of the verb to **compose**.

10. **RTB.** The second form is found in Rāzī as *tartīb*, the active **arranging** of things, e.g. particles of a body and their attributes, the heavenly bodies. These radicals do not appear in any form in the *Qur’ān*.

11. ‘**YN.** The most common derivative found in Rāzī is *mu‘ayyan*. In the *Qur’ān*, ‘**āy**n most frequently means ‘eye’ (as in 3:13; 5:45; 20:40), sometimes a spring or fountain (18:86; 55:50; 76:6) and as a verb, to flow

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\(^1\) *TK 27:257:* “Every contingent thing (jā‘iz) must have a *Murajjih* and a *Mukhaṣṣiṣ*.” See also 17:10; 18:232; 22:65 and 30:6–7.

\(^2\) *Op. cit.* 444–52

\(^3\) For example, 11:41; 40:79 and 84:19.
forth (2:60; 34:12). ‘Ayn can be equivalent to nafs, in the sense of the thing itself, the essence of a thing, the individual existent, the person, the most important part of a thing. Afnān (206) cites some of the classical authors who use it in this sense.

The second form (layyana), which is more relevant to the vocabulary of this thesis, means to pierce (as if to make an eye-hole in a thing), but more importantly, to designate, specify, fix, single out, appoint.

I translate Mu'ayyin, applying to God, as **Particulariser**, and mu'ayyan as particular, in the sense of specified (the translation already reserved above for khṣṣ), designated or singled out.
CHAPTER 2

THE OBJECTS OF CREATION

The objects, or end-products, of creation throw light on, and, in fact, determine, the character of the creative act, which is tailored, so to speak, to the task in hand. This act, in turn, tells us much about the agent, the Creator. As we shall see, Muhammad warns against meditating directly on the Creator. He exhorts his followers, rather, to reflect on creation first, as an exercise which will lead, in fact, to knowledge of God, the Creator. Our study, then, will proceed from the objects of creation to the creative act, and thus to the Creator.

It is universally accepted by Muslims that God is the Creator of all things. It is important at the outset, however, to be clear how Rāzī understands this assertion, particularly vis-à-vis the Mu'tazilites.

This chapter will thereafter be concerned to summarise his teaching about particular objects of creation referred to in the Qur'an. In the sections on the heavens and earth and on man, there will be some anticipation of what will be said in Chapter 3 on the creative act and Chapter 6 on the purpose of creation.

2.1. Everything in general, except God Himself, His Attributes and the Qur'an

The Qur'an clearly states (6:102) that God created all things. As Rāzī notes,1 many Mu'tazilites concluded from this text that God had no attributes and that the Qur'an was created. "Regarding the denial of attributes [in God], they say: If God were to know by the attribute of knowledge and be powerful by [the attribute of] power, then that knowledge and power would be either eternal or innovated in time (muhdathānī)." Now, if the attributes were eternal, this would negate the universality of the Qur'anic statement. The Mu'tazilites do make one

1 TK 13:123. See also TK 19:34 (on Q 13:16)
particular reservation: "We construe (adkhalnā) this general statement in the light of a particular reservation (rakhṣīṣ) in the case of God’s essence (dhāṭīhi), which cannot possibly create itself. But it [the Text] must retain its general application in everything apart from God. But to say the attributes are eternal requires an excessive (mazīd) reservation to this general statement, and that is impossible (lā yajuzu)." They invoke common consent against the proposition that these attributes were innovated in time. This, they say, would necessitate another knowledge and power to precede the existentialising of this knowledge and power. And that is logically absurd (mufydl). Rāzī then simply states his colleagues’ (and his own) position without elaboration: "We make particular reservations to this general statement by proofs (dala’īl) which establish (1) that God knows by knowledge and is powerful by power; and (2) that the Word of God [i.e. the Qur’ān] is eternal."3

2.2. Essences and Attributes

Rāzī concludes from the words of Sūra 19:9 addressed to Zachariah, “We created you before, when you were nothing”, that God has the power to create essences, attributes and effects (āṯār); and hence He can enable the elderly Zachariah and his wife to beget John the Baptist.4

2.3. The Angels, Devils, Iblīs and the Jinn

Street’s recent doctoral thesis at this University has given a wide coverage of this topic, as developed by Rāzī especially, but also by many other mufassirūn, mutakallimūn and Philosophers.5 I shall restrict myself, therefore, to emphasising the following points.

In the Qur’ān, angels are God’s messengers (3:39-45; 22:75; 35:1). They stand in the presence of God, praising, fearing and obeying Him (7:206; 13:11; 16:49-50; 40:7; 42:5) and they will take an active rôle at the Last

2 The ‘we’ would seem to refer to Rāzī himself, but what follows supports the argument of the Mu’tazilites. Rāzī’s own view is expressed in that of his colleagues (aṣḥābunā), the Ashʿarītes, a few lines further on.
3 For a brief discussion of khusūṣ and ‘umūm, see Goldziher, The Zāhirīs 113-117.
4 “Our line of argument from the words, ‘We created you..’, is to say: Since He created him [Zachariah] from pure nothing (al-ʿadam al-ṣīrīf) and simple denial [of existence], He had the power to create essences, attributes and effects. All He needs to do, in creating (sīr) offspring from an old man and woman, is to alter (rearrange: tabdīl) the attributes. It is fundamental (awwālī) that one who can create all essences, attributes and effects can do this. If He can existentialise him from nothing, then so too can He bestow on him a son by restoring to him and his spouse the power to generate the two fluids from the union of which the son [John] is created (sic)" (TK 21:189)
Judgement (25:22-5; 89:21-30; 78:38). Belief in their existence is one of the articles of Muslim faith (2:177,285; 4:136-7).

While the Qur'ān does not specify the immediate bodily material from which angels are created, Rāzī appears to depart from the light-tradition of the al-Kisā'ī stories, by saying that the angels were created from air. He records here, seemingly with approval, the imaginative analysis by the Ḥukmān of the respective origins of devils, angels and Adam. Given the final product in each case, the unexpected original bodies highlight the power of God. The devils are made from fire, the brightest of substances, and yet they are plunged into the darkness of error. Angels are formed from air, the thinnest and most subtle of bodies, and yet they prove to be very powerful beings. Adam, finally, is from dust, the densest of the three; yet he is shaped to be capable of love, knowledge, light and guidance. In ṴK 24:16 (on 24:45), however, it appears that he equates light with air, when he says: "The angels, which are the most numerous of living things, are created from light; the Jinn from fire and Adam from dust."

For Rāzī, the angels, Jinn and devils are spiritual, and yet homogeneous, corporeal beings. He reports the Mu'tazilite view that, with their advantage in mind, God created the angels before the heavens and earth. He does not subscribe to the reason given, nor does he confirm the fact as his own position.

No Muslim would question the traditional, or revealed, proofs for the existence of angels. In ṴK 7:132-3, Rāzī lists four matters relating to belief in angels, one of which is their existence. But he, in fact, deals in this place rather with the discussion about their nature. To the view expressed in ṴK 1:77, that there is no cogent, rational proof for the existence of the Jinn and the devils (and hence of the angels and Iblīs), Rāzī repudiates that it is sufficient to show that they are possible-existents and then directs his opponents to accept the testimony to their existence.

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6 Op. cit. 49
7 ṴK 8:75 (on 3:59). For the Jinn, see also ṴK 19:180 (on 15:26-33 where, in v.27, they are explicitly said to have originated from fire). Cf Q 6:100 and 55:15.
8 This term survives to the present time to describe those Shi'ites who devote themselves to Ḥikma (or, in Persian, Ḥikmat), a combination of the esoteric teachings of the Imāms, the ishrāqī wisdom of Suhrawardi, the doctrines of ibn 'Arabī and elements of Greek philosophy. (See Sharīf, History II 907.) Ibn Khaldūn uses Ḥukma interchangeably with Fālasifa (op. cit. 890), whereas I suspect that Rāzī reserves the term more specifically for the Neo-Platonists.
9 Cf. ṴK 8:56: "al-Rūḥ jism raqīq ka 'l-rīḥ". Also 1:76-8 (on Sūra 1), 7:132-3 (on 2:285) and 30:267 (on 77:5).
10 ṴK 17:187 (on 11:7)
11 Cf. ṴK 1:76-89
furnished in the Qur'ān. He calls the traditional arguments rational and persuasive, but their probative power is, in fact, limited to reasons of fittingness (argumenta convenientiae).

It may be noted, finally, that it was discussed amongst Muslim scholars whether Iblīs was angel or Jinn. An argument could be found in the Qur'ān for the former position, when it tells us that God commanded the angels to bow to Adam, and all obeyed except Iblīs. On the other hand, we are told that "he was of the Jinn", and, according to him, he was created, like them, from fire.

Rāzī considers the matter in several places and presents the arguments for both views. He does not find the arguments for the angelic nature of Iblīs cogent, concluding, rather, that he was of the same species as the Jinn.

2.4. The Throne

The Throne is mentioned in the Qur'ān in many places. The Chair (al-Kursī) appears only twice: in 2:255, where it is identified with the 'Arsh; while in 38:34 it refers to Solomon's throne. Some of those who distinguish the two describe the Kursī as a footstool to the throne, others give both terms a cosmological significance. There are interpretations that stretch the imagination; but others, particularly in the context of God's relationship to the Throne, take up the classic questions of anthropomorphism and divine transcendence, and the literal or metaphorical understanding of the Qur'ān.

Rāzī describes the Throne as "the greatest of bodies (ajsām)". In the order of the creation of cosmic things, the Throne and the Chair come first. "With regard to the heavenly bodies (al-falakiyyāt)," writes Rāzī,

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12 See Street 59 and 77 n.122. For another application of this principle, see below 7.2.2.
13 Q 2:34; 7:11; 15:28-31; 20:116; 38:71-4
14 Q 18:50; 7:12; 38:76.
15 See TK 1:82; 2:213-5 (2:34), 166-71 (2:30); 13:115 (6:100); 14:31 (7:11-25); 21:136-7 (18:51).
16 See, e.g., Q 6:1,2; 7:54,185; 9:129; 10:3-6; 11:7; 13:2; 17:44; 20:5; 21:22; 23:86,116; 25:59; 27:26; 32:4-10; 39:76; 40:7,15; 43:82; 57:4 and 81:20. (Many of these pass with little or no comment in the Tafsīr.)
"the first is the glorious (majīd) Throne and then the lofty (rafi‘) Chair. And it is incumbent on the intelligent person to know what the Throne is and what the Chair is, as well as their [various] attributes."

Before these, however, the waters were created and the Throne set thereon. In his commentary on Q 11:7 ("And His Throne was on the waters"), Rāzī summarises the views of other writers. Kā‘b,20 for example, narrates that God created a green emerald and looked at it with awesome aspect (bi l-hayba),21 whereupon it turned to water which grew turbulent. "Then He created the wind, placing the water beside it (‘alā mutanāhan). And after that He set the Throne over the water."22 Ābū Bakr al-Āṣamm23 takes the words to prove that the Throne and the water existed before the heavens and the earth; not, however, that the throne and the water were in contact with each other, any more than the heavens and the earth were.24 For Ābū Muslim al-Īṣfahānī, it is a sign of the altogether extraordinary and wonderful (abda‘, ā‘ab) nature of such a great object as the Throne, that God should build it on the water, when even a light and flimsy building needs solid earth for its foundation.25

For Rāzī himself, it is the perfection of God's power that is shown in the fact that God "holds fast to (clasps: amsaka) the Throne, which is the greatest of created things, above the seven heavens with neither support under it nor chain above for it to hang from." And, "despite the fact that the Throne is mightier (a‘am) than the heavens and the earth, it is on the water."26

Further commentary on the place of the Throne in the order of creation follows.

At the end of what must be one of the longest pericopes on a particular Qur'anic clause, Rāzī explicitly lists the seven Sūras where God uses the

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19 TK 12:147
20 Kā‘b al-Āḥbar. Jewish traditionist from Yemen and convert to Islam. Wrote several works and is a major source for stories of this kind (d.652/4). See GAS I 304.
21 See 2.6.2.1.5. below.
22 TK 17:187
23 Ābū Bakr 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Kaysān al-Āṣamm. Basran theologian, mufassir and probably a poet, he is generally considered a Mu'tazilite, although he was excluded from the strict Mu'tazilite group for rejecting 'Alī's claim to the imamate. None of his writings is extant (d.815/17). See Van Ess, "Āṣamm", Jomier 152-3.
24 Ibid.
25 See also TK 17:13
26 TK 17:187-8
expression, "Then He sat on the Throne". The verb used in every case is *istawâ 'alâ*, which has been variously translated as 'mounted' or 'established Himself' (Pickthall), 'ascended' (Sale), 'sat (or seated) Himself' (Arberry) and 's‘assit en majesté' (Blachère). I shall settle for the simple 'sat', keeping in mind the valid nuances of these various renderings.

The seven passages of the *Tafsîr* dealing with this matter tell us more about God than about the Throne. However, we may anticipate here in part (albeit at some length) the question of whether God is in space, in order to glean as much as we can about the character of the Throne.

Three terms will occur frequently in this context, viz. *hayyiz*, *makan* and a more elusive one, *jiha*. *Makan* is defined by Râzî in the present text (TK 14:103) as "the inner surface of a body, embracing (häwîn) and contiguous with (mumâss) the external (zâhir) surface of the body embraced (See also l.c. 111). Richard Frank, *Being and their Attributes* 96) describes *jiha* as the "ultimate and indivisible unit of spatial location". "It is that area," he says, "into which, when it is occupied by one atom, another cannot intrude, being the locus or the where (hayt) of the first" (ib.). And "position (jiha) ... implies and defines the 6 directions .. of up and down, left and right, etc."(97). Gimaret notes al-Jubbâţi's understanding of *jiha* as "the point of space occupied by some body" (Théories 416) and Peters calls it the direction or place "into which the substance extends itself" (God's Created Speech 129). He refers us to Goichon, *Lexique* 423-5. The Ash'arite definitions, as found in *Ma'alîm* 44, seem to differ little from those of the Mu'tazilites. For the sake of clarity and consistence, *hayyiz* will be translated as space, *makân* as place and *jiha* as position, or direction. See G. Monnot, "Le Verset du Trône", in *MIDEO* 15 (1982) 142, n. 69, and R. Frank, "Bodies and Atoms".

### 2.4.1. TK 14:101–117 (on Q 7:54)

In this, the first of the seven pericopes, Râzî gives sixteen proofs from...
reason and eight from faith and tradition (naqlīya) to show that the words, "Then He sat on the Throne", cannot mean that He was settled and fixed (mustaqīr) thereon. I shall try to summarise these arguments here. Many make no explicit reference to the Throne, but the denial of space, place and position to God is to deny that He has a corporeal relationship to the created body which is the Throne.29

2.4.1.1. The 16 Arguments from Reason

i) If God were settled (occupying space) on the Throne, He would be from some aspects finite, and hence subject to increase and decrease. But all such things are innovated, which is logically absurd (mufyal) in God.30

ii) If God were in a place (makān) and position (jiha), He would be limitless in every position; or limited in every position; or limited in some positions, but not in others. As all three consequences of such a hypothesis are false (bāṭil; fasādahu is also used), it is completely false to say that He is in place and space (hayyiz).31

iii) If God were present in space and position, this position would either exist and be able to be pointed to, or it would not.32 But both these consequences are false.33

iv) If God could exist only as specified by, or in relation to, space and position, then He would be dependent on external things and thus be by nature contingent.34

v) Space and position are nothing else but (lā ma’nā lahu illa) pure void (farāgh) and vacuum (khalā). So all spaces are by nature equal. If God, then, were characterised by a particular space, this would have to be as a result of the free act of a Specifier, and hence God would be innovated.35

vi) Whatever occurs in space and direction is sense-perceptible. Things

29 For further comment on these proofs, see below, 4.2.
30 See Appendix 1 [30]. Rāzi’s arguments in TK 14:101–117 are translated in full in Appendix 1 at the end of the Thesis. They are identified by the present note numbers in square brackets.
31 Appendix 1 [31]
32 The expression used here is al-burḥān al-thāliḥ. It is the third rational proof. The first is called a wajh aqīl. Burḥān is used for this and subsequent proofs. This apparent inconsistency in the use of terms, which is not confined to the present text, may be attributed to the inadvertence either of Rāzi himself or of the Editor.
33 Appendix 1 [33]
34 Ibid. [34]
35 Ibid. [35]
like this can be either indivisible or divisible. If indivisible, God could be a minute particle; if divisible and composite, He would be contingent.36

vii) If an essence is perceptible to the senses, it is mumkin. But God is not mumkin. Therefore God is not accessible to the senses.37

viii) If God were in space, then He would be greater than, equal to or smaller than the Throne. In the first two consequences of this hypothesis, He would be divisible; in the third, the Throne would be greater than God.38

ix) If God were to be (hāsilān) in space, then He would either be finite from every aspect (min kulli 'l-jawānib), or not. But both these consequences are false.39

x) If God were to be in space and position, His presence there would either prevent another body being there or it would not. Both consequences of this hypothesis are false. So the view that He is in space is false.40

xi) If God were in space and position, it would be either possible for Him to move from that position or it would not. But both these consequences are false.41

xii) If God were to be specified by a particular space, man can either enter it or not. In either case, attributions would have to be made of God which no Muslim could accept.42

xiii) As the earth is a sphere, if God were to be in a particular space, He would be above some people and below others. This and other such conclusions are unacceptable to Muslims.43

36 Ibid. [36]
37 Ibid. [37]. To bring this proof into line with the preceding arguments, Rāzī would need to spell out the conclusion, drawn from the premise of no. vi above, viz. that since He is not accessible to the senses, He does not occur in space and position.

Street, Angels 54. n. 6, reminds us that the expression, qa'im bi-nafsihi, (which occurs in this pericope), is predicated only of the atom by the Mutakallimūn, but of God in the system of Avicenna.

38 Ibid. [38]
39 Ibid. [39]
40 Ibid. [40]
41 Ibid. [41]
42 Ibid. [42]. This proof, (which is now called hujja) seems to be based ultimately on the naqîl.
43 Ibid. [43]
xiv) If God were above the Throne, then He would be in contact with it (mumāssān īl), or separate from it by either a finite or an infinite distance. But all three consequences are false.⁴⁴

xv) If God were to be in a place (makān), understood as the inner surface of the containing body, He would be finite. If He were to be in a place, understood as distance or extended space, His presence would not be confined to one, since all spaces are alike in nature. He would thus be subject to motion and rest and, as a consequence, innovated. But this is logically absurd.⁴⁵

xvi) From a study of the four elements and the heavenly bodies, it is clear that active power is in inverse proportion to bodiliness. But God is perfect in power and capacity (al-quwwa wa l-qudra) to innovate and originate. Hence He is not corporeal, He has no situs (mawdū'), nor is He in space.⁴⁶

He concludes this section by saying that "This is the sum-total of the rational arguments (wujuh) to explain that God is not characterised by space and position.

2.4.1.2. Arguments from Authority

Rāzī then proceeds to his eight proofs from Authority:

i) God is one (Q 112:1), but anyone who occupies the Throne is made up of many parts.⁴⁷

ii) If God were on the Throne, then the words, "On that day eight will carry above them the Throne of your Lord" (Q 69:17), would mean they were carrying God. 'This would mean that God was both carrier and carried, guarding and guarded. But no reasonable person would say this.'⁴⁸

iii) "God is the Self-sufficient One" (ghanīy). (Q 47:38). By definition, this must include self-sufficiency in regard to space and position.⁴⁹

iv) Pharaoh looked for God in the skies, but we know that while the religion of Moses recognised God as Creator, it did not say that He was

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⁴⁴ Ibid. [44]
⁴⁵ Ibid. [45]
⁴⁶ Ibid. [46]. Rāzī stresses that this argument is by way of induction and analogy.
⁴⁷ Ibid. [47]
⁴⁸ TK 14:113
⁴⁹ Loc. cit.
"In what He created, i.e. in space and position (Q 26:24,28; 37:126).”

v) "God says in the present verse [7:54]: 'Your Lord is God Who created the heavens and the earth in six days. Then He sat on the Throne.' Now the word 'then' (thumma) indicates an interval, a time-lapse. So if by istiwa' we mean seated [in the sense of established, at repose: istiqrar], then we have to say that God was not on the Throne in repose, but rather askew (mu'wj) and in disarray (muqtarib), and then, after that, He mounted the throne.

"But this would mean that He was like other bodies, in disarray and movement at one time, and at another at rest. No intelligent person would say that." vi) This is based on the Qur'anic account of how Abraham established his faith. "God tells us how Abraham rejected the divinity of the star, sun and moon because they are transitory (diminishing: aceil) and they set (gharib). So if the god of the universe were a body [like the heavenly ones], then he would be continually (forever: abadan) setting and passing on. Thus, from being in disarray and askew, he would become properly-aligned and at rest, as he sat [on the Throne]. And everything that Abraham puts forward to refute the divinity of the sun, star and moon would be found in the god of the universe! So how could we acknowledge his divinity?"

vii) The words preceding and following "Then He sat on the Throne" (Q 7:54), are a tribute to the wisdom and power of God. So these words themselves must have the same thrust. Hence, they cannot mean that God is in space and position.

viii) From the Qur'an (8:11, for example), it is clear that whatever is lofty and elevated can be described as heaven. So if the divinity of the universe were to be existing above the throne, then the essence of the divinity would be a heaven in relation to anyone or anything dwelling on the Throne. But the Qur'an also says, here and elsewhere, that He created the heavens. So then He must have created Himself, which is logically

50 TK 14:113-4
51 ai-tarakhkha. There are three related expressions in Arabic: wa (absolute conjunction, without reference to priority or posteriority); fa (sequence, either logical or chronological) and thumma (sequence, with a time-lapse). However, in 2:155-156, Razi allows that the thumma of Q 2:29 may have no chronological implication, but simply introduces a list of blessings bestowed by God.
52 TK 14:114. This seems more like a rational argument, but it takes its rise in the Qur'an.
53 Ibid. Razi, untypically, does not quote verbatim from the Qur'an. He is presumably referring to 6:76, which he does quote in a parallel text in 22:6.
54 See Appendix 1 [54]. Razi does not spell out the conclusion here.
Having presented his twenty-four proofs in something of a *tour-de-force*, Rāzī outlines two schools of thought amongst the *Ulamā*.

There are those who simply state that the words of *Q* 7:54 ("Then He sat on the Throne") mean that God transcends place and position. They do not give a detailed interpretation of the verse, leaving to God the true understanding of its meaning. The second group, under al-Qaffāl in particular, believe in thorough-going metaphorical interpretation. Rāzī says of the first approach: "This is the school we belong to. We speak about it and base our thinking on it." And of al-Qaffāl's view, he says: "I believe it is absolutely correct".

We now proceed to the second of the seven texts commenting on the words, "Then He sat on the Throne".

2.4.2. *TK* 17:12–14 (on *Q* 10:3–6)

Rāzī again refers to the commentary on Sūra 20 ("Tāhā") (*TK* 22:5–6), which he describes as 'exhaustive'. In the present passage, he gives four proofs why this verse cannot be interpreted literally. *First*, a literal understanding of 'sitting on the throne' means that God is supported and preserved by the Throne, not, as Muslims say, that it is God Who holds and preserves the Throne. *Secondly*, the literal understanding of these words implies that God underwent a change of state when He sat on the Throne. But what changes is innovated. *Thirdly*, God's preceding state might have been unstable and mobile. But these are attributes of innovated things. *Fourthly*, the literal implication of *thumma* is that before the creation of the Throne God was self-sufficient in relation to it.

But He could hardly become dependent on it after actually creating it. Hence He is not fixed (*mustaqarran*) on it.

Having given these proofs, Rāzī outlines three views about the meaning of

55 *TK* 14:115

56 *Loc. cit.* Rāzī then gives a beautiful account of how the way of the metaphor must go hand-in-hand with the *via eminentiae*. When we say God knows, we mean that there is nothing concealed from him, and His knowledge is not the result of thought, deliberation or the use of the senses. When we say He is powerful, we mean that He can existentialise things (*kā'ināt*) and bring possible ones into being; and can do this without need of instrument, previous matter, time-frame or planning.

In this text there is explicit reference to the commentary on Sūra 20 ("Tāhā") (*TK* 22:5–6), numerically later than this one. See also 17:12.


57 *Cf.* *TK* 2:154; 14:114
the 'Throne'. The first is that of Abû Muslim who holds that in these Qur'anic phrases the Throne is not the great body that Muslims believe to be in the heavens, but rather a reference to God's post-creational act of spreading out and forming things in an appropriate manner. The second view is that the Throne of this verse is that large body in the sky; and the third is that it means the kingdom. 58

2.4.3. TK 18:233 (on Q 13:2)

In this passage, Râzî gives four proofs why 'sitting on the Throne' must be understood metaphorically, as meaning that God exercises dominion, power, direction and protection over creation "from above the Throne to what is beneath the soil".

These proofs have appeared elsewhere already, but, while he simply states that their pre-suppositions are impossible, he does not refer the reader to those places where he does elaborate.

In brief, the proofs offered are these:

1. The context of the verse is the proof of the Producer's existence. But the Throne [taken literally] cannot provide that proof because it is invisible and unknown.

2. If God could be seen sitting on the throne, it would show only that He was dependent on place and space.

3. It would also mean that He had undergone change.

4. And, likewise, that He was previously in a state of disarray (mu'wajj, muqtarab). 59

2.4.4. TK 22:5–6 (on Q 20:5)

In this passage, Râzî presents a sequence of ten proofs, some of which are based on reason, some on tradition and faith. 60

1. God is neither Throne nor place (li-annahu... kana wa la 'arsh wa la makân). And since He is the author of creation, He has no need of place

58 See Appendix 1 [58]
59 TK 18:233
60 See the 16 rational and 8 scriptural proofs given above in 2.4.1., some of which are repeated here.
within it; rather He is independent of it.

2. If someone sits (jālis) on the Throne, he must have a part on the right side of the Throne which will be different from one on the left. Hence he is a composite (mu'allafan murakkaban) and needs some agent to join the parts. But God could not be subject to this agency.

3. Whoever sits on the throne is either capable of transfer and motion, or he is not. If he is, motion and rest can be predicated of him, and thus he is innovated. If he is not, then he is like something under constraint (marbūṭ). But God cannot be in either category.

4. God would be found either in every place, or in one place and not another. If in every place, this would have to include places of squalor and filth. If in one place and not another, He would need a specifier. Neither hypothesis could be verified of God.

5. The Qurʾān (42:11) says: "There is nothing like Him", which must be taken as a universal statement. But if He were literally sitting, then anyone else who sits would be, in fact, like Him.

6. The Qurʾān says: "On that day eight will carry the Throne of their Lord above them" (69:17). Now if the Throne were literally the place of their God, then they would be carrying their Creator, whereas the opposite is, in fact, the case.

7. If we hold that something established in place (al-mustaqrū fi 'l-makan) can be divine, then we have no way of excluding the sun and moon from divinity.

8. As the world is a sphere, things above us are below in relation to beings on the other side of the earth. So if God were in position, He would be below certain of His creation. This is contrary to sound reason.

9. The Muslim community universally accepts the words of the Qurʾān, "Say: He is one God" (112:1), as amongst the certain truths of revelation (min al-muhkamāt lā min al-mutashābihāt). But to be distinguished by place (mukhtasān bi 'l-makān) would mean that [God's] right side would be distinct from His left, and so He would be composite and not one.

10. Abraham said: "I do not like things that set" (Q 6:76). But if God were a body [and hence in space and position], He would be such a

61 This is the second tradition-argument in TK 14:113.
Of these ten proofs, five (nos. 1, 5, 6, 9 and 10) are based directly on faith. The first is the only one that does not invoke an explicit statement from the Qur'ān, but its major premise is that God is the author of creation. The other five (nos. 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8) derive from the nature of bodies, which are composite and subject to motion, and the fact that the world is a sphere. The fourth and seventh arguments employ the reductio ad absurdum.

2.4.5. TK 24:104 (on Q 25:59)

Rāzī's comment here on the words, "Then He sat on the Throne", is brief. For reasons that he has already given more than once, these words, if taken literally, would involve change occurring in God and that He was composite. In addition, the words do not imply that the Throne was created after the heavens. Rāzī does not see the thumma referring to the creation of the throne, but rather to its being lifted up to its place in the heavens.

2.4.6. TK 25:169 (on Q 32:4-10)

This passage briefly refers to: 1) the significance of the Throne and 2) the questions a) whether it is in a place and b) whether God sits on it, as in a place. It adds little to the discussion.

2.4.7. TK 29:214-5 (on Q 57:4)

Rāzī here refers the reader back to his treatment of the corresponding passage in Sūra 7, translated extensively above. His only comment here is that the words, "Then He sat on the Throne", are a proof of God's power.

In TK 27:43 Rāzī refers in a general way to the clear and convincing rational proofs (dalā'il) that he has already given to establish that God could not be a body or in a position. The expression dhu 'l-'arsh simply states God's relationship with the Throne as its Owner (mālik), Director and Creator. It does not mean that He is limited to the Throne as to a place.

62 The 6th tradition-argument in 14:114
63 As has been noted in 2.4., Jomier seriously questions the authenticity of this part of the Tafsīr.
The Throne, then, for Rāzī is the greatest of the cosmic bodies and the first to be created. As a body, it is in space, place and position, but it is not attainable by the senses. It is carried by eight (angels) and is set on the waters, as a sign of God's power to sustain such a mighty body on such a foundation. Rāzī approves of both a literal and a metaphorical understanding of the term, "The Throne", but, in the case of those expressions which speak of God mounting or sitting on it, only the metaphorical interpretation can obtain.

2.5. The Heavens and the Earth

2.5.1. Created in Six Days, Not at One Stroke

Rāzī treats as a major issue the apparent discrepancies between the Qur'anic verses telling of God's creation of the heavens and earth and the number of days it took. The first reference is in the commentary on the words of Q 2:29: "He it is Who created for you everything that is on the earth. Then He turned (istawa) to the heaven and levelled them (sic: sawwāhunna) as seven heavens". No number of days is mentioned, but he reads this Quranic statement in the light of Q 7:54 and 41:9–12. "This means", says Rāzī, commenting on Q 2:29, "that He measured out (taqdlr. created) the earth in two days and its sustenance (aqwāt) in two further days; as when someone says: [The journey] from Kūfa to Medina [takes] twenty days, and to Mecca thirty days. He means that amount [thirty] to be the total. Then He turned to the heaven in two more days, so that there were six days in all, as the Qur'ān says: "He created the heavens and the earth in six days" [7:54].

In his commentary on Q 7:54, he takes issue with those who do not see the relevance of a creation protracted over several days in proving (dalīlān) the existence of a Producer. In the course of his replies to their sevenfold explanation (bayyānuhu min wujūh), he shows how it was appropriate that God should effect the creation in six days.

The first argument of these opponents is that actual innovation (ḥudūthuhā) or the contingent status (imkānūhā) of things innovated, or both, could lead to the necessity of a Producer, but the length of time taken to innovate is irrelevant. Rāzī does not address this reasoning, but simply invokes the Torah, with which the Arabs, he says, would have been familiar because of their association with the Jews. It recounts that the heavens and the earth were created in six days.

64 TK 2:155. An almost verbatim parallel passage is TK 27:103 (on Q 41:9-12).
65 TK 14:98-100
Rāzī's reply to the first argument has more point-of-contact with his opponents' second explanation. This is strengthened by the fact that no answer is given to the second one.

The reasoning of the second explanation, as Rāzī presents it, runs as follows: innovation can occur in all sorts of circumstances. Thus we can conclude that this innovation occurred in six days only if we are told so by a reliable source. This presupposes that we know of the existence of God, the Free Agent, but to make such knowledge a premise for proving that the Producer exists would be circular reasoning.

The third explanation is that innovation at one stroke (daf'atān ṭāḥidatān) is a more cogent proof (adallu) of God's power and knowledge than creation over six days. So what is the point in saying that God did, in fact, do it in six days? Rāzī answers this at length. God obviously could have created everything at one stroke, but it is no sign of negligence or weariness on His part, but rather of patience and compassion, that He should spread the action over a period of six days. Along with other commentators (mentioned here in general as mufassirūn), Rāzī sees this as a counterpoint to God's postponement of a day of Judgement to a time appointed by Him.66

The fourth explanation asks why God restricts Himself here (Q 7:54) to mentioning the heavens and earth, and does not refer to the creation of other things. Rāzī simply answers that the phrase, "and everything between them" (he quotes Q 25:58–9; 32:4 and 50:38), is understood here as elsewhere.68

66 TK 14:99. "In this context, some of the 'Ulamā' offer two reflections:

1. "If a thing is innovated at one stroke and then the act of innovation ceases, some people may perhaps think that it is only a coincidence (ittifāq). But if things are innovated successively ('alā 'aḏāqah) and in a continuous fashion (tawāṣul), with wisdom and in the best interests of all: then this is a stronger proof (dalāla) that they occur by the innovation of an Eternal, Wise Innovator, Who is [furthermore] Powerful, Knowing and Compassionate.

2. "[The appropriateness of the creation in six days] is established by the proof (dalā'ils) that God created first a being endowed with intelligence and, after that, the heavens and earth. Then, if that intelligent being contemplates (shāhāda) every hour and moment the innovation of other things [sg. in the Arabic] in succession and uninterruptedly, this has a greater effect on his knowledge and discernment (bastira) because the clarity (splendour) of this proof recurs (yatakarrara) to his mind at every successive moment, with the potential of bringing about (iṣfāda) greater certainty" (TK 14:99–100).

67 The following four points raised by the opposition are not as introduced, viz. arguments to show that creation in six days is no proof that a Producer exists. From the fifth on, in fact, the term wajh is not used, but rather su'al.

68 TK 14:98,100
The *fifth* point is that if day is distinguished (*yumtāz*) from night by the rising and setting of the sun, how can there be days, as we understand them, before the sun and moon are created? Rāzī does not answer the question explicitly here.\(^{69}\)

The objector, *sixthly*, quotes against a six-day creation the Qur'ānic verse, "Our command is but a single act, like the twinkle (*lamḥ*) of the eye" (*Q 54:50*). Rāzī replies that these words refer to the "existentialising and annihilation (*īdām*) of every single essence, because there is no separation (*rafa'wait*) between the existentialising of the single essence and the annihilation of the single existent. So this can only be done at one stroke, [whereas] delay (deferment: *imhāl*) and spacing-out (extension: *madda*) can occur only (*lā yahṣulu illa*) in a space of time (*mudda*).\(^{70}\)

The *final* question is: why limit creation to six days? Rāzī sees no point in discussing this, since God decides and does what He wills. He does mention one *argumentum convenientiae*, viz. that, as great nobility is attached to the number seven, then it was appropriate that God should be about the act of creation in six days, and on the seventh achieve the perfection of the kingdom and its possessions.\(^{71}\)

The next Qur'ānic reference to creation in six days is in Sūra 10:3: "Your Lord is God Who created the heavens and the earth in six days". The question is asked again: Why seek reasons for the number of days in which God created the heavens and earth? Rāzī concedes that God could create the whole universe (*ālam*) in the swiftest twinkle of the eye (*aqall min *lamḥ* al-ḥasār*). This is because the universe is composed of indivisible particles. "Now the existentialising of an indivisible particle can only be effected at one stroke, because if we were to postulate that it could only be done over a period of time (*zamān*), then that period of time would certainly be divisible into successive instants (*ānāt*)".\(^{72}\)

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69 "What is meant is that God created the heavens and earth in the space (measure) of six days. This is similar to what is said [in *Q 19:62*], 'In it [the Garden] is their nourishment morning and evening', i.e. the measure of morning and evening in this world, because if there is no day, there is no night" (*TK 14:98,100*). What he seems to mean is that the time-period in question is what a day *would have been* had the sun, moon and earth already existed.

70 *Loc. cit.*

71 *Loc. cit.*

72 He asks: "Does any part of the existentialising occur in the first instant? If not, the thing is outside the period (*mudda*) of the existentialising. If the existentialising of the thing does occur in that [first] instant, and the existentialising of another thing occurs in the second instant, then these two things are two particles of that indivisible particle. So then the indivisible particle is divided (*muraqīzutan*), which is impossible. But if it is another thing [and not a particle of an indivisible particle], then its existentialising can only be in one instant, at one stroke. The same is to be said about the existentialising of all particles. So it is established that God has the power to existentialise the whole universe at one stroke; but there is no doubt, either, that He can existentialise and bring things into being gradually (*āla 'l-tadrīj*)" (*TK 17:10-11*).
Rāzī then distinguishes between the Ash'arites who do not ask why God created this way or that, since no cause or motive is to be assigned to Him; and the Mu'tazilites who say He created in a gradual way, as a greater evidence of His wisdom and His concern for those legally responsible, and as giving them the time to reflect on the great act of creation.73

Rāzī understands why reason alone cannot prove (iṭḥbāt) the creation of the earth in two days. We are dependent on revelation (bi 'l-sam') and the inspiration of the Prophet, but as the Unbelievers do not accept either of these two sources, they cannot be used to establish our conclusion or to prove their doctrine false.74

In three places at least, Rāzī asks how the word day is to be understood in the Qur'anic texts on the creation of the heavens and earth.75 He seems to accept neither the literal interpretation of al-Qāḍī nor the 'improbable' view of Ibn 'Abbās that "the six days are days of the Hereafter, and each of them a thousand years, as you understand the term [lit.: as you reckon].76 To the question that has already arisen, about the possibility of days existing before the creation of the sun and moon, Rāzī replies that, if there were a period of time, during which the heavens and earth were innovated (and it is only an hypothesis: mafātih, mawhûma), then it would be equal to six days. He believes there is no force in the objection that a period of time would have to be innovated before the world was created, and then another and another to infinity. "Perhaps," he says, "God created the interval first, and then created the heavens and earth in it [the interval] over a period of six days".77 In other words, God had foreknowledge of what the length of days and nights would be, so it was within such a length of time that He created.

In commenting on Q 50:38 ("Then God says: 'And We created the heavens and earth and everything between them in six days, and no weariness touched Us"), he refers the reader to what he said on Sūra 32 ("al-Sajda")

73 ibid. p.11. In TK 17:187 (on 11:7) Rāzī refers the reader back to this commentary on "Yūnūs" (Sūra 10). See also his more extensive treatment in 14:98-100.
74 TK 27:101-102
75 TK 17:12 (on 10:3-6); 24:103 (25:59) and 28:183-4 (50:38)
76 TK 17:12; 24:104.
77 TK 24:104

'Abd Allāh Ibn al-'Abbās (d. ca. 688), paternal cousin of the Prophet. Considered father of Qur'anic exegesis and believed to have written his own commentary, he occupies a very important place in the transmission of ḥadîth. Frequently quoted by Rāzī. See Jomier, "Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī" 147-8.
and summarises what he says there. Day cannot be taken literally, as we have seen, because before the creation of the heavens, there was no sun and moon. Therefore, we should look on the six days as six stages or phases (atwâr).

In *TK* 25:168, he, or another author, says that the six days point to (ishâra ila) six states (ahwâl), in the opinion of those who speculate (sittati alhwâli fi nazari l-nâzirin). Perhaps this could be rendered as "six things that the observer can see". He analyses the three things created by God, viz. the heavens, the earth and everything between, as having, each one of them, a nature and qualities. This, then, makes for six objects in the view of those who reflect.

2.5.2. The Order of Their Creation

Râzî tells of certain unbelievers who try to discredit the Qur'an by pointing to inconsistencies, even contradictions, in it. In two places, the earth is said to have been created before the heavens. However, in another place, it says that the heavens were created first. According to Râzî, the 'Ulama' make several points in their reply to this dilemma. He gives, in fact, only one; and that is, that since spreading-out (tadhiya) and smoothing-out (basâ) are synonymous, we can say that the earth was created before the heavens, but it was not spread out until after the creations of the heavens.

80 In the more surely authentic text (28:183), we find Râzî saying: "We mentioned this in our commentary on "al-Sajda" [Sûra 32] and said [there] that there are three kinds of bodies: 1) the heavens, which He then set in motion, and to which He allotted specific characteristics (umûr) and places (mawâdi'); 2 (likewise) the earth, which He created and then spread out (da'hahâ); and 3) (likewise) everything between, whose essences (a'yânahâ) and types (asnâfahâ) He [also] created."

He puts it in another way in 27:105 (on 41:11): "Since the creation of the essence of the earth was effected (realised) in two days, and the other things on the earth in another two days, and the heavens in another two, the total is six days."

81 *Mulâhidâ* can mean heretics, but those who reject the Qur'an are more than heretics.

82 *TK* 2:155 (on 2:29)

83 a) Sûra 2:29: "He it is Who created for you everything on the earth. Then He turned to the heaven (sic) and levelled them (sawâhunna) as seven heavens."

b) Sûra 41:9-11: "Do you indeed disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two days.......? Then He turned to the heavens."

84 Sûra 79:30: "Which is harder to create: you or the heavens which He built? He raised its ceiling and levelled it (sawâhâ). He made its night dark and brought forth its forenoon light (duhan). And, after that, the earth which He spread out (da'hahâ)."

85 *TK* 2:155
Some object that the matter is still problematic (mushkil) for two reasons. The first is that, since the earth is an enormous body, its creation and spreading-out cannot be separated (infikák). So if the spreading-out of the earth takes place after the creation of the heavens, so does its creation. But Q 2:29 contradicts this by stating that the creation of the earth and everything on it precedes the creation of the heavens. Now God could not create things on earth unless it was already spread out. So the sense of this verse requires that the earth be spread out before the heavens are created.

Rāzī's comment on this first objection is to interpret the words, "And after that the earth which He spread out" (Q 79:30), as pointing to the following order: creation of the heavens, creation of the earth and then the levelling (taswiya) of the heavens. He believes this reading removes the contradiction.

The second reason for problems is the text of Q 79:30, which we have looked at above. Rāzī makes no comment here on the objector's view that this pericope must mean that the creation of the heavens comes first; then the levelling of the heavens and, finally, the spreading-out of the earth. But, the objector says, the problem remains because, if the spreading-out of the earth follows the creation and levelling of the heavens, so must the earth's creation, which necessarily precedes its spreading-out.

In a closely-related text, Rāzī juxtaposes Q 41:11 and 79:30, as appearing to contradict each other on the question as to which was created first, the earth or the heavens. He refers again to the diversity of views amongst the 'Ulamāʾ, but cites only what he calls the 'best-known reply' to the contradiction problem, which is, in fact, a statement without proof, viz. that God created the earth in two days; then the heavens; and finally He spread out the earth.

Rāzī finds their answer problematic for several reasons (five, in fact). In the first instance, Sūra 41:9-11 makes it clear that the earth must be spread out and levelled (madhūwa, munbasatā) before firm hills (rawāšīya), sustenance, trees, plants and other living things can be created. And it is only after this has been done that God turns to the heaven (v. 11). He points out that if the levelling were to occur after the creation of

86 Rāzī does not give their reason for asserting this.
87 See also 19:2-6 (on 13:3).
88 T.K 2:155. This is given as the second reason for the problematic nature of the matter. It seems better to read it as part of the first, providing the apparent Qur'anic contradiction.
89 T.K 27:104-105
the heavens, as the 'Ulamā' say, then the whole operation would take more than the Qur'anic six days. He understands the words, "Come willingly or unwillingly" (ib.), as a reference to (kināya) the existentialising of the heavens and earth. "So were the existentialising of the heavens to precede that of the earth, then His words, 'Come...,', would require the existentialising of what [already] exists. But this is false and logically impossible."90

Acknowledging that "the literal sense of revelation proves (yadullu) that the earth was created before the heavens", he approaches the question as to why the Qur'ān mentions the heavens first.91 "The heavens," he says, "are like a circle (or sphere: dā'ira), with the earth as centre. Now, for a circle to exist, we must specify (a'ayyun) a centre-point, not a circumference. So [the mere fact] that a centre exists does not mean that we have to designate a circle, because an infinite number of circles can surround one centre. For this reason, then, since the heavens precede the earth in this sense, so should they be mentioned first in the Qur'ān".92

As he emerges from the labyrinth of argument and counter-argument, Rāzī seems unshaken in his conviction that God devoted two days respectively to the creation of the earth; the spreading-out thereof with its mountains, sustenance and life; and, finally, the creation of the heavens. Their spreading-out and levelling must have been completed in the last two days.

