

# A Critique of Iqbal's

## *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*

Burhan Ahmad Faruqi\*

**Abstract:** "This attempt aims at the evaluation of some salient points in Iqbal's ambition for the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam. Attempt is made with the following objects in view:

- 1) That it may prove an incentive to the study of Iqbal's Philosophy.
- 2) That those who are interested in the task of interpreting Islam, may coolly and dispassionately consider the difficulties a student has to face.
- 3) That those who are really interested in and inspired by Iqbal, may be invited to seriously consider the task before Iqbal and join heads to take it afresh if possible.
- 4) That Iqbal's conclusion are a cultural legacy and should receive due attention.
- 5) That the Thought of Iqbal should be approached in his own spirit. He himself reminds us in the preface [to the *Reconstruction*] that there is no such thing as finality in philosophical thinking.

I interpret this negation of finality in philosophical thinking in two ways:

- i) That nothing can be final in the philosophical thinking of man.
- ii) That nothing can be final in the philosophical thinking of an individual. On the basis of the second interpretation Iqbal may be defended against the objections raised against his philosophical conclusions as presented in his *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. It is possible that he himself might had have outgrown

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\*Burhan Ahmad Faruqi(1905-1994) was an erudite and visionary scholar of Pakistan. He was a philosopher by training, his Ph.D. dissertation (Department of Philosophy, Aligarh Muslim University) deals with the study of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's doctrine of *tawheed* (*Mujaddid's Conception of Tawhid*, Lahore:Institute of Islamic Culture,1989). He authored several books including *Minhaj al-Qur'an*, *Qur'an awr Musalmanoan Kay Zindah Masa'l*. He has also contributed extensively to scholarly journals. He also undertook a critique of Dr. Muhammad Iqbal's lectures, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, in 1934 which remained unpublished. The present article consists of the "Introduction" to the *Critique*. I owe special debt of gratitude to Maulana Muhammad Khizar Yasin, for providing the photocopy of the manuscript. The manuscript is in poor condition, so many words misprinted and omitted. The author has quoted passages from *Reconstruction's* first edition (Lahore: Kapur Art Press, 1930). Preparing the script of present article, I have used *Reconstruction's* edition of 1989(edited and annotated by M.Saeed Sheikh: a joint publication of the Institute of Islamic Culture, and Iqbal Academy Pakistan,Lahore,1989). [Editor]



<sup>20</sup> Ibid., vol. 4, part 12, pp. 399-400.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., vol. 6, part 16, pp. 71-72.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., vol. 6, part 17, p. 333.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., vol. 5, part 14, pp. 257-258.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., vol. 5, part 15, p. 450.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, part 2, pp. 396-424.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., vol. 6, part 17, pp. 291-292.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 304-305.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, part 2, p. 250.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 252-254.

<sup>30</sup> *Al-Bahr al-Muḥīṭ* of Muhammad ibn Yūsuf, Abū Ḥayyān (d.745 A.H.) is a *tafsīr* dedicated mainly to semantic syntactic debates on the Qur'ānic words. *Ḥaqā'iq al-Tafsīr* of Muhammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī (d.412 A.H.) contains mystic discourses based on the statements of certain well-known mystics. The most famous work from scientific point of view is *Al-Jawāhir fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* of Ṭanṭāwī Jawhārī (1870-1940 C.E.). In this work, he has discussed in detail the discoveries made in the natural sciences such as Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Botany, Zoology, Astronomy, and Medicine etc.

<sup>31</sup> Al-Rāzī, op. cit., vol. 3, part 9, p. 497.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., vol. 4, part 11, pp. 276-277.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 290-291.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., vol. 4, part 10, p. 151.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., vol. 5, part 15, p. 375.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., vol. 6, part 18, p. 386.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., vol. 4, part 12, p. 517.

<sup>39</sup> Ibn Taymīyyah, *Al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1386 A.H.), vol. 2, p. 227, issue no. 289.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Kattānī, Muhammad ibn Ja'far, *Al-Risālah al-Mustaṭrafah* (Beirut: Dār al-Bashā'ir al-Islāmiyyah, 1986), p. 78.

