Arabic Sciences and Philosophy, vol. 23 (2013) pp. 117–134
doi:10.1017/S0957423912000100 © 2013 Cambridge University Press

EARLY IBĀḌĪ THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS ON ATOMS AND ACCIDENTS

ABDULRAHMAN AL-SALIMI
P.O. Box 4, Code 421, Bidiyah, Sultanate of Oman
Email: aalsalimi@yahoo.com

Abstract. The bulk of Orientalist research regarding Islamic theological literature has neglected Ibāḍī theological opinions related to cosmology, which has led to an incomplete understanding of Islamic theology in the West and to a significant gap in Western scholarship. The omission of this important movement of Islam is understandable, considering the unavailability, lack of publication, circulation and translation of Ibāḍī texts. Therefore, this study seeks to address some of these gaps in the scholarship on early Islamic theology. The goals of this article are: 1) to characterize the classical Ibāḍī theological literature dealing with the atomistic theory of substance and accident; 2) to review the texts of Ibāḍī scholars as they argued and engaged with other Islamic theological schools: pre-Bahshamiyya Muʿtazilites (Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī, d. 321/933) and Ashʿarites (Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, d. 324/936), in relation to the atomistic theory of substance and accident during the 3rd/9th century; 3) to survey the wide range of opinions among the early Ibāḍī theologians, and to examine the specific sources and themes that may have influenced this multifarious school of thought. Likewise, it is the aim of this article to demonstrate the common features in the Ibāḍī approach to producing theological literature during the formation of Islamic theology, and to explore how these early theologians may have gained access to cosmological themes that predate Islam.

Résumé. Le gros de la recherche orientaliste consacrée à la littérature théologique islamique a négligé les idées théologiques Ibāḍī à portée cosmologique, ce qui a conduit à une compréhension incomplète de la théologie islamique et à un manque considérable dans la recherche occidentale. L'omission de ce mouvement important de l'Islam est compréhensible étant donné que les textes Ibāḍī ne sont accessibles, publiés, diffusés et traduits que de façon très partielle. Cette étude vise donc à combler certaines de ces lacunes dans la recherche sur la première théologie islamique. Les objectifs de cet article sont de: 1) caractériser la littérature Ibāḍī classique portant sur la théorie atomiste de la substance et de l'accident; 2) examiner les textes d'auteurs Ibāḍī du IIIe/IXe siècle dialoguant et discutant avec d'autres écoles théologiques islamiques, à savoir les Muʿtazilites pré-Bahshamiyya (Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī, d. 321/933) et les Ashʿarites (Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, d. 324/936), en lien avec la théorie atomiste de la substance et de l'accident; 3) passer en revue le grand nombre d'opinions soutenues parmi les premiers théologiens Ibāḍī, et examiner les sources et les thèmes spécifiques susceptibles d'avoir influencé cette école de pensée diversifiée. Cet article cherche aussi à identifier des traits communs dans l'approche Ibāḍī durant la période de formation de la théologie islamique, et à explorer les voies grâce auxquelles ces premiers théologiens ont pu avoir accès à des thèmes cosmologiques antérieurs à l'Islam.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

I

Studies of Islamic views on the subject of atoms and accidents commonly focus on the works of Muʿtazilite and Ashʿarite theology. One weakness with this approach is that it has created a division between schools of theology within early Islam, which has left their contributions still mostly incomprehensible to the modern scholarship, Ibāḍī texts in particular have received little attention in the study of Islamic theology, whether in the Western or Islamic context. The main aim of this article is to rectify this gap by presenting the development of Ibāḍī arguments on atoms and accidents during the 3rd/9th century drawing on recent discoveries of the monographic works by Bashīr b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb (d. 285/890).

Taking these works as its basis, this article will demonstrate the use of rational argument in early Ibāḍī texts, highlight the early evolution of Ibāḍī discourse regarding atoms and accidents in the middle of the 3rd/9th century and provide a comparison between the development of the Ibāḍī argument and other schools of Islamic theology.

Bashīr's volume consists of three overlapping and complementary texts which were recently discovered: respectively, *Kitāb al-Raṣf wa-ḥudūth al-ʿālam* and *Kitāb al-Muḥāraba* and *Sīra fī al-ḥadth al-wāqiʿ bi-ʿUmān*.[1] All these texts provide material that sheds new light on the Ibāḍī view of atoms and accidents, but the focus of this article will fall on two of these texts, *Raṣf* and *al-Muḥāraba*. These two texts have remained out of circulation, even among the Ibāḍīs, and even until recently were considered lost works.[2] Nevertheless, they have been familiar to us from quotations, though the degree of their prominence has varied from text to text. Thus, quotes from *Kitāb al-Muḥāraba* have appeared more frequently in Ibāḍī theological and legal literature than ones from *Kitāb al-Raṣf*. For the first time in Ibāḍī scholarship, both texts mention issues related to metaphysics and the concepts of atoms and accidents, in the context of arguments concerning divine creation and divine power – two of the most controversial subjects debated by Islamic theologians and their adversaries among the philosophers and atheists.