2.5.3. The Interaction of Heavens and Earth

In a general way, Rāzī allows for an influence of the heavenly bodies on the earth. Commenting on Q 6:1, he writes: "The uses of the heavens are too numerous to be covered adequately in any one book because, as far as the various kinds of things in the world (mawālid) are concerned, the heavens are like a father and the earth a mother. So (fa) the active causes are heavenly, the passive earthly, and by means of them the three categories [animal, vegetable, mineral] are fully established. There is no way we can provide an exhaustive commentary on this topic."93

His view of creation, against that of the philosophers, is that "the events that occur in this world cannot be as a result of the conjunctions of the

90 TK 27:105. Given that the 'Ulamā' do not propose such an order, perhaps the text should be reversed: "So were ..., earth to precede that of the heavens." Two other problems for Rāzī in accepting the view attributed to some of the 'Ulamā' stem from the spherical nature of the earth and its massive size.
91 TK 12:148 (on 6:1-2)
92 Ibid.
93 TK 12:150 (on 6:1)
heavenly bodies". He sees this as a necessary conclusion of Q 13:4 where we read: "And on the earth there are tracts of land (qita') alongside each other, vineyards, cultivated fields (zaw'), date-palms in clusters or separate, [all] irrigated with the same water. [And yet] We have made some bear more fruit than others. Surely in this there are signs for those who understand." Only a Wise Director, an Eternal Measurer and a Free Agent can explain this.

With regard to the hypothesis that the heavenly bodies might have an effect on the earth, Rāzī says: "Even if that were so, we have already proved that [those very] heavenly bodies need a wise Producer. So this hypothesis (question) does not detract from our purpose (gharadnā).

What he does not accept is that the whole cosmos be reduced to a perfectly running machine. Irregularities prove that God both directs and intervenes in the operation of things, as He pleases.

He analyses this question at greater length in his commentary on Q 16:13: "And in the diverse colours He has disseminated (dhara'a) on the earth, there is indeed a sign for those who take note (ya'adhakkarūna).

94 TK 19:6 (13:4)
95 His sensitivity to the varied beauty of nature makes it worthwhile to have his own words on this:

"1. There occur on the earth tracts [of land] which differ in physical makeup and quiddity, and yet they are alongside each other. Some of them are salty, some thin-soiled (loose: rakhw); some solid (clay), some are a plantation (manbai); some stony or sandy (ramli) and some thick mud. But they are alongside one another and the influence of the sun and the stars on [all] these tracts of land is equal (alā 'f-sawiya). So this proves that the difference in their qualities is due to the measuring of One Who knows and measures.

"2. One [particular] tract of land is watered from the same source and the sun's influence on it is equal, [but, despite that] the fruits [of that one tract] turn out to be (lit: come) different in taste, colour, physical constitution and particular character. So you take [for example] a bunch of grapes. All its individual grapes (seeds: ḥabbā) are sweet and ripe (nafi'a) except one, which remains sour and dry......

"We say furthermore (bal) that what makes it [more] wonderful is that in some species of flower one surface is deep red and another just as black, despite the fact that the flower is extremely delicate (riqa) and fine (nu'uma). So it cannot be said that the sun influences one of its two outer surfaces (ṭarfayhi) and not the other.

"This is a conclusive proof (dalala qaṭiya) proof (dalala) that every thing is due to the direction of a Free Agent, not to the conjunction of the heavenly bodies" (19:6–7).

See also 20:2 (on 16:13) (where the flower is now yellow and red, and the skin, pips, flesh and juice of the grapes come under scrutiny) and 20:43 (on 16:48).

In 19:225 (on 16:4) he does not allow that the human sperm can be influenced by the heavenly bodies.

96 TK 19:6
It may help to schematise our translation of this text. The numeration is added:

"Even if we concede that events do occur [or ‘beings are innovated’: ħawādīth] in this lower world because they are linked to the conjunctions of the heavenly bodies and the star–forms (tashakkulāt), the movements and conjunctions of the stars must themselves have causes.

"Now the causes of these movements may be either:

1. in their essences; or:

2. in something other than their essences.

"No. 1 is false for two reasons:

a) Bodies are alike. So if a body were the cause of a particular characteristic, then every body would be endowed (ittiṣāf) with that characteristic, which is impossible.

b) If the essence of the body caused this portion of motion (ḥādhā 'l–juz' min al–haraka) to happen, then it would exist as long as did the essence. So the body would have to remain in one [same] state, without ever changing. Thus it would have to be at rest, and never able to be in motion. So if you say that a body is in motion by its essence, you must [also] say that it is at rest by its essence. This would be a contradiction of a self–evident truth. A thing cannot be itself and something different at the same time.

"It is clear then that a body cannot be in motion by its very nature.

"2. If it is in motion, then, it must be so because of something else. This other thing must be either:

a) actually (effective: sārin) in it; or:

b) distinct from it.

a) [This] is false, because what goes for one goes for all.

b) So it is clear that what moves (muharrīk) the heavenly bodies and the stars is distinct from them.

"Now, if that distinct thing is:

i) a body, or bodily thing, then we must refer back to the first part [of
the argument, viz. either 1, a,b; or 2a above;

ii) not a body or bodily thing, then it is either:

a) necessary by nature; or: b) a free agent.

"a) This is false, because the relationship of that thing, which is necessary by nature, to all bodies, is equal. So some bodies would not be more receptive of particular influences than others.

But since this is false:

b) it is clear that what moves the heavenly bodies and the stars is a Free, Almighty (Qādir) Agent, no body or bodily thing. And that is God the Most-High.

"So the upshot of this is that, were we to conclude (ḥakimnā) that the events of the sublunary world were linked to the movements of the heavenly bodies and stars, then these movements could not themselves be linked to other heavenly bodies. Otherwise, an infinite chain would result, which is logically impossible. So God must be the Creator and Director of these movements (ḥarakāt). And if the events in this sublunary world are linked to the movements of the heavenly bodies – and it has been established that these movements occur by the takhlīq, taqdīr and takwīn of God – then this is an admission (iʿtirāf) that everything is from God and results from His innovating and creating."

2.5.4. Created in Truth, by a Deliberate, Considered Act, not in Vain or Aimlessly

The root meaning of ḥaqq is something carved; an established fact, reality; permanently valid laws. A secondary meaning is what corresponds to reality, truth. Its opposite is bāṭil. It is not the same as ṣidq, whose opposite is kidhb, although in TK 13:32, Rāżī does run them together. It can also mean a claim or right to something. And, as we have noted, it is one of the Beautiful Names of God Himself.

In the Qurʾān, the expression, particularly in the phrase bi ʿl-ḥaqq, is used almost exclusively in the context of the creation of the heavens and earth. O'Shaughnessy analyses each one of these texts, and he finds in different brackets four meanings of al-ḥaqq: 1) with the truth (i.e. not bāṭil or

97 TK 20:2-3
98 See EI2, s.v. Ḥaqq, III, 82-3. Also, O'Shaughnessy, Creation 30-52; Wensinck, The Muslim Creed (passim) and Sweetman, Islam and Christian Theology (do)
aimless); 2) wisdom; 3) the divine creative power, or God's creative command, 'Be!'; and 4) God Himself.

He lists seventeen passages where al-ḥaqq is linked with creation and, to indicate the elusiveness of any English equivalent, he records the translations of bi 'l-ḥaqq offered by six scholars, viz. Sale, Rodwell, Bell, Pickthall, Dawood and Arberry. 'In truth' or 'with truth' feature most prominently. In its negative sense (as non-bāṭil), it can mean 'for a worthy or serious end', but O'Shaughnessy points to the definite article al- as indicating an abstract quality.59

As we shall now see, Rāżi's frequent juxtaposition of bi 'l-ḥaqq with bi 'l-bāṭil supports the understanding of the former in the sense of not being in vain, futile, aimless or as a flippant gesture or joke (lā'iban), but rather for a worthy and serious end.

In his first, and most extended, treatment of the question,100 Rāżi indicates what is understood by the word 'this', when God says: "You did not create this in vain". "It means," he says, "'You did not create this wonderful creation (makhlūq, referring to the heavens and earth) to no purpose (bāṭilan). In the word 'this', there is a kind (durūb) of extolling (ta'zīm), as in His words, 'Truly, this Qur'ān guides to the way which is most correct' [17:9]."

He lists three ways of looking at the accusative use of bāṭil. Some see it as a cognate accusative, i.e. khalqan bāṭilan. Others say that, with the elimination of a preposition, what is implied is bi 'l-bāṭili or li 'l-bāṭili. Zamakshāri101 thinks that bāṭilan is possibly a ḥāl of "this".102

Rāżi then summarises a controversy over the meaning of bāṭil in relation to the creation of the heavens and earth.103 The important thing is Rāżi's commitment to defend God's act of creation from those who would impugn it. His methodology of presenting conflicting views is subordinate to this.

99 This would, however, seem to argue against his own consistent translation of that same article into English, i.e. 'with the truth'.
100 TK 9:138-141 (on 3:191). 'First', that is, in the printing of the Tafsīr that we are using.
101 Abūl-Qaṣīm Maḥmūd ibn 'Umar al-Zamakshāri (1075-1144), a Persian scholar, died 5 years before Rāżi was born. One of the most famous of the Muṭazilite theologians. Referred to frequently by Rāżi as the 'author of the Kāshšāf', from the title of his Qur'ānic commentary. See Jomier, art. cit. 156-7.
102 TK 9:139: ḥālan min "ḥadhā".
103 I shall translate it under my own headings, as an example of his method of presenting conflicting views and, incidentally, of the difficulty he causes in the use of We and They.
The Mu'tazilite Position

"The Mu'tazilites say that whatever God does, He does only for the welfare of creatures and out of His wisdom; meaning by this wisdom His care for the well-being of His creatures. They use this verse as their proof-text, because, if God had not created the heavens and earth with [such] a purpose, then He would have created them to no purpose (in vain), which is the opposite of what this verse says. They contend that the Jabrites\textsuperscript{104} clearly contradict this verse by saying that, in creating the heavens and earth, God wanted injustice, futility (\textit{al-bāṭil}) and even disbelief in their Creator to proceed (\textit{sudūr}) from most of His creatures. They [the Mu'tazilites] invoke the words, 'Glory be to You' [in this verse], to show that He is far removed (\textit{tanzih}) from creating the heavens and earth in vain and from creating any kind (\textit{kull}) of evil."

\textit{Al-Wāḥidī's Reply}\textsuperscript{105}

"Al-Wāḥidī gives an appropriate answer to this difficulty when he says that \textit{al-bāṭil} refers to what is ephemeral and perishable (\textit{sā'īl}, \textit{dhāhib}), having neither power, solidity (\textit{salāba}) nor permanence. But the creation of the heavens and earth is perfect and well-established (\textit{mutqan}, \textit{muḥkam}). Are you not aware (\textit{a lā tarā}) of His words, 'You do not see, in the creation of the Merciful One, any flaw (\textit{tafāwut}). So look again. Do you see any rift (\textit{tuṭūr}) [67:3; cf TK 30:52–8]?' And He says: 'We have built above you seven firm ones (\textit{shadādan}) [78:12; cf TK 31:6ffl']

"This then, and not what the Mu'tazilites say [\textit{i.e.} that God created with a purpose] is what is meant by His words, 'Oh Lord of ours, You have not created this to no purpose'.\textsuperscript{106}

The Mu'tazilites' Rebuttal of al-Wāḥidī

"This opinion is refuted in several ways:

1. \textit{From the imperfection of our world:

"If \textit{bāṭil} were to mean what is weak and comes to nothing (\textit{rūkhw}, \textit{mutalāšī}), then His words, 'Glory be to Him', indicate that He is far

\textsuperscript{104} al-Mujbira are the Determinists, or Predestinationists, who deny free will. Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d.745) was one of their number, as was Rāzī, according to the Mu'tazilites.

\textsuperscript{105} Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Ahmad al-Wāḥidī (d. 1075/6). Son of a trader of Sawa in Iran, he studied under the commentator and traditionist, Abū Isḥaq Ahmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrahīm al-Thalabī. He wrote three commentaries on the Qur'ān, as well as the \textit{Asbāb Nuzūl al-Qur'ān}, one of the earliest works in this genre. Held in high regard by Niẓām al-Mulk. See M Ayoub, \textit{The Qur'ān and Its Interpreters} vol. I 4.

\textsuperscript{106} For al-Wāḥidī, then, ethical \textit{purpose} does not come into the question of creation.
removed from creating anything like this creation \(\text{i.e. one which has so many imperfections}\). But He can, evidently."

2. From the word order of the verse:

"To link the words, 'So keep us from the torment of the Fire' to the words 'Glory......' is appropriate only if we interpret them as we have done, because the implication is: 'You did not create this (\(\text{hu}\)) in vain, without wisdom. Rather, You created this with great wisdom. And You made it [the earth] as dwellings for the those legally responsible, who are devoted to obeying you and taking all precautions (\(\text{ta\'ahraz\u0101}\)) not to disobey you. So save us from the torment of the Fire, because it is the retribution (\(\text{jaz\u0101}\)) of those who disobey.'

"So it is established that, if we interpret His words, 'You did not create this in vain', in the way we have indicated, this word order [within v.191] is appropriate. But if we say [as al-\(\text{W\u0101h\u00f6d}\)] does] that it means, 'You created this firmly-established and stoutly-constructed (\(\text{mu\'hk\u0101m\u0101n, shad\u0101d al-tartib}\)), such a word-order is not appropriate."

3. From the Qur\'\u00e6n:

"God mentions this in another verse: "We did not create the heavens and earth and all between in vain, as those who do not believe think' [38:27; \(\text{cf. TK 26:200–201}\). Again, 'We did not create the heavens and earth and all between in play (\(\text{l\u0101\u011f\u0101b\u00f6n}\)). We created them only in truth' [14:38–9; \(\text{cf. TK 27:249–50}\)]. And again, 'Did you reckon, then, that We only created you aimlessly (in jest: '\(\text{abathan}\'))', down to 'And God is exalted; He is King and the Truth' [23:115,116; \(\text{cf TK 23:127–8}\)], i.e. the Sovereign and the Truth is above acting aimlessly. Now if He cannot act aimlessly, less still can He act in vain."

Reply to the Mu\'tazilites on Behalf of al-\(\text{W\u0101h\u00f6d}\)

"It is self-evident (\(\text{bad\u0101h\u0101t\u0101 l-\text{\u0101q\u0101l}}\)) that the existent is either necessary by essence or possible (\(\text{mumk\u0101n}\)) by essence, and [furthermore] that whatever is possible by essence derives its actualisation from (lit.: its preponderance ends at) what is necessary by essence. Such a proposition (\(\text{q\u0101\text{\u0111y\u0101}}\)) does not specify that this possible thing does not include (lit.: is different from) the actions of creatures. Nay, in general, it is a proposition whose [universal] validity is attested to by the intellect. If that is so, then good and evil must be by God's decree, and if that in turn is true, the cause (\(\text{\u0140l\u0131l}\)) of God's acts cannot be the welfare [of His creatures]."

"If you accept this, then we ask: why can we not accept al-\(\text{W\u0101h\u00f6d}\)'s allegorical explanation (\(\text{\u0175w\u0101l}\)) as outlined above?"
1. With regard to the imperfection of the world:

"They say that, were it not thus [as understood by them], then God's words, 'Glory be to You', would indicate that He was unable to perform (lit.: transcended) an action which involved lack of strength or solidity. But that is false [i.e. God has created things of this kind]. We [Rāzī and al-Wāḥidī] say: why could it not mean, 'Oh Lord of ours, You have not created this [world] unstable or badly arranged (rukhw, tartīb), but rather firm and well-established (muḥkam)? And His words, 'Glory be to You', mean: 'Although You created the heavens and earth solid, strong and lasting, there is no way that You needed them or sought advantage therefrom'. That is what these words mean."

2. With regard to the order within the verse:

"They say, secondly, that it is appropriate to link His words, 'So preserve.....' with 'Glory.....' only if we interpret them (fassarnāhu) as we have indicated. This we [Rāzī and al-Wāḥidī] do not concede. Rather, the kind (wajh) of order that we find [within the verse] is that, when He says, 'Glory.....', He acknowledges that He is independent of everything apart from Himself. And in the context of independence, [the creature] confesses (aqarra) to himself that he is impotent (ajz) and in need of God in this world and the next. For this reason, He says, 'So preserve.....'. On this matter of order [within the verse], if what we propose is not more fitting than your view, it is not less so."

3. With regard to the Qur'ān:

"The other verses you mention show that God's acts transcend vanity, jest and futility. On the basis of this (bi-mujibihi), we say that all God's acts bespeak wisdom and rectitude (correctness), because God does not dispose of things arbitrarily, except in His own domain. So His wisdom is absolutely correct.

'This is the gist of the controversy. But God knows best.'

A second controversy, much more briefly treated, is that between the Wise Men of Islam and the Theologians.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{107} TK 9:140: qawluhu. The referent should be al-Wāḥidī, but the context would seem to refer to the Muʿtazilites, both here and a few lines on where qawluhu thānīyan occurs.

\textsuperscript{108} The Ḥukamāʾ and the Mutakallimūn. Ibid.
The Ḥukamā’ of Islam

"They use this verse to prove that God created these heavenly bodies and the stars and placed in each special powers, in such a way that the welfare of this world, and benefits to the inhabitants of this earthly spot (buq’a), resulted from their movements and mutual relationships (ittiṣāl). If this is not the case, they say, then [the heavens and earth] would indeed be in vain: which contradicts this verse.

"According to them, one cannot say that the point [of the verse: fiḥā] is to prove (istidlāl) the existence of a Free Producer, because every single sphere has air and water; and the heavenly bodies and the stars have this in common with them. So there is no point in specifying (khusūs) [a particular one] as a sphere or sun or moon. This would be vain and at odds with this text."

The Theologians’ Reply

"They say: Why is it not sufficient [to say] that they cause in the ordinary course of nature (‘ada), but that they are not causes in any real sense?"

Rāzī finally sums up: "So, if the Mu‘tazilites think that the beginning of the verse vindicates their position, let them know that the end of the verse proves ours, viz. that God cannot be criticised for anything."

In a parallel commentary, he sees the Qur’anic words, ‘He it is Who created the heavens and earth in truth’ (6:73), as the positive expression of the pericope we have just been studying from "Āl ‘Imrān", ‘Oh Lord, You did not create this in vain’ (3:191). And he cites another text which combines both the positive and the negative: ‘We did not create the heavens and earth and all between in jest (la‘ibin). We created them only in truth’ (44:38–9).

The three opinions (although he announces only two) line up somewhat differently:

1. "The Traditionalists (ahl al-sunna) say that all innovated things belong to God, as do all existents (kā‘īnāt). And it is absolutely fitting and correct that the Owner (mālik) have free disposal (taṣarruf) of what he possesses. So that free disposal is utterly fitting and true (ḥaqqaqan)."

109 The text seems deficient here. I suggest reading it:  ill-kulli wāhīdin...wa yushāriku...
110 TK 9:141
111 TK 13:31–3 (on 6:73)
2. "The Mu'tazilites say that 'being true' (kawnihi ḥaqqan) means that it [creation] is in the best interests of those who are legally responsible (al-Mukallaḥīn). Al-Qāḍī ['Abd al-Jabbar] says that [God] implies (yadkhulu) in this verse that His primary reason for creating those who are legally responsible (khalaqa 'l-mukallaṭa awwalan) was so that they could have the benefits of the creation of the heavens and earth.

3. 'The Ḥukamā' of Islam see another way of approaching this matter. They say that He put in these great bodies a power and exclusive properties (khawass), with the result that effects and motions proceed from them that are in the best interests of this universe (ʿālam)."

In another comment, Rāzī repeats that to create bi 'l-ḥaqq is to create in wisdom and for the general good (maṣlaha). Al-Qāḍī is here referred to as holding that this verse proves (tadullu) the falsity of Determinism. "For if God were to will all injustice and create all evil, and if He were to will to mislead (iḍīlā) those who err, then it would be incorrect for Him to say that He created only bi 'l-ḥaqq."

The Ḥukamā' of Islam appear for the third time saying that the verse means that "God put in the bodies of the heavenly spheres and the stars particular, exclusive properties (khawass) and specific powers and, as a result (bi-ʻitibārihā), the well-being of this lower world is ordered. If they had no effects in this world and provided it with no advantage, then this creation would be aimless (ʻabathan), in vain and useless. But the present texts deny this. God knows best."

Commenting on the Qur'anic words, 'Do you not see that God created the heavens and earth in truth?' (14:19), Rāzī takes his cue from the preceding and subsequent verses and the order he sees therein to trace evil, not to God, but to His creatures: "When God explained that their works would become futile and wretched (bāṭila, dā'ī‘a), He [also] explained that the cause (sabab) of that futility and uselessness (iḥbāq) was in (emanated from) themselves, viz. their disbelief in God and their refusal to serve Him. God does not, from the outset, render the works of sincere people futile. How could that be compatible with His wisdom? He created the world (universe) only from the motive of wisdom and correctness.

112 Loc. cit. 32
113 TK 17:36 (on 10:5). Rāzī later on refers to this locus at least three times, viz. 19:106 (14:19), 27:249 (44:38–9) and 27:268 (45:22). And here he refers back to the "Al 'Imrān" (3:191).
The Traditionalists, Rāzi says, interpret *illā bi 'l-haqq* to prove (*dalāla*) the existence, knowledge and power of the Producer. The Mu'tazilites are briefly mentioned as saying that the expression means: 'He did not create [all] that in jest (*abathan*), but rather for a genuine (*saḥīḥ*) purpose.'

Another pericope in the Qur'ān describes as infidelity the view that God created the heavens and earth and all between in vain. Rāzi uses the occasion to list some opinions about the creation of human acts.

1. "Al-Jubbā'ī argues from this verse that God could not be Creator of the creature's actions, because they include unbelief, sin (*fisq*) and vanities (*abāqīl*).

2. "The Predestinationists (Al-Mujbira) say that He created the unbeliever so that he would disbelieve. But [replies Rāzi] disbelief is vain; so He would have created what is vain...Hence this [verse] is a declaration (explanation: *taṣrīḥ*) that the doctrine of the Predestinationists is the same as (*'ayn*) infidelity.

3. "The Ash'arites argue that this verse proves that God is the creator of the creature's acts because it proves that God is Creator of everything between the heavens and earth, and this is where the actions of creatures are located. So God must be their Creator."

In his commentary on *Q* 44:38–9, Rāzi refers first to his treatment in "Jūnūs" (10:5; *TK* 17:36), and to two other Qur'ānic sources, viz. "al-Mu'minūn" (23) and "Ṣād" (38:27). He says that from beginning to end (in particular, vv. 1–115), Sūra 23 builds up to God asking: 'Did you think, then [after all My account of creation], that I created you *abathari*?'

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114 *TK* 19:106 (14:19). After the omission, at least in this edition, of a second point, Rāzi goes on, thirdly, to point to the similarity between this verse and "Jūnūs" [10:5], "Āl 'Imrān" [3:191] and "Ṣād" [38:27].

115 Ibid.

116 *Q* 38:27

117 *TK* 26:201–202. He first quotes parallel Qur'ānic texts: 3:191 and 15:85–6. This question of human acts will be considered below in 2.6.2.3.


119 *TK* 27:249
He makes no further comment in this place, except to imply that *lā`ibin* and *abathan* are synonymous.

In another place, Rāzī sees *illa bi 'l-ḥaqq* as meaning 'with graciousness and compassion'. He refers again to al-Jubbā'ī and the Ash'arites.

1. **Rāzī**: "The words, *illa bi 'l-ḥaqq*, prove (yadullu) that the God of the world is just (čādīl) and merciful, because they [the Qur'ānic words] mean 'for no other reason than graciousness (*faḍl*), mercy and beneficence (*iḥsān*). And the graciousness of God has to be superabundant (*zā'id*), His beneficence superior (preponderant: *rājih*) and the benefits the needy receive from Him greater than the harm."

2. **"Al-Jubbā'ī**: This [verse] proves that none of the evils existing between the heavens and earth are of God's creating, but come rather from the actions of His creatures (*'ibādīhi*). Otherwise, He is Creator of everything futile, and that runs counter to His words, 'He only created them [dual, i.e. the heavens and earth] in truth'."

3. **The Ash'arites' Reply**: "The creation of a futile object (*khalq al-bāṭil*) is one thing; creation in futility (*khalq bi 'l-bāṭil*) is another. So we say: God is such a one Who creates a futile object, but creates it, nevertheless, *in truth*, because that is free disposal (*tasarruf*) [of things] by God in His own domain, and such disposal by the ruler is *in truth*, not *in futility*

   What confirms this is what we have mentioned, [viz.] that God's words, 'We did not create......truth', prove that He is Creator of all the acts of creatures, because these acts are part of the totality that is the heavens and earth. So they must be created by God, and no verse [of the Qur'ān] could clash (*ta'aruḍ*) with this. So there is no option other than what we have said."

Rāzī rounds off his commentary with what can only be described as a pronominal jungle: "If they say, therefore, that the creature's actions are accidents, and accidents cannot be characterised as occurring between the heavens and earth, *we* say that what you have proposed as argumentation (*istidlāl*) collapses. God knows best." A consoling thought! I take it that the gist of what Rāzī is saying is: If an opponent (*they*) were to raise an objection to the Ash'arite position on the score that actions of creatures are accidents, then Rāzī (*we*) would see the bottom falling out of the Ash'arites' (*you*) argument.

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120 *TK* 28:3 (46:3)

121 This view has been seen already (above, in this section) as that of the *Ahl al-Sunna* in *TK* 13:31.
For Rāzī, then, there is a rich content to the phrase, ‘bi 'l-ḥaqq’.

God creates with wisdom and rectitude; with graciousness, mercy and beneficence; with freedom to dispose arbitrarily of all His creatures, since He is independent of them. His creation is perfect and well-established, not impermanent and flimsy. He does not create with the intention of being beneficial to those who are legally responsible. Nor is He the source of evil in His creatures. He does not create in vain, flippantly, in jest or aimlessly. Rather, He creates for the general good.

2.5.5. Created as Signs

It is surprising to see a radical occasionalist using arguments from design. Given that he does, one might have expected him to take his cue from the refrain that recurs in the Qur’ān, "In these there are signs", to dwell at some length on the nature of sign and its role in God’s plan for His creatures. We shall look at three passages where he does devote at least some attention to the question.

2.5.5.1. TK 4:202–203 (on Q 2:164)

He has just dealt exhaustively with the eight proofs for the existence of God that he sees contained in this verse. These acts of divine beneficence are, as the verse concludes, "signs for those who understand". He explains it in this way: "There are two kinds of blessings: those pertaining to this material world and those of a religious nature. The eight things enumerated by God are, on the face of it (fi 'l-zahir), worldly blessings. Now, if the intelligent man reflects (tafakkara) on them and proves (istadalla) from them that the Producer can be known, they become religious blessings. But insofar as they are worldly blessings, their benefit (intifa) is fully realised (yakmulu) only at the level of the good they provide for the senses and a healthy physical disposition (siḥhatu 'l-mizāj). Likewise, insofar as they are religious blessings, their advantage

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122 There are a few other places in the Commentary where Rāzī makes at least brief reference to the expression, bi 'l-ḥaqq. We have analysed part of what he has to say in 13:31–3. Towards the end of the pericope, in the context of the final Resurrection, he says that the fact that God must have power over all possibles and knowledge of all knowables means that He acts in truth and sincerely, not in jest. Other references are: 19:222 (on 16:3–5); 22:147–8 (21:16); 23:127–8 (23:115); 26:243 (39:5); 27:268 (45:22) and 30:57 (67:3). In 30:22 (64:3), he says in truth can mean by God’s eternal will and wisely. And he refers to some who read bi 'l-ḥaqq as meaning li 'l-ḥaqq, i.e. for the [day of] truth, i.e. the day of Resurrection.

123 These ideas will be expanded in Chapter 6, on The Purpose of Creation.

124 See Abrahamov, Al-Ḳāsim 5 and Street’s review of Abrahamov, forthcoming in MIDEO.

125 This text is examined in 5.3.3.1.

126 The poetic ring to the distinction would not be lost on the Arabs: dunyuwila, dīniya (p. 203).
is fully realised only in the good they provide (salāma) for the mind and in the opening-up of one's vision (baṣar) to hidden (inner) [meanings]." 

He quotes al-Qāḍī 'Abbād al-Jabbār, seemingly with approval, when he points to three conclusions resulting from God's description of these eight things as signs. The first is that truth cannot be attained simply by taqlīd or by following our ancestors, associates (al-alīf) or custom (ādā). Secondly, knowledge [of God's existence] cannot be necessary and intuitive (ilhām), "because signs are not needed to know what is self-evident". And, thirdly, these eight examples of divine blessings stand out from others ("bodies and accidents") as signs and proofs, in the main for those legally responsible, and as such make a more efficacious appeal to heart and mind (p.203).

2.5.5.2. *TK* 9:133 (on *Q* 3:190)

The substance of this passage is examined in Chapter 5. Rāzī gives a reference back to the commentary we have just looked at on "al-Baqara" (*Q* 2:164), and asks why there the text reads, "There are signs for a people who think (li-qawmin ya'qilūn)"; whereas here: "There are signs for those possessed of intelligence (li-ūlī 'l-albāb)".

And the further question: Why eight proofs in al-Baqara and only three here? As we shall see in Chapter 5, he shows that the closer we come to the object of our knowledge the fewer proofs [and signs] we need to lead us to it. And, as for the terminology, he distinguishes an outer, superficial (qāhir) aspect of 'aql and a more interiorised one (lubb). "In the preliminary stages, then," he says, "it is 'aql [hence li-qawmin ya'qilūn], whereas in the perfect state, it is lubb [hence li-ūlī 'l-albāb]' (p.135).

2.5.5.3. *TK* 27:258 (on *Q* 45:3)

There are three parallel groups, for whom God's actions are signs: those who believe (li 'l-mu'mīnīn), those who are sure (li-qawmin yuẓqīnūn) and those who think (li-qawmin ya'qīlūn).

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127 Below 5.3.1.6.

128 For the first text, Pickthall has 'who have sense'; Blachère: 'qui raisonne'; Arberry: 'having understanding'. For the second, Pickthall has 'men of understanding'; Blachère: 'doux d'esprit', and Arberry: 'possessed of minds'.

129 A similar threesome is found in *Q* 16:11,12,13 (*TK* 20:2-5); those who reflect (yatafakkarūn), those who think (ya'qīlūn) and those who recall (yaḍḍaḍhūk rūm). There is practically no commentary on the nature of sign either here or in *TK* 17:37 (on 10:6); 19:6-8 (13:3-4) or 27:171 (42:29).
There are three interpretations of the first phrase:

1. **Rāżī**: they are signs, especially for the believers.

2. The **Mutazilites**: they are signs for both unbelievers and believers. "However, since the believer profits from them and the unbeliever does not, it is added (uṣūfa) that they are signs for the believers."

3. The **Ash'arites**: they are signs only for the believers. "Proof (dalīl) and sign are that which, being known, lead to [further] knowledge (ʿilm). Now that knowledge occurs only by God’s creation...... [which was] only for the believer, not the unbeliever. So that sign is a proof (dallān) only in relation to the believer, not the unbeliever."

Rāżī offers a possible (ażunnu) reason for the three categories of people referred to in the verse. "If you are a believer, then understand (iṣhamū) these proofs. If you are not a believer, but you are searching for truth and certainty, then understand these proofs. And if you are not a believer, nor of those who are sure, at least (lā aqalla min ‘an) you are an intelligent person (min zumrati l-‘āqilin). So strive to understand these proofs."

2.5.6. The Possibility of an Eternal World

Rāżī gives little attention to this subject in the creation context. He describes eternity as "the denial of a beginning, without implying any particular time". "The eternal," he says, "never ever ceases." In discussing the matter of God having a son, he equates eternal and necessary-by-nature: "This child cannot be eternal, because it would require that he be necessarily existent by nature. And what is necessarily existent by nature is independent of all other things."

In *TK* 27:86 (on 40:68), he holds that being innovated and being eternal are mutually exclusive: "It is logically absurd that an innovated thing (ḥādīth) should occur in eternity." Likewise in 19:179 (on 15:26-33), he writes: "It is logically absurd to hold that there are innovated things which had no beginning."

He refers to the eternity of the universe as "the doctrine of the

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130 *TK* 14:111 (on 7:54); al-Azal ‘ibāra ‘an nafy l-awwaliya min ghayri an yushāra bihi lā waqtin mu‘ayyan l-batta.

131 *TK* 30:54 (67:11); al-Azali lā ya‘zulu al-batta.

Philosophers", and considers it logically absurd: "[The Innovator] must have knowledge. But it is only from a being that has knowledge that the well-devised (well-established: muhkam) act proceeds (sadara). He must also be independent of creation; otherwise, He would have created it from eternity (ji 'l-azal), and that is logically impossible." He is naturally constrained by revelation, as Christians and Jews are, to believe that creation occurred in (or more precisely, with) time, but he does not offer here any rational argument for the logical impossibility of an eternal creation. As a final note, he refers in TK 21:218 (on 19:35) to a view that God has power from eternity, but He is not a Mukawwin from eternity. He approves this distinction, as we shall see in the next section.

2.5.7. The Possibility of Other Worlds

It is worth noting that this discussion should be understood in the context of Rāzi's opposition to Mu'tazilite optimism. He is unambiguous about the possibility of worlds other than this. It is worth quoting two fine passages to illustrate this:

2.5.7.1. TK 14:124 (on Q 7:54)

"This verse shows that God has power over worlds ('awālim) other than this one, according to His will and desire. This is proved by the fact that He says: 'Indeed, your Lord is God Who created the heavens and earth (in six days, and then sat upon the Throne. He covers the night with day, which follows it in haste, and has made the sun and the moon and stars [subservient to His command. His indeed is all creation and command. Blessed be God, Lord of the worlds ('ālamīn).' If He were to desire to create a thousand worlds, including the Throne, the Chair, the sun, moon and stars, in the merest twinkling of an eye, He could do so, because these quiddities are possible and the Truth has power over all possibles."

133 TK 28:184 (on 15:38)
134 TK 17:26 (on 10:4): 'anhā. And further down, khalaqahā. The referent is 'creation', but the feminine may be hearking back to 'the heavens and earth', although it should then be -humā.
135 Ibid.
136 He treats this at length in Ma'alim 35-8.
137 This is a facet of the discussion about the relation between the attributes of takwin and qudra.
138 Rāzi gives a telescoped reference to Q 7:54. The sections in square brackets are not in the Tafsir.
"Note that what we have said, and the analysis we have given (faṣṣalnāhu) of God’s sovereignty and possessions is a mere drop in the ocean. So perhaps God has a thousand worlds beyond (warā’ā) this one, and in each of them a Throne greater than this Throne, a Chair loftier than this Chair, and heavens more spacious than these. How can the mind of man grasp the perfection of God’s sovereignty and possessions, after he hears God’s words: ‘And none can know the Lord’s armies, except He’ (Q 74:31).”

2.6. Man

2.6.1. The First Man: Adam

2.6.1.1. First Man and Father

Rāzī acknowledges the power of reason to conclude to the existence of a first father, but relies on revelation and tradition to identify him as Adam: "Note that reason proves that mankind (al-nās) must have a first begetter (wālid). If not, every son would have to be preceded by a father ad infinitum. This is logically absurd. Now the Qurʾān shows in this verse [3:59] that that first begetter is Adam. And [elsewhere] He says: ‘Oh people, fear your Lord Who created you from one individual (min nafsīn wāhidatin), and from it created his mate (ja’ala) his mate [7:189].”

Al-Aṣāmī does not agree with Rāzī about the power of reason to establish this: "The point here is," he says, "that we cannot prove (dalīl) rationally that creatures must be created from one individual. This is only known from revealed arguments (bi ’l-dalīl ‘l-san‘īya)." He attempts to prove this on the grounds that, since Muḥammad was illiterate (ummiyān) and had not studied under a teacher (ustadh), when he was informed about the matter [in this verse], he considered it to be something mysterious (ghayb) and hence miraculous (muljīz).

Rāzī sees the derivation of all men from one first man as pointing to the perfection of God’s power: "The creation of all members of the human

139 Arnaldez, "L’oeuvre" 322, notes that Rāzī does not allow the possibility of other worlds in the Mabāḥith.

140 Other renderings of this phrase are, for example: ‘one man’ (Arberry, Sale), ‘one living entity’ (M. Asad), ‘une personne unique’ (Blachère) and ‘a single soul’ (Pickthall).

141 TK 8:75 (on 3:59). See also 19:179 (15:26–33), quoted below; 26:245 (39:4–6) and 27:86 (40:68).

142 See above 2.4.

143 TK 9:160 (on 4:1)
race from one man (min al-insān al-wāhid) proves that God's power is perfect in view of the fact that, if things occurred according to their nature (tabi‘a) and specific characteristic (khāṣṣī‘a), what is generated from one man [viz. Adam] would only be things similar to it (mutashākil) in attribute and alike (mutashābih) in creation (design: khalqa) and physical disposition. So since [in fact] we see in particular persons white and black, red and brown, handsome and ugly, tall and short: this proves that their Creator (mudabbiraha wa khāliqaha) is a Free Agent, and the forms they have are not due to the influence of a physical disposition (lā ṭabi‘a mu‘aththira) or a necessitating cause.144

It is a datum of revelation in this verse [4:1] that God created Eve (khalaqa minhā [agreeing with nafs] zawjahā). To the question how it can be that the entire creation is from a single individual, given their [enormous] number and its smallness [in comparison]: he replies that "God has explained what is meant in this way: Since Adam's wife was created from part of him, then their children were created from their (sic) sperm and so on forever (kadhalika abadan). So the whole of creation can be traced to Adam."145

The majority view, according to Rāzī, is "that when God created Adam, He cast him into a sleep and created Eve from one of his ribs. When he woke up and saw her, he lent over and became intimate with her, because she was created from part of him".146

For Abū Muslim al-İṣfahānī, zawja refers to the human species (jins), but al-Qādī opts for the majority view, because "if Eve had been created at the beginning, then mankind would have been created from two individuals, not one".147

Rāzī cites Ibn ‘Abbās for the origin of the personal names, Adam and Eve: "Adam is called by this name only because God created him from the surface (adim) of the earth, with all its red and black, [its] good and evil. The woman is called Eve (ḥawwā) because she was created from one of Adam's ribs, i.e. from something living (ḥayy)".148

Rāzī believes there are conclusive proofs (al-dala‘il al-qā‘i‘a) that to hold that there are innovated things which had no beginning is logically absurd. The conclusion is that God must have created Adam: "It is clearly

144 TK 9:159 (on 4:1)
145 TK 9:160
146 TK 9:161. It is to be noted that Rāzī uses khalaqa to mean creation from pre-existent matter, e.g. Adam, clay, mud, sperm and so on.
147 Ibid.
148 Ibid.
necessary that innovated things end in a first which is the beginning of [all] such things. Thus, human beings must stop at a man who is the first human being. So that first one was not created from parents. It follows, then, that he was created by God.\textsuperscript{149}

2.6.1.2. Adam’s Origin

He goes on to say a little further down that we have to conclude positively (\textit{al-qaf}) that, being a body and hence innovated, Adam was created from pure nothingness (\textit{an ‘adam mahd}). In almost the same breath, however, he quotes \textit{Q} 3:59 as his authority for saying that Adam was created from dust, and 38:71 for his creation from clay. In the verse under study here (15:26), we are told that Adam was created from dried clay, from black mud moulded. "What is most likely," says Rāzī, "is that He created him first from dust, then from clay, then from black mud moulded, then from dry clay like pottery."\textsuperscript{150}

Rāzī quotes commentators as saying that "God created Adam from clay, then formed him (\textit{sawwarahu}) and left him in the sun for forty years and he became dry clay (\textit{salšāl}) like pottery. And no one knew what he was meant to be, nor saw anything resembling his form until [God] breathed the spirit into him. The truth of the matter is [this is Rāzī, presumably] that God created Adam from clay in the form of a man. Then it dried out (\textit{jaffa}) and when the wind blew around it, it sounded as if it were clattering (\textit{salšila}). So God called it a piece of dry clay (\textit{salšāl})."\textsuperscript{151}

In \textit{TK} 8:74–5 (on a verse just referred to above, \textit{Q} 3:59), Rāzī lists all the materials from which revelation says Adam is created,\textsuperscript{152} citing the \textit{Qur'ān} \textit{verbatim} in each case: dust (\textit{turāb}; this verse, 3:59); water (25:54); clay (\textit{quf}: 32:7–8); refined clay (\textit{suğala min \textit{tin}}: 23:12–13); sticky clay (\textit{min \textit{tin lázib}}: 37:11) and potter’s clay of black mud moulded (\textit{min \textit{salšāl min hamā’})

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{149} \textit{TK} 19:179. Some lines further on, Rāzī writes: "So we must come eventually to a first man who was the \textit{beginning of the human race}. The fact that he is our father, Adam, can be established only by tradition (\textit{sam})."
\textsuperscript{150} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{151} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{152} The verse reads: Indeed the likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam whom He created from dust." Rāzī says that the commentators agree that the occasion of this revelation was the delegation of the Najrān which came to see Muḥammad. He summarises one of the specious objections they put to the Prophet and his two-pronged reply. To the objection that if Jesus had no human father, then God must be his father, Muḥammad is reported as replying, first, that Adam had neither father nor mother, but it does not follow that he was God’s son. And, secondly, that if God could create Adam from dust, then surely He could create Jesus from Mary’s blood.
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Commenting on the words, "He it is Who created you from clay" (6:2), Rāzī notes: "It is accepted that this means God created humankind from Adam and Adam was created from clay...... For my part," he continues, "there is another point that can be made here, and that is, that man is created from sperm and menstrual blood; these two were created from blood and blood indeed from plant nutriment. And there is no doubt that this is generated from clay."154

Continuing his commentary on 3:59, Rāzī refers to the reasons given by "the wise" (hukamā') for the creation of Adam from dust and water.155 He was created from dust, they say: 1) to keep him humble; 2) so that he might be a screen (sitāran); 3) to ensure that he would remain closely-linked to the earth, in accordance with Q 2:30, naming Adam [and his progeny] His vice-gerent on earth; 4) to display His power by giving to the densest of bodies (ajrām) the capacity for love, knowledge, light and guidance; and 5) to extinguish, as dust can fire, the flames of passion, anger and greed.

He was created from water "so that he might be pure (ṣāfin) and the shapes of things would be revealed in him."156

2.6.2. Man in General

2.6.2.1. His Origin

2.6.2.1.1. From Nothing157

Many of the Qur'anic pericopes dealing with creation ex nihilo are, in fact, in the context of the creation of man.158 In his commentary on these verses, Rāzī takes creation ex nihilo as fact. He reads the words of Q 19:9, "We created you before, when you were nothing", as meaning "creation from pure nothing" (al-'adam al-ṣīrf) and absolute negation [of existence] (al-nafū al-mahqūq).159 His argument in this passage is that "if He [can] existentialise him [Zachariah] from nothing, then so too He can

153 He lists two other aspects of man's creation that do not refer to his origin, viz. that he was created "from haste" (Q 21:37) and "in trouble (or toil)" (90:4).
154 TK 12:152. See also 26:125 (on 37:11) and 26:228 (38:71–6).
155 TK 8:75
156 Loc. cit. See also TK 19:179 (on 15:26–33).
157 I shall not discuss here the consequences of Ash'arite occasionalism on the doctrine of creation ex nihilo. In a sense, at least for most Ash'arites, every moment is such a creation. Rāzī subtly modifies this. See Ma'ālim 34.
159 TK 21:189 (on 19:9)
bestow on him a son" [by the normal course of generation, even though his wife is of advanced years]. It is not surprising, then, that he offers little, if any, commentary on Q 19:67 ("Does not man remember that We created him before (min qablu), when he was nothing (lam yakhshay'an)"); or 56:57 ("Who created you in the first place from nothing (min là shay')").