<sup>41</sup> Al-Rāzī, op. cit., vol. 6, part 17, pp. 256-257.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., vol. 5, part 14, pp. 286-291.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., vol. 6, part 17, pp. 257-259.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., vol. 5, part 15, pp. 451-452.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., vol. 5, part 14, p. 353.

<sup>46</sup> Ibn Taymīyyah, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, (edited by 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Muhammad Qāsim, Maktabah Ibn Taymīyyah, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition; no place and date mentioned) vol. 16, pp. 213-214.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Khallikān, Ahmad ibn Muhammad, *Wafyāt al-A'yān* (Beirut: Dār al-Thiqāfah, 1968), vol. 4, p. 248, Serial no. 600.

<sup>2</sup> Ḥājī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-Zunūn* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1992), vol. 2, p. 299.

<sup>3</sup> Al-'Asqalānī, Ibn Hajar, *Al-Durar al-Kāminah* (Hyderabad: Majlis Dā'irah al-Ma'ārif al-'Osmāniyah, 1972), vol. 1, p. 360, serial no. 769.

<sup>4</sup> He is Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Khalīl al-Khuwayyī. He was born in Damascus in 626 A.H. and died therein in 693 A.H. He served as a judge in Damascus, Jerusalem, Ḥalab, and also in certain cities of Egypt. He was a strong supporter of Shafī'ite school of jurisprudence. He compiled several works in different fields such as mathematics, jurisprudence. He is said to have rendered Ibn al-Ṣalāh's work '*Ulūm al-Hadīth*' into poetry. Please, see: Al-Ziriklī, Khayr al-Dīn, *Al-A'lām* (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li al-Malāyīn, 1999), vol. 5, p. 324.

<sup>5</sup> He is Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abī al-Ḥarm al-Qarashī, Najm al-Dīn al-Qamūliyy. He was born at a locality in Egypt called "Qamūlah" in 645 A.H. He worked in various capacities such as teacher, controller etc. in many cities of Egypt. He was a well known jurist from the Shafī'ite school of *fiqh*. He died in Cairo in 727 A.H. He wrote several books, including his commentary on Allah's Excellent Names (*al-Asmā' al-Ḥusnā*).

<sup>6</sup> Al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn, *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* (Beirut: Dār Ihyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1997), vol. 10, part 29, p. 398.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., vol. 4, part 11, p. 299.

<sup>9</sup> Al-Dhabbī, Muhammad Ḥusayn, *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn* (no publisher and no date of publication), vol. 1, p. 293.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> This information is borrowed from two sources: 1) Introduction to al-Rāzī by the publisher of his *Tafsīr*, vol. 1, pp. 11-20, and 2) Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *Al-A'lām* (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li al-Malāyīn, 1999), vol. 6, p. 313.

<sup>12</sup> Al-Dhabbī, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 296.

<sup>13</sup> Iṣlāhī, Amīn Aḥsan, *Tadabbur-e-Qur'ān* (Delhi: Taj Company, 1997), vol. 1, *Muqaddimah*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Biqā'ī, Ibrāhīm ibn 'Umar, *Nazm al-Durar fi Tanāsuh al-Āyāt wa al-Suwar* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1995), vol. 1, *Muqaddimah*, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Rāzī, op. cit., vol. 9, part 27, p. 569.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, part 2, p. 278.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., vol. 3, part 7, p. 164.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, part 5, p. 286.

this view is too disgusting to deserve attention; and as for the first (view that Allah's speech to Moses was composed of letters), it is invalid (*bātil*).<sup>45</sup> He is inclined towards the view pertaining to non-verbal form of Allah's speech simply because it is held by majority of *Ahl al-Sunnah*. This matter belongs to the unseen (*ghayb*); man can in no way determine the exact form and nature of Allah's speech; he can merely guess; and an idea based on guess is not necessarily certain. What the *Mu'tazilah* hold and what *Ahl al-Sunnah* believe are not definite. How can one, then, pass a judgment that this or that view is wrong?