The Muʿtazilite scholar Abū al-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf (d. 226/841) was the first to introduce metaphysics into the domain of Islamic theology (*kalām*)[3] and his early contributions played a formative role in

[1] *Early Ibāḍī Literature: Abū l-Mundhir Bashīr b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb*, introduced and edited by Abdulrahman al-Salimi and Wilferd Madelung (Wiesbaden, 2011).
[2] Patricia Crone and Fritz Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Sālim b. Dhakwān* (Oxford, 2001), p. 318; John Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition of Oman* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 190–1.
[3] See "Abu l-Hudhayl al-ʿAllaf", *EI*^{2}.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

shaping the endeavours of later theologians.[4] This influence was firmly entrenched with the rise of Maturīdī and Ashʿarī Sunni schools and the development of *kalām* metaphysics, in which the concepts of atoms and accidents became foundational among Islamic schools of theology.[5] Likewise, the Islamic philosophers borrowed from this discussion, as evidenced in the work of al-Kindī (d. 252/866) who developed arguments of creation on the basis of atoms and accidents deriving from either Islamic theologians or philosophers in the middle of 3rd/9th century.[6]

In addition to the principles of atoms and accidents, an additional important question these texts permit us to raise concerns the comparison between early Ibāḍī and Muʿtazilite theological views.[7] These texts include discussions of characteristic Muʿtazilite topics, such as cognisance, leadership, titles and conditions of places, commanding right and forbidding wrong, duty, and divine capability Comparison of these works with early Muʿtazilite thought clearly shows early theological interaction between the two schools. Additionally, the texts include topics belonging more narrowly to the concerns of Islamic jurisprudence, reflecting the way in which theologians during the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries sought to integrate jurisprudence into their theological approaches. Thus, the texts deal with several topics that would normally appear under the heading of jurisprudence, such as questions about the interpretation of Qurʾanic texts, the prophetic traditions, abrogation, and dissidence.

The texts reflect many of the debates that took place between Ibāḍī and Muʿtazilite scholars, especially those that occurred between the

[4] Salomon Pines, *Beiträge Zur Islamischen Atomenlehre* (Berlin, 1936), p. 5–7; Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1976), pp. 466–86; Richard Frank, *The Metaphysics of Created Being according to Abu l-Hudhayl al-ʿAllaf: a Philosophical Study of the Earliest Kalām* (Istanbul, 1966), pp. 1–53.

[5] Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, pp. 521–44; Richard Frank, "Al-Aš'arī's conception of the nature and role of speculation reasoning in theology", *Proceeding of the VIth Congress of Arabic and Islamic Studies* (Stockholm, 1972), pp. 136–54.

[6] Roshdi Rashed, *Œuvres philosophiques et scientifiques d'al-Kindī*. Volume I: *L'optique et la catoptrique* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 25–36.

[7] Cf. on the works that deal with the Ibāḍī-Muʿtazilite theological encounters: Josef van Ess, *Une lecture à rebours de l'histoire du muʿtazilisme*, *Revue des Études Islamiques*, hors série 14 (Paris, 1984): 106–10; M. Martino Moreno, "Note di teologia ibâdita", *Annali del Istituto Universitario di Studi Orientali di Napoli*, N.S., 3 (1949): 299–313; Carl A. Nallino, "Sull'origine del nome dei Muʿtaziliti", *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, 7 (1916–1918): 429–54; Carl A. Nallino, "Rapporti fra la dogmatica muʿtazilita e quella degli Ibâditi dell'Africa settentrionale", *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, 7 (1916–18): 455–60; William Montgomery Watt, "Was Wāsil a Khārijite?", in Richard Gramlich (ed.), *Islam wissenschaftliche Abhandlungen Fritz Meier zum 60. Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden, 1974), pp. 306–11; Patricia Crone, "A statement by the Najdiyya Khārijites on the dispensability of the Imamate", *Studia Islamica*, 88 (1998): 55–76; Wilferd Madelung, "'Abd Allah Ibn Ibāḍ and the origins of the Ibāḍīyya", in Barbara Michalak-Pikulska and Andrzej Pikulski (eds.), *Authority, Privacy and Public Order in Islam, Proceeding of the 22nd Congress of L'Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants* (Paris, 2006), pp. 51–8.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