For Râzî, the phenomenon of innovation calls for creation ex nihilo. "The non-existence of innovated things precedes their existence." And again: "Note that bodies are innovated. So we must conclude positively (al–qat') that Adam, and bodies other than he, are created from absolute non-being ('an 'adam maḥḍ)."

In the light of what Râzî will be saying shortly about man's origin, it seems surprising that he should align himself with the Theologians (al-mutakallimun) in holding that it is logically absurd for one thing to be created from another. "The creation of [one] thing from another [say the Theologians] is rationally absurd, because if this created thing is identical ('ayn) with the pre-existing one, it is not created at all [it already exists]. So if it is not created at all, then it could not be created from something else. We [Râzî and the Theologians] say that, [on the other hand], if this created thing is distinct from the pre-existing one, then this created and innovated thing is indeed innovated and comes about from pure nothingness." The Qur'anic verse, however, speaks of God creating from a single individual, from whom He created his mate and all their progeny. Râzî here allows for an equivocity in terms by saying that "min" in this verse means absolute beginning (ibtida' al-ghaya), i.e. that the innovation of these things is not in the framework (under the aspect) of need and demand, but rather by way of simply stating the fact that they occur.

He records the diametrically opposed view of the Naturalists, who see these present verses as proving "that an innovated thing (ḥadīth) is only innovated from pre-existing matter (madda), from which the thing is created; and [also] that the creation of a thing from pure nothingness (al-'adam al-maḥḍ) and utter denial [of existence] (al-naṣi' al-ṣirf) is logically absurd."

In his commentary on Q 52:35 ("Or were they created out of nothing, or are they the creators?"), Râzî lists several interpretations of the expression,

160 TK 21:240; 29:175
161 TK 12:151 (6:1–2) 19:179 (15:26–33)
162 TK 9:161 (4:1)
163 Ibid. 162
164 Ibid. 161
1. They were created without a creator

2. They were not created for anything in vain (’abathan)

3. They were created without father or mother

4. 'Nothing' is equivalent to something mean or base [like dust or water. We read] in Q 77:20: 'Did we not create you from despised water?'

Rāzī is not opposed to this last interpretation, but he seems to favour tracing man back to dust, as the Qurʾān frequently does, but then adding a minor premise that dust is created from nothing, and hence so is man.

2.6.2.1.2. From One Individual

What Rāzī has to say on this matter has been dealt with above in the context of Adam as father of the human race. The order of the creation and generation of all subsequent human beings, according to Rāzī, who follows the Qurʾān closely, is: from dust, to water, to clay, to black mud moulded, to dry clay like pottery, to nutriment, to menstrual blood and sperm, and thence to the foetus. I shall try to avoid unnecessary repetition and overlapping in commenting on each of these.

2.6.2.1.3. From Dust

Rāzī describes dust as the most remote thing (baʿida) from which man is created. In commenting on Q 40:67 ('It is He Who created you from

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165 Some of the English translations of the phrase are 'by nothing' (Sale, Rodwell); 'out of naught' (Pickthall, Arberry) and 'for no purpose' (Bell).

166 TK 28:259–260 (on 52:35). In an interesting analysis of Qur’anic style, Rāzī shows that where there is a double question, the first is a denial, the second an affirmation. He cites three examples from Sūra 56:

a) "Do you create it, or are We the Creator?" (v.59)

b) "Do you foster it (tazraʿūnahu), or are We the Fosterer?" (v.64)

c) "Did you make the tree grow (anshaʿum), or did We?" (v.72).

"In all of these," says Rāzī, "the first query is [really] a denial, the second an affirmation." The problem is that he goes on to say that this is what we have in the verse we are studying, whereas in fact it is the first question ("Were they created out of nothing?") that must be for a Muslim the affirmation.

167 See 2.6.1.1.

168 TK 26:228 (on 38:71–6). Baʿida could also mean 'unlikely'. See also, in relation to the first man, TK 8:74–5 and 19:179.
dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clot, then brings you forth as a child....."), he says that one proof for the existence of the unique Creator-God is "the way in which this [i.e. man's] body comes into being (takawwun), from when it first began to be a sperm-drop and a foetus right up to final old age. It is said that Adam is referred to here. In my opinion, there is no need [to take this position], because every man is created from sperm and menstrual blood. Now sperm is created from blood, so man is created from blood and blood is generated only from nutriment, either animal or vegetable.

"The generation of these living things is like that of man. So nutriment is entirely terminated in the vegetable. Now plants are only from dust and water. So it is established that all men are brought into being (mutakawwin) from dust."\(^{169}\)

2.6.2.1.4. From Clay

A parallel passage to the above includes a mention of clay. Commenting on Q 6:2 ("It is He Who created you from clay"), he refers to a generally-held view that all men are created from clay because Adam was, and all men derive from him. But he adds: "For my part, another point can be made here, and that is, that man is created from sperm and menstrual blood. These two were created from blood and blood only from plant nutriment. And there is no doubt that this is generated from clay. So every man is generated from clay. In my opinion, this is closer to the correct position."\(^{170}\)

He amplifies this in his commentary on 23:12 ("We have created man from an extract of clay").\(^{171}\) After itemising again the two views of man in this context (i.e. Adam or Adam's progeny), he continues: "There is another view on this, viz. that man is only begotten from a drop (nuṭfa), and this drop from a surplus (fāḍl) of the fourth digestion (ḥaḍm), which itself is generated from food (nutriment: aghḍhiya). Now this nutriment is either animal or vegetable. What is animal finds its origin (tantahī ilā) in the vegetable, and this [in turn] is generated from the pure (ṣafw) essence of earth and water. So man is in reality generated (mutawallīdan) from an extract of clay. So indeed, after this extract reaches the point of

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\(^{169}\) TK 27:85

\(^{170}\) TK 12:152 (on 6:2). An almost verbatim passage is to be found in TK 26:125 (on 37:11: ‘See! we have created them from sticky <lāzi> clay’). It may be mentioned obiter that on p.125 Rāżī says: "As to how man was created from clinging clay, this was dealt with in the preceding Sūra'. The last few verses of Sūra 36 have a similar creation/re-creation theme, but I was not able to find, either in that Sūra or in the commentary thereon (which Jomier considers to be by another hand) any reference to sticky clay.

\(^{171}\) TK 23:84
creation and its stages, it becomes sperm. This interpretation fits the letter of the Qur'ān and does not call for any forced explanation of the text.172

Three questions arise out of Q 38:71, "I am [about to] create (khāliq) man out of clay":

1. Why mention this if it is the only way that man can be created? The objector says that the only reason for stating, "I am making (mustakhid) a bracelet out of gold", is that I could also make it from something else, e.g. silver. Rāzī's answer is: "God first of all explains to them that man is an individual person (shakhṣ), combining [in himself] tame and wild animal (bāhimmīya, sabīya), satanic and angelic powers. So when he says, 'I am about to create man out of clay', it is as if He were to say: "This individual person, who is a combination of these attributes, I have in fact created from clay".173

2. The second question is that this pericope appears to contradict other verses where, as we have seen - for example, in relation to Adam - man is said to be created from dust, dry clay, mud moulded, even from haste. Rāzī sees no inconsistency here. Dust is the most remote source–material. Next to it comes clay, and then the others.174

3. The final query or objection is based on the seeming contradiction between the present text and Q 2:30, "I am making (jā'īl) a vice-gerent on the earth." In the first instance, the angels acquiesce without demur and prostrate themselves. In the second, they seem perturbed and ask questions about the likelihood of this vice-gerent being a trouble-maker on earth, while they themselves simply continue their praise of God. Rāzī sees the later revelation expanding the first. "In this present verse," he says, "God explains that this vice-gerent is [surprisingly, mere] man, created from clay."175

2.6.2.1.5. From Water

To the words of Q 24:45, "God created all animals (kulla dābbatin) from water", Rāzī counters the fact that by no means all living things (ḥayawanāt) are created thus. The angels, for example, which are "the

172 In TK 19:224 (on 16:4), he tells us what - or rather, where - these four nutriments are which constitute the four digestions, viz. in the stomach, the liver, the veins (urūq) and in the particles (jawāhir) of the limbs. It is from the surplus or the residue (here faḍla, in the feminine) of this fourth digestion that sperm is generated.
173 TK 26:227-8
174 Ibid. 228
175 Ibid. Other general references, which have little or no commentary on man's origin from clay , are: 8:74-5 (on 3:59); 19:178-183 (15:26-33) and 29:97-9 (55:14-15).
most numerous of living things", are created from light; the Jinn from fire; Adam from dust and, finally, Jesus "from the spirit". "Furthermore," he continues, "we see many living things which are not generated from a sperm-drop [alternatively referred to as water]."

He offers three answers to this objection:

1. The first and the best one (al-ahsan) is that of al-Qaffāl who says that God is here referring to all animals, not to the whole of creation, and He means that every animal is generated from water, and thus is created by God.

2. The second explanation is that water is creation’s source (ašl): "As we have been told, the first thing He created was a jewel (jawhara)." Then He looked upon it with awesome mien (bi ‘ayni ‘l-hayba; in TK 17:187, simply bi ‘l-hayba) and it turned to water. From the water He then created fire, air and light. Now since the purpose of this verse is to explain the source of creation, and [since] the [its] first source is water, it is natural that he should mention it in this context."

3. Thirdly, "Dābba means what crawls on the face of the earth and has its abode there. So this excludes angels and Jinn. And since the great majority (qhallib) of living things are created from water, because they are either generated from water or live only in water, He naturally uses the expression ‘all’ to signify the majority."

Rāzi finally explains why here water is in the indefinite, whereas in Q 21:30 we read: "And We made from the water every living thing". "It is indefinite here simply because it means that He created every animal from a species of water which is specific to those animals. It is definite [on the other hand] in [Q 21:30] because it means that they are created from this [particular] genus. And it is explained here that that genus is divided into many species."
Rāzī takes the occasion of ْQ 16:4 ("He created man from a sperm-drop; and behold he is a manifest adversary") to expatiate on the nature of the human sperm, particularly in relation to the ْajzāʿ of which it is composed.181 He says that there is no doubt that they are similar in the way they present themselves to sight (mushāhada), but some doctors (ʿatibbaʿ) hold that in reality it is composed of different particles, because, as we have already seen, it is only generated from what is left over of the fourth digestion (haḍm) which is found in the basic components (jawāhir, this time) of the limbs. They go on to say that, "at this moment (waqt), some particles of nutriment reach the bone (ʿażm) and there appears evidence (athar) of something having the character (ʿabVa) of bone. The same may be said of flesh, sinew, veins and other things. Then, as the body temperature rises, with the arousal of desire, there is a distillation (? distillation: dhawaban) of all the organs. This is the sperm-drop. Thus," they conclude, "the sperm-drop is a body composed of different particles and physical constitutions."182

Rāzī himself takes over from here and sets out to prove that, whether these particles are similar or not, we must invoke a Wise and Free Agent as ultimate explanation of what happens. If they are similar, he says that "the natural disposition found in the jawhar of the sperm-drop and menstrual blood cannot [of itself] be sufficient to generate a body from them, because the natural disposition operates by essence and necessity (dhāt, ʿijab), not by direction and free choice." In pursuing his line of thought, Rāzī introduces a new element, viz. the sphere. "If natural power (quwwa) operates on matter whose particles are similar, its action (filuha) must be something spherical. And so, they raise up (ʿawwalu), according to this view, basic elements (basāʾit) whose natural forms must be in the sphere. So if the natural disposition were required for the generation of living things from sperm, then its form would have to be in the sphere. But since that is not so, we know that it is not the natural disposition which is required for the innovation of living bodies, but rather a Free Agent Who creates in wisdom, direction and freedom."183

The same conclusion must be drawn, according to Rāzī, if we adopt the other hypothesis (qism), viz. that the particles of the sperm-drop differ in natural disposition and quiddity. He gives two reasons for this. The first is that "the sperm-drop is a [species of] moisture (ruṭūba), which is subject to quick alteration (istiḥāla). Thus the particles existing in it do not retain their situs (waḍ) or [mutual] relationship. So the particle of

181 TK 19:224
182 Ibid. See also 23:84 (on 23:12-16).
183 Ibid.
which the brain is constituted (dimāgh) can occur in the lower [members]. And the particle of which the heart is constituted may occur in the upper [members]. Thus it cannot be that, by their own nature, the limbs of living things would be arranged in this particular way with either frequency or stability. And so, we know that these limbs are innovated in this particular arrangement only by the direction of a Wise and Free Agent.\textsuperscript{184}

The \textit{second} reason appeals again to the sphere. "On the supposition that the sperm-drop is a body composed of particles differing in natural disposition – although the resolution (taflīl) of its composite structure (tarkīb) into particles must have an end (be finite) – each one of them is in itself a simple (extended: bāsiṭ) body. Thus, if what directed them were to be a natural power, then the form of each of these basic elements (basā'it) would have to be spherical. And living things (hayawan) would be in the form of spheres compressed (maḏmūm) one to the other. But since that is not so, we know that the Director of the bodies of living things is not natural dispositions, nor the influences of the stars and heavenly bodies, because these influences are alike (mutashābaha). So we know that the Director of the bodies of living things (hayawanāt) is a Free and Wise Agent.\textsuperscript{185}

The life-cycle of the sperm is described with flair, when Rāzī comments on 10:4: "There is no doubt that the body of living things is generated simply from a sperm-drop which is drawn from the body as a whole. Proof (dāṭiḥ) of this is that, when the sperm-drop is ejaculated (infīṣāḥ), weakness and languor result throughout the body. Now the material of this sperm-drop is generated solely from ingested nutriment, which itself is generated only from elementary particles (al-ajza' al-'unṣuriya). And these particles are dispersed throughout the world. When they chance to combine, animals and plants are generated from them, which man eats, and from this, blood is generated. That blood is distributed in the members and from it [in turn] fine particles are generated. Then when sexual passion takes charge (istīlā'), there flows from these moist particles a fixed measure, which is the sperm-drop. It then propels itself to the mouth of the womb, and this [particular] man is generated therefrom. So it is clear that the particles, from which the body of man is generated, were at first spread about in the seas, the mountains and the upper air. They then indeed come together as described, and as a result this body is

\textsuperscript{184} Loccit. 225. See also 12:152 (on 6:2): "The sperm-drop is generated from clay...... Then from the sperm-drop are generated [different] species of organs, differing in quality, form, colour and shape; such as the heart, brain and liver. Also species of simple organs (limbs), such as bones, cartilages, ligaments, sinews and so on. And the generation of different attributes in (from) similar matter is only possible by the measuring of a Wise Measurer and a Compassionate Director."

\textsuperscript{185} TK 19:225
generated from them. So when he dies, these particles are dispersed, as they were at first ('alā mithāl al-τaṭarruq al-awwal)."\textsuperscript{186}

The Qur'an (86:6-7) tells us that "[Man] is created from a rushing liquid (min mā'in dāfiqin) that issues from between the loins and ribs". Rāzī notes the incorrect view of the heretics (mulhidūn) who, he says, reject (ta'anū) this verse by limiting the separation of the sperm to this particular area of the body. It seems, though, that it is Rāzī who embellishes this particular pericope by claiming that the sperm derives from "all the particles of the body", enabling it in turn to generate organs that have the specific qualities which they, in the first instance, contributed to the sperm.\textsuperscript{187}

He considers weak, and even fanciful, the views of those who understand "loins and ribs" to mean: a) the place where most of the particles of the sperm are generated; or b) the seat of the sperm, "since that is the spermatic vessels (aw'iya, from w'y) and these are veins intertwined (multaff) one with the other in the two testicles"; or c) the outlet (mukhrij) for the sperm [presumably the penis], "since sense observation shows that this is not so. It is in the brain, he says, where most of the particles of sperm are bred (yatarrabbū from rby). This is confirmed by the fact that they and the brain are similar in form. "There is no doubt," he concludes, "that the organ which contributes most (ma'una) to the generation of sperm is the brain. Now the brain has a vice-gerent (khalifa) which is the spinal cord (nukha'), situated in the backbone (ṣulb). This has many branches (shu'ab) descending to the front (muqaddam) of the body."\textsuperscript{188} This is why God mentions "loins and ribs" in this verse.

In another place, Rāzī further analyses the origin of sperm and the composition of the menstrual blood. "The body is generated only from sperm and sperm only from menstrual blood (Ammā 'l-jīsam, fa-innahu innamā yatawalladū min al-minā, wa 'l-minā innamā yatawalladū min dami 'l-τ'amth). This is only from the four components (humors: akhāt) [blood, phlegm, yellow and black bile] which in turn are generated only from the four basic elements (arkān) [fire, water, earth, air]. In bringing about this formation, attention must be paid to the measurement specific to each one of them, how they are mixed and combined and the length of time this takes."\textsuperscript{189}

We have seen that Rāzī has used the nature, origin and function of sperm

\textsuperscript{186} TK 17:24
\textsuperscript{187} TK 31:129
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{189} TK 26:228 (on 38:71-6)
to prove the necessity for a Wise and Free Agent Who is God. In his commentary on 86:5-7, he says it is one of the most evident (ażhar) of all the proofs (dalā'il). He gives three reasons for this. The first is that the body is remarkable in its composition (tarkibat) and so its generation from such simple material as the sperm points cogently to a Powerful and Free Being. Secondly, man is confronted by the condition of his own body. The proof is before his eyes. And, thirdly, it is an enduring proof as man sees the sperm's effect in his own offspring and that of other animals.

He goes on to enumerate a fourth argument, but its conclusion is not precisely the same. "Just as we can reason conclusively (yadullu qa'an) in these ways to the existence of a Free, Wise Producer, so can we prove conclusively the validity (ṣiḥa) of the Resurrection on the Last Day. Rāzī made this point when commenting on Q 4:1, "And from these two [Adam and Eve] He has multiplied (batthha) a great many men and women". "This section [of the verse]," he says, "is a proof of the Resurrection because, since God can draw out from the loins of one person different sorts of people, and create from a [simple] sperm-drop (min qa'ra min nutfa) a person wondrously composed (tarkib) and subtle (laṭīf) of form: how could we think it improbable that He should enliven the dead and raise them up on the Last Day?"

2.6.2.2. His Soul

Rāzī says that the investigation into the nature of the soul is without doubt one of the more obscure questions to be tackled (aghmad). He does, however, say more about the nature of the soul than about how it came to be created.

The most common meaning for nafs in the Qur'ān is 'soul', i.e. a human being, a living thing, the individual self. Thus in Sūra 2:281: "Then every individual being (kullu nafsin) will be paid for what it has acquired (earned), and they shall not be treated unfairly." It occurs in both

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191 TK 31:130
192 Ibid.
193 TK 9:160. He makes this same connection in 17:24 (on 10:3-6, esp. v.4) and 23:7-9 (on 22:5).

Other, brief, references to this matter are found in 20:74 (on 16:70); 21:123,126 (18:37); 26:125 (37:11); 27:85 (40:6-8); 28:260 (52:35); 29:175 (56:57); 30:234 (75:37-9), 236-7 (76:2), 272 (77:20) and 31:59-60 (80:18-19).

194 TK 8:76 (on 3:59)
195 A brief treatment of the soul may be found in Ma'ālim ch. 8, where he proves the existence of the soul from our consciousness of an abiding identity, despite physical change. For Rāzī, the soul must be a subtle body, not a separated substance. See Street, op. cit. 14.
singular and plural, whereas rūḥ (spirit), while having many meanings, appears only in the singular and nowhere in the Qur’ān does it refer to the human soul.

In his 31-page commentary on Q 7:54 ("Behold, your Lord is God Who created the heavens and earth in six days......Blessed be God, Lord of the worlds"), Rāzī makes a passing reference to a view that the nafs is "nothing other than air (ḥawā') breathed in (mustanshaq) through the nostrils". He makes no comment. One short reference to the rūḥ seems to identify it with wind: "With regard to His words, 'And I have breathed into him My spirit (min rūḥī)', there are several matters to be looked at. The first is that the breathing-in (nafkh) means causing the spirit to flow (ijra' ) in the hollow cavities (taṣawif) of another body. Literally, this would mean (yash'aru) that the spirit (rūḥ) is the wind (riḥ). If this is not so, then it cannot be described as blowing (nafkh)."

He defers a "full investigation" into what is meant by rūḥ to TK 21:36–53, where he is commenting on the Qur'anic words, "Say: al-Riif} is by command of the Lord" (17:85). Rāzī says that in this text, "God links (adā'fa) the spirit of Adam to Himself, as ennobling and honouring him".

It is important, however, to note that he comments again in 26:228 on the words, "And I have breathed into him min rūḥi" (found also in Q 38:72), referring to some who think that, "Since He linked the spirit to Himself......he [Adam] is a noble, lofty and holy jawhar." The Incarnationists (Hulūliya), he says, hold that the "min" (in min rūḥi) denotes that the rūḥ is a particle of the Divinity. For Rāzī, of course, this is: "utterly false, because everything that has particles [making up] a whole is composite, possible-of-existence (mumkin) by nature and innovated (muḥdath)". He goes on to say that the mode of this breathing-in is one of the things known only to God, but it very likely indicates that "the substance of the soul (jawhar al-nafs) is (iḥbārā 'an) a translucent (ṣafīf), luminous (nūrānī) body, celestial ('ulwīya) of element and holy of substance. It circulates (taṣrī) in the body like light, air and fire among the coals (faḥm)."

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196 See also Q 2:48,123; 3:25;145; 4:1; 5:32 and many other pericopes.
197 TK 14:112
198 TK 19:182 (on 15:29)
199 Ibid. There is no unanimity amongst Islamic scholars or Orientalists about the meaning of either spirit or command in this verse, and as we are not precisely concerned here with rūḥ, it is not necessary to examine Rāzī's treatment thereof in that place.
200 TK 26:228 (on 38:72)
201 Rāzī is not too specific about when the spirit joins the body. "When the sperm settles in the mother's womb, it is a small drop. Then the body of man is generated from it. The spirit is joined to the body when it is very small." (17:24)
Rāzi is more concerned about the nature of man than about the soul, although, obviously, his view about the one affects what he will believe about the other. In his commentary on Q 10:4 ("Unto Him is the return of each one of you. God has truly promised this. He began the creation and then repeated it......"), he presents two views of the nature of man. One is that "the term 'man' means (ibâra 'an) a rational soul (al-nafsi 'l-nâtiqati) which is a substance that perdures (bâqîn)." The other is that "it consists of particles which perdure from the first moment that the embryo is brought into being until the end of [its] life ('amr). [The soul] permeates (jariya) the body as long as the particles perdure." He does not in this place come down in favour of either side of the discussion.

What he is clear on is that man is a soul. This, he says, is the obvious and literal meaning of many Qur'anic verses, e.g. 3:168, "And they do not reckon that those who are killed in God's cause (way) are dead, but rather living". The text clearly states that the body of the slain person is dead, but it also proves that he is alive. "Hence, the reality [of the man] must be something different from this dead body." "To say that he is a body is the most improbable of all views (aqâwil)."

The reality of the Resurrection, the preoccupation of this part of the treatise, is compatible with either view of the nature of the soul, and so Rāzī is slow for the moment to show his hand: 'The argument for the Resurrection is the same] whether we say the soul is a separated substance (jawhar mujarrad) or a subtle body (jism la'tîf), like this [physical, visible! body which remains, no matter what the state of the [human] body, protected (mašun) from disintegration and change.

He adopts the same methodology when examining a third objection or difficulty (shubha): "Man," the objector says, "is this body, not these particles, whatever they are (kayfa kânat), because the particles existed before the man in question was innovated, even though he was obviously non-existent. Furthermore, if this body is burnt, these simple particles remain. Yet we know that their aggregation from earth, water, air and fire does not constitute an intelligent, rational man. It follows then that

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202 TK 17:24 (on 10:4)
203 TK 17:27
204 TK 17:29. He also cites 6:93.
205 TK 17:27
206 Ibid. See Ma'âlim 30. Street (op. cit. 10, note 51) comments: "This is an extremely problematic point in Râzī's theology. He speaks of spirits (arwâh) as not being space-occupying; see ad 7:185, TK 15, 78. Yet later in the Ma'âlim he speaks of souls as being a sort of spirit, and yet space-occupying. On the whole, I think Râzī looked on the question as open to debate, but tended to favour the view that the soul, and spirits, were space-occupying."
these particles are *this man* only on condition that they occur in a specific combination, mixture and form (*ta' lil, mazâj, sûra*). So when this man dies, and the particles of which he is composed disintegrate, these forms and accidents cease to be (*adimat*). But what is non-existent cannot return. This being so, it is impossible that some of the particles in question (*mu'tabara*) when this man [first] appeared in the world (*huşûl*), could return. So we are forced to the conclusion that he could not return exactly as he was (*bi-'aynîhi*) another time."^{207}

Râzî does not admit the premise that man is a visible body, but rather a soul, "whether we interpret soul as a distinct, separated substance, or as a specific, subtle body, like this one, immune to change."^{208}

It is only in his answer to the next objection that he finally, if briefly, states his own position about the nature of the soul. The objector argues that, on the basis of what may be called the "particle-theory", a cannibal would have his own particles and those of the man he has eaten (lit.: these particles would be in the body of each of the *shakhşayn*). Râzî again denies this theory of soul and says: "He is the soul without qualification or distinction (*sawâ*). In our view, the soul is a separated substance, whereas subtle, enduring bodies (*ajsâm*), which the Theologians call basic (*aşîya*) particles, are like the body (*jasad*) [of man]."^{209}

In the course of this discussion, he has nothing to say about the creation of the soul, but he does use the present verse, ("To Him is your return"), to prove that the soul existed before the body, "because the return to a place can happen only if one was there before". He cites corresponding texts: Q 89:28 ("O soul at peace, return to your Lord well-pleased"), and 6:62 ("Then they are sent back to God, their Master, the True One").^{210}

This discussion may be rounded off with his description of the first condition of the human soul (*al-nafs al-insâniya*) which is introduced as an argument for the existence of a Free and Wise Producer: "The argumentation (*istidlâl*) is based on the fact that, when their *fitra* is first formed, human souls are less intelligent (*fahman*), less developed or clever (*fi'nat*), than the souls of the other animals. Is it not so that when the chicken comes out of the egg-shell, it [immediately] distinguishes between friend and foe? Thus [for example] it flees from the cat and takes refuge with the mother-hen. It also distinguishes between suitable and unsuitable nourishment. But the newly-born human offspring can in no way distinguish between friend and foe, harm and advantage.

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207 *TK* 17:28
208 Ibid.
209 *TK* 17:29
210 Ibid.
"So it is clear that when he is first innovated, man is inferior in condition and less clever vis-à-vis the other animals. Then, when he grows up, his intellect becomes stronger and his understanding (fahmuhu) greater, until he reaches the point where his power extends over everything in the heavens and earth, he can know God and His attributes, and [various] kinds of created things, such as spirits (arwâh), the heavenly bodies and the elements. He can also rebut serious objections to God's religion and marshal strong arguments (khuṣūmât) on any topic of enquiry (maṭālib).

"But it requires the direction of a Wise and Free God to transform spirits (arwâh) from a defective to a perfect state, from ignorance to knowledge about (bi-ḥasabi) wisdom and free choice, and to bring the soul of man from the depths of stupidity to the heights of sagacity."211

2.6.2.3. Man’s Acts

Before and since Râzî, in both Arabian and Latin scholarship, one of the burning issues has been the question of predestination and free will, God’s universal knowledge and power as against man’s real or seeming capacity for self-determination. In Western Christian thought, it reached its acrimonious highpoint in the 16th century controversy, De Auxiliis, between the Jesuits and Dominicans. In Islam, some centuries before, the debatants were the Mu’tazilites and the Ash’arites.212

In several passages in the Tafsîr, Râzî outlines the position of the Ash’arites, using the occasion to rebut the arguments of the Mu’tazilites. Commenting on Q 6:101-102, he writes: "Our Companions base their doctrine, that it is God Who creates the actions of creatures, on His words, 'Creator of all things' [v.102]. They say: The actions of creatures are things and, on the authority of this verse, God is the Creator of all

211 TK 19:225-6. Some useful references to nafs and rûh can be found in: E.A.Calverly, "Nafs" in SE1 433-36, and EI1 III 883-87; Smith and Haddad, The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection 18-21; Peters, God's Created Speech 164-6; Macdonald, "The Development of the Idea of Spirit in Islam", in MW 22 (1932) 25-42, and Arnaldez, "L'oeuvre", 319. See also Street, op. cit. 146-151.

212 It is not relevant to elaborate the point here, but it should be understood that, while the basic problem was the same, the battle was fought on different grounds. In the Christian case, for example, there was no intention in either camp to question the reality of God’s power or of man’s freedom to produce his own acts.


Useful sources of information about Islamic views, including those of Râzî, on the creation of the human act, and the related question of predestination and free will, are: Arnaldez, "Apories" (1959-60) and "L'oeuvre" (1960); Gimaret, Théories (1980); Peters, God’s Created Speech (1976); Watt, Free Will (1948).
things. So God must be their Creator.\textsuperscript{213}

He refers us to his ‘extended’ treatment of this proof in his work, \textit{The Book on Determinism and the Divine Decree} (\textit{K. al-Jabr wa 'l-Qadar})\textsuperscript{214}, contenting himself here with ‘some brief remarks’, which take the form of an analysis of the Mu'tazilite arguments. They give four reasons (\textit{wajh, dalîl, burhân} are used interchangeably) for exempting creatures' acts from the universal embrace of the Qur'anic phrase.

The \textit{first}\textsuperscript{215} takes its cue from the words that follow: "So worship Him". "If creatures' acts were to be included in His words, 'Creator of all things', the sense of the verse would be: I created your acts: so you perform them again, just as they are (\textit{bi-a'yânihā}) [i.e. as they have already been created by God]. Everyone knows that this is false"\textsuperscript{216}

\textit{Secondly}, the purpose of the phrase, 'Creator of all things', is to praise and glorify God. But this purpose would not be served by attributing to him such things as adultery, sodomy, pederasty, theft or Unbelief.\textsuperscript{217}

Their \textit{third} argument is drawn from the following verse [v.103]: "Clear proofs (\textit{baṣā'ir}) have come to you from your Lord. Whoever sees clearly, then it is to his own good. And whoever is blind, then it is to his own loss".\textsuperscript{218} "This is a statement (\textit{taṣrīḥ}) [according to the Mu'tazilites] that the creature has autonomy over whether to act or not; and there is nothing to prevent him acting or not acting. This proves [they say] that the creature's action is \textit{not} created by God, because, if it were, the creature would then not have this autonomy, because it would not be able to impede what He created, nor make it happen if He did not create it.

"So [they conclude], since this verse shows that the creature does exercise autonomy over acting or not acting - and it has been established that consequently it is impossible to hold that the creature's act is created by God - then we have proved that his words, 'Whoever sees clearly, then it is to his own good; and whoever is blind, then it is to his own loss', entail a specific exception to the general statement."\textsuperscript{219}

\textsuperscript{213} \textit{TK} 13:121-3. This passage is referred to by Rāzī in \textit{TK} 27:11 (39:63) as his thorough treatment of this matter. See also \textit{TK} 29:72 (54:49); 26:4 (35:3) and 8:56 (3:49).
\textsuperscript{214} \textit{TK} 13:122. See above 1.1. See also L. Gardet, "\textit{al-Ḳaḍā' wa 'l-Ḳadar}", in \textit{EI} 2 IV 365-7.
\textsuperscript{215} Reading \textit{Ahaduhā} (since four reasons are in fact given and listed) for \textit{ahaduhumā}.
\textsuperscript{216} \textit{TK} 13:122
\textsuperscript{217} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{218} This is the sense that Pickthall and Arberry give to \textit{bi-nafiṣihī...alayhā}. Rāzī, or the editor, does not have the last sentence in commas.
\textsuperscript{219} \textit{Loc. cit.}
Their *fourth* argument takes up the reference to the dualist doctrine in a previous verse (v.100), "And they made the Jinn as partners". They see the words, "There is no God but He, Creator of all things" (v.102), as a rejection of this doctrine, but they do not believe it should be understood to mean that He created all the beasts of prey, insects, diseases and suffering.

Having given in ample detail the arguments of the Mu'tazilites, Rāzī finishes the discussion fairly abruptly by recourse to a general observation to cover all four. He invokes the concepts of power and motivation (Gimaret's *incitation: dā'īn*), which will be found in other passages of the *Tafsīr*: "We say that conclusive rational proof (al-*dalil* al-'aqīl al-qāṣī) supports the truth of the literal sense of this verse because action depends on (mawqūf 'alā) motivation which is created by God. And when power (qudra) and motivation are joined, the action necessarily happens. Now this requires that God be the Creator of the creatures' acts. And if this conclusive rational proof (burhān) supports the literal sense, then all problems and ambiguities (difficulties: *shubhāt*) cease."²²⁰

Some lines further on, Rāzī affirms, of course, that the *Qur'ān* is not created, but "despite the exception to the universal statement in this case, the Sunnis still cling to [the principle of] universal applicability when they affirm that the acts of creatures are created by God".²²¹

The same phrase, 'Creator of all things', appears in *Q* 13:16 and equivalently in 25:2 ("He has created everything"). In each case, Rāzī considers the position of al-Qāḍī,²²² as seen through the eyes of the Ash'arites. He notes, first, the Mu'tazilite claim that animals create both motion and rest in the same way as God does, thus ascribing associates to Him. The Ash'arites and Rāzī see that, in *Q* 13:16, God is condemning and rejecting (*inkār*) such a claim, thus showing that the creature does not create an action himself.²²³

Al-Qāḍī is invoked at this point to present the Mu'tazilite view in a more palatable way. According to Rāzī, he says: "Although we say the creature acts and innovates (*ya'alu, yuydhithu*), we do not however propose the view that he creates (*yakhluluq*). And even if we did, we would not say he does it the way God does, because each one of us acts only to realise some benefit (*manf'ada*) or repel harm, whereas this kind of motivation is not to be found in God. So it is clear that, even if the creature were a

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²²⁰ *Loc. cit.*
²²¹ *TK* 13:123
²²² See above 1.3.1.
²²³ *TK* 19:32
creator, he would not create the way God does." 224

Rāzī simply does not accept al-Qāḍī's premise that praise or blame imply human autonomy. It seems a reasonable premise, but Rāzī sees it as disproved by what the Qur'ān has to say about Muḥammad's uncle, Abū Lahab, a violent opponent of the Prophet, condemned roundly in Q 111, 225 but whose actions are not, presumably, considered by Rāzī as excepted from God's authorship. "Against fact," he says, "there is no argument." 226

Al-Qāḍī's views are again rehearsed in the commentary on Q 25:2–3, and again Rāzī rejects the Mu'tazilites' premise, this time that "praise cannot be bestowed on one who creates evil". "Why not," asks Rāzī, "considering that the measurings-out of power and the attribute (faculty: ṣīfa) of existentialising from non-existence and the annihilating out of existence, belong to Him alone?" 227

For Rāzī, the Qur'anic texts that must over-ride all others, and in the light of which they all must be read, are such ones as: "God is Creator of all things" (13:16), and "Who is creator apart from God?" (35:3).

To prove their thesis, the Ash'arites use three other parallel Qur'anic pericopes that speak of God creating the heavens and earth and everything between (wa mā baynahumā). 228 Rāzī asks us to note that "Our Companions say this verse [15:85] proves (radullū) that God creates all the acts of creatures, because it proves that He is Creator of the heavens and

224 For a list of the things which the Mu'tazilites think man can create, see Peters, God's Created Speech 126–7.
225 The four verses of Sūrah 111 tell the fate of Abū Lahab, Father of Flame: "The power of Abū Lahab will perish and so shall he. His wealth and what he has earned will be of no avail to him. He shall be burned in flaming fire. And his wife, the carrier of wood, will carry on her neck a rope of palm-fibre."

See Al-Munāẓarāt (Kholeif transl.) 74,134–38.
226 The final words of v. 16, ("He is the One, the Victorious"), are seen by the Ash'arites as corroborating their view: "This text must mean that He is one in creation, and victorious over everything other than Himself. Thus this text also proves that we are right" (TK 19:33).
227 TK 24:46. Another reference to the views of al-Qāḍī on this matter may be found in TK 10:68 (4:28). In 19:127, Rāzī shows us al-Qāḍī's poetic bent as he reasons to the fact that man produces his own acts: "If God had not created the solid trees from which ships could be built; nor iron and other tools; and if He gave no instruction (ṣarīfiḥū) to His creature how he should make use thereof (yattakhidhūhu); and if He had not created water flowing, thus enabling ships to course along; nor the winds and the powerful forces in them, nor established rivers, wide and deep: ships could not sail thereon." 228
228 They are, as we noted in 2.5.4., a positive and negative expression of the same truth: "We did not create the heavens and earth and everything between except in truth" (15:85 and 46:3), and: "We did not create the heavens and earth and everything between in vain" (38:27).
earth and everything between, and there is no doubt that the actions of creatures are 'between them'. So God must be their Creator'.

In his commentary on the second and third verses (46:3 and 38:27), he is not deflected from this conviction by al-Jubbā'ī's argument that the text clearly shows that God does not create such vanities as unbelief and sin which are found in the actions of creatures.

Yet another pair of parallel verses lead the Ash'arites to the conclusion that man does not create his own acts. In Q 7:191, God says: "Will they assign as associates [to Me] what do not create anything, but are themselves created?" And 25:3: "They take, beside Him, other gods who create nothing, but are themselves created." In the first case, the Ash'arites see God's words as equating creativity with divinity: "If the creature were to create his own actions, he would be divine. But, as this is false, we know that he does not.'

The same thing is said in different words in relation to the second text: "They say that God denounces ('āba) these unbelievers for worshipping what creates nothing. This proves that whatever creates deserves to be worshipped. So if the creature were a creator, he could be worshipped as God'.

In another place, Rāzī notes that the generality (jumhūr) of Ash'arites invoke: "And God created you and what you make" (37:96). The Ash'arites have recourse to the Grammarians (nahwiyyūn) who say that "the expression mā, taken together with what follows, is a mā mašdariya. So His words, 'And what you make', mean 'And your making [your acting]. In this view, the verse means: 'He created you and your acting [act].'

They also see in the text of 67:1 ("He has power [qadīr] over all things") a threefold refutation:

a. of the Philosophers' view about natures;

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229 TK 19:206
230 TK 26:201. As we saw, also in 2.5.4. above, Rāzī (TK 28:3) reports the Ash'arites as responding to Al-Jubbā'ī with the subtle distinction between the 'creation of a futile object' (khalq al-bāṭili) and the 'creation in futility' (khalq bi 'l-bāṭili).
231 TK 15:9
232 TK 24:48. The two mutually-implicative concepts of divinity and worship are mentioned together in Rāzī's comment on 16:17 ("So is He Who creates like him who does not create?") in TK 20:13.
233 Ta'malūna is variously translated as make (Arberry, Sale, Pickthall), faites (Gimaret, cf. Théories 362) and façonnez (Blachère).
234 TK 26:149
b. of the Mu'tazilites' theory of generation (mutawallidāt);

c. and of the thesis that creatures existentialise their own actions.235

"There is no Influencing-Agent," they say, "except God's power ......
So if some contingent thing were to occur, not by God's power, but by [that of] something else, then that other thing would prevent God's power from [producing] its effect (ta'ithir) in what was His maqdūr. Now that is impossible because apart from God everything is contingent and innovated and [so] is weaker in strength than God's power. But the weaker cannot repel the stronger."236

Power is one attribute. Knowledge is another. The Ash'arites claim that the creature cannot have the detailed knowledge implied in the creative act. The words of Q 67:14, "A lā ya'luμu mān khalāqa', have been translated in two ways: a) "Should He not know what He created?" (thus Pickthall and, in equivalent terms, Sale and Blachère); and b) "Should He Who created not know......?" (M. Asad and Arberry, in as many words.)237 Rāzī and the Ash'arites seem to be availing of both possible senses of the phrase. At some length, they show that the creature does not have knowledge commensurate with the creative act.238

God does not only have power over, and knowledge of, all things. He is also "Guardian (wākīl) over all things" (Q 39:63). This term, too, leads Rāzī to the conviction that God creates human actions: "He is the Steadfast Support (qā'im) of their protection and direction (tadbīr), with no rival (munāzi') or associate (mushārik). This also proves that the creature's act is created by God, because if it were to occur by the creature's creating, that act would not be under the guardianship of God...... But that would deny the universal application ['all things'] of the verse."239

In 2:52 (on 2:7), Rāzī says that the Qur'ān is full of pericopes that can be quoted to support opposing views about the origin of human actions. This drives him to the conclusion that we must put our reliance on the dalā'il al-'aqīlya. One of the fundamental rational arguments is that based on the two requisites for a human act, viz. the power to perform it and the motivation (dā'īya). These are both created by God, and hence so is the human act. We have referred to this above in connection with his

235 TK 30:53
236 Ibid.
237 The ambiguity stems from the fact that, in Arabic, if the indefinite relative is the subject of a relative clause, its referent is contained in the verb; if it is the object, the referent can be omitted entirely.
238 TK 30:67. He cannot, for example, know the divisible particles of his actions, nor what preponderating influence is at work to reduce a contingent thing to actuality.
239 TK 27:11

Against the Mu'tazilites, he holds that God is in no way bound to reward us for good deeds, "because these acts can be done only if God creates the power and the motivation to do them. The combination of the two necessarily brings about the emanation (ṣudûr) of the act from the creature".240 This, of course, entails determinism (al-jabr), as he admits in 2:51,55 (on 2:7). Determinist, yes, but no colleague of the Predestinationists (al-mujbira) when they say that what really happens when God creates is that the creature acquires something from which his action results. "This is sheer polytheism", says Râzî, "because God and the creature [would then] share in the creation of these actions".241

The implications of his stance and the close analysis of the issues involved, e.g. human freedom, secondary causality, divine punishment and reward, and many others, do not feature so much in the creation passages of the Tafsîr, which are the object of the present study, as in such works as Al-Matâlib al-Âliya and Al-Ma'âlim fi usûl al-dîn (both probably contemporaneous with the Tafsîr); and also the K. al-Arba'in fi usûl al-dîn, the K. manâqib al-Imâm Shâfi'i, the Lubâb al-îshârât, the Muḥâassal and the Nihâyat al-'uqul.242

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241 TK 19:32. It should also be noted that, for Râzî, things are not determined by blind fate (jabr). Otherwise, God would not invite us to reason about the heavens and earth. Cf.17:169 (on 10:101). Cf. Nasr, Sharif I 648. See also L. Gardet, "Kasb", in El2 IV 692-4.
242 A painstaking overview of Râzî's position, as contained in these works, is to be found in Gimaret 134-153, 361-391 and passim throughout Théories. See also Arnaldez, "L'œuvre" 322.
In relation to God’s creative act, I shall summarise here the position that Rāzī takes on five matters which were the subject of dispute, either between the Philosophers and Theologians, or amongst the Muṣassirūn themselves. The first is the question as to whether the world was in fact, or at least could have been, created from eternity. Was it, secondly, created ex nihilo, and what does Rāzī understand by the term “nothing”? The third and fourth questions are inter-related and ask whether God was the immediate source of creation, availing of no instrument, and whether His act was instantaneous. Finally, Rāzī shows what he and others understand by the Qur’anic words, "Be! And it is."

3.1. From Eternity

Eternity, for Rāzī, signifies the denial of priority, without thereby indicating any particular time of which this priority is denied. In the light of their respective Scriptures, no Muslim, Christian or Jew can postulate that the world was, in fact, created from eternity. Creation of this kind, he says, is impossible, but it is a view maintained by the Philosophers. In another place (TK 19:179, on 15:26–7), Rāzī indicates that, even on philosophical grounds, the eternity of the world cannot be sustained: "Conclusive proofs (al-dalā‘il al-qāṭ‘ā) establish that it is impossible to hold the view that innovated things (ḥuwa‘dith) exist that had no beginning."