### Conclusion

Al-Rāzī's work *Mafātīh al-Ghayb* is an encyclopaedia. It basically comprises information of different nature. Theology, philosophy, logic, physics, mathematics, linguistics, jurisprudence, and readings of the *Qur'ān* etc., constitute the main discussions in this work. If the discussions on every subject are separated from *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* and compiled, various treatises will come into existence. Apparently, the allegation that this work contain every thing except *tafsīr* seems true. But, it is necessary to understand that his intention was not to produce a *tafsīr* for general consumption; it was meant basically for the philosophers and theologians. It is quite natural to change the methodology of discourse with the change of the audience. Apart from this a work invariably represents its own time. Most probably, the time of al-Rāzī (the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.H.) demanded such unusual *tafsīr* work as *Mafātīh al-Ghayb*. As for the controversy over whether al-Rāzī is the sole author of *Mafātīh al-Ghayb*, it appears to be enigmatic. Yet, it is not so difficult to speculate on the basis of the unity of methodology of *tafsīr* throughout the work. Had its authorship really been shared by someone else as claimed by certain sources, there would certainly have been the impact, even though least, of his own methodology in the *tafsīr*. Niẓām al-Dīn al-Nīsābūrī (d.728 A.H.) summarized *Tafsīr al-Rāzī*, added to it certain material from *Tafsīr al-Zamakhsharī* (d.538 A.H.), and named this compilation "*Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān wa Raghā'ib al-Furqān*". This summary of al-Rāzī seems to be an appreciable effort. Still, *Tafsīr al-Rāzī* deserve more attention. Its *aḥādīth* and reports need further scrutiny. From information point of view, it is an excellent work, but, it requires extra care and discernment to deal with its contents. Otherwise, it will certainly cause, as Ibn Taymīyyah observes, confusion and skepticism in the minds of the readers.<sup>46</sup>

that the hearing (*al-Sam'*) is superior to the sight (*al-Baṣar*), and others' view that the sight is superior to the hearing. He quotes the arguments in favour of both the views, each containing six arguments. The third issue he brings in is how the *Ash'arites* argue on the basis of these *āyāt* that the human acts are the creation of Allah.<sup>43</sup> In the whole discussion on the above *āyāt* (10:42-44), the *mufassir* seems to have forgotten his main task.

The last two categories of al-Rāzī's treatment appears to be digression from the main theme. Such places in his work outstrip the first category as mentioned above.

### 11: Repudiation of Others' views in Scathing Manner

It seems al-Rāzī has made himself seated on the chair of the chief justice (*Qāḍī al-Quḍāt*) in the court of Islamic knowledge and disciplines to make a final judgment on the nature of all the views held by Muslim philosophers, theologians, jurists, and general scholars. Most of the time, he, immediately after mentioning others' view or views, declares: "*wa hādhā ḍa'īf*" (and this is weak), "*wa hādhā bāṭil*" (and this is wrong and invalid), "*wa hādhā al-qawl Akhass*" (and this statement is extremely disgusting) etc. These remarks seem to be highly aggressive and utterly unbecoming to a *mufassir*. More often than not, his own arguments to substantiate his verdict appear to be too weak to be considered as arguments. It simply implies that he is too biased to accept opposite views.

While interpreting the *āyāt* 8:2-4 ("*Believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear their signs rehearsed, find their faith strengthened, and put their trust in their Lord. Who establish regular prayers and spend out of the gifts We have given them for sustenance. Such in truth are the believers: they have grades of dignity with their Lord, and forgiveness and generous sustenance*"), he refers to an opinion that "*Īmān* signifies the sum total of faith, declaration, and action" developed in the light of the above-quoted *āyāt* (8:2-4) and passes on his judgment: "*wa hādhā al-istidlāl ḍa'īf* (and this argumentation is weak).<sup>44</sup> This verdict is based on an argument which is too weak in comparison with the arguments in favor of the view.