major figures representing these groups in the second half of the 3rd/9th century. Notable among these are Bashīr b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb al-Ruḥaylī and his contemporary Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī (d. 303/915). Although they probably never met, they clearly held similar views on many issues, which were akin to those of the Muʿtazilite School of Baṣra. This is perhaps not surprising, given our knowledge that Bashīr's father Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb (d. 259/873) took an active role in Oman in the debate on the createdness of the Qurʾān. This caused deep controversy among Ibāḍī scholars during Imām al-Muhannā b. Jayfar's reign (226/841–236/851), and almost resulted in his expulsion from Oman.[8] This event had some influence on the development of Ibāḍīsm in North Africa, since it led the Rustamid Imām Abū al-Yaqẓān Muḥammad b. Aflaḥ b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (r. 207/823–257/871) to adopt the tenet of the createdness of the Qurʾān. Thus, while ʿAbd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī (d. *c.* 190s/810s) is usually mentioned as the first to have advocated this tenet among the Ibāḍīs[9] it was rather the Ruḥaylīs, Muḥammad and Maḥbūb who contributed to the spread of this theological concept from Iraq to Oman.

Bashīr's grandfather Abū Sufyān Maḥbūb b. al-Ruḥayl b. al-ʿAnbar b. Sayf/Sayyid b. Hubayra was considered the last Ibāḍī leader in Baṣra according to Crone and Zimmermann whose work corrects many historical inaccuracies related to the Baṣran Ibāḍī leaders.[10] I will not go into the biographical details here in order to avoid some of the controversies not relevant to the present discussion. In brief, according to Omani sources, Maḥbūb b. al-Ruḥayl was considered to have descended from the Quraysh,[11] whereas, according to North African Ibāḍī sources, he was from Kinda or from ʿAbd al-Qays.[12] This dispute aside, the more relevant question remains whether his arrival in Ṣuḥār coincided with the reign of Imām Ghassān b. ʿAbd Allāh (r. 192/808–207/823) or whether it took place after his argument with Hārūn b. al-Yamān, and if so, whether he remained in Oman after that time until his death. The sources available to us suggest

[8] Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥumayd al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfat al-Aʿyān bi-sīrat ahl ʿUmān*, ed. Abū Isḥāq Aṭfayyish, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1961), vol. 1, pp. 132–3; Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Kindī, *Bayān al-Sharʿ* (Muscat, 1987), vol. 1, pp. 152–4; 183–5.

[9] Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Baraka, *al-Taqyīd* (a manuscript is kept at al-Sālimī Library in Bidiya, Oman), p. 22; F. al-Jaʾbīrī, *al-Buʿd al-ḥaḍārī li-al-ʿaqīda al-Ibāḍiyya* (Muscat, 1987), p. 350.

[10] Crone & Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Sālim b. Dhakwān*, pp. 305–15; also *EI*^{2}, s.v. Mabḥūb b. al-Ruḥayl.

[11] Jumayyil b. Khamīs al-Saʿdī, *Qāmūs al-Sharīʿa* (Muscat, 1985), vol. 8, pp. 303–4; Sirḥān b. Saʿīd al-Azkawī, *Kashf al-Ghuma*, ed. by Ḥasan al-Nabūdha (Beirut, 2006), vol. 2, p. 1005.

[12] Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Saʿīd Darjīnī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mashāʾikh*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ṭalāyī (Algeria, 1987), vol. 2, p. 278; Ibn Sallām, *Kitāb fīhi badʾ al-Islām wa-sharāʾiʿ al-dīn*, ed. Sālim b. Yaʿqūb and T. Schwartz (Wiesbaden, 1986), p. 130.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

that he continued visiting Oman with al-Rabīʿ b. Ḥabīb (d. *c.* 180/795), and then after he left Baṣra following the dispute among Ibāḍī scholars toward the late 3rd/9th century. However, it appears that he never settled in Oman. This conclusion is based on two observations:

1- There is no mention of him when ʿAbd al-Malik b. Ḥumayd (r. 208/824–226/841) was elected to the Imāmate, nor when his successor al-Muhannā b. Jayfar (226/841–236/851) was elected. As the most prominent scholar of his time, it is unlikely that he could have been excluded from the election procedures.
2- There is no acknowledgement or reference to him in the Omani literature produced by those who would have belonged to the generation of his students. The Omani scholars mentioned in the sources are contemporaries of his son Muḥammad, or in the case of his peers, they were students of Hāshim b. Ghaylān and Sulaymān b. ʿUthmān, and then Mūsā b. Abī Jabīr (d. 182/798).[13] On the other hand, Abū Sitta (d. 1099/1688) mentions that after the death of al-Rabīʿ, Maḥbūb lived and died in Mecca.[14] Moreover, Ibn Madād states that Maḥbūb lived in Baṣra and not in Oman, which is confirmed by the fact that al-ʿAwtabī did not mention him among the scholars there at the time, as did later Omani sources.[15]