Commenting on Q 19:35 ("When He decrees a thing, He only says to it: Be! And it is."), he relays the opinion of those who say that "Be!" means the creating and bringing–into–being (takhliq, takwin) of something. They distinguish between power over a thing and the bringing of it into being. Rāzī’s mode of citing suggests that he agrees with them. “So God has power from eternity, but He does not bring into being (is not actually the

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1 TK 14:111 (on 7:54)
2 See TK 14:111; 17:26 (on 10:4) and 28:184 (50:38). Rāzī deals with eternity and its relation to corporeal creation in Lawāmi’, Chap.V. See also Ma‘ālim 35.
agent of bringing-into-being: mukawwin) from eternity, because at this (any) particular moment He has power over worlds other than this, but He is not bringing them into being." The attribute of power (qādiriyya), he says, is distinct from that of bringing-into-being (makawwiniyya).

3.2. Ex Nihilo

Surprisingly, in the Tafsîr, there is no in-depth treatment of creation ex nihilo: not much more than a reference in 21:240 on the words of 19:67, "Does not man remember that We created him before, when he was nothing (lam yak shay'an)......?"; nor in 29:175 on 56:57, "Who created you in the first place from nothing (min lâ shay'in)?"

He does list various meanings ascribed to the words of Q 52:35, "Or were they created out of nothing (min ghayri shay'in)?"

This verse is set in the context of an extensive pericope which begins with an assurance that Muhammad is not a soothsayer or possessed. It is followed by a verse introducing sarcastically one of the most painful insults hurled at him, i.e. that he was a poet: "Do they say that he is a poet?" (v. 30). This is followed by thirteen verses of scornful sarcasm: Did they do this; did they do that? (reminiscent of God challenging Job). Among these scornful questions, implying a negative answer, is this one in v. 35: "Were they created out of nothing?"

Having shown that the verse serves to establish both the unicity of God and the possibility of the resurrection, Râzî turns to the significance of the words "min ghayri shay'in". He says that they have a number of interpretations, the sense of them being that they (those who accuse Muhammad of being a poet) must believe that they were created without a Creator.

These interpretations of God's words of scorn for them are:

a) They were then created for no purpose, pointlessly.

b) They must have been created without father or mother, i.e. without anyone preceding them (see Q 2:21-2).

c) (From another view-point): Were they not created from earth or water (see Q 77:20)?

3 TK 21:218 (19:35)
4 TK 28:259-60
Looking at it in yet another way, Rāzī is clear that the Qur'anic text is not simply a rhetorical question, but rather a real affirmation. We have already noted his exegetical principle that, when two questions are asked in the Qur'ān, the first is a denial, the second a positive statement or affirmation.5

He cites:

a) Q 6:59: "Do you create it, or are We the Creator?";
b) Q 56:54: "Do you foster it (tazrā'dūnaha), or are We the Fosterer?";
c) Q 56:72: "Did you make the tree grow, or did We?"6

He understands "when you were nothing" (lam tak shay' an) to mean pure nothingness (al-‘adam al-ṣīf) and simple denial [of existence or being] (al-naṣīf al-maḥḍ), and he believes that Adam, and indeed other bodies, were created "‘an ‘adam maḥḍ". In the Qur'anic description of human generation in Sūra 23, Rāzī sees another sense in which this can be said to be true. Regarding the words of v. 14, "Then We created the clot a morsel", he says: "This change is called an act of khalq because He annihilates some of its [the clot's] accidents and in their place creates others [ex nihilo]."7

Whatever his views of the immediate source–material of man, Rāzī sees him, and all innovated things, as ultimately coming into existence after non-existence.8

On the basis of Q 4:1 ("Who created you from a single individual .......") the Natural Philosophers draw the conclusion that creation from pure nothingness and utter denial [of prior existence] is logically absurd.9 The Mutakallimūn reply that it is rather creation from another that is logically absurd, because if the thing created is the same ('ayn) as the thing from which it was created, then the 'new' thing is not really created at all. Rāzī completes the argument by saying: "If this created thing is distinct from the pre-existing thing, then this created, innovated thing is indeed innovated and comes to reality (ḥaṣala) from pure nothingness."

Finally, Rāzī takes creation ex nihilo as a given in arguing for a repetition

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5 See above 2.6.2.1.1.
6 TK 28:260
7 TK 21:189 (on 19:9); 19:179 (15:26)
8 TK 23:84 (23:14)
9 TK 12:151 (6:1–2)
10 TK 9:161 (4:1)
of such a creation on the Last Day.  

A question related to that of creation—ex–nihilo is the status of the non-existent (ma'dum). Towards the end of the Tafsīr (30:52–3), Rāzī presents opposing views on this matter, when dealing with the words of Q 7:1, "And He has power over all things". He relays the arguments of the Mu'tazilites who hold that, from this verse, we can conclude that the non-existent is a thing (shay'ī). The outline of their reasoning is this: What is decreed or intended (maqdūr) by God is certainly a thing. But it cannot be existent because, if it were, God, Who has power over all things, could either existentialise what already exists, or produce by His active power a purely negative effect, viz. annihilation. So the non-existent is a thing. The Ash'arites deny this, saying that it is God Who makes a substance or blackness blackness. As a free Agent, He must precede His act. "So God's existence and essence must precede the substance becoming substance and blackness becoming blackness", which therefore, as non-existents, are not things.  

Another related question, to which in at least two places Rāzī devotes some space, is whether al-khalq, i.e. God's act of creating, is itself the created thing (al-makhliiq) or something other than it (ghayruhu).  

It is not simply a semantic question which might have been dealt with under Creation Vocabulary in 1.3.1. above. It is to be understood in the context of the takwin–qudra discussion taken up by R. Frank in his review of Kholeif's edition of the Munāzarāt.  

Positing the ground of contingency outside God, as, according to Frank, Rāzī does, militates against the radical creation ex nihilo which he seems generally to affirm.  

He finds that opinions differ. "Some learned person (ālim min al-nās) says: The act of creating is the created thing. And they (sic: ihtajiū) adduce arguments from a verse [of the Qur'ān] and from reason (ma'qūl). The verse [in question] is this one [2:164], because God says: 'Indeed in the creating (khalq) of the heavens and earth and the alternation (ikhtilāf) of day and night', down to the words, 'there are signs for people who understand'. Now [they say] it is accepted (ma'ūm) that signs can only be in the created thing (makhliiq) because it is [only] the created thing which  

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11 See TK 17:30 (10:3–6) and 29:175 (56:57). On this general subject, it may be useful to refer to H.A. Wolfson, The Philosophy of the Kalam 355–372, and O'Shaughnessy 1–9.  
12 See Ma'alim 26.  
14 For a consideration of takwin–qudra in the context of God's attributes, see Ma'alim 59–60.
points to (proves the existence of: yadullu 'alâ) the Producer (ğâni'). So this verse indicates that the act-of-creating is [itself] the created thing.

As for their arguments from reason, "They come under several headings: First, khalq signifies something being drawn out (ikhrâj) from non-existence to existence. Now if this act of drawing-out were distinct from the power or the effect (athar) [of the Agent], it would be either eternal or innovated. If eternal, it would occur in eternity and would be preceded by non-existence [of the thing drawn forth]. But eternity excludes precedence. So if it did occur in eternity, you would have the juxtaposition of two opposites, and this is logically impossible. If innovated (muḥdath), it [i.e. the drawing-out] also must have a mukhrij drawing it [i.e. the ikhrâj itself] out of non-existence to existence, and it [in turn] must have another ikhrâj. So what we said in the first case (kalâm) applies here too and an [infinite] chain would be entailed."

As Râzi presents it, the second argument is not so clear. "God is not from eternity (fil-azal) the mukhrij of things from their state of non-existence to their state of existence. Does He, then, from eternity innovate (aḥdatha) a thing or not? If He does, that innovated thing (ḥâdiḥ) is the created thing (al-makhluq); if not, God never (qiṭṭu) created anything, nor ever will (yakhluqu)."

"Thirdly, influencing (mu'athhariya) is a relation (nisba) between the influencing-agent and the effect. Now a relation between two things cannot be established without an agent effecting [that] relation (muntasib). So if this influencing is innovated, an [infinite] chain is necessarily entailed; if eternal, it is necessarily entailed from the very nature of God. And whether the effect occurs immediately (fi'l-hâl) or in the future (istiqbâl), it flows necessarily from this great, eternal attribute [of influencing]. And what flows necessarily from a necessary being is [itself] necessary. So the effect is a thing that flows necessarily from the very nature of God. If that is so, God would have no power or freedom of choice (ikhtiyâr), but rather would He be under compulsion (muljâ' ) and force (muḍṭarr), vis-à-vis that act of influencing (ra'ṭhîr). And so He would be a necessitated (mâjaba) cause. But this is infidelity (kufr)."15

Râzi then goes on to summarise five arguments of those who say that al-khalq is not al-makhluq:16

"1. They say: There is no disputing (lâ nizâ') that God could be characterised as Creator before He creates things. [But] the Creator is [so] described from the act-of-creating. So if the act-of-creating were [itself]

15 TK 4:178
16 From Matâlim 59, we know that these are the scholars from Transoxiana.
the created thing, God would of necessity be characterised by created things, such as the Satans, the devils (abālīsa) and [other] vile things (qāthūrār). But no one with intelligence would say that.

"2. If we see a thing innovated [lit.: an innovated thing being innovated] after it had not existed, we say: Why does it exist (wujīda) after not existing? If the reply comes back: [Because] God created and existentialised it; we accept that as true and correct. If [on the other hand] it is said that it exists by its own power [lit.: by itself alone], then we say that is erroneous (khaṭāʾ), heretical (kufr) and contradictory (mutanāqīf). So since it is true (to say) that what caused it to be innovated was the fact that God created it — whereas it is untrue (to say) that it was innovated by its own power — we know that God's act-of-creating—it (iyāhu) is distinct from its existence in itself. So the act-of-creating is not [itself] the created thing.

"3. We know the acts of creatures and we know God and His power qudra, despite the fact that we do not know if the influencing-agent in the creature's acts is God's power or that of the creature. Now (wa) what is known is different from what is not known. So the attribute-of-influencing which puts it in the power of the agent (qādir) to make something (maqdūr) happen is distinct [both] from that power itself and from the thing. So (thumma) if this difference (mughāyara) cannot be privative (salbī: because it is the contradictory opposite of the attribute-of-influencing, which is itself loaded with negative connotations, 'adami), then this influencing is something positive (thubūtiyya), additional to the essence both of the influencing-agent and the effect. And this is what we set out to prove [i.e. that God has both attributes of qudra and khalq].

"4. According to the grammarians (nuḥah), if we say: 'God created the world [or universe: 'ālam], al-'ālam is not the mašdar, but rather the object (al-maj’ūl bihi). This shows (yadullū) that the act-of-creating—the-world is not the world. [Hence the act-of-creating is not the created thing.]

"5. We can validly speak of the creation (khalq) of black and white, substance and accident. So it is recognised (matḥūm) that the khalq is the [same] single thing in all things, and different from these various quiddities. This is shown by the fact that it is valid to divide creativity (khāliqiyya) into the creation of substance and the creation of accident. Now the significatum (murād) of the division is found (verified, shared) in

17 al-ma’ilūm ghayru mā hāwa ma’lūm. The thrust of the argument would seem to call for a negative, which is not in the text as we have it.
18 It is not easy to see in what sense the influencing is considered a negative thing.
each arm of the division. So it is established that the act-of-creating is not [itself] the created thing. [And if not the created thing, then it must be the Creator Who thus creates ex nihilo.] That is all we have to say on this question."

Rāzī's delineation of the arguments for both positions is so even-handed in the Tafsīr that it is not immediately clear to which party he himself belongs. In a parallel passage in TK 14, he does seem to come down in favour of al-khalq being al-makhlūq. Here, the double-barrelled argument, i.e. from the Qur'ān and from reason, supports the negative view. In reply to this, it is presumably Rāzī who claims that one or other of the two hypotheses must be considered in relation to that position. Either the khalq is eternal, in which case a creature is eternal; or it is innovated, thus leading to an infinite chain of khalq. Both of these, he believes, are logically impossible.

3.3. Immediate

Rāzī approves as "absolutely correct" al-Qaffāl's analysis of the Throne pericope in Q 7:54 both per viam eminentiae and metaphorically. When we use the adjective 'powerful' of God, we understand that "He can existentialise beings (kā'īnāt) and bring-into-being possible ones (mumkināt)". Reason then indicates that, "in doing these things, He is the Creator Who thus creates [itself] the created thing. [And if not the created thing, then it must be the same thing.]

19 TK 4:178-9

20 TK 14:125: "Some people say: Khalq is one of God's attributes and is not the created thing. They base their arguments for this on Scripture [this verse: 7:54] and reason (ma'qūl). As for Scripture, we have God's words, To Him belong the khalq and the command (amr). According to the Traditionalists (ahl al-sunna) [to say] 'The command belongs to God' does not mean that it is a creature of His, but rather one of His attributes. It follows then that [to say] 'The khalq belongs to God' has the same sense. This shows that the khalq is an attribute subsisting (qā'ti) in the essence of God. The rational argument is this: If we say: 'Why was this thing innovated, why does it exist (wujīda) after not being?': we reply, 'Because God created and existentialised it'. This is a valid explanation (ta'ltā'il). So if God's creating it is exactly the same thing as its actual occurrence (huṣūl), then, to say that it was-innovated-only-because God-created-and- existentialised-it would be the same as saying that it-happened-by-itself-alone (li-nafsīhi wa li-dhātihi) and not-because-of-anything-else. But that is logically impossible and absurd (bāṣā'il), because, if it were true (ṣadq hādīhā 'l-ma'nā), this would deny that it was created by (min qībal) God. So it is established that God is the creator of the creature and distinct from the essence of that created thing, which shows that al-khalq is al-makhlūq."

21 Ibid. In another place (27:259), he seems to approve of the Ash'arites saying al-khalq is the same as al-makhlūq. Here, however, khalq is not being read as a maṣdar, and simply means created things, the whole of creation.

Rāzī also deals with khalq as either divine ṣifa or makhlūq in K. Lawāmi' al-bayyināt 26-7. See Kraus, The Controversies, 142, n.2. See also Gimaret, Théories 10,189-90,205.

22 TK 14:116
independent of tools and instruments (ālāt, adwāt)". Rāzī does not spell out here how reason does establish the logical nexus between the nature of the creative act and the fact that it does not, and cannot, make use of intermediaries, but at least we know where he stands on the issue.

### 3.4. At One Stroke

In discussing the creation of the heavens and earth, we saw that, on the authority of the Qur'ān, God's creative act spanned a period of time, but it is to be borne in mind that, for Rāzī, God can, and in fact initially does, create at [one] stroke (dāf'atān). The universe is composed of individual particles, the first at least of which needs to be created at one stroke. Otherwise, "that period of time [over which it was created] would certainly be divisible into successive instants (ānār). So does anything," he asks, "of that existentialising occur in the first instant? If no part of it does, then it is outside the period (mudda) of the existentialising. If the existentialising of the thing does occur in that [first] instant, and the existentialising of another thing occurs in the second instant, then the two of them are indeed two particles of that indivisible particle. So the indivisible particle would be susceptible of division (mutajazz'ān), which is logically absurd.

"If it is, however, another thing, then the existentialising of the indivisible particle can only be in one instant, at one stroke. The same is to be said about the existentialising of all particles. So it is established that God has the power to existentialise the whole universe at one stroke. But there is no doubt, either, that he can existentialise and bring-into-being by degrees ('alā 'l-tadri')."

### 3.5. "Be! And It Is"

Rāzī embarks more than once upon a lengthy scholastic analysis when he comments on the Qur'ānic words: "Originator (bādi') of the heavens and earth! When He decrees (qadā) a thing, He says only: Be! And it is."
His first observation runs counter to what would seem to be the obvious meaning of the verse. He does not understand it to mean that God says "Be!" and then the thing comes into being (yatakawwanu).

As an example of his method and his close attention to detail, it may be of value to summarise in schematic form the whole relevant section in 4:27-8:

I. It is false (fāsid) to say that God says "Be!", and the thing comes into being.

This for seven reasons:

1. The command would have to be either eternal or innovated. But both are fāsid.

   A. Not eternal, for three reasons:

      i) Kun is composed of kaf and nun. Now the nun is innovated because it is preceded by the kaf; and the kaf is innovated also because it precedes the nun by a single unit of time (bi-zamānīn wāhi'din).

      ii) The particle idhā (when) points to a future decree (qadā) which would therefore be innovated. And the fā of ta'qib indicates a sequential relationship between the (innovated) decree and the "Be!". But what is subsequent to an innovated thing is itself innovated and cannot be eternal.

      iii) A similar fā of ta'qib expresses a sequence between the kun and the coming-into-being (takawwun) of the creature by one unit of time. Hence the word kun is innovated, just as the created thing itself is, and cannot be eternal.

   B. Not innovated (despite the above!), because if every innovated thing were to depend on the "Be!", and "Be!" itself were innovated, then, in order to arrive at creation, you would need an infinite chain of "Be's".

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27 See also TK 20:33 (16:40): "The statement (qawl) is attached to the word idhā, and there is no doubt that the expression idhā looks to (yadkhulū) the future."


29 In TK 20:32, Rāzi disagrees here with the Ash'arites who use Q 16:40 ("Our word for a thing when We intend it (ara'adnāhā) is that We say to it: Be! And it is") to prove that the Qur'ān is eternal. He seems to back off from his own reasoning summarised here in our text. "For us," he says, "this proof is not very cogent for several reasons. The first is that the word idhā does not imply repetition (takrāran). The proof (dāfīl) of this is that, if a man says to his wife: When (if) you enter the house, you will be divorced (ţiliq). So (if (when)) you enter the house once, you will be divorced once; if you enter twice, you will be divorced twice. So we know that the word idhā does not
2. Coming-into-being cannot depend on the command "Be!", because it would mean that God was either addressing something non-existent, or commanding what already exists to exist.30

3. Many created things are inanimate and, as such, unable to respond to a command.

4. Either God can existentialise or innovate without invoking "Be!", or He cannot. If He can, then existentialising does not depend on this command. If He cannot, then He is not free either to perform or omit an action at will (bi-ḥasabi 'l-ıradāt), and hence not all-powerful.

5. "Be!" of itself cannot bring into being because, if it did, we too could use it to the same effect.

6. [This deserves verbatim reporting!] "'Be!' is a word composed of kāf and nun in such a way that kāf precedes nun. So the influencing-agent (mu'aththir) [in bringing something into being] is in itself either one of these letters or both. If it were the first [i.e. one letter], the [whole] word kun would have no effect at all [in bringing-into-being]; rather the influencing is for (to bring about) these two letters. The latter [i.e. that both letters are the infl.-agent] is logically absurd, the reason being that this combination has no existence at all, because, when the first letter occurs, the second is not yet. And when the second occurs, the first no longer exists. A combination that has no existence at all cannot have any influence"!31

7. In Q 3:59, the command "Be!" is given after Adam was created from dust. But what follows cannot be an influencing-agent on what precedes it.32

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imply repetition. If that is so, it is established that it is not necessary (yalzumu), in regard to everything which God innovates, that He say to it 'Be!'. So a chain is not entailed.

30 Cf. TK 13:33 (6:73) and 21:218 (19:35). In the former passage, Rāzī says: "We have mentioned in many [places] in this book that the words, 'Be! And it is', do not have the sense of an address (khiṭāb) or command". Prior to this passage, I can find only 4:24; 13:32 and 8:53 and 76, none of which seems to make this particular point.

While Rāzī agrees with the absurdity or contradiction in this point, he does enter a qualification in 20:32 (16:40): [To make this assertion without comment] would be like denying that God can have speech (kalam) with man, that He can speak enigmatically to them (ma'ayyac cf Lane, under 'yy), or that He might address His creatures (khalq) in a way that they can understand.... Creatures are told about this [His manner of creating] according to the capacity of their intellect.

31 Cf. TK 4:27, Quest.5,n.6 (on 2:117) and 20:32-3 (16:40)

32 TK 8:76 takes up the problem caused by the words of Q 3:59: "He created him [Adam] from dust (turāb). Then He said to him: Be! And he is." According to Rāzī, Abū Muslim's explanation is that, as creating is measuring and levelling (taqdīr,
"Thus, for these reasons (wujūh), it is clear that this doctrine [about kun influencing the takawwun of a thing] is false."\(^{33}\)

II. Therefore, We Must Engage in (Have Recourse to) Ta‘wīl

This may take several forms:

1. The purpose of the command is to indicate the rapidity (sur‘a) with which God’s power brings things into being, and to say that such an act costs Him no thought or effort, nor does it require any experimentation (tajriba).\(^{34}\)

2. It is to inform the angels about the creation of something (Abu‘l-Hudhayl).\(^ {35}\)

3. God is specifying the things He is bringing into being, in somewhat the same way as He says to the wicked: "Be (kūnū) apes, despicable" (in Q 2:65 and 7:166). This is the view of al-‘Ašamm.

4. God is thus seen to command the living to die and the dead to live.\(^ {36}\)

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taswiya), it has to do with God’s knowledge about how Adam occurs (wujū) and His will that he should occur in a specific way. "His word, 'Bel!' [then] refers to Adam's being brought into existence (iddhā ilā 'l-wujūd). And thus it is clear that Adam's creation precedes God's word, 'Bel!'" In another reference to Abū Muslim's view, Rāzī reports him as holding that "Nothing is innovated, nor enters into existence, except after he says: 'Bel!'" (TK 17:15).

Al-Qāḍī, again according to Rāzī, approaches the problem from another angle. Adam is first created from clay (jin) and the "Bel!" refers to his reception of life. Whichever of these explanations is accepted, the thumma in the text evidently indicates a sequence or interval (tarākūn) in the divine activity.

33 Cf. TK 4:28 (2:117)
34 The command can also mean, as we have seen (above 3.3.), that God uses no instruments or intermediaries in creating (TK 17:26 and 27:86), nor does He have to contend with adversaries and opponents (min ghayri mu‘ārif wa la mudāfi‘: TK 27:86).
35 Cf. TK 13:33, Qu.2: "Its purpose is rather to announce the putting-into-effect (nafūz) of His power and will in bringing things into being and existentialising existsents (ijāda 'l-mawjudūn). "This last phrase seems a little careless in the light of several assertions that you cannot existentialise what already exists. See also TK 20:32, Qu. 3, where Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā‘ī, senior) is quoted for the view expressed in TK 13:33.

36 Cf TK 27:86 (40:66): "He is telling us about giving life and taking it away when He says: 'Bel! And it is'. It is as if one were to say: The transfer (intiqāl) from being dust to being a sperm-drop to being a blood-clot: these are changes which happen gradually (‘alā 'l-tadārij), little by little. As for becoming alive, this only happens by affixing (ta‘liq b) the substance of the rational spirit to it. Now this is innovated at one stroke. For this reason, we are told about it in the words, 'Bel! And it is'."
According to Rāzī, the first of these exercises in ta‘wil is the most plausible. The others are weak.

In his extended commentary on the phrase, 'Be! And it is' in Q 16:40, Rāzī notes that kāna is being used in the absolute sense,37 implying innovation and existence, i.e. "If We wish the innovation of a thing, We only say to it: 'Be innovated' (ahdīth) and it is innovated immediately (min ghayri tawaqquf) after that."38

He then gives two readings (qirā‘a) of the words, Kun fa-yakūn:

1. Fa-yakūna (i.e. subjunctive). Thus Ibn ‘Amir, al-Kisā‘i and all the Grammarians. The subjunctive means that "Be! And it is" are governed by the words, "that We say", meaning: "That We say 'Be!', in order that it may exist." Al-Zajjāj says that yakūna can be subjunctive as the jawāb to the command expressed by Kun.

2. Fa-yakūnu (i.e. indicative). Thus al-Farra‘, who says we have here a complete sentence, without predicate. We are simply told that after the word Kun, he will be (sa-yakūnu).

Abū ‘Ali disagrees with al-Zajjāj. He does not believe that God is commanding here, and hence yakūn is not in the subjunctive as a jawāb to Kun.39

To bring this section to a conclusion, we may refer to a question that is marginal to our main concern, but for which many a Muslim suffered persecution during the Abbasid period.

Rāzī considers the arguments of the Ash‘arites for or against the eternity of the Qur‘ān.40 He considers them both less than cogent. The Ash‘arites prove the eternity of the Scripture from the fact that the "Be!" is eternal. If it were not, as we have seen elsewhere, it would be innovated and entail an infinite chain of innovations. The Mu‘tazilites, on the other

37 Grammarians distinguish the kāna al-tāmma, simply indicating existence absolutely, with no object, and kāna al-nāqiṣa, the incomplete, 'deficient' kāna, which requires an object.
38 TK 20:32, Q.2.
40 TK 21:218 (19:35)
hand, propose three arguments to prove that the Qur'ān was innovated. First, the word idhā, as we have seen, indicates that the thing to be created will occur in the future. Secondly, the fa indicates (yadullu) a sequence (ta'qīb) and hence the occurrence of a delay or interval (ta'akhkhur) between the word and the decree. It also, thirdly, indicates that the thing innovated follows the word immediately. But, they say, what precedes an innovated thing without interval (viz. the Word of God) is itself innovated.

Against the Ash'arites, Rāzī says that their argument is weak because it depends on the word of command, "Be!" being eternal, which is wrong, by general agreement. And he rejects the Mu'tazilites' premise that God's Word is composed of particles and sounds.41

41 See Maʿālim 63.
### CHAPTER 4

**THE CREATOR**

#### 4.1. Names for the Creator

As an introduction to this Chapter, it may be helpful to tabulate the names attributed to God by Rāzī in the context of creation. This summarises our detailed analysis in Chapter I, under "Creation Vocabulary". The English translations assigned to them are also given, as well as an indication of whether they, or other derivatives from the same roots, occur amongst the Ninety-nine Beautiful Names of God.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME IN RĀZĪ</th>
<th>ENGLISH RENDERING</th>
<th>99 NAMES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bādi'</td>
<td>Originator</td>
<td>al-Bādi'</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mubdī'</td>
<td>Fashioner</td>
<td>al-Mubdī'</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bāri'</td>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>al-Bāri'</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fā'il</td>
<td>Maker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fāṣir</td>
<td>Appointer</td>
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<td>Ḥā'il</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khāliq</td>
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<td>Khullāq</td>
<td>Influencing-Agent</td>
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<td>Mu'aththir</td>
<td>Particulariser</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mu'ayyin</td>
<td>(Determiner)</td>
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<td>Mudabbir</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mudḥahḥib</td>
<td>Remover</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mughayyir</td>
<td>Changer</td>
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Rāzī does not derive names of God, in any technical creational sense, from the following radicals: bd', bny, dhr', kdhb, kwn, khr', rkb, swy, ẓdr and wld.¹.

4.2. Not Corporeal, nor in Space or Position

In an exhaustive study, containing 16 rational and 8 traditional or scriptural arguments, Rāzī shows how God cannot be related to the Throne

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¹ In TK 14:121, Rāzī calls God the Muṣannif (author) of the Qur'ān, but for him it would not have creational overtones. Amongst the 99 Beautiful Names, the following are also related, if less explicitly, to God’s attribute of creativity: al-ʿAlī, ʿAlī, al-Awwal, al-ʿAzīz, al-Bāʾith, al-Barr, al-Bāṣīt, al-Jāmiʿ, al-Malik, Malik al-mulk, al-Muṣīm, al-Muḥyī, al-Muʿīd, al-Mumīt, al-Muqīt, al-Rashīd, al-Razzāq, al-Wahhab and al-Wālī.
in any way that would suggest He was corporeal in nature. These arguments have already been summarised, and in great part translated. His conclusions, of course, are based on his understanding of the nature of corporeality and his concept of God. God is eternal, indivisible, necessary-by-nature, a free Agent, the Specifier, the Preponderator, independent of any other being, infinite and in no way innovated.

Bodies \( (ajsām) \), on the other hand, are composite and, as a result, divisible. From this we may infer that they are contingent, and hence, according to Rāzī's theology, have existence only through innovation. Motion is not in them by nature. They are subject to increase and decrease, another indication that they are innovated, since they need a Specifier. Bodies are characterised or specified by space and occur in a position. Two bodies cannot occupy one and the same space, nor can one body occupy several places simultaneously. Bodiliness \( (jismīya) \) is a hindrance to action: "The more deeply-rooted a thing is in bodiliness, the weaker and more diminished is its capacity for action \( (al-quwwa al-fā'iliya) \). And \[e converso\] the less a thing partakes of bodiliness, the more powerful and perfect is this capacity."
common.

"So, then, we say that that whereby they differ is:

1. *either* one of their attributes (*ṣifa*);

2. *or* something characterised by the bodies (*ma˓ṣūṭan biḥā*);

3. *or* neither of these.

"All these propositions are false (*bāṭil*):

1. [This is false] because if that whereby they differ were to be attributes existing in their nature, then regardless of those attributes, the natures in themselves (*fī-ʾanфusiḥi*) would be equal in the completeness of quiddity. And if that is so, then everything which is true of [one] body is true of all. And that is what we set out to prove.

2. This view was that that whereby bodies differ amongst themselves are things characterised by bodiliness, spatialisation and measure (*miqḍār*). This too is false, because that—thing—characterised is: a) *either* mass and spatialised (*ḥajman, mutahayyizan*); b) *or* not.

"The *first* is false. Otherwise, it would have to have another substrate (*ma˓ḥall*) and that would go on to infinity. Furthermore, on this supposition, the subject would be like what inheres (*ḥāll*) in the substrate. And there is nothing to determine (neither of the two has priority: *al-awwāl min al-aqṣā*) that one of the two should be a substrate and the other that which inheres in the substrate. So each of the two must be [both] a substrate for the other and that which inheres in it. But this is logically absurd.

[Secondly], as for that subject *not* being spatialised, while [at the same time] it has mass, we say:8 Things like that do not have specification by space, nor any connection with (dependence on: *tdʿalluq*) position. Now a body is specified by space and occurs in position. And it is impossible (*yamtaniʿu*) that such a thing inhere in something else which cannot occur in space and position.

3. The third view is also false, *viz.* that that whereby bodies differ is *neither* something inhering in the body, *nor* a substrate for it. The reason for making this assertion is that that thing would be something separate (*mubāyan*) from the body, having no connection with it.

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8 Could this be translated rather: "As for that subject not being spatialised, it has mass and therefore we say .......... "?
"So then the natures of bodies are equal in the completeness of quiddity. And that is what we sought to prove. So it is established that all bodies without exception (bi-'asriha) are equal in the completeness of quiddity. And so we say: Things which are equal in the completeness of quiddity are equal in all things that necessarily accompany (lawâzim) the quiddity. So whatever is true of some of them must be true of the others. If it is true, then, that the specification of the body (jîrm) of the sun is by a conquering, beaming radiance (bi 'l-qa'îr al-bâhir), then something akin to this conquering light must be true also of the body of the moon. And vice versa."

In all this, Râzî is, of course, building up to establish the need of a Specifier and an Appointer (Jâ'il) Who by a free act determines that the sun will have one particular kind of light and the moon another.

Space and position are essentially, if we can use the word, relative to corporeality. Little is said about these terms since Râzî describes them as "pure vacuum and simple void" (farâgh, khala'). Spaces are all essentially equal, one space cannot contain more than one body and, like bodies themselves, neither space nor position is eternal.

In the 16 arguments from reason, to establish that God is not in space or position, which we have been reviewing, Râzî in most cases proceeds by way of reductio ad absurdum. The following are logical absurdities he sees as consequent upon claiming that God is in space and position:

1. He would be composite and divisible, because:
   a) He would be in physical contact with the Throne (arg. xiv);
   b) The Throne itself would be divisible (arg. viii);
   c) If the position He occupied were without limit, the heavens and earth would dwell in His essence (arg. ii);
   d) He would be an object of sense-perception (arg. vii).

2. He would be contingent, as being subject to the contingent states of motion and rest (arg. xi), and because composition means dependence of

10 TK 14:104 (7:54).
11 Ibid. See also 18:232 (13:2) and 14:103 (7:54).
part on part and the whole on all the parts (arg. vii);

3. He would be dependent on space and position for specification (arg. iv), thus ceasing to exist when they did (args. iv and vi);

4. He would be finite, like the Throne itself (arg. ix), and as equal to the other corporeal essences generally (arg. x);

5. Thus He would be subject to increase and decrease, division and fragmentation (args. i and ii).

For these and other reasons, the eternal Muḥdith, Mūjid and Muʿaththir would stand in need of being innovated, existentialised and influenced.

To assert that God is in space and position could also imply that He would be:

a) an indivisible particle, perhaps attached to the tail of a louse (arg. vi);

b) penetrable, like a body of fine texture, or impenetrable, like rock (arg. xii);

c) above some people and below others, the world being a sphere (arg. xiii);

d) weak in action, through bodiliness, rather than One Who has power over all things (arg. xvi).12

4.3. Necessarily Existent and Self-Subsistent

God is the Necessarily-Existent (al-mawjud al-wajib) and everything other than He is possible (mumkin), i.e. contingent, by nature (li-dhatihi). Rāzi insists that the contingent must be possible, i.e. there can be no necessarily-contingent entity. This established, there ceases to be a

12 For other treatments of this question, see TK 18:232 (13:2); 27:149-154 (42:11) and 30:54 (67:1-3).

It should be noted that the above texts broach a highly technical area of Rāzi's theology. R. Frank, "Bodies and Atoms", alerts us to the complexities of vocabulary in Ash'arite scholars of the classical period (ca. 900–1100 A.D.), particularly in regard to such expressions as jism, jirm, jawhar, and juz'. He points out that there is no unanimity amongst these scholars, nor do the expressions generally convey the meaning ascribed to them in ordinary usage.
functional distinction between possible and contingent. In his commentary on 2:117 ("Originator of the heavens and earth.... And it is"), he explains his assertion in this way: "If there were two beings existing necessarily by nature, they would share in the necessity of existence (wu'ub al-wujūd). Each would be distinguished from the other by whatever it is (mā bihi) that makes them particular (ta'ayyun). But what makes them sharers in the necessity of existence is different from what makes them distinct (mumāyaza). This entails (yalzamu) that each of them is a composite of two limitations.

"Now every composite thing depends on all its particles (ajzā'), each of which is something other than the composite itself. So every composite depends on something other than itself, and as such is possible-by-essence. Thus each of the two beings, necessarily-existent by essence, would be possible-by-essence. This follows logically.

"Thus we say: If each of these two is necessary, then the disjunction (taqsīm) we have mentioned recurs. This would mean that they [each one, hence sing.] would be composed of an infinite number of particles, which is logically absurd. If we were to allow that it was not absurd, then our conclusion (maqsūd) would stand, because in every plurality (kathra) there must be a unity (wāḥid). If these unities (āḥād) are necessary-by-essence, they are composite, as we have established. So what is simple would be composite, as a logical consequence.

"If [on the other hand] they are possible, then the composite which depends on them is even more contingent."

The Necessarily-Existent is eternal, not subject to alteration and can be only one. The possible, or contingent, thing does not have existence by nature; it comes to be and ceases to exist. Implicit in the nature of the

13 See 4:23 (2:117): "Everything possible-by-essence needs an Influencing-Agent whose influence is experienced: either when it is non-existent; or while it exists. If the first, then that possible thing is innovated. If the second, then that existent needs the Influencing-Agent: either while it continues actually to exist; or when it is being innovated. The first is absurd, because it would require the existentialising of the [already-]existent. So that leaves us with the second and that calls for the innovation of that possible thing. So it is established that everything apart from God is innovated and was previously non-existent, and that its existence occurs only by the creating, existentialising and originating of God."

14 TK 4:23. For the substance of what Rāzī has to say in this place about the divine command, see above 3.5. A parallel treatment of the present matter we are examining is found in 31:45 (on 79:27). Cf. also 12:145 (6:1-2); 13:114 (6:100), where Rāzī refers to the Book of the 40 Qūrūns on the Roots of Religion, and 14:103 (on 7:54).

15 Or specifications (qaydayn). Cf. TK 31:45.

16 The feminine here refers to the āḥād.


18 TK 24:89 (25:46-8) and 29:175 (56:57)
contingent is that it must be existentialised by the Being Which is necessarily-existant by nature. As Rāzī puts it: "God is existent, necessary in se, knowing and subsistent (qā'im) in se, and in His essence, attributes, actions and judgements, independent of everything apart from Him. Everything comes from God because what exists is either necessary in se or possible in se; and He alone is necessary in se. Every possible thing exists only by being existentialised by what is necessary in se."19

4.4. Transcendent

Underlying most, if not all, of the arguments given by Rāzī to prove that God is not corporeal or in space and position, is that He is infinite and unlimited in every sense. Rāzī also equates the attribute of creativit,y, strictly taken, with divinity. Negatively, he who does not and cannot create is not God.21 Positively: "Everyone who is a creator is divine. So if the creature were to create his own actions, he would be divine."22

Rāzī devotes only four lines of commentary to the Qur'anic words, so popular among the Sūfis, "We are closer to him [man] than his jugular vein", asserting simply that God is here referring to His own intimate knowledge of man.23 He seems much more concerned to emphasise the transcendence of God than His closeness. Plain reason (ṣariḥ al-'aql), he says, tells us that God is far removed from being, for example, the thousandth part of an atom, or a particle on the tail of a louse, a conclusion which would be warranted by the assertion that He is in space and position.24 He can, however, be called a thing. Jahm, according to Rāzī, offers three arguments to support his claim that this is not so. In the present verse (13:16), God is described as "Creator of all things". If He were a thing, He would be creator of Himself.25 Secondly, another Qur'anic verse (42:11) tells us: "There is nothing like Him (layṣa

19 TK 14:127 (7:54)
21 TK 32:15 (96:1-2)
23 TK 28:162-3 (50:16)
24 TK 14:105 (7:54)
25 Jahm b. Saṭwān Abū Muḥbriz, an extreme determinist, who denied attributes in God. He was executed 745/6, towards end of Ummayad period, for civil disobedience. See Watt, The Formative Period, 121,144-5; Glasse, The Concise Encyclopaedia, 204.

It is presumably Jahm who anticipates an objection: "It [cannot be] said that this is a universal statement which admits of an exception, because such an exception is appropriate only if what is excepted is less significant and valuable (akhass) than the rest. Someone, for example, may say: 'I ate this pomegranate', even though some of its seeds had fallen out. But ...... God is the loftiest and noblest of existents. So how could a universal statement be made which would include Him, and yet He would be an exception to it?" (TK 19:33)
ka-mithlihi shay'). This means, says Jahm, "There is no thing like His likeness (laysa mithla mithlihi shay'). Now we know that every reality (haqiqa) is the likeness of its own likeness. So the Almighty Fashioner would be a likeness of His own likeness [if He were a thing].26 Thirdly, thing is not a beautiful name, including as it does the lowliest of existents, and hence cannot be applied to God, on the authority of Q 7:180: "God's are the most beautiful names. So invoke Him with them."

Both here (19:33) and in the closely-parallel passage, 30:53 (67:1–3), Râzi records the Ash'arite view that God can be designated as a thing. He says: they base this conviction on the words of Q 6:19, "Say: What thing is greatest as witness? Say: God is witness between you and me."27 And so they allow that "there must be a particular restriction (takhfsis) to this general statement [i.e. that God is Creator of all things]. This then proves that there is (found) in God's Book a qualification (restriction, particular exception: makhfsis), and that such an exception to the universal is rationally possible - nay, a fact." This is the typical Ash'arite attitude to the general and the particular.

In grappling with the problem of how to address or describe an utterly transcendent God, Râzi avail[s] of what Latin theologians have called the via negativa and the via eminentiae. He distinguishes two classes of divine attributes: 1) those which express God's sublimity (loftiness, majesty: jalal); and 2) those pointing to His nobility (honour: ikram).28 His sublimity is often described in negative terms. We say, for example, that He is not a body, nor a substance, nor an accident, nor is He in a place (makân), nor in a substrate (mâfâll). But a problem arises in this kind of negative ascription. "People would say that, in addressing God, to deny these [defective, imperfect] things of Him would be an affront (isda'a) to propriety (adab)". He presumably means that it is unnecessary, even impertinent, to make these denials, since there should never have been a question of God being so limited and imperfect.

He sees, likewise, subtle implications (daqiqa) in using terms of nobility to describe God, for example, to say that He is the Creator and a most perfect Arranger (Murattib). "If," he says, "we explain the characteristics (nu'ûd) of God's perfection and His attributes of sublimity by the fact that He is Creator of these created things, then we comment on and explain the perfection of the Creator's majesty in terms of the 'perfection' of His creatures. And that means defining the perfection of the Most High

27 Râzi does not take up the matter when commenting on this Qur'anic verse in 12:175–6
28 TK 1:147 (on Sûra 1). This distinction is found in one of the Beautiful Names, viz. Dhû 'l-Jalâl wa 'l-Ikrâm.
(mutdālin) in the vilest and most lowly (khissa, dinā'a) terms. And that would be improper (su' adab).\textsuperscript{29}

Despite such objections, he justifies offering praise and glory to God in these ways, at least as a preliminary to a more perfect worship of the Deity. And here we have one of the more sublime passages of the \textit{Tafsīr} as we see Rāzī rise on the ladder of rational thought to the heights of mystical awareness.

It must be given in full:

"The soul is submerged (mustaghriq) in the world of the senses and illusion (khayāl). Thus, if Man wants to attract (jadhaba) his soul to the threshold of the world of holiness, he needs to make it aware of the perfection of the Holy Presence. But the only path to the experimental knowledge of God's perfection and majesty is this two-fold one, viz. the recollection and repetition (dhikr) of the attributes both of majesty and of nobility. So let him be assiduous in this two-fold recollection until the soul abandons the world of sense and becomes aware that it is standing on the threshold of holiness.

"Once it has achieved this state, then at that point it becomes aware (yatanabbahu) of how much the objections we have mentioned inhere in these two kinds of dhikr. So he abandons the recitation of these attributes, and says [simply]: \textit{Yā Huwa}, as if the creature were to say: Your Rank is too mighty for me to praise and glorify You, [either] by removing from [my apprehension of] You the deficiencies of created things, [or] attributing to You their perfections. For Your perfection and Your majesty are more exalted and mightier.

"Rather, I do not praise or glorify You other than by Your \textit{huwiiyya}, from the standpoint of It being what It is. Likewise, I do not address You by the word \textit{anta}, because such an expression suggests arrogance and pride, as though the Soul/Spirit were to say: I have reached such a level of attainment that I have become like one standing in the presence of the Necessary Being. No, I add nothing to my utterance of \textit{Huwa}, so that it may be understood as a declaration that He (\textit{Huwa}) is praised in Himself for Himself, and that His rank is too exalted and sublime for things at the level of creation to be attributed to Him; for this one word tells us of those secrets/mysteries at the grades of manifestation and unveiling. Thus it follows that this \textit{dhikr} is the noblest of \textit{dhikr} since it directs us to these

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
mysteries.”

4.5. Unique as Creator

It is not so much the unity of God, as the essential core of Muslim faith, that concerns us here; it is rather God’s uniqueness as Creator of all things. In several passages of the Tafsir, Rāżī presents arguments to this end, some of which are, however, linked fairly closely to the proofs that it is metaphysically impossible to have more than one deity.