The *āyah* 7:143 mentions about the dialogue between Moses and God. At this place al-Rāzī has brought in the issue regarding the nature of Allah's conversation: whether it was composed of letters and organized words or it was mere demonstration of the reality in non-verbal form. After referring to the rationalists' view that Allah's words consisted of organized letters, he passes on his judgment: And *Hanbalites* and their followers claim that the speech composed of letters and sound is eternal;

so many, and also interpretation of such places is relatively brief. For example, the *āyāt* 10:40-41 ("Of them there are some who believe therein, and some who do not: and your Lord knows best as to who are the spreaders of the corruption. If they charge you with falsehood, say: To me my doings and to you your doings: you are not accountable for what I am doing, and I am not accountable for what you are doing") have been interpreted very briefly. Al-Rāzī does not go beyond rephrasing and emphasizing the message in these *āyāt* (10:40-41). He writes only few lines in the name of *tafsīr*. First of all, he shows the link between the previous *āyah* (10:39) and these *āyāt* (10:40-41). He, then, proceeds to explain the four components of these two *āyāt*. The gist is produced here.

Allah knows as to who will believe in the *Qur'ān* in future and who will not. He is well-aware of the future of the spreaders of corruption: whether they will insist on disbelief or give it up. The Prophet (S.A.W.) has been advised to convey to them: His faith and obedience is for him, whereas their act is *shirk*; and for me is the reward for my doings, and for you is the retribution for your doings. As for the statement—"You are not accountable for what I am doing, and I am not accountable for what you do"—it may be a deterrence or a call to change. Muqāṭil and al-Kalbī consider this last statement abrogated by *āyat al-Sayf*(9:5), but this approach is wrong. This *āyah* is not abrogated.<sup>41</sup>

Second, he initially maintains the task of interpreting the *āyāt*, but after a while he enters a realm interspersed with diverse issues, having no direct link with *tafsīr*, and devotes his time and energy to tackling them to the best of his capacity. For example, while treating the *āyāt* 7:57-58, which mention how Allah uses winds, clouds to cause rainfall so as to let the earth vegetate and bear edible fruits, he briefly explains every part of the two *āyāt*, and, then, enters the area of Physics and Botany, dealing at length why the water turns into clouds, what is the role of winds, how the clouds after rising high comes down in the form of rainfall, and how the earth yields fruits.<sup>42</sup> Third, he forgets his obligation of interpreting the messages of the *Qur'ān*, and the whole discussion on the given *āyāt* focuses on different issues divorced from the main theme. For example, under the *tafsīr* of *āyāt* 10:42-44 ("Among them are some who listen to you: but can you make the deaf to hear, even though they will not use their reason? And among them are some who look at you: but can you guide the blind, even they will not see? Verily, Allah does not do the least wrong unto men, but it is men who do wrong to themselves"), he does not touch the message of Allah therein. He starts the discussion with the division of disbelievers (*kuffār*) into two kinds, insincere believers and unbelievers. He then further classifies the second categories into two more types, those who are very harsh in their opposition and those who are not like them. The second issue he deals with here is Ibn Qutaybah's (d.322 A.H.) view

*tābi'ūn*. At no place he has mentioned the *sanad* (chain of narrators). He simply uses the phrase: “*Ruwiya ‘An*” (it is reported on the authority of so and so) or “*Rawā Fulān*” (so and so narrated).

His reports are generally of two categories: 1) reports containing information on *asbāb al-nuzūl* and 2) reports relevant for *fiqhī* matters. As for the first category, he relies on ‘Alī ibn Ahmad al-Wāḥidī (d.462 A.H.) who is viewed as not very careful in using reports on *asbāb al-nuzūl*. Al-Wāḥidī is reported to have borrowed his reports from the *tafsīr* work of his teacher, Ahmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Tha‘labī (d.427 A.H.). Scholars are not happy with his *ḥadīth* quotations without care and authentication, in his *tafsīr*. Ibn Taymīyyah (d.727 A.H.) expresses his displeasure over the approach of both al-Tha‘labī and al-Wāḥidī in these words:

As for al-Wāḥidī, he is a student of al-Tha‘labī.....and in their *tafsīr* works there are many great benefits, and also there are so many false reports in them.<sup>39</sup>

Al-Kattānī (d.1345 A.H.) comments on these two works:

“Neither al-Wāḥidī nor his teacher al-Tha‘labī is so capable in *ḥadīth*. Their *tafsīr* works, particularly al-Tha‘labī’s are full of fabricated *aḥādīth* as well as false tales.”<sup>40</sup>

Keeping this fact in view, the value of the reports on socio-historical background in al-Rāzī’s *tafsīr* may easily be assessed. It was rather more appropriate for him to judge between the reliable and unreliable reports. It is very surprising that he could not maintain his analytical and critical method in using reports, as he generally did in philosophical, logical, *fiqhī* and semantic issues. It seems difficult to suppose that he was not aware of the significance of *sanad* in reports. He might have dropped the chain from his reports as a measure to ensure brevity. He should have at least disclosed the sources. He has quoted *aḥādīth* from al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Nasa’ī etc. It was also sufficient if he only referred to these scholars of *ḥadīth*. Among the reports he has included in his work, there are authentic, weak as well as unreliable.

## 10: Digression from the Main Theme

By having even a cursory look in the pages of *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, one can feel that the main objective of this work is to discuss almost all the *fiqhī*, philosophical, theological, semantic and reading-style issues rotating around the revealed words. There are not many *āyāt*, which al-Rāzī has touched without the above mentioned categories of questions and debates. If his treatment of *āyāt* are classified, there will be three categories. First, he has explained *āyāt* in order to unfold their message directly without touching on any philosophical and *fiqhī* dimensions. Such places are not



reader to logical truth. His discussion may be summarized thus: “*Ikhtiyār* is derived from the root *khayr* (good). In this verb there is the sense of selecting what is good. When someone declared that in a particular act are more benefits and better results, he did it because he found that particular act better than the other. If he not believe in the obtaining of the benefits, he would not prefer to act that way. Here it may be asked: Suicide, which is basically an evil (*sharr*) is selected by man on his own, is it, then, *khayr* (good)? The answer to this question is that the man who intends to commit suicide believes that it will save him from a far greater loss. Thus, the suicide for him is *khayr* (good) and not *sharr* (bad).<sup>36</sup> Whether one agrees with his logic or not but he has developed his theory of *khayr* (good), *sharr* (bad) and *ikhtiyār* (selection) with the help of semantic dimension.

### 8: Information on the Reading Styles of Words and Phrases

Al-Rāzī, generally, builds various issues around an *āyah*. Wherever it is possible, one of the issues thus brought up is the issue of *qirā’ah* (reading style). He has given the information on the style of reading at so many places in his work that it could form enough material on the controversial readings in the *Qur’ān* for a separate useful treatise.

Scholars whom he most of the times quotes for the reading style are ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Āmir (d.118 A.H.), ‘Abd Allah ibn Kathīr (d.120 A.H.), ‘Āṣim ibn Abī al-Nujūd (d.128 A.H.), Abū ‘Amr Zabbān ibn ‘Ammār (d.154 A.H.), Ḥamzah ibn Ḥabīb (d.156 A.H.), Nāfi’ ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (d.169 A.H.) and ‘Alī ibn Ḥamzah al-Kisā’ī (d.189 A.H.). These scholars are considered authorities on the reading style of the *Qur’ān*. They are called “*al-Qurrā’ al-Sub’ah*” (the seven readers).

The controversies surrounding thus quoted by al-Rāzī are very minor, not affecting the essence of the message conveyed through the words in view. For example, he quotes the differences in reading the word “*Ṣalawāt*” in the *āyah* 11:87 (“*They said: O Shu’ayb! Does your prayer/prayers commands you that we give up.....*”). Ḥamzah, al-Kisā’ī and ‘Āṣim read it in singular, whereas others in plural.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, he quotes the differences among scholars over the reading of the word “*ta’qilūn*” in the *āyah* 6:32. He says: Nāfi’, ibn ‘Āmir had read it as “*ta’qilūn*” (you use your reason), and ‘Āṣim reads it as “*ya’qilūn*” (they use their reason).<sup>38</sup>

### 9: Deletion of Chain of Narrators from the Reports

Al-Rāzī has quoted a number of traditions of the Prophet (S.A.W.) and the reports concerning the views of others from among the *ṣaḥābah* and

A.H.), the author of “*Ahkām al-Qur’ān*” in support of *Hanafī* school. Both of them are so sharp against one another. The *Qur’ān* needs not to be interpreted in the light of *fiqhī* views of *fuqahā’*, but rather their views are to be weighed, validated or invalidated in the balance of the *Qur’ān*. *Fiqhī* debates in *Mafātīh al-Ghayb* would have surely been valuable, had the *mufasssir* been objective in his approach.