Maḥbūb's two sons, Sufyān and al-Mujabbar, however, were orphaned at a young age, and were forced to sell their home in Basra. Omani sources mention with certainty only select narratives about Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb's stay in Ṣuḥār and migration to the city of Azkī to study under Mūsā b. ʿAlī b. ʿAzra al-Azkawī (d. 230/845).[16] This evidence suggests that Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb received some of his education earlier in Baṣra, and then completed it in Oman, and that his father was not present there. His sons, al-Mujabbar and Sufyān, lived in Baṣra. Some of al-Mujabbar's letters and legal opinions *fatwās* in response to queries from the provinces, including Khurasan, were recorded in Ibn Baraka's *K. al-Taqyīd*.[17]

Both Bashīr and ʿAbd Allāh, sons of Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb, were born and died in Ṣuḥār, where their father was a judge. Many of Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb legal opinions are recorded in Omani classical scholarship. Wilkinson is correct in stating that the Ruḥayl family had a lasting influence on the intellectual life in Oman, especially in the city of Ṣuḥār, where Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb was the chief

[13] Ibn Baraka, *Taqyīd*, p. 59.
[14] Abū Sitta, *Ḥāshīyat al-Tartīb* (Muscat, 1987), vol. 1, p. 143.
[15] Salama b. Muslim al-ʿAwtabī, *al-Ansāb* (Muscat, 1984), vol. 2, p. 229.
[16] Sayf b. Hamūd al-Battāshī, *Itḥāf al-Aʿyān* (Muscat, 2008), vol. 2, p. 250.
[17] Ibn Baraka, *al-Taqyīd*, p. 159; see also Crone & Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Sālim b. Dhakwān*, pp. 314–15.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

judge and played a central role in codifying the tax system in this major trading center.[18]

II

The concepts of atom and accident were first mentioned among Ibāḍī theologians in recently discovered epistolary writings and monographs by ʿAbd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī, who was not only the flag bearer of Ibāḍī reform theology, but was also considered to be one of the greatest early Islamic theologians.[19] He argued in his writings in favor of the createdness of the Qurʾān. His positions, however, were not followed by other Ibāḍī scholars, who would have introduced them into Ibāḍī literature, especially during the post-Baṣran period, when Ibāḍīsm moved into new regions. There is no doubt about the influence of the al-Ruḥaylis in strengthening the links between the Eastern and the North African Ibāḍīs.[20]

It is worth noting that Ibāḍī and Muʿtazilite schools, both based in Baṣra towards the end of the 2nd/8th century, subsequently witnessed internal developments emanating from their theological debates. Thereafter, the Muʿtazilīs formed the Baghdad school, headed by Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir (d. 825), while the Ibāḍīs generated another branch represented by ʿAbd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī, Hārūn b. al-Yamān (d. *c.* 840) and Shuʿayb b. al-Maʿrūf (d. *c.* 815), all of whom were influenced by political events resulting from the legacy of the Ibāḍī and Muʿtazilī schools.[21] These Ibāḍīs were referred to by their followers as *Shaʿbiyya* or *Shuʿaybiyya*. Their beliefs subsequently spread among Ibāḍīs in Egypt and Yemen as well and in the North African Ibāḍī communities which dissented from the Rustamid State (the Ibāḍī Imāmate 776–909). These dissidents in North Africa were dubbed *al-Nukkār* (the "Deniers"). Other Ibāḍī Imāmates in Oman and North Africa, as well as their followers in Iraq and Central Asia, remained attached to mainstream Ibāḍīsm. They supported al-Rabīʿ b. Ḥabīb, Wāʿil b. Ayyūb al-Ḥaḍramī, and then the last Imām Maḥbūb b. al-Ruḥayl.[22] It may well have been that the influence of provincial Ibāḍīsm, combined with the strength

[18] Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition of Oman*, pp. 2–3.

[19] J. Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra: eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*, 6 vols. (Berlin and New York, 1991–97), vol. 1, pp. 406–14. Recently, theological texts have been discovered in Algeria in al-ʿAlī library in Mazab among which the *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* by ʿAbd Allah b. Yazīd al-Fazārī mentions the concepts of atoms and accident. The text was written approximately in the 170s.

[20] Crone and Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Sālim b. Dhakwān*, pp. 309–14; John Wilkinson, *Al-Ibāḍism: Origin and Early Development in Oman* (Oxford, 2010), p. 237.

[21] Cf. Crone & Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Salim b. Dhakwān*, p. 277; Abdulrahman al-Salimi, "Themes of Omani/Ibāḍī Siyar", *Journal of Semitic Studies*, v. 54 (2009): 475–514.