He stresses that “When we say ‘Yā Huwa’, we mean that ‘everything apart from God is pure nothing (maḥḍ al-‘adam)”31 and he tabulates all these things analytically by exclusive disjunction in TK 15:78 (7:185):

Everything apart from God:

A. Either occupies space:

1. Simple

   a. Lofty : The Heavenly Bodies and Stars
      The Throne and Chair
      The Garden and the Fire
      The Frequented House32
      The Elevated Roof of Heaven33

   b. Lowly : The 4 Elements

2. Composite : The 4 Lofty Works (āthār)34
   Animals, Plants, Minerals

B. Or exists in something occupying space: accidents

C. Neither occupies space nor exists in something occ. space:

1. Dependent on bodies for organisation and movement: Spirits:

   a. The 8 Holy Spirits carrying the Throne (Q 69:17)
   b. The Holy Spirits following them (39:75)

30 TK 1:148
31 TK 1:147 (on Sūra 1)
32 al-Bayt al-ma’mūr (Q 52:4). Variouslly considered to be the Ka’ba itself; the original model of that House in heaven frequented by the angels; or, according to Bayḍāwī, the heart of the believer.
33 al-Saqf al-marfū (Q 52:4; 21:32).
34 Rāżī does not say what these are.
c. Those who occupy the Chair (2:255)
d. The Holy Spirits in the 7 Heavens (37:1)

2. Not so dependent: The Holy Substances (al-jawāhir al-qudsiyya)

A variant of this tabulation appears in TK 12:147 (6:1) and is found below at the beginning of Chapter 5 in this thesis. All the things listed are contingent or possible: "Everything existent is either necessarily-existent-by-nature or mumkin by nature. The former is [only] one, i.e. God. Everything apart from Him is possible and comes into existence only by God's existentialising and bringing-into-being."\(^{35}\)

Rāżi elaborates this somewhat in his lengthy commentary on 7:54: "If it is established that He created some [possible] things, it must follow that he created all possibilities. We prove (tāqrīr ) this by saying that what is created needs a creator because it is by-nature-possible (li-imkānhū). This possibility is the same in all possible things, and is the reason ('illa) for the need of an Influencing-Agent that is either determining (particularising: mu'āyyin) or not determining." He says that the latter is bāṭīl because "everything existing outside [the mind; in reality] is determined (mu`a`yyan would seem to be indicated here) in itself. So it follows that what is not determined-in-itself does not exist outside the mind and hence cannot cause other things to exist outside." His conclusion is that possibility calls for an Existentialiser and a Determiner, and, finally, "He Who is the Influencing-Agent in the existence of one thing is the Influencing-Agent in the existence of all possibles".\(^{36}\)

Nothing is equal to God at the level of nature and essence (fi 'l-dhatiyā),\(^{37}\) nor can anything compare with Him. He draws this latter conclusion from, amongst other texts, the Qur'anic words, "Praise belongs to Allah" (6:1). This expression brings home the point that it is not valid to make analogies between the Truth and creatures (qiyyās al-ḥaqiq 'alā 'l-khalq), because self-glorification in the creature is repugnant, whereas it is not in God. Thus, "since His actions are not like those of creatures, so likewise, neither are His attributes nor His nature. And so we arrive at the fact that God is absolutely transcendent (al-tanzih al-muṣlaq) and totally free of any resemblance in nature, attributes or actions to anything apart from Himself.

"And this is God, may He be praised: unique in nature, sharing His attributes with no one, there being none His like (naẓīr); unique [also] in His actions, with none comparable to Him. May He be exalted and

\(^{35}\) TK 12:145 (6:1-2)
\(^{36}\) TK 14:1127 (7:54). See al-Nubuwwāt 152-5
\(^{37}\) TK 27:150 (42:11)
venerated (*taqaddasa*). God knows best.\(^{38}\)

The fact that God did not simply say, "Who created pairs", but added "all of them" (43:12), is again significant for Rāżī. He interprets the verse as meaning that *everything* which is one of a pair is created and hence the Creator must be unique (*fard mu'laq*).\(^{39}\)

Apart from Scriptural proofs, such as those which he spells out briefly in 14:122-123 (7:54), one can identify at least five rational proofs for the uniqueness of the Creator. They may, up to a point, be variations on a theme, but they are worth noting separately:

**4.5.1.** The God and Director of the world does not need to be more than a single Producer because, as the Qur'ān indicates, He has power over all objects of decree or possible things (*maqḍūrāt*) and knows all knowables. If there were more than one, the number would be either infinite (limitless), or determined (*mu'ayyan*) in such a way that the first of the hypothetical series would have no precedence over the others in the series. Rāżī feels under no constraint to do more than assert the logical absurdity of both these positions.\(^{40}\)

**4.5.2.** A second God, who would also be omnipotent and omniscient, would be Agent and Existentialiser of either some innovated things or of none. In the first case, every action which each one would do would prevent the other from bringing about what he had decreed or measured. "That means that each would of necessity cause the incapacity of the other." In the second case, if he does not existentialise anything, he would be defective and unproductive (*mu'aṭṭilan*), a description ill-befitting the Deity.\(^{41}\)

**4.5.3.** As the one God must be perfect in His divine attributes, a second god either would share all (*jamī') these attributes with him, or he would not. On the first supposition, "he would have to be distinguished in some way from the First, since without some kind of distinction, there would be no multiplicity (*ta'addud*) or duplication." Now this distinction would have to be sought *either* from among the attributes of perfection *or* not. But not all of them could be shared, otherwise there would be no basis for distinguishing one from the other. If the two deities were distinguished by something outside the class of attributes of perfection, then they would be

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38 *TK* 12:147-8 (6:1)
39 *TK* 27:197 (43:12)
40 *TK* 13:121 (6:102)


4.5.4. As sovereign deities, each would be "interested only in what he personally created (khalq) and over which he had dominion (istabadda bihi). You would see each one's kingdom distinct from that of the others. Some would surely attempt to subdue others, as you see happening amongst the kings of this world, for their kingdoms would be separate and at odds with each other (mutaghālibīn). But when no trace of separateness (tamāyuz) or struggle is evident between sovereigns, then you must know that He is only one God and in His hands is the dominion of all things".43

4.5.5. If there were two gods, each would be in need of, and at the same time independent of, the other: which is logically absurd. Rāzi's reasoning runs thus: 'If we were to suppose (qaddarnā) a second god, then he would be either able (yaqduru) to existentialise something or not. If he were unable to existentialise something, he would not be a god. If he were able to do so, then what he determined or measured out (maqdur) would be a thing, and thus a maqdūr of the first god, according to God's word [here, v. 1], 'He has power over all things'. Thus it would follow necessarily that a creature (makhluq) would be from two creators. But that is logically absurd, because if one were independent (mustaqqīl) in regard to existentialising, then neither could have any need of the other. So [at the same time] each would be in need of, and independent of, the other; which is logically absurd".44

4.6. Free, Omniscient

The theme of God acting in total freedom will run through all Rāzi's proofs for the existence of the Creator. It need not delay us here. Other constantly-recurring themes are that the Creator is All-Powerful and All-Knowing. It will suffice, for the present, to refer to one particular aspect of each of these attributes.

Ironically, the perfection of God's power extends to annihilation. Rāzi is not impressed by the view that this is absurd (yastahīl) on the grounds that reduction (ja'l) to non-being could not be the effect of an active power.45 Quite the contrary, he says, when commenting on Q 23:16 ("Then you will be raised up on the Day of Resurrection"): "God made

42 Ibid.  
43 TK 23:117 (23:91)  
44 TK 30:53 (67:1-3). Other references to the matter of God's uniqueness, especially as Creator, may be found in 8:55-6 (3:49); 9:137 (3:191); 13:112ff (6:100); 14:112ff (7:54); 20:217-20 (17:42); 22:150-159 (21:22); 26:124-6 (37:11), 242 (39:4-6); 30:198-9 (74:11); 31:138-40 (87:2), 167 (89:8), 197-8 (92:3); 32:14-16 (96:1-2), 174-80 (112:1).  
45 Here Rāzi parts company with his Ash'arite colleagues. See Ma'ālim 34.
killing (imāta), which is the i'dām of life, and raising (ba'th), which is the restoration of what was destroyed and annihilated (yu'fnihi, yu'dimuhu), two proofs (also) of [His] great power (iqtidar) after things had been initiated in being and devised (al-inshā wa'l-ikhtirā)".46

He disagrees with those who hold that, in the Resurrection, God "separates (yufarriqu) the particles of bodies and does not annihilate them, [but] brings them together again (yu'ldu tarkibaha)". He believes that Q 21:104 ("As We began (bad'a nā) the first creation, [so] We will repeat it") prove that "He does annihilate them entirely (bi'l-kulliya) and then existentialises them again exactly as they were (bi-'aynihā)...... God likens the Resurrection to the Beginning (ibtidā). And since the Beginning does not imply the composition of separate particles, but rather existence after non-existence, so what happens (fyal) at the Resurrection must be like that."47 He is quite categorical, then, about his own position: "Only God can be described as existentialising from non-existence and annihilating from existence". Again: "The bodies of the heavenly spheres are created. So they are subject to non-existence, separation and disintegration", contrary to the view of Aristotle and his followers.48

With regard to the omniscience of God, mention will be made here only of His knowledge of particulars. With the Mutakallimūn, Rāzī set himself against the Philosophers on the basis of Q 2:29, "He knows all things".49 These words, he says, "show that He can only be Creator of the earth and everything in it, and of the heavens, and the wondrous and rare things in them, if He knows about them, and if He has comprehensive (muhīt) knowledge of particulars and universals (juz'iyāt, kulliyāt)."50 The Theologians prove this by pointing out that God is Agent of these bodies in a precise and perfect way (iḥkam, ittiqan).51

4.7. "The Best of Creators"

This expression is used only twice in the Qur'ān (23:14 and 37:125), but it has generated some discussion. There is also an interesting story, with more than one version, about how these words found their way into the Qur'ān. In his commentary on 23:14 ("So blessed be God, the Best of

46 TK 23:86. Also Ibid. 84: "This change [from clot to morsel] is called khalq because He annihilates (yu'fni) some of its accidents and creates others."
47 TK 22:229. See also 17:30 (10:4): "The Return (Resurrection: i'āda) is like the Beginning. But since it is established that God indeed creates them in the Beginning from non-existence, then we must say that He also reproduces (repeats) them from nothing".
48 TK 30:52 (67:1-3); 24:47 (25:2-3) and 17:28 (10:3-6)
49 Cf. Ma'ālim 51
50 TK 2:158
Creators"), Rāzī gives al-Kalbi's account which he traces back to Ibn 'Abbās. 'Abdullah bin Sa'd bin Abī Sarḥ was, apparently, secretary to Muhammad and, at the Prophet's dictation, wrote down the description of man's generation in v. 14, closing with the words, "And then We initiated it [him, flesh?] in being (ansha'nāhu) as another creation." He was in such admiration of these words that he spontaneously exclaimed: "Blessed be God, the Best of Creators!" Muhammad immediately rejoined: "Write that down, because that is how (fa-hākadhā) it was revealed." 'Abdullah was in a quandary. "If Muhammad is speaking the truth," he reasoned, "then there has been revealed to me what was revealed to him. If he is lying [on the other hand], then his religion is no good." Best safety lay in flight, he thought, and he promptly fled to Mecca, where some said that he died in infidelity, others that he accepted Islam and was spared the death-penalty, when Muḥammad came victorious to the Holy City.\(^{52}\)

It is not clear to me whether Sa'id bin Jubayr's story, also resting on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, is another version of the above, or an additional incident. According to Sa'id, when the verse was revealed, 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, the second Caliph after Muḥammad's death, said: "Blessed be God, the Best of Creators", and Muḥammad replied: "That is how it has been revealed, O 'Umar". 'Umar used to list four things that Muḥammad agreed with him upon, and one was this phrase. Rāzī sums up by saying that scholars ('ārifun) saw this incident as an occasion of happiness for 'Umar and of distress (shaqāwa) for 'Abdullah. "As God says [2:26]: 'He misleads many thereby, and many does He guide thereby.'\(^{53}\)

According to Rāzī, the Mu'tazilites draw three conclusions from the phrase. The first is that God must be Creator of His own act.\(^{54}\) It is hard to follow the comparison here, as summarised by Rāzī: "The Mu'tazilites say that if God were not Creator of His act when He measured it out (qaddarahu), then we could not say that He was the best of creators – just as, if none of His creatures were wise and compassionate, we could not say that He was the Wisest of the wise or the most Compassionate of the compassionate." Perhaps, anticipated here is the Mu'tazilites' second conclusion, viz. that man creates his own actions, since linguistically, creation is every action (fi'l) which has existence (wujīda) from its agent by measure (miqdāran), not as a result of negligence or inadvertence (sahw, ghafla)."

Admittedly, man is a 'creator' in a qualified sense only, as, in his case,

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52 TK 23:86. See also Sale, Comprehensive Commentary II 182 n.94.

Muḥ. b. al-Sā'īb al-Kalbi (before 685–763/4), Kūfani historian and genealogist. Wrote a commentary on the Q. of which several mss. are extant. See Jomier 151.

53 Ibid.

54 TK 23:85
measuring is the result of consideration and calculation (zann, hisbān). They (Rāzī?) agree that this verse is one of the mutashābihāt. And, thirdly, God cannot create infidelity or anything evil, because the "Best of Creators" must create everything "[in] excellence, wisdom and correctness (husn, hikma, sawāb)".

As we have seen, in the examination of the origin of man's acts, the Ash'arites judge all texts, especially the mutashābihāt, in the light of the Qur'anic assertion that God is Creator of all things (e.g. 35:3 and 16:17). So the phrase, "Best of Creators", must be understood anthropomorphically (fi itiqadikum wa zannikum).

4.8. No Fit Subject for Reflection

For Rāzī, God is making a conscious, explicit distinction between dhikr and fikr when He says in Q 3:191: "Those who remember (recall: yadhkurūna) God as they stand, sit or recline; and reflect (yatafakkarūna) on the creation of the heavens and earth, [and say]: O Lord of ours! You did not create this without purpose." God is pointing out that dhikr is not complete (la yakmulu) without fikr. The activities indicated by these terms, however, are directed to different objects.

Rāzī several times quotes the Prophet's saying: "Reflect (tafakkaru) on creation, not on the Creator". In his first comment, Rāzī says that we can know God, not in Himself, but by the via negativa: "Note that God wants us to recall Him affectively (dhikr). As far as fikr is concerned,

55 Ibid. Cf. TK 26:161 (37:125). While Jesus is the only human being described in the Qur'ān as 'creator', the Mu'tazilites, according to Rāzī, hold that creativity is not his exclusive property, because 'creators' is in the plural. Anyone who fashions things (mujawwir) is a 'creator' (TK 23:85).

56 TK 23:86
57 See also 24:46–7 (25:2–3).
58 TK 9:136. The basic meaning of dhikr is remembering and verbally recalling. A repeated, ritual recitation of consecrated words and phrases has had its place in many religious traditions, especially in the Sāfi movements in Islam. Muslim theologians identify at least 18 meanings to the word as found in the Qur'an. Fikr is reflection. A consideration of the relative value of these two spiritual exercises confronted Muslim mystical writers from the early times. For dhikr, see Macdonald's entry in SEI 75 and Gardet's in EI2 II 223–7. For fikr, see Gardet, op cit. 891–2.
59 Cf., e.g., TK 295–6 (2:21–2), 9:137 (3:191) and 17:169 (10:101)
however, He does not want us to reflect on Him, but rather on the states of the heavens and earth. It is in harmony with this verse that Muḥammad says: 'Reflect on creation, not on the Creator'. This is because we cannot reason (istidlāl) from creation to the Creator by way of an attribution (naʿīt) [implying] similarity (mumāṭhala), but rather by way of contrast (mukhālaṭa). So we reason from the innovation of these sensible things (mahṣūsāt) to the uncreatedness (qidam) of their Creator; and from their quantity, quality and outward form to the fact that their Creator does not have any of these characteristics.

Deliberately leaving aside the mystical implications of another saying of Muḥammad, "Whoever knows himself (nafs), knows his Lord", Rāzī takes it to mean: "Whoever knows himself as innovated (bi 'l-hudūth) knows his Lord as uncreated (bi 'l-qidam). And whoever knows himself as contingent (bi 'l-imkān), knows his Lord as necessary (bi 'l-wujiḥ). And whoever knows himself as dependent or in need, knows his Creator as independent, lacking in nothing." He concludes, then, that according to this verse (3:191), reflection on the created world is possible, but reflection on God quite impossible (ghayru mumkin al-batta), because he can be conceived (yataṣawwara) only negatively: "He is not substance, nor accident, nor composite (murakkab, mu'allaf), nor in a position. There is no doubt that His specific reality is different from these negative attributes and there is no way for the intellect to come to know this reality. So the mind is totally confused (ka 'l-walihi 'l-madhushi, l-mutaḥayyar) in this matter.

"It is for this reason, then, that the Prophet forbade us to reflect (tafakkur) on God, whereas he directed us to reflect on created things. And because of the subtlety of this matter, God commands in these verses that we exercise dhikr concerning Him, but when He speaks of reflection (fikr), He does not ordain that we reflect on Him, but rather on the things He has created."60

We shall see shortly what Rāzī has to say about the positive part of the Prophet's directive, "Reflect on creation". Here we should note that that exercise itself, while valid and in fact commanded by God, reinforces for Rāzī the conviction that God is not an appropriate subject for reflection. The reason for this is that reflection on the created world itself shows the inadequacy of the human intellect. It is a telling a fortiori argument. We can look, he says, at a little leaf and see at its centre a single, outstretched (extended: mumtadd) stem ('irq), from which there branch out to both sides other stems and thinner ones again from them, until they are so fine that we cannot see them. This brings home to us the extent of the

60 TK 9:137
Creator's wisdom and the wonder of His secret direction of things (tadbīr). God then places in the leaf the power to attract (jādhīb) nourishment from the depths of the earth into its every part. There is no way that man can comprehend this process. "So if he knows that his mind is incapable (qāṣir) of investigating how this tiny leaf was created, and then he compares it to the heavens – with the sun, moon and stars; and to the earth – with the seas, mountains, minerals, plants and animals: he knows that, by comparison with these things, this leaf is as nothing. Then (so), if he recognises that his mind is incapable of knowing this lowly thing (haqīr), he knows that there is no way at all that he will be able to comprehend (iṭṭilāʾ) the wonders of God's wisdom in the creation of the heavens and earth."

Rāzī calls this a luminous, demonstrative proof (al-burḥān al-nayyir), and "it only remains for man to recognise that the Creator is too sublime and great (ajall, aʿẓam) to be encompassed by human description or the learning of the experts. Rather, he declares that in everything that God has created there are far-reaching wisdom and excellent secrets which can in no way be known by man." 61

61 *TK* 9:137-8
CHAPTER 5

PROOFS FROM CREATION OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

5.1. "Reflect on Creation"

Despite the apparent limits set to the power of reason and the agnostic note struck in his comment on "Do not reflect on the Creator", Rāżī makes it abundantly clear, both by his positive avowal and, of course, by the vast project he undertakes in the Tafsīr, that he is wholeheartedly behind the Prophet's command, "Reflect on creation". He believes that taqlīd, the blind adherence to traditional faith which does not engage the mind, jeopardises the fulfilment of this command. One senses a note of asperity in what he has to say about it. He acknowledges the difficulty of speculative thought for the ordinary person ('āmī) who, consequently, over-rates (yu'azīmu) his faith in the Qur'ān. But, says Rāżī, 'it is undiscriminating faith, based on blind authority ('tiqadan taqlidīyan ijmāli'yan)'. The expert (muḥaqiq) interpreter, who "pores ceaselessly over (yuṭlī) the wonderful secrets and exquisite subtleties to be found in every verse, has a more perfect faith in the greatness of the Qur'ān than one who accepts it blindly".¹ This taqlīd is "a futile thing (bāţīl), of no consequence (lā 'ibra bihi), and no consideration should be paid to it". It is "impermissible", and we must come to a knowledge of God by deductive and inductive reasoning (naẓar, istsīdāl), not through blind faith.²

For Rāżī, Q 3:191 is telling us that tafakkur on the proofs (dalā'il) for God's essence and attributes is the "highest level [of human activity] that the righteous can attain."³ The material of these proofs is the world (ālam), by which Rāżī understands the Qur'ān (as in rabb al-ālamīn, in 1:2) to signify "everything apart from God", the whole universe.

In TK 12:147 (on Q 6:1: "Praised be God Who created the Heavens and Earth and appointed darkness and light"), Rāżī presents a variant of the

¹ TK 9:137
³ TK 9:138
schema which he gives in 15:78 (see 4.5. above):4

The 'Alam (i.e. the universe):
A. Is either a Body:

1. Celestial:

   The Glorious Throne
   The Lofty Chair
   The Preserved Tablet
   The Pen
   The Cushions in Paradise (rafraf: Q 55:76)
   The Frequented House
   The Lote Tree in the farthest Heaven (Q 53:14,16)
   The Strata of the Heavens
   The Fixed Stars
   The Revolving Planets

2. Elemental:

   The Four elements
   The Three categories: mineral, vegetable, animal

B. Or a Bodily State:

   Lowly things, e.g. bed-bugs, gnats
   Genera and species (remote and proximate)

C. Neither Body, nor Bodily State: Spirits:

   Lower (Thronal)
   Higher (celestial)
   Ranks of holy Spirits
   Relations of bodies (cf. Q 21:19: "Those with Him").5

Much of this reflection is related to astronomy. Some people, described by Rāżī as ignorant, stupid unfortunates, criticise him for devoting so much time to this in his Commentary, saying that this is "not the Muslim

4 He sees this as the correct order of our reflection on creation, twice reminding us, however, that our exercise is like embarking on a sea that has no shore, since we are reflecting on every reality apart from God.
5 A much simpler schema is given in TK 17:169, where we find another citing of the Prophet's command.
His arguments are as follows:

1. The Book is filled with proofs (istiqlāl) of the knowledge, power and wisdom of God, taken from the condition and movements of the heavenly bodies. They occur in many Sūras and are reiterated time and again.

2. Astronomy is essentially reflection on how God created and constructed the heavenly bodies. The Qurʿān encourages this study when it says: "Do they not then look up to the heaven above them, how We have built it and adorned it, and [do they not see that] it has no flaws (furūj)?" (50:6)

3. God encourages us to reflect on the bodies of men (Q 51:21). But "the creation of the heavens and earth is certainly greater than that of man" (40:57). "So it is more appropriate (awlā) that we be required to reflect on the states of [those] bodies which are loftier in the order of being (as things) and more cogent (aʿzam) as proofs (burhān) than we are."

4. God praises those who reflect on the creation of the heavens and earth (mutaṣṭakkirūn), as we saw above in Q 3:191. He would not have done this if it were a thing prohibited.

5. The argument that follows (listed as the fifth in our printing of the Tafsīr), seems to be less a Qurʾanic justification of fikr on things astronomical than an explanation of the nature of this task.

Someone, Rāzi says, may write a noble book, without equal, comprising the finest points of the rational and revealed sciences. There are two reactions to such a work. Some will simply accept it in general, without going into its fine points; others will study and analyse it in detail, moving from argument to argument (al-barāhīn al-mutawātira wa l-dalāʾil al-mutawāliya). This second approach has an immense influence in strengthening certainty and removing doubts.

The purpose of God's Book, then, is not to encourage fanciful ideas, useless etymologies (al-iṣtiqāqūt al-khāliyaʾan al-fawāʾid) or misleading narratives, but rather to strengthen our certainty and remove doubt, above all, in regard to the existence of an Innovator of the universe. And "the greater one's knowledge of the details and subtleties of this Book, the more perfect is one's conviction (iʿtiqād) about the greatness and splendour (jalāla) of the Author (Muṣannif)." This approach is "more perfect,
Rāzī took up this point in 2:57 (2:7): "Insisting (tamassuk) on proofs based on language (al-dalā'il al-lafẓiyya) does not lead to certainty, whereas rational ones ('aqliyya) do...... Language-proofs invoke principles, all of which are [only] probable (zannlya)...... because they are based on lexicography, syntax and accident. And one does not know, about those who transmit (ruwāh) these things, whether or not they have fulfilled the requirements of transmission (tawātur). So their transmission is [only] probable."

A fundamental principle of this approach is also the refusal to recognise the use of homonyms, figurative language (majāz), particularisation or specification of the universal (takhṣīṣ), any degree of ellipsis (iḏmār) or hyperbaton (al-taqdīm wa 'l-ta'khīr). But this assertion, says Rāzī, cannot be established with certainty. A second basic stance of the literalists, which he also finds unacceptable, is that reason can offer no opposition to their arguments. "How [otherwise] have we found here rational arguments that do [in fact] oppose the literal sense?" Thus these two kinds of proof cannot be at the same time true or at the same time false. Nor can tradition prevail (tarjit) over reasoning, "because reasoning is fundamental to tradition, and [so] if we question (ta'n) reasoning, we must question both reasoning and tradition." So he concludes that "the argumentation (dalāla) in these traditional proofs is [only] probable. And there is no doubt that what is [only] probable does not contradict what is certain."

See also TK 2:87–96 (2:21–2), where he says that, despite the view of the literalists (qawm al-ḥashwiyya) that, on many grounds, kalām and nazar are heresy, "there is no way to the knowledge of Almighty God except by deductive reasoning and inductive proof (nazar, istidlāl)...... We have tradition and reason in support of our position (madhab)." (p.87)

This may suffice as Rāzī's apologia for his proofs. His perspective on the rational exercise is, however, a balanced one. While unswerving in his loyalty to the Prophet's command, and a champion of our reasoning powers, Rāzī does not see the meditation or reflection on Creation as the end of the line. "Know that the purpose of this noble Book," he says, "is to entice (jadhb) hearts and spirits (arwāḥ) away from being too preoccupied with Creation while becoming absorbed in the [experiential] knowledge (mārija) of the Truth." (9:133, on 3:190). And a little further on (p.134), he warns of the danger of rational arguments becoming "like a veil between [man] and his heart's absorption in the knowledge of God."
5.2. Methodology

We may broadly distinguish in Rāzī two sets of proofs for the existence of a Creator-God. The first, which we find in his systematic treatises, are cosmological proofs, set down in strict *Kalam* terminology. The second group, which he feels are more powerful in convincing the common man, are arguments from design. It is on these that the *Tafsir* concentrates. It should be noted that this second group dovetail in with the first.

Rāzī’s discussion of the proofs is a striking example of his concern to justify as ideal the order of proofs to be found in the *Qurʾān*. See, for example, *TK* 20:12 (16:17–20): "God gives proofs for the existence of the Powerful and Wise One, according to the most fitting arrangement and order."* In taking his cue always from the Qur’anic text and context, he is led, as we shall see, to defend different, even opposite, orders and variant groupings and numbers of proofs. A good example of this is found in his commentary on 71:14–15: "Note that sometimes God starts with proofs (*dalā'il*) from souls (human individuals) and then gives the proofs from the heavenly bodies, as in this verse [these verses]. This is because the soul of man is the closest thing to man; so it is natural that God should begin with what is closest to him. Sometimes [however] He begins with the proofs from the heavenly bodies, and then takes up those based on souls: either because the former [proofs] are more brilliant and greater (*abhar, aẓam*), and thus come first; or because the proofs from souls are included (*ḥadīra*), and there is no need to meditate (*ta'ammul*) on them. In fact, [for] anyone who needs to meditate on them, there are the proofs from the heavenly bodies, because the similarities between the two are many. So then it is natural that they [the proofs from the heavenly bodies] should come first."

Rāzī warns us that we have to be aware of the limits of human reason and, furthermore, that some proofs which are valid in themselves have no cogency in certain quarters. He cites the creation of the earth in two days. "This cannot be proved," he says, "by reason alone, but only by revelation (*bi 'l-samili*) and the Prophets' (pl.) inspiration. But unbelievers reject inspiration and prophecy, so these cannot be used to establish [our] premise." By the same token, he says, "neither can we thereby prove

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8 He adds: "Just as these are proofs, so also are they an explanation and a listing (*tafṣil*) of, the categories of God's favours and the various examples of His beneficence (*iḥsān*)."
9 *TK* 30:139–40
Further observations about this divine methodology, which by definition has to be perfect, will be made in relation to the pertinent pericopes of the *Tafsir*.

### 5.3. Proofs from Creation

Rāzī notes that "God filled His Book with proofs (*dalā'il*) of His knowledge, power and wisdom by means of the changing states of the heavens and earth, the succession of night and day, the character of light and darkness, and of the sun, moon and stars. He mentions these things in very many Sūras and repeats and reiterates them (*karrara, 'āda*) time and again."\(^{11}\)

Consequently, he returns frequently to this subject throughout the *Tafsir*. Many of these passages we shall look at fairly closely, but it may help to mention here texts in which he makes a general reference to the other pertinent ones in the *Commentary*. He refers, for example, to "other places in this book" where he deals with proofs taken from the heavens and the elements (26:243–5, on 39:4–6) and from human generation, which he considers one of the most evident proofs (31:130, on 86:5–7). He says, on the one hand, that he has treated the proofs from the heavens and earth "very frequently" and that there is no point in repeating them (15:76, on 7:185); on the other, however, that despite mentioning them "at length" throughout the book, it does not hurt to refer again to some of their *fawā'īd* (19:126, on 14:32–4). See also 19:223 (on 16:3–5). In 27:128 (on 41:37), he mentions "in particular" his commentaries on two Qur'ānic texts, viz. "Praise belongs to God, Lord of the worlds" (40:64), and "Praise to God, Who created the heavens and earth" (6:1–2).\(^{12}\) He says he has commented "several times" on this kind of proof.

### 5.3.1. Proofs in Detail

Two substantial analyses of the proofs for the existence of a Creator occur in his commentary on Sūra 2 ("Al-Baqara"), viz. in *TK* 2:97–8 (2:21–2) and

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10 *TK* 27:101–102 (41:9–11). St. Thomas Aquinas issues a similar *caveat* with regard to the general question of creation in time: "That the world began to exist is an object of faith, not of demonstration or science. And it is useful to consider this lest anyone, presuming to demonstrate what is of faith, should bring forward reasons that are not cogent (*necessarias*), so as to give occasion to unbelievers to laugh, thinking that on such grounds we believe things that are of faith" (*Summa Theol.* 1,46,2). Rāzī, as we shall see in 5.3.1.1.2., does believe that creation in time can be proved by reason.

11 *TK* 14:121 (7:54)

12 See *TK* 27:84 and 12:145–154, which will be discussed below.
4:178–203 (2:164). There are four references back to these texts, which will be examined in their proper place.\textsuperscript{13}

Rāzī’s presentation of the proofs will be grouped here numerically, \textit{i.e.} according as he finds two, three or more arguments, either in the Sacred Text or as implicit therein. Beginning with the first pericope in the \textit{Qur’ān} to deal with this matter constrains us to look at the “Six” grouping first. This procedure has an element of the artificial about it, particularly as more than one grouping may appear in the same passage, but it does enable us at least to study the proofs in manageable instalments.

5.3.1.1. Six Proofs

5.3.1.1.1. \textit{TK} 2: 97–8 (on \textit{Q} 2:21–2)

At the outset of this extended treatment of the proofs, Rāzī takes as an accepted principle that knowledge of God’s existence is not self-evident (\textit{darūriya}), but is to be gained rather by argumentation (\textit{istidlāli}).\textsuperscript{14} He then recapitulates the analysis of this argumentation which he has already given, he says, in his philosophical (\textit{aqliya}) works.\textsuperscript{15}

"The sum–total," he says, "of proofs for God’s existence is six and not more."\textsuperscript{16}

God’s existence is established:

1. \textbf{From the possibility of essences (\textit{dhawāt}).} He invokes here, without comment, the following Qur’ānic pericopes:\textsuperscript{17}

   a) "God is all–sufficient, whereas you are needy" (47:38)

   b) "’They are an enemy to me’, says Abraham, ’except the Lord of the worlds’" (26:77)

   c) "And unto your Lord is the final end (\textit{muntahā})" (53:42)

\textsuperscript{13} There is one reference to the first text in 19:222 (16:3–5), two to the second in 9:134 and 135 (3:190) and one to the second in 27:257 (45:3–5).
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{TK} 2:97
\textsuperscript{15} We shall give references at the appropriate places.
\textsuperscript{16} In a long preface to this analysis, Rāzī finds \textit{five} proofs in the text of \textit{Q} 2:21–2, \textit{viz.} those legally responsible, the Ancients, the heavens, the earth and fruit from the rain coming out of heaven (\textit{TK} 2:88). God also adduces proofs, he says, from the angels and most of the Prophets.
\textsuperscript{17} Not all of which, in fact, seem immediately pertinent.
d) "Say: 'Allāh'. Then forsake them" (6:91). "Then flee to God" (51:50). "Surely by recalling God, their hearts are set at rest" (13:28).18

2. From the possibility of attributes (ṣifāt):19

a) "He created the heavens and earth" (7:54)

b) "He Who made the earth a resting-place for them, and the heavens a building" (here, v.22).

3. From the actual innovation of bodies (ajsām). He finds a hint in Abraham's words: "I do not like things that set" (6:76).20

4. From the actual innovation of accidents. "This is the easiest way for people to understand (ilā afhām al-khalq)."

It seems to be under this heading that he treats of the two starting-points for proof, to which he returns several times, viz. the heavens (āfāq) and the human soul or individual.21

In the passage that follows, Rāzī says that "Here [i.e. Q 2:21–2], God brings them together:

a) the human soul: it is self-evident to every person that he did not exist at one time and that now he is existing. And [furthermore] that whatever exists after not existing must have an existentialiser, who is neither himself, nor his parents nor anyone else, because it is self-evident that creatures (khalq) are incapable of accomplishing this. So there must be an Existentialiser Who will distinguish (yukhālifu) these existents to the point that these [particular] persons come into reality (yaṣīhhu) from the ranks of creatures.

Rāzī accepts as possible the objection that perhaps the physical constitutions of the seasons, the heavenly spheres and the stars may be the influencing-agent that brings them into being, but says that God's words here, ("He Who made the earth a resting-place for them and the heavens a building"), indicate the need these human souls have of an Innovator and Existentialiser.

b) As for the proof from the heavens, commentaries on the Qur'ān list

18 Our printing gives these three texts under the one set of quotation-marks.
19 Again, Qur'anic texts whose relevance is not immediately evident.
20 TK 13:46–56
21 See, for example, 9:137 (3:190); 19:224 (16:3–5); 27:84 (40:64) and 30:139 (71:14–15). "The [our] metaphysical books (al-kutub al-ilāhīya) for the most part deal with (mushtamil) these two" (here, in TK 2:97). See also 17:9 (10:3–4).
the changing conditions of the world, thunder, lightning, clouds and seasonal variations. But the general principle that the commentators are invoking is that the heavenly bodies and the elemental ones have corporeality in common. So it cannot be bodiliness, or anything deriving necessarily from it, that cause specifically distinct characteristics of measure, form and extension. It must be something other than the bodies themselves.

"Now," he continues:

i) "if this thing is a body [itself]: then we are forced to the conclusion that it [the body postulated] does not derive its own special characteristics from the agent which exerts this influence on bodies [in general].

ii) "if it is not a body: then it is either acting by necessity (mūjāb) or free choice. The first is false; otherwise, the specification of some bodies with certain (some) properties would be no more likely to happen than the opposite. Hence, this thing must have power of determination (qādīr) to bring them into being."

He concludes that all bodies need an Influencing-Agent Who has power of determination and is [Himself] neither a body nor bodily in nature.22 Also, that as a result of the above (inda hādhā), we must incorporate the fifth and sixth bases of proof, as indicated in the schema at the opening of this passage, i.e. "we cannot reason to the existence of the Producer from the actual innovation of accidents without invoking the support of their possibility [as well]."23

Rāzī then gives two reasons why God specifically mentions this kind of proof at the beginning of the Qur'ān:

1. "Since this way [of presenting arguments] is the easiest for people to understand, and most in harmony (īltiṣāq) with the reasoning faculty - and the proofs mentioned above are in the Qur'ān - they [the proofs] must be as free as possible of subtlety (diqqa) and most accessible (closest) to the intelligence, so that people of both high and low station may profit therefrom ..........

2. "The purpose of the Qur'anic proofs is not argumentation for its own sake, but rather that hearts should acquire the articles of faith (a'qā'id). Such proofs carry more weight than others in this regard, because, just as

22 TK 2:97-8
23 Ibid. 98. It is not so clear how the fifth and sixth elements add to the general line of argumentation.
they lead to the knowledge of the Creator's existence, so they [also] recount the benefits that the Creator has bestowed upon us. Indeed, existence and life are among the great benefits we have received, and to be reminded of [these] blessings is one way leading to love, harmony and obedience (tark al-munāza'a, inqiyād).

"So for this reason, it is preferable to present such proofs as these rather than any others."24

5.3.1.1.2. *TK* 19:222-235 (on Q 16:2-5)

Most closely related to this first passage (in *TK* 2:97-8), and one which makes several explicit references back to "Al-Baqara", is Rāzi's commentary on 6:2-5 in *TK* 19:222-235.

By way of introduction, he says that v. 2 gives us the key to our purpose in studying the proofs of God's existence. There the Almighty had explained that the knowledge of *al-Hāqq* was for itself (and so God says: "Annahu là ilāha illa annā"), and that knowledge of the Good was that it might be put into practice (and this is the meaning of "fa-'ttāqūni").25 He follows this, then, by mentioning proofs for the existence of God—the Creator and the perfection of his power and wisdom.

In an implicit reference to 2:97-8, he says that he has already explained that the proofs of divinity are either by way of contingency in their essences or attributes, or innovation in their essences or attributes; or by way of the combination of contingency and innovation in their essences and attributes. These are the "six avenues of proof".26 The method set out in God's revealed books is by way of innovation of attributes and changes within them.27

Rāzi notes that this method is applied in two ways:

One of them is by commitment to the principle of passing from the most manifest to the most hidden, and this is the application followed in the early part of *al-Baqara* (2:21-2). The Almighty said: "Worship your Lord Who created you" (2:21), thus treating the changes that occur in every individual thing as a proof that it needs a Creator. Then He mentioned the proof by way of the succession of fathers and mothers, in

24 *Loc. cit.*
25 *TK* 19:222
27 *Ibid.* See also 17:9 (10:3-4): "Most of the proofs (dalā'il) mentioned in the revealed Books (kutub) are based on the possibility and [actual] innovation of attributes, sometimes in the changing conditions of the upper world, sometimes in those of the lower".
His words, "And those who went before you" (ibid.). After that, He mentioned the proof by way of changes occurring in the earth, when He said: "Who made the earth a resting-place for you" (v. 22), because the earth is closer to us than the sky; which He mentions then in the fourth place, saying: "And the heavens as a building" (ibid.). In the fifth place, He refers to the changes generated by the structuring of earth and sky: "And He sent down water from the sky, and thereby brought forth fruits for your nourishment" (ibid.).

This approach differs from that of "Al-Nafîr" (16:2-5), which we are studying here in 5.3.1.2., and in which God presented His arguments by moving from the most exalted to the lowliest: first, the most sublime celestial bodies; secondly, the changes occurring in man; thirdly, those occurring in animals; fourthly, the changes in plants; and, finally, those occurring in the four elements. Râzî considers the structure of this argumentation eminently appropriate.

His discussion of this two-fold approach is an excellent example of how he discovers principles of order in the essentially poetic logia of the Qur'ân, and then presents this discovery in a rational structure in accord with his own philosophical ideas.

In dealing with the most sublime celestial bodies (Q 16:3), he refers the reader to his commentary on 6:1, "Praise be to God, Who created the heavens and earth", where he says that "the expression Creation (khalq) proves (yadullu), from so many points of view, the need for a Wise Creator. There is no harm in returning to them here." He bases his arguments from the heavenly bodies on three premises and on the definition of creation as being "measuring with a specific measure or amount".

The arguments may be summarised as follows:

1. **Every body is finite.** This includes the heavenly bodies. But the particular finite quantity and volume that they have is a matter of possibility (jâ'iz). Every such thing, however, needs a Measurer and a Specifier, and, because of this dependence, they are innovated.

2. **Eternal motion is impossible.** Whether the heavenly bodies are non-existent in eternity, or existent but at rest and then in motion: either

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28 Ibid.

29 The Tafsîr has "the second of the Qur'anic dalâ'il". It is, in fact, the second wajh, or procedural method, employed by God.

30 TK 19:223. His reference is to TK 12:145ff, which we shall discuss below in 5.3.1.4.
way, there is an innovation of motion, which is a creation and a measuring. "So that a beginning needs a Measurer, a Creator and a Specifier."31

3. **The heavenly bodies are made up of particles** (ajzāʾ) whose situation, *e.g.* in the interior or on the surface of the body, is again a matter of contingency, calling for a Specifier and a Measurer.

At this juncture, he refers us back to other proofs "given at the beginning of the Sūra, 'Al-Baqara'".32 As we have noted, he proceeds to deal at some length with the other proofs of the Creator's existence in the descending order indicated, Rāzī suggests, in the Qur'ān: "Note that, after the heavenly bodies and stars, the noblest of bodies is man". The prescribed order, however, does seem to be reversed, on cue from the Sacred Text, when it comes to deal with man, or, more precisely, when Rāzī draws a rather tenuous conclusion from the Text. "When God," he writes, "gives argumentation for the existence of a Wise God from the heavenly bodies, He follows this up with a proof from man. Now man is composed of body and soul (nafs). So His words, 'He .... sperm-drop', point to the argumentation from his body (badari) to the existence of a Wise Producer. And His words, 'And behold .......... manifest adversary', point to the argumentation to the same conclusion from the states of his soul."33

As he expounds this second proof, Rāzī brings to his reading of v. 4 the links in the presumed argumentation. Only a wise and knowing Organiser could bring man from being an insignificant sperm-drop, and then a body without sensation and movement, to the stage of applying logical powers in debate, as a "clear adversary" might do.34

Of the remaining sources of argumentation, it may suffice here to summarise his rather engaging preoccupation with God's merciful concern for man, as evidenced in the creation of the animals. Of all bodies in the lower world, man's is the noblest. Next, come the animals "by reason of the noble powers that characterise them, *viz.* the external and internal senses and [their capacity for ] desire and anger".35

Verses 5–8 of this Sūra indicate that God categorises these other animals as follows:

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31 This is Rāzī's rationale for creation in time. See *Ma'ālim* 35–8. See also Tony Street's forthcoming article, "The Controversial Rāzī: An Ash'arite in Context".
32 *TK* 19:223
33 *TK* 19:224
34 *TK* 19:226. A fuller presentation of this text of the *Tafsīr* on the body and soul can be found in 2.6.2.2.
35 *TK* 19:227
1. Those used by man (more noble than those listed in no. 2):

   a. for the necessities of life (food and clothing):
      cattle (sheep, goats, camels, cows – not actually listed in Q here). (More noble than those in b.)

   b. for superfluities (adornment and riding): horses, mules, asses; listed in v. 8. (Less noble than those in a.)

2. Those not used by man: "species, categories and divisions beyond limit and calculation". (Less noble than those in no. 1)

A particular conclusion which Rāzī draws from these verses is the two-fold prohibition against building up large herds of horses, and the eating thereof. In fact, he believes that the Scripture is allowing that cattle alone should be used for food, and he rather labours the point. As for adornment, this cannot be understood in any sense as providing human beings with the occasion of vanity and pride. "These qualities are condemned by God", he says. His interpretation of the word, *zīna*, (for adornment or ornamentation) is obscure: "As far as being adorned thereby: this occurs in the thing itself, but it is not intended in se".36

5.3.1.3. *TK* 22:161–8 (on Q 21:30–33)

Rāzī finds God giving six kinds of proof also in Sūra 21. He says that He "introduces here a series of proofs (*dalā’il*) for the existence of the Producer" (v. 1).

These six kinds of proof are cosmological. We cannot look for the comprehensive generation of proofs by way of exclusive disjunction, although these proofs from the text of the *Qur’ān* do fit with those from speculative theology.37 To each of the proofs studied here Rāzī gives extensive divisions and subdivisions of commentary which tell us far more of variant readings of the *Qur’ān*, grammatical questions, the generation of living things and astronomy than they do of underlying philosophical postulates or of the nature of the Creator.