## 7: Argumentation over the Semantic Aspect of Words

The *Qur’ān* represents the language of the time of its revelation. In order to justice with the interpretation of the *Qur’ān*, one has to necessarily look at the semantic dimension of the *Qur’ānic* words. Semantic discussion on the revealed words had started almost after the Prophet’s (S.A.W.) demise. With the passage of the time this discussion widened. The more the gap of time between the time of revelation and the *mufasssir*, the more the discussion hence the controversy. It was quite natural during the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ 12<sup>th</sup> century C.E., the period of al-Rāzī that the scholars went deeper into the discussion on the words of the *Qur’ān* from grammar point of view.

Al-Rāzī’s semantic discussion spreads over the whole work. Wherever he found opportunity, he made the analysis of the words. His semantic analysis of words are of two categories. First, he has done it just for the sake of unfolding the import of the *Qur’ān*. Second, he has entered the realm of grammar in order to develop a ground for certain logical premise. Examples of the two kinds may not be out of place. They are advanced here below.

The *āyah* 4:82 (“Do they not consider the *Qur’ān*? Had it been from any other than Allah, they would surely have found therein contradictions a lot”) uses a word “*yatadabbarūn*” (they consider). Al-Rāzī unfolds the literal import of the word with a view to give a right direction to the reader of the *Qur’ān*. He says: “*Al-Tadbīr* and *al-Tadabbur* signify insight into the pros and cons of the matter. For instance it is said: If they did not ponder over (*tadabbarū*) the negative consequences of the matters concerned, they would not actually take place. Another example in the eloquent Arabic is: *law istaqbaltu min amrī mā istadbartu* (Had I pondered over my problem in the beginning the way as I did towards the end of the matter).<sup>35</sup> Here it is very clear that he is giving the meaning of the word in order to bring the reader close to the *Qur’ānic* message.

The *āyah* 7:155 opens with this statement: “And Moses selected (*ikhtāra Mūsā*) forty men from his people”. He singles out the word “*ikhtiyār*” (selection) and explains its meaning before he finds a way to lead the

It is very evident from his approach in *fiqhī* matters as touched in his work that he keeps Shāfi'ī school of *fiqh* dear to himself to the extent of bias against other schools of *fiqh*. When he touches on a jurisprudential issue, he brings in the views of other *fuqahā'*, particularly, Abū Hanīfah and his followers and Mālik ibn Anas and his followers. He also quotes their arguments in favor of their respective views before he subjects them to his analysis. His motive at most of such places is to prove the supremacy of Shāfi'ī approach. It seems he is very keen and over enthusiastic in his endeavour to validate the view he holds. The readers may, at times, feel the apparent pre-eminence of other *fuqahā'* in certain matters and the weakness of the arguments advanced by al-Rāzī in support of Shāfi'ī school. Yet, al-Rāzī seems to have vowed to defend what he keeps dear to himself.