[22] Al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfa*, vol. 1, p. 122; Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition of Oman*, pp. 164–5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of its scholarship, overcame the persuasive capacity of Baṣran central authority. This may also have explained Maḥbūb b. al-Ruḥayl's decision to reside in Ṣuḥār in Oman rather than in Baṣra. However, Shaʿbiyya/Shuʿaybiyya scholars held vigorous debates in Baṣra, Kūfā and to a lesser extent in Baghdad. Nevertheless, their followers dwindled for two reasons:

1. The defeat of the *Nukkār* by the Rustamids in North Africa even as Ibāḍīs in Ḥaḍramawt and Oman rallied to the cause of Maḥbūb b. al-Ruḥayl. This left the Ibāḍīs of Yemen alone in their struggle to maintain their theological stance. Nevertheless, they faded completely with the establishment of the Zaydī State in 897 by al-Hādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Qāsim al-Rassī. Of their literature only one book seems to have been preserved by ʿAbd Allāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī. This work is quoted in its entirety in the treatise *K. al-Najāt*, which was composed by the Zaydī Imām Aḥmad Nāṣir al-Dīn (d. 322/934).[23] Ibāḍī literature also mentions that the aged Shuʿayb b. al-Maʿrūf lived in a town called Qidam after migrating to Yemen, and eventually died there.[24] Omani historical accounts have interestingly preserved the texts recording a theological exchange between the Ibāḍī leaders in Baṣra Maḥbūb b. Ruḥayl and Hārūn b. al-Yamān.[25] Al-Sālimī (d. 1914) reported that in the debate between Maḥbūb b. al-Ruḥayl and Hārūn b. al-Yamān the people of Yemen followed Hārūn while the people of Oman and Ḥaḍramawt supported the views of Maḥbūb.[26] For this reason, Maḥbūb b. Ruḥayl set in motion the second most crucial development of Ibāḍīsm since the establishment of the constitution of the Qaʿda and the secession from the *Muḥakkima*, and therefore since the early Kharijite schism in the second half of 2nd/8th century. Therefore, the Ibāḍīs refused to rebel when the conditions made it impossible to rebel against illegal Islamic rulers. Moreover, they disassociated themselves from other Muslims, regarding them as unbelievers.[27]
2. The Ibāḍī Imāmate arose following a century of strife, with Oman and North Africa constituting the axis of the Ibāḍī movement; as a result, scholars gradually migrated from the Ibāḍī center in Baṣra which had begun to lose its theological influence

[23] Wilferd Madelung, *Streitschrift des Zaiditenimams Aḥmad an-Nāṣir wider die Ibāḍitische Prädestinationslehre* (Wiesbaden, 1985).
[24] *Al-Siyar wa-al-Jawbāt*, ed. Sayyida Kāshif Ismāʿīl (Muscat, 1984).
[25] See the three texts: *al-Siyar wa-al-Jawbāt*, vol. 1, pp. 295–318.
[26] Al-Sālimī, *Tuḥfa*, vol. 1, p. 155.
[27] "Ibāḍiyah", *EI*^{2}.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and political authority. Immediately this situation not only affected their position in Iraq, but also resulted in difficult communications or loss of contact with Central Asia and Iran.[28] Revolutionary movements around the Imāmate lost their appeal, especially with the emergence of small states and Emirates.

III

It would be useful before going further to give a brief preliminary survey of the Ibāḍī theological sources dealing with questions of metaphysics, and more specifically with the notions of atoms and accidents. This literature begins in the mid 2nd/8th century with Abū al-Mūʾthir al-Ṣalt b. Khamīs al-Kharūṣī (d. *c.* 295/907),[29] who was a contemporary of Bashīr. Abū al-Mūʾthir mentions in his introduction to the *K. al-Tawḥīd* the concepts of 'essence' and 'accident' and their connection to the creation of the universe. The aim of this book, as its introduction states, is to establish God's existence.[30] Abū al-Mūʾthir then goes no further in his work to demonstrate how the theory might support the notion of creation. Subsequently, it is Ibn Baraka's works (d. *c.* 355/966) that develop these connections and articulate the argument based on the notions of atoms and accidents in the beginning of the 4th/10th century, particularly in his work *K. al-Taqyīd* where a partial reference to those concepts appears in the initial chapters. Ibn Baraka's arguments concern two aspects: the demonstration of divine power and the creation of the universe.[31]

It seems that the issue of atoms and accidents aroused the interest of his student Abū al-Ḥasan al-Basyawī (d. *c.* 375/985), who detailed the subject in his book *al-Jāmiʿ*,[32] and later, in his epistolary monograph. Al-Basyawī went further in detailing the divine attributes without delving into essential characteristics, as well as responding to the fatalists.[33] This type of argumentation soon flourished in the Rustāq school even more than in the Nizwā school in Oman.[34] Between the 4–5/10–11 centuries it was developed extensively and

[28] John C. Wilkinson, "The early development of the Ibāḍī movement in Basra", in G. H. A. Juynboll (ed.), *Studies on the First century of Islamic Society* (Carbondale, 1982); Crone & Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Sālim b. Dhakwān*, p. 306–8; Van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra*, vol. 1, p. 411.