He divides the Qur’ānic pericope into what he sees as *six distinct proofs* (*dalā’il*):

36 *TK* 19:229–231
37 Al-Κāsīm is the earliest text to hand which treats at length the Qur’ānic verses as arguments from design. (See Abrahamov in the Bibliography.) Rāzī is a logical extension of this tradition.
1. "Have not those who believe seen that the heavens and earth were a single welded entity (ratqan), and We separated them (fataqnāhumā)?" (v. 30a)

2. "And We made everything living from water. Will they not believe?" (v. 30b)

3. "And We placed on the earth solid mountains, lest it sway with them." (v. 31a)

4. "And We placed valleys in it [the earth] as paths, that haply men might be guided." (v. 31b)

5. "And We made the heavens as a roof held in place. And yet they turn away from Our signs (āyāt)." (v. 32)

6. "He it is Who created night and day, sun and moon, each moving in its firmament." (v. 33)

5.3.1.4. TK 27:257–9 (on Q 45:3–5)

This pericope also proposes six proofs, but they do not correspond to those of 2:97–8, and will be looked at in conjunction with 12:149–150, to which it makes reference and where ten proofs are outlined.38

5.3.1.2. Five Proofs

5.3.1.2.1. TK 2:88 (on Q 2:21–2)

As we have seen, Rāzī finds five proofs in this pericope, viz. those legally responsible, the Ancients, the heavens, the earth and fruit from the rain coming down from heaven.39

5.3.1.2.2. TK 19:222 (on TK 16:2–5)

This passage has already been translated.40 It gives yet another grouping of five bases for proof:

1. the upper heavenly bodies

38 See below 5.3.1.4.
39 See above, 1.2.
40 Above, 5.3.1.1.2.
2. the changing states of man (body and soul)
3. the animals
4. plants
5. the four elements

These all point to the need for a Creator-God.

5.3.1.3. Eight Proofs

5.3.1.3.1. TK 4:178-203 (on Q 2:164)

This grouping of proofs is in the second pericope in Sûra 2 and is the second passage from the Tafsîr to treat of the proofs. It makes no reference to the treatment of the subject in TK 2:97-8 (2:21-2).

Râzî’s fascination with the universe created by God, and with the almost limitless indications it provides of His wisdom, freedom and power of organisation, is strikingly evident in this passage. His commentary on 2:164 fills twentyfive pages. It is not to our purpose to give more than a summary, under the author’s headings, noting one or two discrepancies which may be attributed to either Râzî or the printer. In this passage, Râzî uses both the expressions, istidlâl, which more generally means indications or inductive proof, and nazâr, which is deduction from rational principles.

He says, at the outset, that in Q 2:164, God gives eight kinds of proof (dalâ’il) of His own existence:

"The proofs are presented in several divisions (aqsa’m):

QISM 142 : The division (tafsîl) of our material on each kind of proof:

First Kind of Proof : From the changing conditions of the heavens (p.180)

Faṣl 1: The arrangement of the heavenly spheres. Four investigations (abhâth) (pp.180-3).
\textit{Faṣl 2:} Knowledge of the heavenly spheres (p.184)

\textit{Faṣl 3:} The measures of their motions (p.185)

\textit{Faṣl 4:} The manner of proving (\textit{istidlāl}) the Producer's existence from the states of the heavens (p.187). There are several ways of approaching this:

\textit{Wajh 1:} Deductive reasoning (\textit{naẓar}) about their specific measures calls for a \textit{Mukhassīs} and a \textit{Mudabbir}.

\textit{Wajh 2:} Deductive reasoning on their extent (extension: \textit{ahyāz}) postulates a Decree-er (\textit{Muqtaṭin}).

\textit{Wajh 3:} Curvature needs a Specifier (\textit{Mukhassīs})

\textit{Wajh 4:} Axes \textit{etc.} imply contingency, and hence require a \textit{Muqtaṭin}.

\textit{Wajh 5:} The specific motion of all heavenly bodies, despite their similarity in nature, demands a \textit{Mukhassīs}.

\textit{Wajh 6:} Differences of thickness and thinness postulate a \textit{Mukhassīs} \textit{mukhtār}.

\textit{Wajh 7:} Different directions in their movements point to a \textit{Mudabbir} (p.188).

\textit{Wajh 8:} Motion requires precedence, which does not exist in eternity. So there must be an eternal \textit{Mudabbir} to start motion from non-existence, or from a state of rest.

\textit{Wajh 9:} As the motions of the heavenly bodies are distinct from their individual bodiliness, then, in their motions, these bodies need a \textit{Muḥarrīk} from outside them; one Who is the cause of motion and the \textit{Mudabbir} of the fixed stars and the revolving planets. "This is the Divine Truth."

\textit{Wajh 10:} The whole organisation of the heavenly bodies shows that Wisdom is its source.

\textit{Wajh 11:} Differences of colours require a \textit{Mukhassīs}.

\textit{Wajh 12:} The influence of the heavenly bodies on this world points to a \textit{Ṣāni'} Who is their Master (\textit{mustawlin}) in virtue of His power and control over them (\textit{qahr, taskhīr}) (p.189).

\textit{Wajh 13:} As the heavenly bodies are composite, they are all
dependent on the particles of which they are composed and from which they are distinct. This means they are contingent and need a Mu'aththir and a Şāni'.

**Wajh 14:** Since bodies are equal in quiddity, they are equally receptive of qualities or accidents. The fact that they have different qualities points to an eternal Şāni'.

**Second Kind of Proof:** From the changing conditions of the earth (p.190).

*Fatḥ 1:* Explanation of the states of the earth. The changes in these states have three causes (asbâh), the of which, in turn, has three supporting explanations (ḥujja).

*Fatḥ 2:* The argumentation for the Producer's existence from these states. Rāzi says that this is easier than the proof from the states of the heavenly bodies, because "our opponents" consider that these latter changes are necessary-by-nature and hence do not need a Mu'aththir.

**Third Kind of Proof:** From the alternation of day and night.

*Question 1:* He gives proofs (yadullu) from 8 points of view (wujāh) (pp.194-5).

**Fourth Kind of Proof:** "And the ship that courses on the sea, with profit to men." 5 questions (pp.196-7).

**Fifth Kind of Proof:** "And the water God sends down from heaven, therewith reviving the earth after it has died." The dalāla for the Producer's existence is approached from 6 view-points (p.198).

**Sixth Kind of Proof:** "And He scattered in it all kinds of crawling things" (p.199). Similarly: "And from the pair of them, He dispersed abroad many men and women" (Q 4:1).

- with regard to the animals: whether their innovation is by tawlīd or by tawālūd, they need a wise Producer.

- with regard to men: their need for a Producer, in their innovation, is proved in 6 ways.

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43 TK 4:189. The text of Wajh 13 is translated above in 4.2.
44 Under the second ḥujja (p.192), al-bayān al-awwal should not be in brackets. There is no "Explanation of the Second", etc.
45 Rāzi promises two questions (mas'ālatāni), but only one is given.
Seventh Kind of Proof: The currents of the winds (p.200). 5 matters are to be considered (p.201).

Eighth Kind of Proof: "And the clouds suspended between heaven and earth" (p.202).

This long passage, given here only in skeleton outline to convey some idea of Rāzī's approach to creation, concludes fittingly with a commentary on the final words of the verse, "There are indeed signs for a people that understands."46

5.3.1.4. Ten Proofs

5.3.1.4.1. TK 12:149–50 (on Q 6:1–2)

Rāzī is here commenting on the first two verses of Sūra 6, "al-An'am". They read: "Praise be to God, Who created the heavens and earth and appointed darkness and light. Yet those who disbelieve ascribe equals to their Lord (v. 1). It is He Who created you from clay, then decreed a term [for you]; a term [is] fixed (stated: musamman) with Him. Yet you doubt" (v. 2).

He notes that the purpose of this pericope is to prove (dalāla) the existence of the Producer. This is established (taqrīruhu), he says, by ten examples, all of which are contingent things, of the heavens and earth being specified, in fact, by a particular measure. This is what he understands creation to be, as we have seen. There is a familiar ring to these arguments from contingency, but for the sake of completeness, they are summarised here:47

1. Every heavenly sphere is specified by a particular (mu'ayyan) measure, although it would have been capable of having a larger or smaller one.

2. Every heavenly sphere is composed of particles which are positioned contingently either on the surface or internally.

3. The motion or rest that a heavenly body has is a contingent matter.

4. Likewise, the specific speed or slowness of a heavenly body.

46 See the reference back to this, and a comparison of proofs, in TK 27:257 (45:3). See below, 5.3.1.4.2.
47 TK 12:149
5. And again, the motion of a body in such-and-such a particular direction is a matter which is in itself contingent.

6. The place and arrangement of heavenly spheres is also contingent.

7. Similarly, the innovation of a body's motion at a particular time. It is established that every motion must have a beginning because the essential idea (haqīqa) of motion is the shift from one state to another. But this calls for posterity. Now beginning excludes posterity to another. And the conjunction [i.e. of 'first' and 'second'] is logically absurd.

8. That some bodies should be heavenly and others elemental, and not vice versa, is evidence of contingency, since bodies are equal in their essential integrity.

9. The movements of the heavenly bodies are the action of a free Agent and so must have a beginning. This is explained by the fact that "if their Influencing-Agent is a necessitating-cause-by-nature, then its effects persist as long as the cause does; and so must every one of their particles subsisting in this motion. Since this is logically absurd, it is established that their Influencing-Agent is not a necessitating-cause-by-nature, but rather a free Agent. And if this is the case, then that Agent must precede these movements, and so they must have a beginning."

10. The final example of contingency is that this world should occupy the space that it does in the infinite void, a fact that Rāzī considers self-evident (bi 'l-ḍarūra).

All ten instances of contingency, then, are examples of measuring and hence of creating, and they call for a Measurer and a Preponderator. While Rāzī uses the expression, dalāla, of the Qur'anic text, v. 1 of the present Sūra does no more than state the fact that God created the heavens and earth and appointed darkness and light. These latter do not rate a mention in this list of ten 'proofs', nor do they, in turn, rate a mention in the Qur'an 6:1. Rāzī's exercise seems to be more in the nature of naẓar than istidlāl.

5.3.1.4.2. TK 27:257–9 (on Q 45:3–5)

This passage refers more than once to the commentary on Sūra 6 which

48 Here, it would seem better to translate jiha as 'direction'.
49 In our text, the alif is incorrectly joined to the waw in lā awwala.
50 TK 12:149–50
we have just examined, and hence may best be dealt with here. The Qur'anic pericope reads: "Indeed in the heavens and earth there are signs for those who believe (v. 3). And in your creation and all the beasts He scatters on the earth, there are signs for those who are convinced (certain) (v. 4). And in the difference of night and day, the provision which God sends down from the sky, whereby He raises the earth to life after it dies, and the change of the winds, there are signs for those who understand" (v. 5).\footnote{With regard to this trilogy, \textit{muiminin} - \textit{ya'qinun} - \textit{ya'qilun}, see above, 2.5.5.3.}

Rāzī says that, in his commentary on Sūra 6:1, he gave many \textit{wujūh} to prove (\textit{dalāla}) the existence of a powerful and free God, but that "there is no harm in repeating some of them."\footnote{TK 27:257} He gives 6 \textit{wujūh}, only two of which, in fact, repeat earlier ones. The rest are further instances of contingency in the heavens and earth. The gist of the arguments is as follows:

1. As bodies, the heavens and earth are innovated (\textit{hāditha}) and hence need a \textit{Muḥdīth}.

2. The \textit{locus} of their particles is contingent, requiring a Preponderator and a Specifier.

3. The particular qualities, \textit{e.g.} heat/cold, subtlety/density, are contingent and call for a Preponderator.

4. Despite their essential equality, the stars are of different colours. This difference of colours could be effected only by a powerful and free God.

The comparison with a similar listing in 14:97 may be noted here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>27:257</th>
<th>14:97</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturn</td>
<td>sombreness</td>
<td>sombreness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jupiter</td>
<td>whiteness</td>
<td>pearliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>\textit{al-ṣaw' al-bāhir}</td>
<td>\textit{ishrāq}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mars</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>\textit{al-ṣaw' al-bāhir}</td>
<td>\textit{al-ṣaw' al-bāhir}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venus</td>
<td>pearliness</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>yellow</td>
<td>radiance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moon</td>
<td>phases</td>
<td>(\textit{mahwa})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(\textit{zuhūr})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

He goes on to say here in \textit{TK} 27:257 that "some of them are propitious
(lucky: saʿīda), others ill-omened (nahṣa); some diurnal and male (nahārī, dhakar), some nocturnal and female (unṭā).

5. The decision of a free Agent is the only explanation for the actual motion, direction, speed or slowness of bodies.\(^{55}\)

6. Finally, for a heavenly sphere to be what it is, and not something else, is the work of a free Agent.

In reference to v. 3 (Q 45), he repeats the underlying premise of his argument for the existence of a powerful and free Being, viz. the contingent specification of each animal's limbs, with their own quality and shape. To this he adds increase in age and the change from one state to another. "The close study (istiqṣā\(^{56}\)) of this matter has already been made", he says: presumably, a reference to 12:149–50.

He then compares the Qur'anic proofs given here (Q 45:3–5) with those of Q 2:164: "There God mentioned eight species of proofs, but here [only] six, omitting the ships and the clouds. The reason for this is that the movement of the ships and clouds is due to various winds. So the mention of the winds ... allows us to dispense with a mention of the two."\(^{57}\)

It should be noted that in his commentary on 2:164, Rāzī enumerates the eight Qur'anic arguments as they stand. But, despite the comparative comment, the six arguments he offers in his commentary on 45:3–5 bear no explicit relationship to the Qur'anic verses. In other words, Rāzī approaches the dalāʾīl of the Scripture in different ways. Whereas in the first text, he works directly with the Qur'anic list, in the second one he moves far from it, adducing quite other examples of contingency in creation.

5.3.1.4.3. TK 14:96–8 (on Q 7:54)

Again in this passage, Rāzī proposes ten reasons why the universe and everything in it must have a powerful and free Specifier, Agent, Producer, Measurer and Influencing-Agent. It is part of the long commentary on the Throne which we examined in 2.4. above and which contains 16 rational and 8 revealed proofs about God's relation to space and position.

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55 This seems to be a reference to the epicyclic motion of the planets, on which Rāzī dwells at length. See TK 4:179–203.
56 See the comment on this word below in 5.3.1.6.
57 TK 27:259
The ten proofs he adduces here for the existence of the Creator are all examples of a measuring of the various states of the heavens and earth (ḥāla min ahwāl ihimā), which is what he understands creation to be. They have all been presented, more or less in the same form, either in 12:149–50 or in 27:257–9, or in both. They are all concerned with the heavenly bodies (including explicitly the stars) and the elemental bodies (or elements), but, in general, Rāzī's dalā'īl, like those drawn from Q 45:3–5, do not derive explicitly from the Qur'anic text.

Briefly, the proofs offer these 10 examples of measuring and specifying:

1. That it is this particular measure, not a greater or smaller one.58
2. That the motions of the celestial bodies begin at determined moments.
3. That the particles have a determined internal or external place and situation (ḥayyiz, wad').
4. That to each of the heavenly bodies themselves there is designated a particular mawdi'59
5. That their motion is in a particular direction and speed.
6. That the stars or planets have their own special colour.
7. That the particles, being multiple, are contingent, and that they are innovated at a fixed time.60
8. That their motion and rest must have been innovated, and that at a specific moment.
9. That some of them should be heavens and stars, and others the four elements.
10. That the stars themselves should be distinct one from another.

There is no reference in this passage to other parallel ones, except insofar

58 TK 14:97. Presumably, a quantitative measure, since all the examples here are 'measurings'.
59 Ibid. "Some of the heavenly bodies are higher (a'la) than others; some of the stars occur in a zone (minjaza), others at the two poles (qutb)."
60 Ibid. "The Necessarily-Existence can only be one. So [the heavenly bodies and the elements] [being multiple] are possibly-exist-ent-by-nature, and as such need a Muʿāththir."
as he says that "Creation is taqdīr, as we have determined" (here in p. 96).

5.3.1.4.4. *TK* 19:126 (on *Q* 14:32–4)

These 10 *dalā'il* for the existence of the Producer which we find in these verses are based on:

1. The creation of the heavens
2. The creation of the earth
3. The sending-down of rain, producing fruits and nourishment
4. The ships that serve man, as do:
5. The rivers
6. The subjection of the sun to God's rule
7. The subjection of the moon
8. The subjection of the day
9. The subjection of the night. And, finally:
10. The gift of all that is asked of Him.

"These 10 proofs," says Rāzī, "together with their establishment (taqrīr) and commentary thereon, are to be found throughout this book. But there is no harm in referring here to some of their advantages (fawā'id)".61 He adds little, in fact, and what he does supply is more in the nature of a justification of the Sacred Text than a description of advantages. He says, for example, that God starts with the heavenly bodies because the other proofs (e.g. from rain) presuppose their creation. But as we saw in discussing the creation of human acts in 2.6.2.3., the Ash'arites and the Mu'ātizilites, albeit from different standpoints, both attribute these acts to God.

In this passage, then, there is little elaboration on the list of 10 *dalā'il* to be found in the *Qur'ān*.

5.3.1.5. Four Proofs

5.3.1.5.1. *TK* 17:9–10 (on *Q* 10:3–4)

While referring implicitly to his discussion of proofs in *TK* 2:97 (see above 5.3.1.1.1.), and in a general way to his philosophical (*'aqlīya*) writings, and availing himself of the same analyses, in this text he reduces
the categories of proof from six to four.62 “We have mentioned in this book and in [our] philosophical works, that the proof for (al-dalîl al-dâll) the existence of the Producer may be grounded in:

- either contingency (imkân)

- or innovation

And both of them as they apply to:

- either essence

- or attributes.

“So, in all, the grounds of proof for the existence of the Producer are four, viz.:

1. the contingency of essences
2. the contingency of attributes
3. the innovation of essences
4. the innovation of attributes.

“These four are exemplified in:

a) the upper world, i.e. the world of the heavens and stars
b) the lower world.”63

In the course of his discussion of these verses from Sūra 10, Rāzī confines himself to proofs from the contingency of the higher bodies, with regard to their measures (maqādir) and attributes. It should be noted that the Qur’ān itself has no hint of the kind of philosophical argument presented here and in other places by Rāzī, despite the fact that he concludes his discussion with the words: "This, then, is the proof (dalîl) which God gives in this verse."64

That the heavenly bodies are contingent is evidenced in three ways:

1. By the fact that they are undoubtedly composed of indivisible particles, which are equal in nature (physical disposition: ṭab‘), quiddity and reality. There is nothing, however, in the nature of these particles demanding that

62 Throughout, he is consistent in having four ontological bases of argument, and in recognising two broad divisions of being to which these bases can be applied.
63 TK 17:9
64 Ibid. 10
they be on the surface or in the interior of the heavenly bodies. This means that for them to occupy a particular place a Muqaddir, a Khāliq, a Qāhir, a Mukhaṣṣīṣ and a Mudabbir must so locate them.

He refers us to his philosophical works where he showed that "everything capable of mental division (division in the imagination: qābilan li l-qismati l-wahmiya) is composed of particles and parts." He describes as fāsid and bāṭil the view of the Philosophers that a body is divisible and yet may remain one [non-composite] thing; although they do concede (aqarrū lanā) that "bodies are simple things (basāʾiṭ) that cannot be composed of particles differing in nature".

2. The attribute of motion must have a beginning, because a change of state (e.g. from rest to motion) is incompatible with being eternal. "Hence it must be said that the heavenly spheres were non-existent in eternity. Or, if they did exist, they were at rest, not moving. In either case, their movement had a beginning (awwāl wa-bidāyā)". This calls for a Mudabbir Qāhir, a Mukhaṣṣīṣ and a Murajjīf. "But this Preponderator is not necessitated by nature (mujab bi-dhatihi). Otherwise, that [particular] motion would occur before that [particular] time, by reason of the fact that the necessitator (mujīb) of that movement occurred before that time. Since this is false, it is established that the Preponderator is powerful (qādir) and acts as He chooses."

3. It is contingent that the particles of one sphere occur, in fact, in it and not in another. Hence the need for a Murajjīf.

5.3.1.5.2. TK 18:231-5; 19:2-6 (on Q 13:2-3)

Rāzī initially says that these Qur'anic verses contain four proofs i.e. from the states of the heavens, the sun and moon, the earth and the plants. Volume 19 of the Tafsīr takes up again the commentary and here he lists three proofs, the second of which has two parts, and the third four subdivisions. On this occasion, however, he does draw on the Qur'anic verses for his dalāʾīl:

1. From the changing states of the heavens. The heavenly bodies cannot
be firmly-positioned (qā'īm) in the upper air by their own essences, because, if they were:

a) then all bodies, given their essential equality, would have to be in that one particular place; and, conversely:

b) the heavenly bodies would have to be in all spaces and positions, given that all of these spaces are completely alike and, furthermore, infinite in number across the infinite void. So "we must posit a Specifier and Preponderator . . . . . . . Thus the celestial bodies are in their lofty spaces because the Exalted and Holy (taqaddus) Director of the universe ('ālam) set them there. This is a cogent proof (burhān qāhir) for the existence of the Victorious (qāhir), Powerful God."

Rāzī then discusses the significance of the expression, "Then He sat on the Throne" (v. 2).

2. From the states of the sun and moon. He divides this into two proofs:

a) From the words, "He made the sun and moon do His will" (v. 2). All bodies are receptive of motion and rest. "So it is only a Specifier that could specify them with continuous (dā'ima) motion without rest, or specify motions with a particular speed or slowness." He adds: "Those, especially, who say that the slow movements are movements interspersed with (makhlū) periods of rest must posit a Specifier, because [this premise] implies that they [the heavenly bodies] are moving in some spaces and at rest in others." From aspects of these motions, Rāzī argues to a Muqaddir endowed with wisdom.

b) From the words, "Each sector running for a fixed term" (v. 2). At this point, he goes about detailing how God organises all things, in order to provide further aspects of the proof for the existence of God.

3. From the earth and its states. He divides this proof into four:

a) The earth. The specification of a particular volume and measure, not more or less, requires a Measurer. He takes the occasion here to discuss the views of those who would say that the earth is spread to its furthest limits and that it is flat.

b) The condition of the mountains. How they came into existence. He gives the position of the Philosophers and offers three replies thereto.

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72 Ibid. 232
73 Ibid. 233. See above, 2.4.
74 TK 19:2-6
He mentions that in the mountains, which are also the source of rivers, minerals are found.

c) **The plants.** Here he discusses the evolution of a grain to plant, tree and fruit, and how these are produced in pairs.

d) **The states of night and day.** Under this heading, he raises the question: Could not the heavens cause what happens here on earth?\(^75\)

### 5.3.1.5.3. TK 23:83–90 (on Q 23:12–22)

Rāzī discerns four kinds of proof (\textit{istidlāl}) for the existence of God in these verses from Sūra 23 ("al-\textit{Mu'minūn}"):\(^76\)

1. **From the transformation of man in the stages (\textit{adrār}) of [his] creation.** The Qur'ān here lists nine stages, including his death and resurrection.\(^77\)

2. **From the creation of the heavens.** Rāzī mentions one or two interpretations of the "seven paths" referred to in v. 17, but they need not delay us here. In general, God's disposition of things in the heavens postulates a Mudabbir, a Muhawwil and a Mughayyir.

3. **From the sending-down of rain and its effects on plants.** He gives here a lengthy literary elaboration of the blessings that rain brings to the earth.\(^78\)

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\(^75\) *Ibid.* 6. See above, 2.5.3.

\(^76\) *TK* 23:83 (on 23:12). He says that God issues a command to worship Him "\textit{fi 'l-āyati 'l-mutaqaddima}". There is no such command in v. 11, or in any preceding verse. The nearest one to be found is in v. 23, after all the proofs for God's existence.

\(^77\) The material in this section has been incorporated in 2.6.2.1., on The Origin of Man. The seventh stage of his development is described in the Qur'ān as "another creation" (v. 14), "differing from the first," as Rāzī puts it, "in the highest degree." He expands his commentary thus: "Now He makes him (\textit{ja'ala}) living, whereas he was solid (inorganic: \textit{jamadān}); endowed with speech, whereas before dumb; hearing, whereas previously he was deaf; seeing, though previously blind. And He set in place his internal and external parts. Indeed," he concludes, "every one of his limbs, and every part thereof, was a wonder of creation, amazing in its wisdom and beyond description or commentary." (TK 23:85)

\(^78\) *TK* 23:88. To savour again Rāzī's feel for language and sensitivity to beauty, we may quote his account of those who believed that 'sky' in v. 18 really refers to the clouds: 'He [God] called it 'sky' (\textit{samā'ī}) because of its loftiness (sublimity, height: \textit{'ulwa}), and what it means is that God makes its watery parts (al-\textit{ajzā'a 'l-mātīya}) ascend from the pit (\textit{qa'r}) of the earth to the seas and thence to the sky, until they become sweet (\textit{adhba}) and limpid (\textit{ṣāfin}) by reason of that ascent. These tiny particles are then united and take form (come into being: \textit{tatakawwana}). God then sends them down as they are needed. Were this not so, these waters would be of no benefit, as scattered in the pit of the earth. Nor would there be any advantage to be derived from the water of the seas because of its saltiness and because [in any case]
4. From the states of animals. For Raží, the Qur'anic pericope indicates four advantages to man in the animals. While they are alive, they provide us with milk⁷⁹ and we use them for transport. Alive or dead, we can sell them for profit, and, dead, we can eat them.

5.3.1.5.4. TK 27:128 (on Q 41:37)

Commenting on this pericope, Raží notes that, in general, prayer is what proves the existence of God's essence and attributes. He says that "God explained in the preceding verse⁸⁰ that the best form of speech and action is to pray to God. After that, He gives a proof for the existence of God, His wisdom and His power, proclaiming that prayer establishes the proof [for the existence of] God's essence and attributes......" It is in the universe, with all its particles and parts (ab‘ād) that we should seek the tangible proof of the Producer's existence. Raží follows the Qur'ān in itemising four aspects of the universe:

1. Night and day⁸¹
2. Sun and moon
3. The heavenly spheres
4. The other stars

With regard to nos. 2–4, Raží does not add to what he said in his commentary on 40:64 and 6:1–2, to which he here refers.⁸²

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there would be no way for these waters to flow on the face of the earth, since the seas are lower than any part of the earth [lit.: at the extreme of depth]". Raží, however, does not believe that 'sky' here should be understood as the clouds. Cf. TK 24:90 (on 25:45-8)

⁷⁹ TK 24:90. Man sees a sign of the power and wisdom of God in the production of milk, here graphically described: "It meets in the udders and is purified between the feces and the blood, by God's permission. Thus it is transformed into something pure, colorful and flavorsome, attractive to the appetite and a source of nourishment."

⁸⁰ This is not, in fact, to be found in the preceding verse, but rather in v. 33, which runs: Who is better in speech than he who prays to God and acts rightly .........?"

⁸¹ TK 27:128: "He mentions night before day, to indicate that darkness is non-existence and light existence (wujūd). Now non-existence precedes existence, so this is like indicating the innovation of these things."

⁸² See in this Chapter, 5.3.1.4.1.–2. and 5.3.1.7.1.3.
5.3.1.6. Three Proofs

5.3.1.6.1. **TK 9:134-5 (on Q 3:190)**

In this passage, Rāzī sets out to explain why God reduces the eight proofs in Q 2:164 to three in Q 3:190, which mentions only the heavens and earth, night and day. He asks three questions:

"1. What is the point of repeating in two Sūras the same verse, containing the same expression?

"2. Why is He content here with three kinds of proof, omitting the additional five [in "al-Baqara"]?

"3. Why does He say in that verse, ya'qilūn, and here li-ūlī 'l-albāb?"

Seeming to bypass the first question, he addresses the second by outlining a sound methodology of study, comparing intellectual vision to physical sight: "The gloom (suwaydā) of mental perception is analogous to that of ordinary vision." For just as due to the obscurity of ordinary sight one is unable to direct a penetrating gaze (yastaqṣī fi 'l-naẓar) to two things [at once] – rather, if a man fixes his eye (ḥaddaqa baṣr) on one thing, he cannot at the same time fix it on another – so, similarly, if a man fixes the eye of his mind to reflect (mulāḥaza) on one concept, he cannot simultaneously fix his mental eye on another concept. On this basis, then, whenever the mind is taken up considering (īltifāt) various objects of thought, [to that extent] it is impossible to investigate in any depth (kāna hīrmānuhu 'an al-istiqṣā...... akhara) other concepts and perceptions (īdrākār)."

It is for this reason, based as it is on Aristotelian psychology, that as soon as possible, the number of arguments should be reduced to a minimum: "At the beginning of the journey, a man looks for a multiplicity of proofs. Then, when this light [of the knowledge of God] comes into his heart, he seeks fewer proofs; to the point that, if that darkness vanishes, which is caused by too great a preoccupation with things other than God, then there is perfected within him the manifestation (al-tajallī) of the light of the knowledge of God."*

The Qurʾān (20:12) says: "So take off (akhla') both your sandals. You are in a twice-hallowed valley." Rāzī says that the sandals are the two

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83 This 'gloom' belongs to a physiology based on the humours. See Gutas (Bibliog.) 184-7.
84 **TK 9:134**
85 *Ibid. 134*
premises by which the mind attains knowledge. On an allegorical level, then, the Qur'ān is saying: "If you wish to set your feet in the valley of holiness of God's unity, give up your preoccupation with proofs."\(^86\) So they are reduced from eight to three in order that the knower "will of necessity concentrate less on proofs, so as to engage himself more completely in the knowledge of the thing which these proofs establish." Even though the Qur'ān explicitly mentions the earth, the five proofs omitted are those drawn from a consideration of the earth, "because the proofs from the heavens are more cogent and brilliant than those drawn from the earth. Wonders are more numerous in them and the heart is more compellingly transported from them to the greatness of God and His excellence." The Qur'ān here does no more than mention that the bases for proof are the heavens, the night and the day, and Rāzī does not feel the need to expand this, as we have seen him do at great length in commenting on Q 2:164 (TK 4:178–203).\(^87\)

In answer to the third question, Rāzī justifies the Qur'ān's choice of words (li-qa'wmin ya'qilūn in 2:164, and li-ūlī 'l-albāb here in 3:190) by saying that 'āql refers to a literal level (zāhir) and lubb to a higher one "So in the preliminary stage, it is 'āql, whereas in the perfect state [which does not need so many proofs], it is lubb."

5.6.1.6.2. TK 17:9–10 (on Q 10:3–4)

This passage has already been treated, under the "Four Proofs" listed above.\(^88\)

5.6.1.6.3. TK 19:222–235 (on Q 16:2–5)

This, too, has already been studied,\(^89\) and like the previous passage, it offers three reasons for the contingency of heavenly bodies.

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\(^{86}\) Ibid. 135. For a treatment of this incident in the Moses story and Rāzī's comment thereon, see A.H. Johns, "Moses in the Qur'ān" 129–131.

\(^{87}\) One could wonder, then, at the expression, istiqāṣ', which Rāzī uses to describe the Qur'ān's treatment of the three proofs in this verse. It simply mentions, or lists, them, in fact. A few paragraphs here above, the word is seen to mean treat in depth, in detail, which is the general sense of the tenth form of qaṣā, from the basic meaning of relegateing something to a great distance. The last translation offered by Kazmiński, viz. to abbreviate ("abréger quelque chose <par ex. son discours>, proprem. chercher à arriver plus tôt à la fin) comes closer to the sense in which Rāzī seems to employ the expression here.

\(^{88}\) See 5.3.1.5.

\(^{89}\) See 5.3.1.1.
Rāzī again stays with the proofs for God’s *wahdāniya* given in the Scripture, and he puts them under three headings:

1. From the changing states of the heavens and earth (4.42)

2. From the effects produced in the heavens:
   a) Clouds
   b) Rain
   c) Mountains, hail
   d) Lightning
   e) Revolutions of day and night (v. 43)

3. From the states of living things. All animals are created from water and are in three categories, according as they go on their bellies, on two legs or on four (v. 45). Rāzī here gives quite a tract on zoology.

The three categories of proof for a Producer are, as the *Qur’ān* tells us:

1. From the increase and decrease of shade, and its change from state to state (v. 45).

2. God makes night a cloak, sleep a rest and day a resurrection (v. 47).

3. He sends the winds bearing good tidings (v. 48).

In his notes on these *dalā'il, sub-su'āl* (to coin an expression) follows *su'āl, wajh and mas'ala* in ample measure. He seems particularly fascinated by shade: what it is, its significance and how it benefits mankind, thus pointing to the wisdom and beneficence of the Producer.

There are many passages in the *Tafsīr* which, following the *Qur’ān*, reduce the proofs of God’s existence to two. They are not always, however, the same two. In fact, four fairly distinguishable duos can be identified:

1. The universe (*āfāq*) and man (*anfus*)

2. The heavenly bodies and the earthly (elemental) ones
3. Body and Spirit

4. Attributes and states.

For the sake of completeness, they will all be listed here.

5.3.1.7.1. The Universe and Man

5.3.1.7.1.1. *TK* 2:97–8 (on *Q* 2:21–2)

While here, as we have seen, Rāzī distinguishes six avenues of proof, he reduces the number to two in the context of the actual innovation of accidents, and they are:

1. Human individuals (*anfūs*)

2. The universe (*āfāq*): including "everything found in the commentaries about the conditions of the world, of thunder, lightning, clouds and the changing of the seasons".91

5.3.1.7.1.2. *TK* 9:137 (on *Q* 3:190)

Rāzī first points to three proofs in this verse of Sūra 3 and explains why the eight in *Q* 2:164 are reduced to this number.92 But, after discussing the question of reflecting on creation, rather than on the Creator,93 he says that proofs of *Tawḥīd* are no more than two:

1. From the universe (*āfāq*)

2. From human individuals or souls (*anfūs*). "There is no doubt," he writes, "that the proofs (*dalā'īl*) from the universe are more noble and excellent. As God says: ‘Greater is God's creation of the heavens and earth than His creation of man’ [40:57]. Since that is so, it is natural that He should command, in this sense, that we reflect (*fikr*) on the creation of the heavens and earth, because [in comparison with man] what the heavens and earth prove (*dalā'īlatuḥā* is more wonderful, and what they attest

90 Above, in this Chapter, 5.3.1.1.1.
91 *TK* 298
92 *TK* 9:134–5. See above, 5.3.1.6.1.
93 See above, 5.1.
(shawāhiduhā) more excellent".94

5.3.1.7.1.3. TK 27:84 (on Q 40:64)

He notes, with practically no elaboration, that this Qur’anic verse offers the same two classes of proof for the excellence and power of God that we find in Q 3:190, here above:

1. The dalā’il al-āfāq: "It is God Who appointed for you the earth as a firm place (dwelling: qarāran), and the sky as a building."

2. The dalā’il al-anfus, i.e. the changing states of the human body and soul, according to God’s words: "And He formed you (ṣawwarakum) and formed you well (ahsana ṣuwarakum)".

The first includes everything apart from man, e.g. night and day, earth and the heavens, etc.; the second, the changing states of man’s badan and nafs. Rāzī says that God gives here five proofs: two from the heavens, three from the anfus.

5.3.1.7.1.4. TK 30:139-40 (on Q 71:14-20)

Again, very little commentary. Here, in the light of the Qur’anic verses, four proofs are presented, but they seem to be grouped under our two present headings, as follows:

A. From the anfus:

1. "He created you in stages" (v. 14). Rāzī explicitly relates these words to the anfus. There is question here of the generation of man from his humble beginnings; hence the Arabic expression in this context must refer to the complete human individual.

B. From the āfāq:

2. "Do you not see how God has created seven heavens in harmony, and has appointed the moon as a light therein, and the sun as a lamp?" (vv. 15-16)

Rāzī notes that sometimes God begins with proofs from the anfus (here it seems to mean souls!), because the soul of man is closer to him than the heavens are. Sometimes, on the other hand, he begins with the āfāq:

94 TK 9:137
either because they are more excellent (a'ţam), or because the soul's proximity to man makes it less necessary for him to reflect (ta'ammul) on the soul.

3. "And God produced you from the earth. Then He will return you to it and bring you forth" (vv. 17-18).

4. "And God has spread the earth out for you, so that you may make your way along its valleys" (vv. 19-20).

5.3.1.7.2. The Heavenly Bodies and the Earthly (Elemental) Ones

5.3.1.7.2.1. TK 17:169 (on Q 10:101)

The proofs in this verse are derived from:

1. The 'ālam of the heavens:
   - their motions, measures and positions (awdā)
   - the sun, moon and stars
   - the special qualities of each

2. The 'ālam of the earth:
   - the elements
   - minerals
   - plants
   - man, especially

Rāzī describes the use of the mind on these things as tadabbur and naẓar.

5.3.1.7.2.2. TK 26:243-5 (on Q 39:4-6)

Again, the two categories of dalā'il for God's divinity are:

1. Heavenly (jalakiya), which include:

95 TK 19:169. The text here has al-'anāṣir al-'ulwiya. This adjective would seem to apply more accurately to the bodies in the first, viz. heavenly, group.
- the creation of the heavens and earth
- the alternation of night and day
- the changing states of the planets, especially the sun and moon.

2. Elemental and Mundane (*ansāriya, asfāl):
- man
- animals

In this passage, and the one preceding, Rāzī does not set man, with his spiritual dimension, over against the bodies in the heavens, but includes him, body and soul, in the earthly, elemental realm.

5.3.1.7.3. The Human Body and Spirit

5.3.1.7.3.1. *TK 17:89–90 (on Q 10:34–5)*

These verses read: "Say: Amongst those whom you make associates of the Divinity, is there any who begins (yabda‘u) (the) creation and then brings it back again (yu‘idu‘u)? Say: God begins creation and then brings it back again .......... (v. 34). Say: Is there any of your partners who guides (yahdī) to the truth? Say: God guides to the truth." (v. 35)

This occasions a discussion on the nature of divine guidance, which will be examined later in the context of God’s purpose in creating. For the present, it will suffice to note two more inter-related proofs:

1. **Man’s body** (*jasad*)
2. **His spirit** (*ruḥ*)

"Note," says Rāzī, "that proof (*istidlāl*) of the existence of the Producer is, first of all, from creation, and, secondly, from guidance (*hidāya*). This is the constant custom in the *Qur‘ān.*" He then gives the examples of Abraham, Moses and Muḥammad, and continues: "This is in truth a noble proof (*dalīl*), because in man there is both body and spirit. So the proof for the existence of the Producer which proceeds from the conditions of

96 *TK 26:244.* The creation of the earth would seem to belong to the second category. He refers here to his commentary on *Q 6:1 (TK 14:145–154).*

97 See below 6.3.2. In his lengthier treatment of creation and guidance, in 22:62–7 (on 20:50), Rāzī promises that, God willing, he will take up, in commenting on "al-*Shu’arā*" (Sūra 26:78), the matter of Moses’ dependence on Abraham’s proofs. It seems that God was not willing, as I do not find the promise fulfilled in 24:143–4. In 2:89 (on 2:21), Qur’anic references are given, incl. "al-*Shu’arā*" (26:26), to such a dependence.
the body is creation; whereas that which proceeds from the conditions of the spirit is guidance."98

In his commentary on the Qur'anic words, "Have they not reflected on the dominion of the heavens and earth?" (7:185), Rāżī in fact draws together much of what we have found already in the *Tafsīr*, applying his principles at the microcosmic or atomic level. He refers in general to his detailed and very frequent treatment (*qad fa^alnaha fi ḥāḏhā l-kitāb mirāran wa atwāran*) of the many *dalā'il* from the dominion of the heavens and earth for the existence of a wise and eternal Producer.99 The next words, however, "And all the things God has created", indicate to him that "the proofs for [God's] unity are not confined to the heavens and earth. Rather," he says, "every tiny particle of the world of bodies and spirits is a glittering apodictic proof (*burhān bāhir*) and a cogent argument (*dalīl qāhir*) for Unity."

He gives the example, then, of light falling on a small window (*kuwa*) in the house, whereupon particles and specks of dust appear. Each of these, he says, from endless aspects, prove (*yadullu*) the existence of the wise Producer. He gives, in fact, three arguments, all of which are by now familiar to us:

1. Out of all other possible and conceivable spaces, limitless as they are in the void, which is itself without limit, this one particle is in this particular space. This calls for a Preponderator, a Specifier. If we were to say that the Preponderator is a body, then nothing is explained. The solution must then be sought further back and thus, in the end, we must invoke a God.

2. Such a particle of dust, being subject to motion and rest, is innovated, and, as such, must have occurred at a specific time. Since this is a contingent matter, it must have an eternal Specifier, and, again, a bodily specifier explains nothing.100

3. While being equal to other bodies in occupying space and in bodiliness, they differ in colour, shape, disposition (*ab' *), flavour and other attributes. These are possible (*ja'īz*), and so require a Preponderator which cannot be simply another body.

"So it is established," concludes Rāżī, "in limitless ways and from endless aspects, that this particle [of dust on the window] proves the existence of a Producer. And we say the same about all the particles of the corporeal

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98 *TK* 17:90  
99 *TK* 15:76  
100 *Ibid.* 77
and spiritual world (al-‘ālam al-jismānī wa ‘l-rūḥānī), whether they be simple or composite, lowly or exalted.”

Rāzi calls the arguments which he finds in this terse Qur’anic pericope bayyināt jallīya and dalā’il ‘aqliya.

5.3.1.7.4. Attributes and States

5.3.1.7.4.1. TK 17:9–10 (on Q 10:3–4)

We saw that this text, while proposing four philosophical bases for proof, and three indications of contingency in the heavenly bodies, speaks also of two aspects of this contingency, viz. "with regard to their measures and their attributes”.

5.3.1.7.4.2. TK 19:222–235 (on Q 16:2–5)

This passage recognises the "six avenues of proof", based on the contingency of essences and attributes, but Rāzi here notes that what we find most commonly in the revealed Books (kutub) are arguments drawn from the innovation of attributes and their changes of state.

5.3.2. General Observations

In the creation context, Rāzi refers us in only five places to other of his writings, which give us the theoretical framework within which the proofs must be understood. These are:

1. In TK 2:97, he speaks of:

   a) The ‘aqliya, which treat of the six bases of argumentation that he lists in the Tafsīr; and:

   b) The Ilāhīya, where the emphasis is on two areas to which the four ontological bases of proof are applied, viz. the heavens and the human soul or individual.

2. In TK 13:114, he refers to The Book of the 40 Questions on the Basic Principles of Religion, where he explains how "everything apart from the One is possible by nature, and what is possible by nature is innovated.

101 Ibid.
102 See above, in this Chapter, 5.3.1.5.1.
103 Ibid. 5.3.1.1.2.
Thus, apart from the Single, True One, everything is innovated”.

3. In TK 13:122, he refers us to his *Book on Fate and Predestination* for his lengthy treatment of the creation of human actions.\(^{104}\)

4. In TK 17:9, he directs us to the ‘Aqliya on two matters:

   a) that, contrary to the view of the Philosophers, everything capable of mental division is composed of particles; and:

   b) that there are four bases of argumentation.

5. In TK 24:89, he refers to the ‘Aqliya where he also deals with the nature of light and shade.

Given that, generally speaking, in the *Tafsir*, there is no lengthy treatment of basic philosophical principles, it may surprise us to find so few references to the ‘Aqliya and the Ilahiya, until we remind ourselves that, in its orientation, the *Tafsir* is theological, rather than purely rational and metaphysical, following the path of the inspired Scripture and walking very closely in step with it. He points out that the study of the proofs contained in the Qur’an is not an academic exercise for its own sake. Its purpose is rather to lead us to prayer, to the love of God and to a deeper understanding of His nature.

By temperament and education, Razi is deeply interested in the universe (the ‘alam) in all its aspects, whether they be astronomical, botanical, medical, or any other. Despite the criticism he attracted in some quarters, he describes the natural world repeatedly and in detail. He justifies this course by the Prophet’s injunction to reflect on creation, not on the Creator. Thus the Qur’anic proofs and Razi’s elaborations thereof give us more knowledge about their subject-matter, viz. the ‘alam, than they do about God.

A constant preoccupation for Razi, as we have seen, is to justify the number and the order of the proofs found in the Qur’an. This requires at times flexibility on his part; as, for example, when he says in one breath that the proof from the heavens should precede that from the human individual, and, in the next, completely justifies the opposite order for different reasons.