The *āyah* 5:4 reads: "They ask you as to what is lawful for them (in food). Say: Lawful are things good and pure....." Under the issue no. 3 of his *tafsīr* of this *āyah*, he, first of all, decrees that *al-tayyibāt* (things good and pure) does not mean *al-muḥallalāt* (things lawful) on the ground that the word *al-tayyib* literally denotes *al-mustaladhdh* (delectable), hence everything which is delicious and savory is under *al-tayyibāt*, which are innumerable. He has actually prepared a ground for the justification of al-Shāfi'ī's stand on lawful and unlawful food items. After this prefatory remark, he puts forward the conflicting views of Abū Hanīfah and al-Shāfi'ī on whether the meat of horse and that of the animal slaughtered without "*Bismillah*" (with the name of Allah). According to the former, they are both non-permissible, whereas the latter considers them permissible. Al-Rāzī confirms the decree of the latter whose only argument is that the meat of the two is delicious and savory.<sup>33</sup> Here, the weakness of the latter's semantic foundation, and strength of the former's Qur'ānic argument are evident. It seems al-Rāzī himself finds the semantic basis inferior to the Qur'ānic argument. In order to strengthen al-Shāfi'ī, he proposes a Qur'ānic argument. He says: Al-Shāfi'ī's view is also valid because of the exception given in 5:3 ("except that which you may have slaughtered while it was still alive") hence if the horse is slaughtered, its meat is permissible; and likewise, if an animal has been slaughtered without the name of Allah, it is also permissible.<sup>34</sup>

*Fiqhī* debates are so many in this work that if they are all compiled in a separate book, it will become an interestingly informative treatise on the *fiqh al-Shāfi'ī*. In his jurisprudential discussion, al-Rāzī has not been different from Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d.543 A.H), the author of "*Aḥkām al-Qur'an*" in favor of *Mālikī* school of *fiqh* and Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ (d.370

over their possessions.....” There is no confusion over what has been commanded here in this statement. Generally, a *mufassir* may not find it justified to dwell on and discuss the message in the above *āyah* at length. Al-Rāzī does not find it appropriate to pass by this place without jurisprudential scrutiny. He first of all refers to Abū Ḥanīfah’s opinion based on the above *āyah* (4:6) that a mentally mature child may attend to his problems on his own with the permission of his guardian. He, then, refers to the view of al-Shāfi‘ī who considers it unacceptable. Thereafter he mentions the arguments of both the *fuqahā’*. According to the former the above *āyah* (4:6), which speaks of the trial of the orphans (*ibtilā’ al-yatāmā*), suggests that the trial takes place before the age of puberty; and the trial here means the trial in monetary transaction; the trial entails permission to transact, hence the command in the *āyah*—“and make trial of the orphans”—requires the guardians to allow the orphans in their charge to transact freely. The latter argues that the *āyah* puts two conditions for the transfer of the possessions to the orphans: 1) age of puberty, and 2) maturity of mind; it means release of the property before the age of puberty is not allowed. In the end al-Rāzī declares the validity of al-Shāfi‘ī’s view.<sup>31</sup>

The first *āyah* of *sūrah al-Mā'idah* (5:1) reads: “O you who believe! Fulfill all covenants....” Al-Rāzī sees a great opportunity here to refer to *fiqhī* differences between Abū Ḥanīfah and al-Shāfi‘ī. He, therefore, refers to three matters and arguments advanced by both the scholars. First, in respect of vow to fast on *Eid* day and to sacrifice the child, al-Shāfi‘ī considers them null and void due to sanctity of the *Eid* day and the human life; Abū Ḥanīfah finds them valid because of the vow, which is necessary to be fulfilled in accordance with the command—“fulfill your covenants”. Second, with regard to the option to break the selling and buying transaction (*khiyār al-Majlis*), Abū Ḥanīfah views it as unfounded on the ground that when agreement of sale and purchase took place, it was unlawful to break it; al-Shāfi‘ī justifies it in the light of a tradition of the Prophet (S.A.W): “The seller and the buyer have the option to retain or break the deal before their departure”. Third, concerning three divorces in one single sitting, Abū Ḥanīfah regards it unlawful in the light of the *āyah* 5:1 (“Fulfill your covenants”); al-Shāfi‘ī does not deem it unlawful on the basis of an analogy: if the three divorces in one sitting were declared unlawful, the divorce did not take place; and if it takes effect, it is, then, not unlawful.<sup>32</sup> Information on these debates are not directly concerned with the command in the *āyah*, which simply emphasizes on the sincerity to the promises and agreements made between parties and individuals. The above three issues are appropriate only in *fiqh* treatises, not in *tafsīr*.