[29] "Abu al-Mūʾthir", *EI*^{2}.

[30] Cf. Abdulrahman al-Salimi, "Identifying Omani/Ibāḍī Siyar", *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 55 (1) (2010): 115–62; This epistle is still in manuscript form, but is available in several private libraries in Oman such as al-Sālimī and al-Būsaʾīdī.

[31] For Ibn Barka see further details in *EI*^{2}: Ibn Barka. According to *Kitāb al-Taqyīd* of which a manuscript is preserved in al-Sālimī's Library.

[32] Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Basyawī, *al-Jāmiʿ* (Muscat, 1984).

[33] Cf. al-Salimi, "Identifying Omani/Ibāḍī Siyar"; *al-Siyar wa-al-Jawabāt*, ed. Ismaʾīl Kāshif.

[34] For Nizwā and Rustāq schools see further; Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition in Oman*, pp. 210, 346.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

used by Abū al-Mundhir Salāma b. Muslim al-ʿAwtabī, in his encyclopaedic work *al-Diyāʾ* especially in the first three volumes, where he sets out Ibāḍī theology in meticulous detail.[35] His theological approach was closer to Ashʿarī than to Muʿtazilite doctrine, although it draws on Muʿtazilite views on the divine attributes, the vision of God in the after-life, the creation of the universe, death and resurrection, and their response to atheists. On the other hand, he adopted Ashʿarīʾs views in his response to the Fatalists and the Mujbarites, as well as in the case of the creation of the Qurʾān.[36] He confirmed and upheld Ashʿarite views on the creation of Qurʾān which became the Ibāḍī position in Oman against the North African Ibāḍīs, and remained constant in Oman until the 10th /17th century. Since that time Ibāḍīs have combined both views on the createdness of the Qurʾān.[37]

During the 5th/11th century, the issue of atoms (*al-jawhar*) and accidents (*al-ʿaraḍ*) was debated among Ibāḍī scholars and we can find some references to it scattered in various discussions in Ibāḍī works. For example, a discussion of it can be found in a correspondence between Imām Khalīl b. Shādhān and the Judge Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā b. Zakariyyā (d. 472/1079),[38] as well as in *Kitāb al-Akilla wa-ḥaqāʾiq al-adilla* by Nijād b. Mūsā (d. 513/1119).[39] Later important work on this topic can be seen in *Kitāb al-Jawhar al-Muqtaṣar* by Abū Bakr b. ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad al-Kindī (d. 557/1162), who is also the author of the famous collection of Ibāḍī traditions in Oman entitled *al-Muṣannaf*.[40] In his work *Kitāb al-Jawhar al-Muqtaṣar*,[41] he extensively explains sections of *K. al-Muḥāraba* and compares the approaches of Ibāḍī and other theological schools on this subject in his book *al-Dhakhīra*. Finally, Abū Saʿīd Muḥammad b. Saʿīd al-Qalhātī was probably the last Omani scholar to deal with the issue of atoms and accidents, which he did in his work *al-Kashf wa-al-Bayān*.[42]

According to the Ibāḍīs of North Africa, the writings to which we have access show that the discussion of metaphysics started in the late 6th/12th century, which then attracted the attention of the most celebrated Ibāḍī theologians. We can see this chronologically with

[35] Salāma b. Muslim al-ʿAwtabī, *al-Diyāʾ* (Muscat, 1984), vol. 3, pp. 96–110.
[36] *Ibid.*
[37] Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥumayd al-Sālimī, *Rawḍ al-Bayān fī al-radd ʿalā man iddaʿā qidam al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sālimī (Muscat, 1994).
[38] Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā b. Zakariyyā, *al-Iḍāḥ fī al-aḥkām* (Muscat, 1983), vol. 4, p. 321.
[39] Musā b. Nijād, *Kitāb al-Akilla wa-ḥaqāʾiq al-adilla*, a manuscript in al-Sālimī library in Bidiya, Oman.
[40] Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Mūsā al-Kindī, *al-Muṣannaf* (Muscat, 1982–1988).
[41] Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Mūsā al-Kindī, *al-Jawhar al-Muqtaṣar* (Muscat, 1984).
[42] Abū Saʿīd Muḥammad b. Saʿīd al-Qalhātī, *al-Kashf wa-al-Bayān* ed. Sayyida Ismāʾīl Kashīf (Muscat, 1984).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