His presentation of the proofs is a pragmatic mix of the Qur’an’s authority standing by itself and some measure of philosophical elaboration that at times bears no explicit relation to the Qur’anic text, not even drawing

\(^{104}\) See above 2.6.2.3.
He refers to two intellectual activities leading us to believe in the existence of God, when he says: "There is no way to the knowledge of Almighty God except by deductive reasoning (discursus: nazar) and inductive proof (istidlal)."\(^{105}\) By far the most frequently used roots are dll and such derivatives as e.g. dalala, dalail, dala, istidlal. They are sometimes translated as 'indicating', or 'establishing', as he gathers grist for the inductive mill. Nazar is used far less frequently and does seem to have the sense of reflecting-on in such a way as to draw out conclusions from established premises. I could not, however, say that Razi is using them as totally dichotomous terms. Other expressions recurring in the Tafsir that are taken as synonymous with dalala are hujja, wajh, mas'ala (although these latter two refer rather to different aspects of the same general proof), bayyina and burhan. This last is not infrequently reinforced with such adjectives as clear, lightsome, certain, cogent and glittering, but this does not necessarily indicate that a particular proof is deductive.

Early in the Tafsir, he does assess the relative value of proofs by saying that those which are based on language and the transmission of grammatical frames-of-reference can lead only to probability, whereas rational proofs (aqliiya) do provide certainty in their conclusions.\(^{106}\) Reason, however, has its limits, particularly in relation to truths and contingent facts, e.g. the creation of the earth in two days, that can be known only because God revealed them to us.

We can see from the Tafsir that Razi accepts the following as facts, which he then uses as premises for his argumentation:

1. The universe is a sphere.
2. The void exists and is infinite in dimension.
3. There are infinite spaces in the void.
4. All existing things, apart from God, are composed of identical, indivisible particles.
5. All atoms are equal in nature.
6. All bodies are finite, composite, subject to motion and rest and

\(^{105}\) TK 2:87. Cf. also 15:77.

\(^{106}\) TK 2:57
incapable of "organising" themselves.

7. Every being in our experience has specificity and particularity in regard to position, quantitative measure, colour, motion, the moment of coming-into-being and in ceasing-to-be, and many other characteristics as well.

8. Innovation must by definition be at a particular point of time.

9. Finally, everyone accepts as incontrovertible fact that he/she began to exist after not existing.

It is *not self-evident* that God exists,\(^{107}\) but it is from *nazar* on the following *necessary truths or premises* that Rāzī argues to His existence:

1. Eternal motion in bodies is impossible, *i.e.* motion and eternity are mutually exclusive.

2. A circle, or an infinite chain, is logically impossible.

3. Every composite is contingent.

4. Likewise, are all dependent things.

5. All beings, apart from God, are contingent.

6. The contingent and the indeterminate must have a Preponderator and a Specifier.

7. What exists after non-existence must have had an Existentialiser.

8. Motion requires an Innovator.

9. Ultimately, a body cannot be the Preponderator, Specifier and so on.

10. The Necessarily-Existent can be only one.

11. The first thing we can discover about God is that He is Innovator and Agent of the ‘Ālam.

12. Everything which derives its existence from the act of will of a Free Agent is innovated.

\(^{107}\) *TK* 4:179; 23:88
13. Likewise, all things specified require a Specifier.

14. Essences are quidditatively equal.

15. Things equal in quiddity are equal in what necessarily accompanies the quiddity.

16. What is equal to a divisible thing is itself divisible.

17. Infinite dimension cannot exist.
CHAPTER 6

THE PURPOSE OF CREATION

6.1. Purpose in God

As we saw, when dealing with the creation of Adam, Rāzī summarises, seemingly with approval, the reasons put forward by the Ḥukamā' for the creation from dust of the father of us all. These were that he should be humble and in close touch with the material world of which he was appointed God's vicegerent. It was to be a display of God's power, by his bringing out of dust, which is a very dense body, a being capable of love, knowledge, light and guidance. Being made of dust would also enable him to extinguish the fires of passion, anger and greed; and taking his origin also from water would ensure his purity. The mixing of these two bodies produces the clay referred to several times in the Qur'ān as the primal material from which man was made.

Despite these reasons for creating, and others which will be mentioned in the course of this chapter, Rāzī sides with the Ash'arites, and against the Mu'tazilites, in holding that God does not act, and hence create, for a purpose. The Ash'arite arguments are set out in his commentary on Q 2:29, "He it is Who created for you all that is on the earth". Their general position is expressed thus: "God does not perform an action for a purpose (gharaḍ). If He did, He would be seeking to add to His perfection. But what is perfected by something other than itself is defective (nāqiṣ) by nature. Now in God, this would be logically absurd".

It should be noted that, while at the strict metaphysical level, there is a massive difference between the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites on this

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1 See above, 2.6.1.2.
2 TKB 2:154
3 Ibid. Likewise, in 28:232 (on 51:56): "God's act is not for a purpose. If it were, He would be perfected by the purpose, whereas He is perfect in Himself. So how can we think that there is purpose or cause (illa) in God's command? We say: The Mu'tazilites insist on this and say that God's actions are for purposes, and they go to great lengths (bālaghā) to oppose anyone who would deny that." It is to be remembered that Jomier has found one Ms. that casts doubt on the authenticity of the commentary on this Sūra. The view expressed here is, however, in perfect accord with our present text, 2:154.
matter of purpose, at the practical religious and devotional level, the distinction is not so marked.

To the Mu'tazilite objection that God's act is motivated (mu'allal) by a purpose that does not revert to (whose object is not: 'ā'id) Himself, but rather to something else, "We" [the Ash'arites] reply with four arguments:

"1. Is it more fitting for God, or less, that the object of that purpose be something else, rather than Himself? If more fitting, then God derives advantage from that action. But we have shown that that is impossible. If it is not more fitting, then to realise that purpose in that other being is not a purpose as far as God is concerned. So He [could not be] the influencing-agent thereof.

"2. Whoever performs an action for a purpose is incapable of attaining that purpose except through that action. But incapacity in God is logically absurd.

"3. If God were to perform an action for a purpose, then that purpose would be:

- either eternal: in which case, the act would have to be eternal;

- or innovated: then the act [of innovating] that purpose would also be for a purpose. Thus an infinite chain would be entailed, which is logically absurd.

"4. If God were to act for a purpose, it would be the welfare (mašlahā) of those legally responsible. Now if that were the purpose of His activity (fā'iliya), He could not act against their interests. But He has done this, because He has laid a charge (kallafa) on him who He knew would not believe.4 Then he would be the one referred to in God's words: 'He created for you everything on the earth'; and 'I have not created the Jinn and men, except that they should serve Me'.5

Rāzī concludes the discussion with "So they say .....", where "they" is, presumably, the "We", i.e. the Ash'arites, at the beginning of the passage. Their summing-up then is: "If an action were to be performed by someone else, it would be directed to a particular thing for a purpose. So, naturally, if God were to perform that action, He would use [in the Qur'ān] the expression (lafi) 'purpose', because of the similarity

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4 See the Abū Lahab story, 2.6.2.3. above.
5 TK 2:154. The section in square brackets is not in our edition of the Tafsīr.
(mushābaha) between the two'.

This conclusion, then, must colour everything we have to say in the remainder of this chapter on Rāzī's position about purpose in creation. In other words, when he speaks about God creating for this or that intention, whether it be the creation of the universe as a sign-post to God, or the creation of man so that he may worship God, the language is not to be interpreted literally, but rather on the analogy of human activity.

6.2. The Creation of the Heavens and Earth

6.2.1. As Signs to Man

In 2.5.4., we examined Rāzī's commentary on the statements in the Qur'ān that the heavens and earth, in particular, were created with a purpose, not as a futile gesture or a kind of game. They were created "in truth". In the following section of that chapter, we noted three passages that dealt with this creation as signs, and we made the observation that, despite the number of times that the Qur'ān uses āya, Rāzī does not discuss at any length the nature of sign itself. The sign-value of the corporeal universe, however, is at least implicitly asserted in everything he has to say when supporting the Prophet's injunction to "meditate on creation". The Creator Himself is not to be the subject of this exercise, but His created universe is like a sign pointing us in His direction, and leading us to a knowledge of the God Who otherwise would remain unknowable.

6.2.2. For Man's Benefit or Harm

If, as we have seen, it is incompatible with the nature of God that He should act for a purpose in the way that man does, i.e. in the literal sense, Rāzī must hold that He cannot create for that particular purpose, which is, that some benefit may accrue to Him. This would be contrary to His eternal self-sufficiency and perfection. Hence "purpose" must be understood equivocally.

Whether, then, He can create so that the creatures themselves may thereby profit, or even be disadvantaged, was yet another question that saw the battle-lines drawn between the Ash'arites and the Mu'tazilites.

6 Ibid. Cf. TK 19:230 (on 16:8)
7 See above, 2.5.4.
8 Ibid. 2.5.5.
9 See 4.8. and 5.1.
6.2.2.1. We shall look at four passages from the *Tafsir* which present the Mu'tazilite view that God did, in the literal sense, create the heavens and earth with an eye to man's benefit or disadvantage.

6.2.2.1.1. *TK* 2:153 (on *Q* 2:29)

Part of this passage has been reviewed already in the present chapter, in the context of Purpose in God. Rāzī is commenting on the words: "He it is Who created for you all that is on the earth ......" (2:29). It is a good example of *al-sabr wa 'l-taqsīm* dialectic, provoking solution by distinction, which was propagated so aggressively by Abelard in the 12th century and brought to its high-point in the 13th century by St. Thomas Aquinas. *Oportet semper distinguere* was a familiar dictum in the Latin schools of western Europe. As we shall see in the next chapter, Rāzī uses the occasion here to make a case for the Resurrection on the Last Day based on rational principles.

At the beginning, he speaks warmly of the benefits to humankind which God provides by creating the universe. "How beautifully," he says, "God has supervised this arrangement (*tartīb*)", viz. that first He should give life to those legally responsible and then bestow on them the benefits to be derived from the heavens and earth. The crucial words in the present text are "for you", which "prove (*yadullu*) that what is meant by the words which follow 'He created', (viz. 'lakum ...... jamā'īn'), is for the sake of benefiting us (*initā'īnā*)." He sees the benefits as being both mundane and spiritual. Mundane (fi 'l-dunyā), insofar as "our bodies may experience well-being and be fortified thereby to act obediently" [this second would seem more appropriate under the next heading]; and spiritual (fi 'l-dīn), "so that from these things and the study thereof (*itībār*), we may construct demonstrations (*istīdlāl*)."

The final words of the Qur'anic pericope, "All that is on the earth", bring together, says Rāzī, "all the benefits (*manāfī*), some of which are related to (*yattaṣīlū*) animals, plants, minerals and mountains; others to kinds of occupations and matters devised by people of intelligence." And he concludes by saying: "God explains that all this He created only to be of benefit, as He says [in another place: 45:13]: 'And what is in the heavens

10 See above, 6.1.
11 See below, 7.2.1.
12 He reminds his readers that he commented on (marra tafsīruhu) "He (it is Who) created", when he was dealing with *Q* 2:21, "Obey the Lord Who created you". See *TK* 2:82-100.
and earth He has made subservient to you".  

It is at this point that he presents the view of the Ash'arites and the four replies of the Mu'tazilites. In doing so, he explains the distinction between the strict and the less strict sense that we have seen already as his solution to the dialectic.

6.2.2.1.2. *TK* 17:187-8 (on *Q* 11:7)

The Mu'tazilite principles in relation to God acting for a purpose are here applied in particular to the angels. According to Rāzī, they (the Mu'tazilites) hold that it is 'abath to say that God had no benefit in mind when He created the heavens and earth. Therefore, this act of creation must redound to someone's benefit. Not God's, however. This would be absurd, because "He is exalted above benefit and disadvantage".  

"It is necessary, then," [they say], "that the recipient of benefit be living, because non-living things do not reap benefits. So everyone with a view on this matter says that that living thing is an angel."  

He goes on to comment on the next words of 11:7, viz. "That He might try you, which of you is better in works". The Mu'tazilites say that the subjunctive particle (iš) in "that He might try you" points to God's purpose in creating the heavens and earth, viz. to try (ištīla) his creatures. Looking at the text in its literal sense, Rāzī agrees that God created this great world for the best interests (mašlahā) of those legally responsible. "Many intelligent people," he says, "hold this view, but each group expresses a view different from the other. However this is not the place to comment on them." Rāzī concedes that, even for those, like himself, who do not suggest that God is motivated (mu'allal) to act for the best interests, either of those legally responsible or the angels, the iš which discloses motivation (ta'īlāl) is still to be interpreted in the literal sense (wuridat 'alā qāhīri l'amr). It would not, however, be consistent for him to admit this literal sense.

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13 *TK* 2:153. On the next page (p.154), he cites or refers to some of the other places in the *Qurān* where ta'ifil of these benefits are mentioned, e.g. 16:1,5 and 80:25. This is the only instance I have found so far of Rāzī identifying a Sūra (here "al-Naḥf") by its first words, viz. 'God's command comes'.

14 *TK* 17:187


16 *Ibid.* 188. He may be referring implicitly to passages in the *Taṣfīr* such as those examined in this present section.

6.2.2.1.3. *TK* 24:104 (on *Q* 25:59)

In answer to the question, Why does God measure-out creating and existentialising with the specific measure of a 6-day operation, Rāzī says that it suffices simply to invoke God's will and His power to accomplish what He wills. "The Mu'tazilites, on the other hand, say that [God's] wisdom must be the motive, insofar as the specification of the creation of the world in this particular manner (measure) is in the best interests of those legally responsible." This does not convince Rāzī who says that the (divine) wisdom they speak of must be either necessary-by-nature or contingent. If it is necessary, it cannot change and hence must exist at all times. So it is not admissible to cause (*sababan*) the specification of a determined time. If, on the other hand, it is contingent, then another specification would be needed to have that wisdom occur at this particular time. But this, he says, would lead to an infinite chain.18

6.2.2.1.4. *TK* 31:139 (on *Q* 87:2–3)

For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that Rāzī here refers to the view of al–Qaffāl, who began as a Mu'tazilite and 'converted' later to Ash'arism, but who here accepts the position of his former mentors that God is motivated to guide His creatures by the consideration of their welfare and the benefits they may derive from His action.

6.2.2.2. In at least two passages, Rāzī formulates a partial reconciliation with the Mu'tazilite doctrine by conceding that God does act for the welfare and benefit of His creatures, not, however, in this world, but in the next. Let us look at these passages in the order of their appearance in the *Tafsīr*.

6.2.2.2.1. *TK* 17:16–37 (on *Q* 10:4–6)

In his lengthy discussion of the Resurrection, which is examined more closely in the next chapter, insofar as it relates to creation, Rāzī distinguishes two groups in the Muslim community, both of which, of course, believe in the Resurrection, but which approach an understanding

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18 *TK* 24:104
of it from different angles. According to Rāżī, the first group, to be identified with the Mu'tazilites, have 12 arguments in favour of the doctrine. In his usual way, he presents and analyses them in detail.

Of particular relevance here is the fifth of these arguments. Two views are stated in explanation of God's creation of the world 'and all people in it':

A. It was not for their benefit or interest. This seems to be Rāżī's position, "befitting," he says, "the Compassionate and Noble One".

B. It was for a purpose, for their interest and good. This is the view of the Mu'tazilites. Rāżī analyses it here and goes part of the way with them:

1. In this world? No, for two reasons:

a) because worldly pleasures are nothing more than the absence of pain. This is a negative thing and, if this were God's purpose, it would be better not to exist or be created at all.

b) because these pleasures are, in fact, mixed with suffering.

2. Therefore, benefit will accrue to the good only in the next world, to balance the evils they experienced in this one.

6.2.2.2. TK 26:201 (on Q 38:27)

The second view expressed in the previous passage (B. above) is, as I have said, that of the Mu'tazilites. In the light, however, of this present passage, and its explicit reference to the earlier one, it does seem that Rāżī is concurring with their position insofar as it refers to the life hereafter. For clarity's sake, let us summarise the passage schematically here:

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19 TK 17:18. In his commentary on an earlier Sūra, Rāżī (2:54–7) analyses at length seven arguments of those Muslims who interpret Q 2:7 ("And they [the unbelievers] will have a great punishment") as meaning that they deserve it, but that God's magnanimity or generosity oblige Him in fact to pardon them. It is an important passage in terms of the doctrines of predestination and determinism, and it takes the occasion to analyse the concepts of advantage and harm as motives for creation.

20 He refers to his thorough summaries of these arguments "at the beginning of the Sūra, "Yūnus", in TK 26:201, the next passage to be discussed here.

21 TK 17:21–2

22 Ibid. 21. This same argument is found in the parallel passages, 2:55 and 26:201.

23 He seems to feel this acutely: "This world is brimful (qāfīh) of evils (shurūr), catastrophes, trials and misfortunes (balāyā). [Compared with these], the delights [of this world] are a mere drop in the ocean (qāratu l-'bahr)?" (17:22)
"God created mankind in this universe":

A. For its disadvantage: *False*, because that would not befit the Compassionate and Noble One.

B. For neither its disadvantage nor its benefit: *False*, because this would already be the case when they were non-existent (so why create them at all?)

C. For benefit:

   1. In this life: *False*, because the benefits of this world are few and the disadvantages many. And to expose humankind to many disadvantages for the sake of a few benefits does not befit Wisdom.

   2. In an after-life: *True*, by a process of exclusion. Therefore, there must be another life after this one. This can be established in many ways.

Our initial observation, however, must presumably embrace this conclusion as well, i.e. that if a benefit is conceded in the next life, it is still valid to admit purpose, on the part of God, only in a less strict sense.

6.3. The Creation of Man

6.3.1. As A Mercy, or to Cause Dissension

Many Qur'anic pericopes have provided the basis for a discussion about predestination and free will, and in all of them there is question of God's purpose in creating man. *25* Here we will take just one representative pericope and see how Rāzī deals with it. In Sūra 11 ("Hūd"), we read: "If your Lord had willed, He would certainly have made the human race (al-nās) one nation; but they do not stop differing amongst themselves (v. 118); except those on whom your Lord has mercy, and it is for that purpose that He created them (illa man rahima rabbuka wa li-dhālika khalāqahum.) And your Lord's word has been fully realised (tammat): 'I shall certainly fill hell with Jinn and men together' (v. 119)."

Rāzī presents three interpretations of the words, "And it is for that purpose

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24 I have interchanged the second and third views in order to conclude with the 'true' position.

25 Some are dealt with above in the section on man's acts (2.6.2.3).
that He created them".26

A. He created them to have mercy on them. He gives this as the view of Ibn 'Abbās and notes that most Mu'tazilites prefer it, because we cannot say that He created men to be at odds with one another (mukhtalifin).

For this they offer three proofs:

1. A pronoun should refer to the closer of two things mentioned, not to that which is more remote. In this case, it is rahima, not mukhtalifin.

2. If God were to create them with the precise purpose of putting them at odds with one another, He could not punish them, because, in being at odds, they would be simply obeying Him.

3. The present pericope must be understood in the light of Q 51:56: "I did not create the Jinn and mankind, except in order that they might worship Me".

Against this view, it is objected that, if 'mercy' (which is feminine) is intended as the referent, then God would have said 'li-tilka', not 'li-dhālīka'. To which 'We' (the Mu'tazilites) reply that rahma is feminine in form, but not in meaning. There are other verses in the Qur'an where, for example, hādha and qarīb (in the masculine forms) are applied to rahma, because this word really means faḍl and ghifrān (graciousness, pardon), both of which are masculine.27

B. He did create them to be at odds with one another. Rāzī makes no comment at this point.

C. He created the Aḥl al-Rahma for mercy and the Aḥl al-Ikhtilāf to be at odds. Abū Ṣāliḥ28 relates, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, that Muḥammad said: "God created the Aḥl al-Rahma so that they would not differ (li-an-lā), and the Aḥl al-'Adhāb so that they would (li-an). And He created a paradise and a hell for each group [respectively]".

Rāzī considers this the correct interpretation and offers three points in support thereof:

1. There are conclusive proofs (al–dalā‘il al–qātī‘a), which Rāzī does

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26 TK 18:78–9
27 The texts are: "Hādha rahma min rabbī" (18:98), and "Inna raḥmata l-lāhi qarīb mina 'l-muḥṣīrin" (7:56). On this point, see Wright, Grammar II 297–99.
not itemise here, that there can be no knowledge or ignorance in creatures, except by God's creation (takhlīq).

2. It is by God's decree, and thus by His knowledge, that some men will be at odds and others belong to the Ahl al-Rahma. If it were possible to reverse this decree, ignorance and knowledge would be reversible. And that is logically absurd.

3. The second verse in this pericope reads: "Your Lord's words, 'I shall certainly fill hell with Jinn and men together', have been fully realised" (v. 119). This makes it perfectly clear that God created some peoples (aqwām) for guidance and heaven, and others for error and hell.29

6.3.2. For His Guidance

Despite his daunting comment, that "to attempt to explain the wonders of God's wisdom (ḥikma) in creation and guidance is to embark upon a sea that has no shore",30 a group of Qur'anic pericopes dealing with this theme obliges us to set at least a tentative foot into these vast waters.31

In Q 10:31–5, God charges Muḥammad to confront the polytheists with the fact that, just as it is only He Who can create and then repeat that creation [at the Resurrection], so it is only He that can lead man to the truth. Rāzī uses this occasion to speak about divine guidance as "the noblest and most exalted of aims" that may be attributed to God in the creation of mankind.32 "The purpose (maqṣūd) for creating the body," he says, "is [precisely] that the spirit (rūḥ) may receive guidance (ḥidāya)." He supports this view with Q 16:78, which tells us that God gave us hearing, sight and heart in order that we should be grateful. "This is as if He were to declare that God created the body, and endowed it with sensation, only so that it might be the instrument for acquiring knowledge and the sciences (maʿārif, 'ulūm)." Bodily states, which include experiencing the pleasures of the palate and the sense of touch, are of a lower order than spiritual states and the knowledge of divine things, which are perfections that endure for eternity. This, he believes, shows that the

29 See O'Shaughnessy 60
30 TK 22:65
31 Three, in particular, are: Q 20:50: "Our Lord is He Who gave everything its creation (nature: khalqatu), then guided it rightly (ḥaddā); Q 26:77–8: "The Lord of the worlds, Who created me; and He guides me rightly (yahdini)"); and Q 87:1–3: "Praise the name of your Lord, All-High, Who created and then levelled, Who measured-out (gaddara) and then guided rightly (ḥaddā)". The first and third of these pericopes both quote verbatim the other two.
32 TK 17:90
creation of the body is with a view to guidance.33

Such is the mental disturbance and confusion that man is prone to, that very few, Rāzī says, are safe from error and hence it is only from God that guidance, science and knowledge come. Whether guidance is understood to be the call to truth or the attainment of that knowledge, "it is in both cases the noblest level of the human condition and the loftiest form that true happiness can take."34

6.3.2.1. In his commentary on the first of our three pericopes (Q 20:50), Rāzī distinguishes creation from guidance. "Khalq", he says, "means the composing or putting together of forms and bodies (tarkib al-qawālib wa 'l-abdān). Hidāya, on the other hand, means the incorporation (idā) of the rational, motive (mudrik, muharrik) power in (these) bodies." He says this is the sense of Q 15:29: "And when I have levelled him (sawwaytuhu) and breathed in him My spirit." The levelling refers to the form (shape: qālib) and the breathing-in of the spirit to the incorporation of the rational power.35 Relating this pericope to the previous one, we see that God's guidance of His creatures is in stages. Prerequisite to this process is the act of creation itself, the structuring of the body, with its parts, its sense faculties and so on, to be a fit lodging-place for the conditio sine qua non of guidance, viz. the human spirit. Man is now able to be called to the truth and has what is necessary to attain it.

6.3.2.2. His commentary on the second pericope (Q 26:77–8) takes a different tack. Together, he says, creation and guidance embrace all the benefits that man is capable of receiving: whether worldly, i.e. the ability to distinguish benefit and disadvantage; or religious and spiritual, viz. the direction of the mind to distinguish between true and false, good and evil.36

A particular point he takes up here is that, in this verse from the Qur'ān (al-ladhi khalaqani fa huwa yahdini), 'created me' is in the past and 'guides me' refers to the future. The reason for this is that creation is once for all and for a fixed period of time, whereas guidance can be repeated any number of times: 'God explains that it is He Who created [man] with those other things whereby his creation would be fully realised in the past at one stroke; and also that He guides him to advantages, both

33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 TK 22:64
36 TK 24:143-4
religious and worldly, in different ways (*qurūb*), at every single moment.\(^{37}\)

6.3.2.3. Rāzi’s longest treatment of this matter, the third passage in our group, is found in Vol. 31 of the *Tafsīr*.\(^{38}\) At the outset, he presses into service not only the two other pericopes, but also the words of *Q* 96:1–4, generally considered to be the very first revelation made to Muḥammad: "Recite: In the name of your Lord, Who created, created man from a clot (1,2)." These evidently refer to creation. After that, God says: "Recite: And your Lord is the most generous, Who taught by the pen (3,4)." These words, Rāzi says, speak of the divine guidance. (*al-Huda* is one of the names of the Qur’ān.)

With regard to our present pericope (*Q* 87:1–3), Rāzi takes up three matters for detailed analysis:

A. The words, "He created, then levelled" (*al-ladhi khalaqa wa sawwā*).\(^{39}\)

These are variously interpreted as referring to:

1. Man: insofar as:

   a. he is upright of stature, well-proportioned and fair of creation;

   b. he is able to do all the acts of which animals are capable, and furthermore make use of a variety of instruments;

   c. he prepares for being made legally responsible and for carrying out those responsibilities by performing acts of worship.

2. All Living Things: insofar as they are all equipped with the limbs, organs and senses they need.

3. All Created Things Whatsoever: insofar as He is omniscient and omnipotent and creates what He wills in perfect wisdom.

B. The form of the radicals, *qdr*, used here (*al-ladhi qaddara fa-hada*).

1. The majority (*jumhūr*) read it with *tashdīd*, and take it to mean that God measured–out everything with a known, or specific, measure

\(^{37}\) Ibid.


\(^{39}\) This first matter is fully translated under *SWY* in "Creation Vocabulary", above in 1.3.1. For the sake of completeness, it is summarised here. One must admit that 'level' is an unsatisfactory rendering of derivatives of *SWY*, and is to be understood in the light of the analysis in 1.3.1.
2. Al-Kisāʿī and al-Qaffāl read it without ṭashdīd (takhffīf). The
latter says that the word then means that God took possession of, or had
power over created things, and then He guided them. He made free
disposition of them as He willed. So His guidance is for their benefit and
best interest.

3. Others say that with or without ṭashdīd, the word means the same.

C. Things included in the term, qaddara: natures and attributes, with an
appropriate measure of, e.g., bodiliness, magnitude, duration, sense
qualities, beauty or ugliness, happiness or misery, guidance or error. Rāzī
quotes Q 15:21: "There is not a thing, but the treasuries from which it
comes (khazāʿinuhu) are with Us. And We do not send it down except in
a known measure."

Coming to the specific question of guidance, Rāzī says that "Then He
guided" mean that, first, every physical thing (mızāj) is so constituted as
to be receptive of appropriate powers which, in turn, are directed to (are
suitable for: tašluhu) certain determined actions.

He then lists a variety of opinions amongst the commentators as to what,
in practice, God's guidance is:

1. Muqātil: "He guides" means that He guided the male how to
approach the female.

2. Others: God guided man to making a livelihood and cared for him.

3. Others: God guided man into the paths of good or evil, joy or pain,
insofar as God makes man sensitive and intelligent, and capable of
tackling (iqdām ʿalā) what delights him (yasurruhu), or shrinking from
(ihqām) what would cause him pain (yasūʿuhi). In support of this view,
Q 76:3 and 91:7–8 are quoted.

4. al-Suddī: God 'measured' the time that the foetus spent in the womb,
then 'guided' it to exit therefrom.

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40 TK 31:139
41 Muqātil b. Sulayman came from Balkh in Iran. He wrote a commentary on the
Qurʾān and other books on scriptural sciences. An authority on Ḥadīth. He lived in
42 The word should read saʿāda, not saʿā.
43 A nice parallelism in the Arabic
5. al-Farā‘: God measured, then guided and made to err (qallā). His view and the relevance of the words from Qur’ān 16:81 are not immediately evident.

6. Others: Guidance is the call to faith (imān).

7. Others: It is God directing us, through a consideration of the perfect order in the world, to a conviction that a Producer does exist, Who is One, Majestic, Unique and Eternal.

8. al-Qatāda: Guidance is God’s command to man that he should be obedient and not errant.

Rāzī concludes by saying that most views on this matter come under one or other of two headings. There are those who envisage guidance as having a religious dimension; whereas others interpret it as referring to welfare in this world. Rāzī adopts the first position. He reasons that the first part of the Qur’ānic verse, about creating, levelling and measuring, refers to the situation in this world, but the next words, "Then He guided", mean that He charges man to behave responsibly, and this is a religious matter.

6.3.3. For Worship

Qur’ān 4:1 indicates that the injunction (ittaqū) is the necessary concomitant of the fact that God is the Creator. "We must," says Rāzī, "dedicate ourselves to worship and guard against everything that He has warned us from." 44

He spells out this link between createdness and the obligation to worship in his remarks on the explicit Qur'ānic command: "Creator of all things. So (fā) worship Him." 45 These words prove that the consequential-fā indicates the nexus (tartīb, usually translated in the thesis as 'arrangement') between the command to worship and the fact that God is Creator of all things. And the causal-fa (bi l-sababiyya) indicates the nexus between the command (ḥukm) and what is said (waṣf) about God. So this means that it is because He is Creator of all things that He must be worshipped without reservation (alā l-īṭlāq). 46

This same nexus is made in Qur’ān 10:3 ("That is God, your Lord. So fā worship Him"). In opening up what he sees to be the significance of this
verse, Rāzi quotes verbatim the words that we shall look at next, viz. "I have not created the Jinn and men except to worship Me" (Q 51:56). And Q 10:4, for Rāzi, tells us that God instils in us the fear of the Last Day so that the conditions will be right for those legally responsible to exercise themselves in the worship of God: "If the Wise One commands anything of His creatures, He must see that they are free of préoccupations (fārighu 'l-bāl) and disturbance, so that they can devote themselves to carrying out these legal responsibilities (takālīf). People have a natural propensity to seek pleasure and ease. So, without the restraining influence that the thought of the Resurrection exercises, there would be great confusion (chaos: harj wa marj) and discord (fitan), and those legally responsible would not be free to engage in acts of worship."

In looking at Rāzi's comments on Q 51:56, we see that he believes that the command to Muhammad to warn (dhakkir), which we find in the preceding verse (55), represents a solemn way of saying that creation is only for worship. "So what is intended in the existentialising of man is worship; and He warns him about this, making him realise (a'lamahum) that everything apart from worship is a waste of time (ṣādyī'u 'l-zaman)."

He reminds us of what "we have mentioned several times (mīrāran") viz. that the prophets laid special emphasis (munhāṣir) on the two matters of the worship of God and the guidance of mankind. In 51:54, God seems to be making a distinction between the two when He says: "So withdraw from them. You are not to blame (bi-malūm)." In other words, we are excused sometimes from guidance, if, for example, people refuse to be guided; but we are never absolved of our obligation to worship.

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47 TK 17:20
48 It is well to recall again that, according to Jomier, one manuscript has cast doubt on the authenticity of this section of the Tafsīr.
49 TK 28:231
50 Ibid.
CHAPTER 7

THE SECOND CREATION: THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection on the Last Day and the Judgement is a pivotal belief in Islam. It is not appropriate here to study the full content of this article of faith, but rather to restrict ourselves to the explicit comparison made quite frequently in both the Qur'ān and the Tafsīr between the initial creation of rational beings and the second creation, which is the Resurrection.

7.1. Terminology

By way of introduction, however, it may be useful to set down the words used by both to describe that event. In the case of the Qur'ān, it may help to distinguish between those expressions that have, to a great extent, the character of proper names, and those which describe the circumstances that will surround the Last Day. In the case of the Qur'ān, only a sampling of references is given. A particular basic word used (e.g. ba'th) may appear in different forms.

7.1.1. Terms used in the Qur'ān:

A. Having the character of proper names:

1. al-Wāqi‘a (The Event): 56: title and v. 1; 69:15
4. Ajal Allāhi (God’s Appointed Term): 29:5
5. Yawm taqūm al-sā‘a (When the Hour Rises): 30:55

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1 al-Ākhira is used for the After-life.
6. **Yawm aẓīm** (The Great Day): 83:5

7. **al-Fawz al-‘aẓīm** (The Supreme Triumph): 37:60; 44:57; 48:5

8. **Yawm al-khulūd** (The Day of Immortality): 50:34

9. **Yawm al-dīn** (The Day of Religion): 1:4; 70:26; 83:11

10. **Yawm al-ḥaqq** (The Day of Truth): 78:39

11. **al-Qāri‘a** (The Calamity): This is the title of Sūra 101, and the expression appears in vv. 1,2. Also 69:4.

12. **al-Ṭāma al-kubrā** (The Great Disaster): 79:34

**B. Terms for the Circumstances of the Last Day:**


2. **Yawm hum bārizūn** (When men will appear): 40:16


4. **Yawm al-khurūj** (When they will come from their graves): 50:42

5. **Yawm al-tagḥābun** (The Day of mutual deceit): 64:9

6. **Yawm al-ẓaʃl** (The Day of Decision): 44:40; 78:17

7. **Yawm ʿasīr, yawm ʿasīr** (The Day of Difficulty): 74:9; 54:8

8. **li-Yawm là rayba fihi** (The Day of which there is no doubt): 39,25

9. **Yawm yaḥshuruhum** (The Day when He will gather them): 10:45; 19:68; 20:101; 46:6

10. **Yawm al-talāq** (The Day of Meeting): 40:15
   - the Meeting (w’out yawm): 13:2; 29:23; 32:14

11. **Yawm al-ḥisāb** (The Day of Reckoning): 38:26,53

12. **Yawm turja‘ūn** (When you will be brought back to God): 2:281

14. *Yawm yub'athūn* (When they are called forth): 23:100 (cf 11:7)
   The Calling-forth (simply) (*al-ba'ith*): 22:5


16. *Yawm al-wa'id* (The Day of the Threat, or Promise): 50:20; 70:44; 85:2

17. *Yawm yaqumu 'l-ashhād* (The Day when Witnesses arise): 40:51

18. *Ilayhi marji'ukum jamVan* (The Return of all to God): 10:4

19. *Yū'duḥu* (He repeats creation): 10:4 et al

20. *al-Takwīr* (When the sun is overthrown): 81: title and v. 1


The most commonly recurring expressions in the Qur'ān are the Day of Assembling, Returning and Calling-forth; the Last Day, That Day, the Hour and the Repetition or Restoration, *i.e.* of the first creation.

7.1.2. Terms used in the *Tafsīr*

In the passages examined for this study, Rāzī uses the following expressions:


2. Repetition or Restoration. Two forms are used:

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2 The expression *ma'ād* appears only once in the Qur'ān, *i.e.* in 28:85. Arberry translates it simply as 'a place of homing'. Pickthall renders it: 'He will surely bring you home again', but notes a tradition citing Mecca as the referent and saying that Muḥammad received this revelation on the hijra. Likewise, Rodwell. Sale is aware of the tradition and reflects it in his translation: "He will bring thee back to Mecca". Blachère gives 'un lieu de retour', but says that everything points to it meaning paradise. He thinks it very unlikely that it refers to Mecca. Asad, in company with 'most of the classical authorities', agrees with this. Rāzī, who, as we shall see, uses the expression frequently, perhaps exclusively, in this sense, believes however that the obvious meaning of this Qur'ānic usage is Mecca (*TK* 25:21). So also Dawood.

3 See also no.6 below.


7.2. Proving that the Resurrection will occur

In establishing the credibility of the Resurrection on the Last Day, Rāżi sets out his argument in the following stages:

1. It is not self–evidently impossible, but rather possible: and reason cannot show that it is improbable (ghayru mustab‘ad fi ‘l-uqūl).

2. Hence it is true, and necessarily so.6

Let us examine each of these:

7.2.1. It is not self–evidently impossible,7 but rather possible: and reason cannot show that it is improbable.

We read in Q 10:4: "To Him is your return all of you; and the promise made in truth (haqqan). Surely, He begins (yabda‘u) the creation; then He repeats (restores: yu‘idu) it." Rāżi notes the close nexus established by God between the two.8 He justifies at length his first claim, viz. that it is not self–evident to deny the Resurrection, but rather the Resurrection is possible, and reason cannot prove it improbable.

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4 This is not the same as the return, either of creatures to God, or the restoration of the first creation, as found in the Qurʾān.

5 In an expression, calculated to produce an effect by its very sound, this is linked with no.1 above in al-Ḥashr wa ‘l-Nāshr: 17:16,17,18; 18:234; 20:78; 21:62; 23:7,8; 26:124,201.

6 TK 17:16-18 (on 10:4). This same analysis is found in TK 26:124-5 (on 37:11).

7 Lit.: "The denial of the Ḥashr wa ‘l-Nāshr does not come under the category of self–evident knowledge (or the self–evident sciences)" (TK 17:16).

8 He speaks of this link, sometimes in detail, also in TK 2:153-4 (on 2:29); 9:160 (4:1); 14:96 (7:54); 18:234 (13:2); 19:8 (13:5); 20:77-8 (16:70),224 (17:51); 21:240-41 (19:67); 22:229 (21:104); 23:7 (22:5),116 (23:90); 26:109 (36:7),124-5 (37:11).
7.2.1.1. What is the subject of disagreement cannot be self-evident. But intelligent people disagree about whether the Resurrection will take place, and even about its possibility (imkân).

7.2.1.2. The proposition (qaḍīya: viz. that there will be a Resurrection) is certainly not impossible (imtinā') in the way that the proposition ‘One is twice (ḍīf) two’ is impossible.

7.2.1.3. Whether the rational soul was created simultaneously with the body or not, the conjunction (tdalluq) of the two on the first occasion shows that it is not improbable that God might do it again.

7.2.1.4. Many comparisons, or examples (amthila), show (dālla) that the Ḥashr wa 'l-Nashr is possible:

7.2.1.4.1. God's rain, which rescues the land from the grip of drought and makes it erupt into new life, adorning it with wonderful flowers and rare blossoms. The Qur'ān says that the Nushūr will be like this (35:9). It happens because "He gives life to the dead" (22:5–6), and it is "a reminder for those who understand" (39:21). "What he means to do here," says Rāzī, "is to make us aware of the Ma'ād"? In commenting on a parallel pericope (Q 80:18–24), Rāzī quotes Muḥammad as saying: "When you see the spring, think deeply about the Nushūr". And his own closing remark is: "There is no similarity between spring and the Nushūr other than the one we have mentioned", i.e. the raising to new life.

7.2.1.4.2. Weight change. We can all relate to Rāzī's words: "Each one experiences in reference to himself increase of weight and size, then loss of weight and then, perhaps, a return to the first condition when we were stout". He argues thus: "What is possible for one of us is not impossible for all. So clearly the ḍāda is not impossible. This is indicated by His words: 'And (that We may) initiate you in being in a way you do not know' [Q 56:61]. This means that, since God has power to initiate your essences in being in the first place, so does He have power over your particles during your life, in the second place; without you knowing when He innovates them, or allows them to decrease. So we must conclude that, after you have decomposed in the grave, it is not impossible for Him to cause you to return to the Gathering (al-Ḥashr) on the Day of

9 TK 17:17
10 Ibid.
Qiyāma.11

7.2.1.4.3. Creation without blueprint (min ghayri mithāl).12 The argument runs: He Who created without exemplar can surely existentialise a second time with one. He supports this line of thought with seven pericopes from the Qur'ān, quoting the first five and the seventh without comment.13 The sixth text runs: "Oh people! If you are in doubt about the Ba'ath, then remember that We created you from dust. This is because God is the Truth, He gives life to the dead, has power over all things, (and because) the Hour is coming, there is no doubt about it, and because God will call forth (yab'athu) those who are in the graves" (22:5–7).

Rāzī says that this pericope testifies to the truth or the validity (ṣiḥa) of the Ḥashr14 on several scores:

1. "By the first creation, He proves the īmkan of the second. It is as if God were saying: 'Since the first creation came about by changing these bodies from one state to another, then why is it not possible for the second creation to come about after many and successive changes [of state] (ikhtilāfān)?" This seems to give the impression that the original creation was a matter of re-arranging particles or atoms, but the text must be read in the light of what has been said already about creation from dust.16

2. All such changes, that are part and parcel of the generation of man from dust, are compared here by God to the revivification of the earth after it dies in winter.

3. He describes Himself as "The Truth", and this means that He is perfect in power, knowledge and wisdom. Hence there is no problem about His ability to raise us from the dead.

7.2.1.4.4. The difficult and the easy. This argument does not seem to be a mithāl, but rather a process of a fortiori reasoning, running thus: If God can perform a more difficult operation (viz. the first creation), then with

11 TK 17:17
12 Is this a device of Rāzī to include under his amthila, pointing to the Resurrection, the lack of a mithāl in the original creation?
13 Q 10:4; 36:79; 56:62; 50:15; 75:36–7,40; 17:50–51
14 This seems to go beyond the general claim in this section, which is to its possibility and non-improbability. See also TK 12:153 (on 6:2) and 20: 78 (16:70). In TK 24:211 (27:64), he writes: "The proof (dalāla) of the ūda from the ibiida is an obvious and powerful one (zāhira, qawwīya)." The passage itself shows explicitly that the discussion is about possibility.
15 TK 17:17
16 See above 2.6.2.1.2.
all the more reason will He be able to do the less difficult, or easy, one (haqir, sahl). This is a recurring theme, e.g. in TK 19:8–9 (on 13:5), 106 (14:19); 26:124 (37:11) and 28:184 (50:38). On Q 46:33, he writes: 'God says: 'Have they not seen that God, Who created the heavens and earth and was not wearied thereby, is able to give life to the dead? Yes, He is truly able to do all things'. The purpose of this verse is to establish the proof that God has power over the Ba'ath .... There is no doubt that their creation [the heavens and earth] is greater and more splendid than the restoration (i'ada) of this person to life after his death. And He Who has power over what is stronger and more perfect (al-qadir 'alâ 'l-aqwâ al-akmal) must have power over the lesser and weaker. Then He closes the verse with the words: 'Yes, He is truly able to do all things'. This means that the conjunction of the spirit and the body is a possible thing; since, if it were not possible in se, it would not have happened in the first instance. Now God has power over all possibilities. Therefore, He must be able to bring about this i'ada. These proofs (dalâ'il) are certain and evident (yaqiniya zâhira).

7.2.1.4.5. Sleeping and waking. Râzî says that sleep is death's brother and waking is like life after death. He quotes Q 39:42, in which sleep and death are both mentioned, and he says that "God here means to prove the future reality of the Ba'ath and the Ḥashr wa 'l-Nashr from the fact that these events occur." 18

7.2.1.4.6. God can replace one thing by its opposite, e.g. life replaced by death, fire generated from a green tree (Q 36:80). Opposites are of equal status and hence the process can be reversed. Life, for example, may in turn replace death.

He concludes this section with the words: "So this is all that is to be said to explain that reason is incapable of showing the improbability of the Mādād and the Ḥashr wa 'l-Nashr ". 19

7.2.2. Hence the Mādād is true and necessary. Râzî here shows how the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites, starting from conflicting principles and standpoints, both establish the Resurrection and the Last Judgement as a future reality.