*Kitāb al-Waḍ*ʿ by Abū Zakariyyā al-Jinnāwnī (alive during 6th/12th century),[43] where he briefly deals with the theological chapters. This became a topic of discussion in Ibāḍī theology with his late contemporaries Abū ʿAmmār ʿAbd al-Kāfī al-Warjilānī (d. before 560/1165) in his works *Sharḥ al-Jahālāt* and *al-Mūjaz*[44] and then Abū Yaʿqūb al-Warjilānī (d. 570/1174) in his work *al-Dalīl al-Burhān*.[45] These two are in fact representative of North African Ibāḍī classical theology, and their works have been considered transitional between early and later classical Ibāḍī theological literature. They touch upon many of the issues related to the metaphysics of atoms and accidents, such as the creation of the universe, the proof of God's existence, the affirmation of the divine attributes, and the question of divine power. After these scholars, Abū Ṭāhir al-Jītālī (d. 750/1350) combined mysticism and theology in his works *Qawāʿid al-Islām* and *Qanātir al-Khayrāt*.[46] After that, Abū al-Qāsim al-Barādī (who lived during first half of the 9th/15th century) examined theological terminology in his work *Kitāb al-Ḥaqāʾiq*, as well as in his work *Shifāʾ al-ḥāʾim ʿalā baʿḍ al-Dāʾim*, which contains commentary on some of the Ibn Naẓr's theological poetry.[47] The last celebrated classical Ibāḍī theologian in North Africa is Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Saʿīd al-Shammākhī (d. 928/1522), specifically with regard to his treatment of issues pertaining to atoms and accidents.[48] Later scholarship was mainly restricted to commentary on earlier texts.

The above has offered a brief overview of the Ibāḍī literature concerned with the notions of atoms and accidents. Among the conclusions it permits us to draw, certainly, is that the contribution of Ibāḍīsm was parallel to other Islamic theological schools in this field.

IV

Bashīr starts in the first paragraph of both texts explaining that both atoms and accidents are empowered by God to "do all things as they are mentioned, in their infinitesimal wholeness, without justification for the inherent meaning of creation." This view is similar to that of Abū al-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf who holds to the idea of atoms and accidents

[43] Abū Zakariyā Yaḥyā b. Abī al-Khayr al-Jinnāwnī, *al-Waḍ*ʿ ed. Abū Isḥāq Aṭfayyish (Muscat, 1978).
[44] Abū ʿAmmār ʿAbd al-Kāfī al-Warjilānī, *al-Mūjaz (Arāʾ al-Khawārij al-Kalāmiyya al-Mūjaz li-Abī ʿAmmār ʿAbd al-Kāfi al-Ibāḍī)* ed. ʿAmmār al-Ṭālibī, 2 vols (Algiers, 1978).
[45] Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf b. Ibrāhīm al-Warjilānī, *al-Dalīl wa-al-Burhān*, 3 parts in 2 vols (Muscat, 1997).
[46] Abū Ṭāhir Ismāʿīl b. Mūsā al-Jītālī, *Qawāʿid al-Islām*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Biklī (Muscat, 2001).
[47] Farḥāt al-Jaʾbīrī, *al-Buʿd al-ḥaḍārī li-al-ʿaqīda al-Ibāḍiya* (Muscat, 1987), p. 150.
[48] Al-Jaʾbīrī, *al-Buʿd al-ḥaḍārī*, p. 351.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

as necessary constructions according to the principle that divine power negates the Creator, or that divine power and the creator are the same entity. The divine power and the Creator are an infinitesimal totality, a finality, both all similarity and all difference coexisting.[49] Al-ʿAllāf seeks to reconcile the Qurʾanic doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* with Aristotelian cosmology, according to which the world, set in motion by God, is eternal, its movement being co-eternal with the prime mover himself. While accepting movement as a principle of the universal process, he declared it to be created in the Qurʾanic sense. In consequence, movement also will reach its end and cease. For this reason, Abū Bakr al-Kindī in his commentary of the texts referred to Nijād b. Mūsā's argument in his work *K. al-Akilla*, that the Eternal cannot be described as the creator of power regardless of the two qualities of atoms and accidents, because what else is the Eternal without the epithet of His power.[50] Therefore, the developing theology of the Eternal led the theologians to a controversy over whether the world was created out of nothing or out of a pre-existent matter, whether the non-existent is nothing or something. Al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) states that al-Shaḥḥām (d. 235/850), a Baṣran Muʿtazilite, originated the view that the non-existent is a thing.