17 TK 17:18. The full stop in our text should come after awlâ. He quotes here Q 36:81; 46:33 and 79:27.
18 TK 17:18
19 Ibid.
What is more interesting at this point is the quantum leap that Rāzī seems to make from possibility to actuality. He spells it out much more explicitly in his commentary on Q 37:11.20 The Latin Scholastics would say: "A posse ad esse non valet illatio"; that is: we are not logically justified in inferring that a thing actually exists simply because it is possible. For them, one particular condition can justify such an inference, i.e. 'in the case of necessary beings': "In necessariis, ex reali possibilitate intrinseca, sequitur existentia, v.g. si possibile est Dominum esse sapientem, revera Deus sapientissimus est.21

Rāzī too shows there is a nexus between possibility and actuality. It does not provide the basis for a procedure from purely logical principles, but rather an argument from authority, and that is, the trustworthiness of the witness (he has in mind the Qur'ān, Muḥammad and the prophets): "If a trustworthy person declares, in regard to a possible thing, that it has actually occurred, its actuality must be recognised."22

Throughout his treatment of this subject, Rāzī gives arguments for the Resurrection which he describes as powerful and convincing, based on the fact of the initial creation. First and last, the Ma'ād is a datum of revelation for Muslims. The arguments he refers to, then, can surely be only very persuasive argumenta convenientiae.

In conclusion, then, while the first creation did not weary God, it was in se a much more difficult operation, calling things ultimately out of nothing; and, despite the fact that the Resurrection will be a 'new creation', the initial one was greater and more splendid.23

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20 TK 26:124-5.
23 TK 28:34 (46:33)
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

After examining all the passages which bear on the creation pericopes in the Qur’ān, one can only stand back in astonishment at what Rāzī achieved in the *Tafsīr*. Every verse of the Qur’ān is commented upon. A complete volume is devoted to the opening Sūra and particular verses may command as many as thirty pages of explanation. By far, the greater part of this project was completed by Rāzī himself.

The general comments made throughout this thesis, and here in the Conclusion, may have a broader application, but it has been my intention to restrict them expressly to what Rāzī says about creation in the *Tafsīr*.

Like that of St. Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae*, which would appear fifty to sixty years later in the West, Rāzī’s over-all project, if not stated explicitly, was to expound and reconcile all facets of knowledge that could be drawn from the two-fold source, viz. divine revelation and human reason, the *Naql* and the ‘*Aql*. The *Naql* is for the rational process both the point of departure, as God’s word, and the point of arrival, as touchstone for the orthodoxy of that process. Again like Aquinas, he pressed into service the ‘*Aql* in his efforts to appreciate the Word of God. Despite his misgivings about the Greek philosophical tradition, as he saw it exemplified in the *Falāṣīfa* – a reservation not shared to the same extent by St. Thomas – he is obviously deeply influenced by their intellectual tools, their definitions and their method. He, in fact, finds in the Qur’ān itself, not only the *Naql*, but also its underpinning by the use of the ‘*Aql*; and he justifies *Kalām* on the grounds that it is employed in the Holy Book itself.1 His only unambiguous condemnation is reserved for *taqlīd*, the blind, slavish and totally literal approach of the traditionists.

Out of reverence for God’s word, he is at pains to justify the *order* in the Qur’ān. This is basic to his approach. He sees this order as part of revelation and seeks the significance of the Scripture first of all in the Scripture itself. All interpretation, he believes, must begin with the literal

1 We can thus distinguish a two-fold exercise of ‘*Aql*: a) man’s use of reason in expounding revelation; and b) that used by God in the Revelation itself.
sense, unless it operates in defeasance of that set of philosophically certain truths which allowed us to accept Scripture; in which case, it must be interpreted allegorically. Where there are seemingly conflicting verses in the Qur'an, Rāzī follows the masoretic approach, understanding the *mutashabihat* in the light of the *muhkamāt*. As we saw in 4.7. above, these concepts are expressed in the Qur'an itself. In Q 3:7, the *muhkamāt* are the clear, unambiguous verses, which are to be understood in the literal sense, and which, according to 3:7, are the essence of the Book (*umm al-kitāb*). The *mutashabihat*, on the other hand, are those verses which express the truth in an allegorical, symbolic or metaphorical way.2

As Arnaldez has noted, the *Aḥādīth* feature minimally in the methodology of the *Tafsīr*.3

Rāzī never loses sight of the ultimate goal of his speculation, which he presents so movingly in his treatment of the *Yā Huwa*.4 On reading this, who could have doubt about his mystical leanings? Apart from one or two other short passages of a similar vein, however, Rāzī does not deal with the question of mysticism explicitly in the Creation context.

His encyclopedic knowledge of, and interest in, a multiplicity of scientific disciplines have been so often noted as not to need much further emphasis.5 Jomier's exercise on "Āl *'lmrān" shows the astronomical number of authors and schools marshalled in the commentary on just one Sūra of the Qur'an.6

Though the philosophical concepts of substance-accidents, essence-existence, cause-effect, time-eternity, necessary-contingent, and so on, are basic ingredients of those parts of his commentary concerned with rational issues, the actual references to his philosophical works are sparse in the *Tafsīr*, which is, of course, theological first and last in its teleology. In concentrating on the *Tafsīr*, I may perhaps be complementing the work of Davidson and Gimaret. In his presentation of Rāzī's proofs for the

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3 In "L'oeuvre" 315, Arnaldez writes that Rāzī agrees with the Mu'tazilites in rejecting their use in exegesis. He adds: "Rares sont les penseurs musulmans qui aient porté leur examen sur le contenu même du ḥadīth." Rāzī does cite various traditions, but he does not make them the final arbiter in dogmatic questions. Goldziher is quoted as saying: "Il rejette toute tradition qui contredit ses convictions dogmatique".

4 See 4.4. above.

5 We may mention amongst those most frequently invoked: astronomy (2.5.3., 5.1., 5.3.1.3., 5.3.1.4.2. above); botany (4.8.), medicine, esp. gynaecology (2.6.2.1.6.), pre-history (2.5., 2.6.1.) and zoology (5.6.1.6.4).

6 J. Jomier, "Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī", in *MIDE0* 15 (1982) 145-172. See also Appendix 3 below, "Authors Cited in the Passages Studied".
existence of a Creator–God, Davidson relies exclusively on passages from the *Muḥāṣṣal* and the *Kitāb al–Arba‘īn*.\(^7\) Gimaret's work on human acts does have many references to the *Tafsīr*, as well as to the *Muḥāṣṣal* and the *Kitāb al–Arba‘īn*. However, recourse to the *Tafsīr* is far less substantial than the sum-total of references to the two latter works, and the *Lawāmī al–bayyināt*, the *Lubāb al–Ishārāt*, the *Ma‘ālim*, the *Mabāḥith*, the *Manāqib*, the *Maṭālib al–āliya*, the *Mulaḥaṣṣ*, the *Munāzarāt*, the *Nihāyatul ‘ī-‘uqūl* and the *Sharḥ al–Ishārāt*.\(^8\)

Coming to the central theme of the thesis, we note in the first instance the rich and varied vocabulary that Rāzī presses into service, only a small part of which he finds in the *Qur‘ān*. God is not only the *Khāliq*. He also originates, arranges, combines, fashions, gives form to, existentialises, inclines the balance in a particular way, determines, influences, innovates, specifies, directs, and so on. Frequently, many of these terms appear to be taken as synonyms, but each provides a facet of his understanding of the Supreme Being. Several times they are used in combination to achieve a rhetorical effect. Rāzī does not attach to derivatives of *khālq* the idea of bringing something out of nothingness, but rather the composite concept of a decree–of–measuring. One of the most familiar refrains in the Creation context is that "*Khalq* can have no other meaning than a measuring–out (*taqdir*)". And since this activity is not restricted to God, it is not surprising that the *Qur‘ān* should speak of Him as "the Best of measurers", because, in His case, it is an activity that involves no planning, calculating or any other discursive thought–process that would point to imperfection. Implicit in the decreeing–aspect of *taqdir* is both God's *knowledge*, which is all–embracing, totally accurate and free of any inadvertence or lack of attention to detail, and His *freedom*.

Rāzī does in general allow the validity of the exegetical principle of *takhṣīṣ* – in other words, the exception to, or reservation placed on, a universal statement that does not negate its universality. He will brook no application of this principle, however, in the case of such a *Qur‘ānic* statement as that "God is Creator of all things". This puts him immediately in the determinist camp, and for this he makes no apology. It slots in well with his Ash‘arite occasionalism and voluntarism.\(^9\)

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9 See 2.6.2.3. above. R. Arnaldes twice takes up the matter of determinism and free will in Rāzī, *viz.* in "L'oeuvre", loc. cit. and "Apories sur la prédestination et le libre arbitre dans le Commentaire de Rāzī", in *MIDEO* 6 (1959–60) 123–36. In the former paper, he sees Rāzī as a determinist, but not a predestinationist; and he sums up what he believes to be Rāzī's view thus: "Dieu veut que l'homme obéisse librement; il ne veut pas ce que l'homme veut, car alors sa volonté se soumettrait après coup à la décision de la créature; mais il veut l'intervention de la volonté humaine dans les actes humains" (p. 322).
Atomism, which in his earlier works, _e.g._ the *Mabahith*, he refuted, is accepted in the *Kitāb al-Arba‘īn* and in the *Tafsīr*. Other shifts of ground are noted in his later acceptance of infinity, the void and the possibility, at least, of worlds beyond our own.

"Sign" is an all-pervasive concept in Muslim consciousness. The *Qur‘ān* as a whole and every individual verse are called signs. The heavens and earth and everything between, the whole universe, or 'ālam: everything, in other words, apart from God, is a sign-post directing us to a Creator. This raises the question of the probative value of Rāzī’s rational proofs for the existence of such a Being. As I have noted, he nearly always uses dīl and derivatives therefrom, and, at the risk of engendering tedium, I have generally given in brackets the Arabic word which I translate as 'proof' or 'prove'. They are more in the nature of indications, signs and inductive underpinning of Revelation. Genuine deduction from rational principles is more accurately rendered as *nazār*, but no truly sharp linguistic distinction between these two terms is evident in the creation passages of the *Tafsīr*.

In evaluating the signs all around him, Rāzī proceeds by the _via negativa* ("God is not-composite") and the _via eminentiae* ("How much more so .......").

In detailing Rāzī’s proofs for the existence of a Creator–God, I have perhaps been guilty of a degree of repetition. My justification for this is that it reflects Rāzī’s own repetition in the presentation of his proofs and hence better reflects the true character of the *Tafsīr*. We should be aware of what emphases he considers important and the proportion of time and space he allocates to the sign–proofs of the Creator’s existence.

Finally, Rāzī considers creation, not only in its own right, but as leading to belief in the Resurrection on the Last Day. Time and again, he will say that, just as God created us in the first place, so can He restore us to life, as a "new creation", using the Qur‘ānic expression, after we have died. The basic fact of Rising is a _datum_ of Revelation, but the reasonableness of this Revelation is more evident when we reflect that the second creation is easier than the first, and even that did not weary God.

Ibn Khallikān (2, 652) calls Rāzī "the pearl of the age, a man without peer", who "surpassed all his contemporaries in scholastic theology, metaphysics and philosophy". For Nasr (Sharif 1, 652), the *TK* is "the most important theological commentary ever written on the *Qur‘ān*. There is no doubt that he was a most impressive theologian, philosopher,
natural scientist, encyclopedist, humanist and polemicist, as well as a devout Muslim, and that the *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* is one of the great achievements of the human mind, in East or West. I look on it as a privilege to have spent so many hours in the presence of a man as deeply imbued as he was with the majesty, wisdom and compassion of God the Creator.
ABBREVIATIONS

EI2  The Encycl. of Islam, Edition 1979 – (first printing 1960 –)
GAL  Brockelmann, Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur
GAS  Sezgin, Geschichte der Arabischen Schrifttums
IJMES  International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies
JAOS  The Journal of the American Oriental Society
Ma‘ālim  Rāzī, Ma‘ālim fī Uṣūl al-Dīn
MIDEO  Mélanges de l’Institut Dominicain d’Etudes Orientales du Caire
MW  Muslim World
Q  Qur’ān
SI  Studia Islamica
TK  Rāzī, al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr
APPENDIX 1

TRANSLATED PASSAGES FROM TK 14:101–117 AND 17:12–14

(See Text of Thesis 2.4.1. and 2.4.2.)

(Numbers in square brackets correspond to the notes in the Text)

"Then He sat on the Throne" (Q 7:54)

We give here in translation Rāzi’s proofs that this Qur'anic verse does not mean God is settled or established on the Throne in such a way as to have a corporeal relationship to it.

The Arguments from Reason


Were God to be settled, or established, (mustaqirr) on the Throne, He would be finite from the standpoint of being adjacent to the Throne; otherwise, the Throne, of necessity, would be within His essence, and that is logically absurd. For reason tells us – in fact, it is self-evident – that there is nothing to prevent finite things from being greater or smaller [even] in an infinitesimal degree. So if the Fashioner (Bāri') were finite in one respect, then He would be susceptible to increase and decrease.

Now the specification of all such things, with a particular measure, is due to the specifying of a Specifier and the measuring of a Measurer. But all things of this kind are innovated. So it is established that if God were on
the Throne, He would be finite from the stand-point of being adjacent to the Throne. Thus He would be innovated, which is logically absurd. So it is likewise absurd that He should be thought of as on the Throne.

[31] **Second Argument** (*TK* 14:101–102)

If God were in place and position, He would be:

a) limitless in every position;

b) or limited in every position;

c) or limited in some positions, and not others.

All these are false. So it is completely false to say that He is in place and space.

a) [To be limitless in every position] is false, because it means that God's essence would be com-mingled with all the sublunary and heavenly bodies, [even] with impure and unclean things; whereas [in reality] God is exalted above such things.

[Secondly], on this supposition, both the heavens and the earth would be a state within His essence. If this is established, then we say: Whatever that thing is of which the heavens are a state is either the same as that thing of which the earths are a state; or it is other than it. If the same, then the heavens and the earths would be two states in the one subject, and thus they would be indistinguishable. And so we should have to conclude that the heavens and the earths are essentially indistinguishable. But that is false. If the [heavens and the earths] are not the same, then the essence of God would have to be composed of particles and parts; which is logically absurd.

**Thirdly,** if God's essence were found to exist in all spaces and positions, it could be said that what is found to be above and what is found to be below are the same thing. In which case, the one single essence would be simultaneously in many spaces. Why would it not, then, also be conceivable that one body should be simultaneously in many spaces? But reason shows this to be logically absurd.

If [on the other hand] it be considered that what is found to be above is not the same as what is found to be below, then there must be composition and separation in God's essence. But this is logically absurd.

b) [To be limited in every position]: We say that it is self-evident that all such things are susceptible to increase and decrease; and further, they
must be specified, by a Specifier, according to a particular measure. But such things are innovated.

Furthermore, if a thing which is limited from every aspect can be eternally pre-existent and Agent of the world, then why would it not be conceivable that the Creator of the world is the sun or the moon or some other heavenly body? But it is generally agreed that this is false.

c) [That God is limited in some positions and not in others] is also false for the following reasons:

i) The aspect from which He is deemed to be limited would not be that from which He is deemed to be unlimited; otherwise, two contradictories would be predicated; which is logically absurd. But if [these aspects] are different, then He must be composed of particles and parts [which is logically absurd].

ii) The aspect according to which reason would deem Him to be limited would be either equal to the aspect according to which He would be deemed unlimited, or it would not.

The first is false, because when things are equal in the completeness of their essence, what is true of one is true of the others. So the aspect according to which He is unlimited can become that according to which He is limited, and vice versa. In that case, then, growth and decay, increase and decrease, division and rending-apart would be possible for His essence. But things like that are innovated; and that is logically absurd in the case of the eternal God.

So it has been established that, were God to be found in space and position, then He would be either unlimited in all positions, or limited in all positions, or unlimited in some and not in others. Now it has been shown that all are false. So we must conclude that to say God is found in space and position is logically absurd.

[33] Third Argument (TK 14:102-103)

If the Fashioner were found to be in space and position, what we call position would be:

a) either existent and attainable as objects of the senses;

b) or they would not.

But both these propositions are false. So it is false to say that God is found to be in space and position.
The first (a) is false, because if what we call space and position were existent and attainable as objects of the senses, then they would be distance or extension. And what is found realised in them must also have distance and extension; otherwise, they could not be present therein. Two distances, then, would have to interlock. But many proofs, familiar in this context, show this to be logically absurd. What is more, if God is eternal, space and position would also have to be eternal, present in eternity as an existent thing standing by itself, apart from God. But most intelligent people would agree that this is false.

The second (b) is [also] false, on two grounds:

i) Non-existence is pure negation, which could not be a complement or position for something other than itself.

ii) Things which are found in a position can be distinguished by the senses from other things because of their [very] position. So if [that] position were to be pure non-existence, then the senses would have to be able to point to pure non-existence, which is logically absurd ......

[34] Fourth Argument  (TK 14:103–104)

If the Fashioner could exist only insofar as He was specified by space and position, then His essence, in its actualisation and existence, would stand in need of other things. But since all such things are possible-by-nature, the result would be that, if the Fashioner could not exist except in position and space, He [too] would have to be possible-by-nature. But since this is absurd, it is absurd to say that He must be found to exist in space.

In explanation of the first proposition (maqām), i.e.: that the essence of God could not occur except as specified by space and position, we would respond: There is no doubt that both space and position are distinct from God’s essence. So, were such to be the case, God’s essence would be dependent for its realisation on something distinct from It. Now everything that depends for its realisation on something other than itself is by nature possible or contingent. The proof (dalīl) of this is that what is by nature necessary does not cease to exist when other things do cease to exist; whereas what is dependent on something else does cease to exist when those things on which they depend cease to exist. So, if He who is by nature necessary were to depend on something else, then two contradictories would be found predicated of Him. But that is logically absurd.

So it is established that if God were to to be found in space, He would be possible-by-nature; which is absurd.
There is a second way to approach this proof (\textit{al-wajh al-thānī, fi taqrīr hādhīhi 'l-ḥujja}), viz.: that a possible being needs to be in space and position.

As for those who say that a vacuum exists, then there is no doubt that space and position can be established \textit{madā 'adam al-tamakkun}.

And as for those who deny the existence of a vacuum, [we say] ‘No’, because, even if there were one who believed that a spatialised object must occur in a position, he would not say that a \textit{particular} spatialised object had to be in that position. Rather, any object at all would suffice to occupy that space.

If this is established, then were God’s essence to be specified by position and space, It would depend on that space; whereas that space would not depend for \textit{its} realisation on God’s essence. We should then have to say: space is by nature necessary and independent of other things, whereas God’s essence would by nature be dependent on and necessitated by things other than Itself. This is incompatible with our view that God by nature exists necessarily.

It may be objected: Space and position are not the kind of existents upon which the essence of God depends, and of which It stands in need. We reply: This is totally false, because, if the essence of God were said to be specified by position—above, then we could distinguish by sense—perception alone between that position and others. And if there is something that can be distinguished by sense—perception alone, how is it conceivable that it should be pure nothing and absolute negation? If that were possible, the same would be the case in regard to all sense—objects. But this would inevitably lead to doubt about the existence of every object of sense—perception; and no intelligent person would hold that.

[35] \textbf{Fifth Argument} (\textit{TK} 14:104–105)

To establish that God cannot be specified by space and position. We say: Space and position have no significance other than pure emptiness and total vacuum. Reason testifies explicitly that this concept is unanimously accepted and there is no disagreement about it at all. If this is the case, then all spaces are equal in the integrity of their natures, and so we say: If God were to be specified by space, He would be innovated; which is logically absurd, and thus the hypothesis is absurd.

We explain how this follows thus: Since it has been established that all spaces are equal, were the essence of God to be specified by a \textit{particular} space, His specification would be due to the fact that a
Specifier had characterised Him by that space. Now every action which has a free agent is innovated. So it is necessary that the specifying of the essence of God by a particular space is innovated.

Therefore, if:

[1] God’s essence must be realised in space;

[2] It is established that occurrence in space is innovated;

[3] The evidence of reason shows that what is not without an innovator is [itself] innovated:

It follows without any doubt that, were He to occur in a space, then He would be innovated. But since this is absurd, so is that hypothesis.

If they object, saying: Spaces are different, according as some are high, some low. So why can we not say that God’s essence is specified by a position—above? In which case, we would reply: This is false because positions are high or low only in relation to the existence of this world. But this world is innovated. So, before its innovation, there was no high or low, left or right, only pure vacuum. That being so, then the necessary consequence already mentioned follows in its entirety. Again, if we were to say that God’s essence was of necessity specified by a particular space, why could it not be conceivable that some bodies are of necessity specified by spaces? But, if that were so, such a body [ism should read al-ism] would not be receptive of movement and rest [because it would be fixed by nature in a specific position]. It could not then be used as a proof that it was innovated.

The proponent of this view cannot establish from motion and rest the proof that bodies are innovated. And the Karrāmiyya agree with us that to allow this entails infidelity. God knows best.

[36] Sixth Argument (TK 14:105)

If the Fashioner were found to exist in space and position, then He could be the object of sense-perception. But things of this kind are either indivisible in various ways or divisible.

(a) If we say that God can be an object of sense-perception, but in no way divisible in a particular measure, He would be an indivisible point and a single, indivisible atom, which would be tiny in the extreme and insignificant. But the consensus amongst reasonable people would be that this was false. This is because, whether they deny or affirm that God is in a position, they do not allow that He could be little or insignificant, like
an indivisible tiny particle. Thus there is a consensus that [to say He is an object of sense-perception but indivisible] is false. Furthermore, if it were possible [for God to be a tiny particle], why is it not conceivable that we might say that the God of the world is an infinitesimal part of an atom on the point of a needle? Or a particle attached to the tail of a louse or an ant? Clearly, each view leads to these kinds of absurdities; so plain reason tells us that God must transcend anything of this kind.

(b) With regard to the second proposition, viz. that He can be divided, we say: His essence would be composite and hence by nature contingent and in need of an Existentialiser and an Influencing-Agent. But it is logically absurd to say that God, Who is by nature necessary, should be such a thing.

[37] Seventh Argument (TK 14:105)

We say: Every subsistent essence which may be an object of sense-perception is divisible. But every divisible thing is possible. So every such essence is possible. So what is not by nature possible, but rather necessary by nature, cannot be an object of sense-perception.

(a) As for the first premise: this is proved by the fact that, in every subsistent essence, which may be an object of sense-perception, the right side must be different from the left. But such things are divisible.

(b) As for the second premise, i.e. that every divisible thing is possible: a divisible thing depends on each of its individual particles, all of which are distinct from the thing itself. So every divisible thing depends on something other than itself, and as such is by nature possible ......

[38] Eighth Argument (TK 14:105-106)

If God indeed were established in space, then He would be either greater than the Throne, or equal to it or smaller than it.

(a) If He were greater, He would be divisible, because the degree to which He equalled the Throne would be different from the degree to which He exceeded it.

(b) If He were equal to it, He would [again] be divisible, because the Throne is divisible, and what is equal to a divisible thing is [itself] divisible.

(c) If He were smaller, then the Throne would have to be greater than He; which, by the consensus of the umma, is false.
As for our position, the matter is evident. But, as for our adversaries, they deny that what is other than God could be greater than He. So it is established that this way of thinking is false.

[39] Ninth Argument (TK 14:106)

If God were found to exist in space, then He would:

(a) either be finite under every aspect;

(b) or He would not.

But both these propositions are false; hence it is false that He should be in space and position:

(a) He cannot be finite under every aspect, because this would mean that there would be empty spaces above Him. But given that God has power to create a body in that [singular] empty space, were He to create another world there, then He would be below [that world. However, [even] our adversary considers this to be logically absurd. Again, He could create from the six sides pertaining to that [divine] essence other bodies; in which case, His essence would be in the middle of these bodies and confined within them. Sometimes, too, He would be joined to them, at others separate [from them]. But, in the case of God, all this is absurd.

(b) The second proposition, viz. that He is not finite in some positions, is also absurd. This is established by the proof (burhān) that an infinite dimension or distance cannot be predicated of God. In which case, we cannot construct a proof (dalāla) on the fact that the world is finite, because no proof based on finite distance is valid when we are dealing with the essence of God.

So this accords with the doctrine of those who do not admit infinite distance. They are not happy with this expression, but they nevertheless accept the concept. And rational discussions are about concepts, not disputes over words.

[40] Tenth Argument (TK 14:106–107)

If God were in space and position, His presence there would:

(a) either prevent another body being there;

(b) or it would not.
But both propositions are false. So the view that He is in space is false.

(a) The first proposition is false because, since His being there precludes the presence of another body, God would be equal to other bodies in that He would be a mass, spatialised, extended in space and position, precluding other things being in the space in which He is. Now, if that is established, that God and other bodies are in these matters equal, then they must be:

(i) either different from other points of view;

(ii) or they are not.

(i) The first is false for two reasons:

[1] If God's essence and the essences of bodies had some things in common and others not, that whereby they shared things in common would be distinct from that whereby they differed. So the essence of the Fashioner would be composed of these two aspects. But we have proved that every composite is contingent. So what is by nature necessarily existent would be by nature possibly existent. And that is a contradiction (khulf).

[2] What they would share in common would be the nature of distance (dimension) and extension, such that it would be: x) the subject for that whereby they differed; y) something inhering in it; or z) neither.

(x) As for the first case, i.e. it would be the subject for that whereby they differed; the nature of dimension and extension is the subsistent substance. But the things that make substances differ are accidents and attributes. However, if essences are equal with regard to the completeness of their quiddity, then what is true of one must be true of others. So, then, what is true of all bodies must be true of the Fashioner, and vice versa. Thus we could speak of God's essence disintegrating or ripping apart; of its growth and decay; its rottenness and corruption. But all this is logically absurd.

In the second case (i.e. that whereby they differed would be a subject and essence, and that whereby they shared in common would be something inherent and an attribute): this is logically absurd, because the physical reality of dimension and extension would then be an attribute existing in a subject. Now if that subject were also specified by space and position, it [itself] would have to have another subject, and thus to infinity. If [on the

1 The headings here are inconsistent.
other hand] it were not like that, then it would be a mere existent, without any link to space or position, and in no way sense-perceptible. But the physical reality of dimension and extension has to be specified by space and position and be a sense-perceptible object. And it would necessarily involve a contradiction, and be logically absurd, for all the things we have been talking about to be found in [the one] subject.

As for the third case (i.e. that neither one of them is inherent in the other, nor a subject of the other): On this supposition, we say: each of the two would then be distinct from the other. In which case, the essence of God would be equal to other bodily essences in the integrity of their quiddity, because that whereby there is a difference between His essence and other essences is not something inhering in these essences; nor is it their subject, but rather something extrinsic. So the essence of God would be equal in the integrity of quiddity to the essences of bodies. The inevitable consequence, then, that we mentioned, would still obtain.

Thus it is established that to say God's essence is specified by space and position, in such a way as to preclude other bodies being in that place, leads to these three false propositions. So the opinion itself is false.

As for the second [hypothesis], viz. that, even if God's essence is specified by space and position, it does not preclude another body being there too: this is also logically absurd, because God's essence would have to mingled with, and permeate, the essence of that body which is in that position and space. Now this is logically absurd by common consent; and its absurdity is evident as well from the fact that, on such a hypothesis, why could there not be many bodies in one space?

So it is established that, if God were in space, He would either preclude another body being in that space, or He would not. But as both propositions have been shown to be false, so it is absurd and false to say that God is found to exist in space and position.

[41] Eleventh Argument (TK 14:108)

If God were specified by space and position, then we say that It would:

- either be possible for Him to move from that position;

- or it would not.

As to the first proposition, viz. that He would be able to move: 

we say

2 It would seem that ḥulūl here should read ḥusūl.
that this essence [of God] would have to be either in motion or at rest. But both of these are innovated since both motion and rest would be possible for It. In that case, the influencing-agent would not be His essence. If it were, then its opposite could not occur, and it would be impossible for Him to move or be at rest. And if that were so, then the influencing-agent of the movement or rest would be a free agent. But since every act of a free agent is innovated, so must motion and rest be. And what cannot do without an innovator is [obviously] innovated. The necessary consequence of this is that God is innovated, which is logically absurd.

As to the second view, viz. that He is specified by space and position, but cannot move away from it: this is also logically absurd, for two reasons:

1) [On this supposition] He would be like an infirm and feeble cripple. This would be a defect (naqq) and, in God, logically absurd.

2) If we might say that an existent were so [specified] by a particular space that it could not disappear [from that space], we might also say that other bodies could be so specified by particular spaces that they could not leave them. In that case, we could not prove from motion or rest that they were innovated. The Karramiya support us in this by classing such a view as infidelity.

3) If the Almighty were in space and position, He would be on a par with bodies in being spatialised and occupying spaces. Then we have recourse to the proof given above that, since spatialised things are equal in regard to the attribute of spatialisation, they must be equal to each other in the integrity of [their] quiddity. The reason for this is that, if some were to differ from others, that factor whereby there would be a difference would be something inhering in the spatialised thing, or its subject, or neither. But as has been shown, all three of these are false. And if they [God and bodies] were equal in the integrity of quiddity, then just as movement is true of bodies, so would it be of God. This completes our proof.


If God were to be specified by a particular space, and a man were to arrive at the outer limit of that space and attempt to enter: it would be either possible for him to penetrate it and enter, or it would not.

If it were possible, then [God] would be delicate of texture, like air or

3 Rāzi in fact gives three.
water, and thus capable of division and rending-apart. If it were not possible, He would be solid, like hard stone, which is impenetrable.

So we have established that, if God were to be specified by place, space and position, then He would be either delicate of texture and hence be capable of division and rending-apart, like air and water; or firm and hard, like solid rock. There is a consensus amongst Muslims that to describe God in these ways is infidelity and heresy. Furthermore, if we were to accept that He is specified by place and position, then He would be either luminous (nūrāniyān) or obscure (opaque: zulmāniyān). The anthropomorphists generally believe that He is pure light, since they hold that light is noble and obscurity contemptible.

However, widespread research indicates (dalla) that luminous things are lacking in density and do not obstruct things penetrating them and entering [the spaces] between the particles. In that case, if the penetrating object mingles with it and comes between its particles, then that which is penetrated becomes like the air which at one time is continuous, at another discrete; at one time joined, at another divided up.

Now it ill befits a Muslim to describe the God of the universe in this way. If it were possible, why could we not also say that the Creator of the universe is one of the winds that blow, or a light or beam that shines on walls?

[Secondly, then], as to the view of those who say He is not susceptible to division and rending-apart, and cannot be penetrated: this is reducible to the proposition that the God of this world is the strong, solid mountains above this world in upper space. They also say that He has an outer extremity and limit. Does He also have depth and thickness, or not?

If He does, then His external surface and His interior are distinct things and He would be composite ...... If He does not, then His essence is an extremely thin surface, like the skin of garlic; in fact, a thousand-thousand times thinner than that. But no intelligent person would deem such a thing to be the God of the universe.

It has been established, then, that, if we admit that God is in space and position, we open the door to these false and incorrect conclusions.4

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4 This argument ends with an appeal to common consent, rather than with a vindication of the basic principles involved.
This world is a sphere and hence the God of the world cannot be found to exist in a position—above. This matter is studied thoroughly in astronomy. Nevertheless, we should like to point out that, if we consider the fact that the lunar eclipse, which occurs at sunset in a country to the west, is the same as the eclipse occurring at dawn in a country to the east, then we know that sunset in the western country is identical with dawn in the eastern country.

But this would be possible only if the earth were to rotate from east to west. Also, the further north we go, the higher the altitude of the north celestial pole [to our vision]. And the south celestial pole sinks to the same extent as the North rises. This proves (yadullu) that the earth is round from north to south. These two observations together prove that the world is a sphere.\(^5\)

If this is established, then we say: let us suppose that there are two men, one of whom is standing on a spot in the east, the other on a spot in the west, the soles of their feet facing each other. What is above vis-à-vis one of them is below for the other. So if we were to postulate that the God of the world was found to exist in the space which is above in relation to one of them, then that space would be below for the other, and vice versa.

So, were God to be in a particular space, then that space would be below in regard to some particular peoples (aqwām). But by general agreement, it would be logically absurd for God to be below people of this world. Hence, He could not be in a particular space.

It would also follow from the opinion we have been discussing that, whenever He was above vis-à-vis some peoples, He would be below for another, right for a third, left for a fourth, in front of a fifth and behind a sixth ....

However, there would be a consensus amongst intelligent people that, in relation to the God of the world, these situations could occur only if we say that He encompasses the earth on all sides, thus being one of celestial spheres surrounding the earth. This is the upshot of their view, but it is not the view of Muslims. God knows best.

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5 Here Rāzī seems to identify 'ālam and ard. Elsewhere, he says that 'ālam is the universe of created things.
Fourteenth Argument (TK 14:110-111)

If the God of the world were above the Throne, then He would be:

- in contact with the Throne;
- or separate from it by a finite distance;
- or separate from it by an infinite distance.

But all these propositions are false. So it is false to say that God is above the Throne.

With regard to the first [proposition], viz. that He is touching the Throne: it would be His lowest extremity that touched it. So does there, or does there not, remain above that extremity [of His] some part of Him that is not in contact with the Throne?

If there does, then that part [of God] which is touching the extremity of the Throne is distinct from that part which is not in contact with the Throne. This would require that the essence of God be composed of particles and parts. In fact, it would be composed of conjoined surfaces, placed one above the other. That would be to say that He would be a body composed of particles and parts, which is logically absurd.

If there does not [remain some part of Him not in contact with the Throne], then God's essence would be a delicate surface, without dimension at all. Two conclusions would follow from this: 1) If He were extended to the right, the left, in front, or behind, He would be composed of particles and parts; 2) If He were not extended and did not move away from spaces vis-à-vis the six positions [up, down; left, right; back, front], He would be one atom and an indivisible particle mingled with [particles of] dust. But no intelligent person would hold this.

As for the second [proposition], viz. that it be said that between Him and the world there is a finite distance: this is also logically absurd because, on this supposition, the world could arise from its space to the position in which God's essence is found to exist; to the point that the world would be touching Him, and the absurdity mentioned under the first proposition would still obtain.

As for the third [proposition], viz. that there is an infinite separation between God and the world: of all the hypotheses, this is the most obviously false, because, if God is separate from the world, His separation from other things is limited by two extremities (poles), viz. God's essence
and the essence of the world; and it [the space between] is enveloped by
them. But a distance which is enclosed between, and restricted by, them
could not be infinite.

If it is objected: Is it not the case that God preceded the world from all
eternity? If so, then this precedence is enclosed between, and limited by,
two extremities; the first of which is eternity and the second the
beginning of the world’s existence. But it does not follow that a
precedence which is enclosed between two things must have a beginning.
That is the case here ..................

[45] Fifteenth Argument (TK 14:111)

The rational sciences have established that place (makān) is either
the inner surface of the containing body, or it is mere distance and extended
space. There is no third possibility.

If we take it in the first sense, then we say that it is established that
bodies in the world are finite. So the exterior of the corporeal world is
not vacuum, plenum, place or position. So God could not be found
existing in a place on the exterior surface of the world.

"If we take the second meaning, we say: the physical reality of distance is
a single physical reality, similar [to all others] in completeness of quiddity.
So if God were to be found existing in [one] space, He would be found
in others. Then He would be subject to motion and rest. Such things,
however, are innovated, as we know from proofs (dalā'īl) given in the
science of Uṣūl, which we have already mentioned and which are familiar
and generally acceptable amongst the theologians. So God would have
been innovated, and that is logically absurd.

So it is established that to say God is found existing in space and position
is false, however we understand it.

[46] Sixteenth Argument (TK 14:112)

This argument (hujja) is inductive (istiqrā'), subjectively-based (i'tibārī)
and very subtle. We observe that the more strongly and firmly
established the concept of bodiliness is found to be in a thing, the weaker
and more limited is its active power (al-quwwa al-fā'ilīya). And [e
converso], the weaker and more limited the concept of bodiliness is found
to be realised, the more powerful and perfect is its active power.

We can establish this by saying:
We find that the earth is the densest of bodies and the greatest in mass. So it follows that it is only receptive to [external] influence. If it does have influence on other things, it is very little.

As for water, this has less density and mass than earth. So it follows that there is in it a power to influence, for flowing water, by its natural disposition when mixed with earth, brings about in it various kinds of effects.

As for air, this has less density and mass than water; so it follows that it has greater power to influence than water. For this reason, some say that life is only brought to perfection by the soul (al-nafs), and they claim that the soul (al-rūḥ) is nothing else than air breathed in through the nostrils (mustanshaq).

As for fire, this is less dense [again] than air. So it follows that its influencing-power is the strongest of the elemental bodies as we see, for example, in cooking and ripening, which are the effects of heat; and the formation of minerals, vegetables and animals.

As for the heavenly spheres, they are more subtle than the elemental bodies. It follows that they have the power to blend these elemental bodies one with another, and to generate different species and kinds of things from these blended elements (tamzijāt).

Thus this continuing induction shows that the greater the mass a thing has, and the more voluminous and corporeal it is, the less power and influence it has. And the greater its power and influence, the less mass it has and the less voluminous and corporeal it is.

Now if that is so, then this inductive investigation provides a strong supposition that, wherever there occurs total power and capacity (al-quwwa wa 'l-qudra) to innovate and originate, we do not find mass, bodiliness and volume, nor specification by space and position. And although this is an inductive study, nevertheless, if we reflect deeply on it ('inda al-ta'ammul al-tāmm), we see that it provides a powerful analogy (shadīd al-munāsaba) to conclude that God is without bodiliness, situs (mawdī) and space.

Two of the Arguments from Revelation

[47] First Argument (TK 14:112–113)

As for revelatory proofs, they are many.
The first is God's words: 'Say: He, God, is One' [112:1]. Thus they describe Him as *al-`ahad*, which is a hyperbolic way of expressing that He is one. Now that from which the Throne is filled and that which remains [after it is filled] make up a great many particles over and above the Throne. This would seem to deny His being one [if He were to fill the Throne].

I have noticed that a group of Karramiya say, in relation to this conclusion, that God is a single essence, but despite His being one, He is found existing in all these spaces simultaneously. Since that is so, they say, the Throne is filled by Him.

I say: The upshot of this is that the essence [of God] can be found occupying space and position in many spaces simultaneously. But reasonable people would be at one in holding that recognition of the falseness of this belongs to necessary knowledge.

Furthermore, if you were to allow that, then why would you not [also] allow the view that the whole world, from the Throne to what is beneath the soil, is one single substance and existent, notwithstanding that that particle, which cannot be divided, occurs in all these spaces, and would be reckoned to be many things? But it is common knowledge that anyone who allows this has a view which is gravely evil.

If they reply: We recognise here that there are differences between these essences, only because some pass away, while others remain. This requires that they be different.

Also, we see some of them in movement and others at rest. But the one in movement is not the one at rest. So we have to say that they differ. Now these characteristics [of motion and rest] do not occur in God's essence. So the difference [between the essence of God and those of other things] is obvious.

We reply: As for your view that we see one particle remaining while another passes away, and hence there must be a difference: We say: we do not concede that any of the particles pass away; rather, we say: why cannot all the particles of the world be only one--single particle? Then it could be here or there, with the attribution of being black or white, or all colours and flavours. What 'passes away' is only its being there. As for the view that it passes away *in itself*, this is not acceptable.

And as for the opinion that we see some bodies in motion, others at rest, and this involves differentiation, because motion and rest are mutually exclusive: We reply that if we hold that motion and rest are incompatible, it is on the basis of our conviction that one body does not occur simultaneously in two spaces. So if we see that the one at rest
remains here and one in motion is not here, we conclude that the one in motion is not the one at rest.

As for the supposition that one essence can be in two spaces simultaneously,⁶ we say: this does not exclude one essence being in motion and at rest together, because the most that can be said in this question is that because of being at rest it remains here, and because of motion it appears in another place. However, if we allow that a single essence can occur in two spaces together, it is not unlikely that the essence-at-rest is identical with the essence-in-motion.

So it is established that, were it possible to hold that, in His essence, the Almighty is one and indivisible, but, notwithstanding, the Throne would be filled by Him; then we could also say that the Throne in itself is a single substance, a single, indivisible particle; but, nevertheless, it occurs in all these spaces and from it the whole Throne results. It is generally accepted that granting this possibility would lead to opening the door to errors.

[54] Seventh Argument (TK 14:114-115)

God makes reference to something before the words, 'Then He sat on the Throne' [7:54], and to something else after these words.

Before this sentence, He said: 'Your Lord is indeed God, Who created the heavens and earth'. Now we have explained that the creation of the heavens and earth provides many proofs for the existence, power and wisdom of the Producer.

As for what He mentions after this sentence, there are a number of matters:

First, are His words, 'He throws the veil of night over the day which it pursues incessantly'. This is one of the proofs of God's existence, power and wisdom.

Secondly, there are His words, 'And the sun, the moon and the stars are subject to his command'. This too is one of the proofs demonstrating [His] existence, power and knowledge.

The third of them is: 'Does He not have creation and authority?' This, too, refers to the fulness of His power and wisdom.

---

⁶ Rāzī now seems to add further comment to what he said initially in answer to the Karramiya.
If this is established, then we say: the beginning of the verse mentions what proves (yadullu) God’s existence, power and knowledge; and the end of the verse likewise indicates this desired goal. If such is the case, His utterance, 'Then He sat on the Throne', must also be a proof of the perfection of power and knowledge; because, were it not - but, rather, were the significance solely that He was settled on the Throne - then this would be an utterance unconnected with what preceded and followed it

Rather, it signifies the completeness of His power in directing the kingdom and the heavenly realms (al-mulk wa 'l-malakūt), in such a way that this sentence is appropriate to what precedes and follows it.

[58] Part of the Commentary on Q 10:3 (TK 17:13-14)

Muslims agree that above the heavens there is a great body which is the Throne. If this is established, we say: Does the throne mentioned in this verse mean this Throne, or not? There are two opinions about this:

The first view, and this is the choice of Abū Muslim al-İsfahānī says it is not. Rather, the significance of His utterance is that when God created the heavens and earth, He levelled them out and raised their roof. Looking at it in this way, every building may be called a throne and its builder a throne-builder ..................

When God says, then, 'And His Throne is on the water' [Q 11:7], He means His building. He mentions this simply because he is so marvellous in His power. The builder constructs an edifice on solid ground far from water so that it will not collapse. God, however, erected the heavens and earth on water so that intelligent people might recognise His power and the perfection of His splendour. And taking His position on the Throne indicates taking possession of it by virtue of His power. The proof that this is the case is the Almighty's words, 'He Who created all the pairs, and appointed for you ships and cattle on which to ride; so that you may mount them, and recall the favour of your Lord when you mount them' (43:12-13).

Abū Muslim says: So it is established that the expression has the meaning that we have mentioned. So we say that this is its interpretation and it cannot mean the Throne that is in the heavens. It is only something known and observable that can prove (istiklāl) the existence of the

7 Three, in fact, are given.
Producer. But the Throne in the heavens is not of this kind; whereas the bodies of the heavens and the earths are visible and accessible to the senses .................

The second view, which is well-known to the generality of commentators, is that the Throne mentioned in this verse does mean the large body in the sky. Those who hold this view say that the words, 'Then He sat on the Throne', cannot mean that God created the Throne after He had created the heavens and earths, because God says in another place, 'And His Throne is on the waters' [11:7]. This shows that the bringing-into-being of the Throne preceded the creation of the heavens and earths ..................

The third view (sic) is that the Throne means the Kingdom. One says: So-and-so has charge of his throne, i.e. his kingdom. So God's Words, 'Then He sat on the Throne', mean that, when God created the heavens and earth, and the heavenly bodies and the stars began to rotate, and by reason of their rotation there came about the four seasons and the various conditions of minerals, plants and animals: [at that moment] these creatures and beings came into existence. The upshot is that the Throne is the kingdom, and God's kingdom is the existence of His creatures, and these only came into being after the creation of the heavens and earth ....... God knows best what He means.

---

8 See a parallel text in TK 18:233.
9 In TK 23:128 (on 23:116, 'The Lord of the Noble Throne'), Abû Muslim is cited as understanding 'throne' in this context as the heavens, "insofar as in them is the Throne around which the angels move. It is possible that what is meant thereby is the mighty kingdom." Râzî continues: "Many say that what is meant is that the Throne is a real thing and it is only described as karîm because mercy flows down from it .............."

Râzî refers to this treatment in Sûra "Yûnus" in TK 17:187.
## APPENDIX 2

### PRINCIPAL TEXTS OF THE TAFSĪR EXAMINED IN THE THESIS

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