Bashīr developed an argument which was later further developed by Abū Bakr al-Kindī about the existence of non-existence and whether non-existence can be considered an atom. Abū Bakr explained that non-existence is not part of essence, as it cannot be measured in size. The Baghdādī Muʿtazilites hold the same view, according to the position of Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī. In contrast, Bashīr agreed with the Baṣran Muʿtazilites who are presumed to have held the views of both Abū ʿAlī and his son Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī and also Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī al-Baṣrī, that non-existence becomes substantial in the case of its non-existence.[51]

Therefore, the Ibāḍī seem to be in agreement with the Muʿtazilite that non-existence is something.[52] However, Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064) and al-Baghdādī (d. 1037) mentioned that al-Ṣālaḥī (d. 276/ 890) and Hishām al-Fuwaṭī (d. *c*. 225/840) from the Muʿtazilite objected to calling non-existence something, which later was the belief of the Ashʿarite.[53] Up on this controversy Wolfson asserted that the

[49] Rukn al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn al-Malāḥimī al-Khwārazmī, *al-Fāʾiq fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*, ed. Wilferd Madelung and Martin MacDermott (Tehran, 2006), p. 11; Frank, *The Metaphysics of Created Being according to Abū l-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf*, pp. 1–53.

[50] Kindī, *al-Jawhar*, p. 3.

[51] Al-Nīsābūrī, *Masāʾil al-Khilāf*, p. 37.

[52] Al-Jaʾbīrī, *al-Buʿd*.

[53] ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayn al-firaq*, ed. M. Badr (Cairo, 1910), p. 164; Muḥammad Ibn Ḥazm, *K. al-Faṣl fī al-milal wa-al-ahwāʾ wa-al-niḥal* (Cairo, 1947), vol. 4, p. 202, 7.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Mu'tazilite in their belief of non-existence were influenced by the Platonic belief in a pre-existent eternal matter. He added that the Mu'tazilite, according to their perspective, might be similar to the philosopher Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā al-Rāzī (d. 323/935) who conceived of the pre-existence of eternal matter as consisting of atoms.[54] Bashīr also attempted to support the creation argument with the concept of aggregation and segregation.[55] The divine power, he asserts, has the ability to create out of nothing, to originate matter, to expand, segregate, divide, destroy and re-aggregate all that exists. This becomes for Bashīr the philosophical basis for his theology of the resurrection of human bodies on the day of judgement. If the divine power can create out of nothing and destroy matter, then the divine power can also re-assemble matter, re-create and resurrect. This is for Bashīr an argument in opposition to atheism.

Another contention listed by Bashīr is the argument of finitudes and reconstruction:

> The existence of the parts (of the world) are inseparable from (the world itself) and (the world) is inseparable from (the parts) both in combination and when taken as separate parts. Circumstances encompass them and time regulates them and they are bound by location. They occur in agency in terms of form and they do not overlap as the composition is (more than the sum of the parts) and there remains the residual part. The number is also taken away and so there are two paradoxical forms because they cannot coexist.[56]

Bashīr's argument is based upon two propositions; the first is that the force within the world, that which preserves the existence of the world, is finite. The second proposition is that a finite force cannot produce infinite existence. According to Bashīr's references, he supports the idea that the world must have a beginning and an end. He offers the following supporting argument:

> Whatever meets a body from its dimensions and facets and from any number (of dimensions or sides) you begin with and to any number you end up with in your thought, the part will materialize and any image in your mind is (also) an image in reality. This also applies to what is seen through the eyes, from the extension of the object with six dimensions to (objects with) unlimited facets from the air, as this is unlimited since the unlimited cannot be thought of as having a limit from one dimension. So the judgment of what we perceive of the creation meets with the judgment of what is absent to us from the creation in the end of its range. The number begins with the last end from one to the following parts.[57]

[54] Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, p. 366.
[55] Bashīr, *Raṣf*, p. 5.
[56] Bashīr, *Muḥaraba*, part 2.
[57] *Ibid*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In the basis of Bashīr's quote above, we may now attempt to streamline his vision of the original form of the creation of the world. Along with the monotheist theologians, Bashīr restates a rejection of the Aristotelian theory of the incorruptibility of the world on the grounds of the finitude of the elements within it. It is possible to summarize his argument in three points. First, he makes the case that the finitude of the universal elements is due to their being surrounded by the air. Second he states the impossibility of the eternal nature of the world by saying, "we realized that the creation must have an end even though part of the world is hidden from our minds." Third, he reasons that any element that has a beginning should also have an ending.

We can end by illustrating his argument with two syllogisms:

A

Everything that has a beginning must have an ending and be accountable;
The world has a beginning;
Therefore, the world must have an ending.

B

Everything composed of finite elements is created;
The world is composed of finite elements;
Therefore, the world is created.

Bashīr's discussion had developed toward an understanding of the creation of the world based upon the accident of its component parts. Bashīr later discussed the construction of accidents, that they exist in both bodies and parts (atoms), that they have a beginning and an ending, and that the bodies are created. He then moves into a serious and controversial issue relating to the essential existence of atoms and accident, whether they are considered similar or different, unified or separate. Ibāḍīs generally believe that atoms and accidents are not differentiated in categories, but are to be considered as one, albeit they may differ in their specific conditions or accidents, due to their individual characteristics.[58] This is precisely the opinion of Baṣran Muʿtazilites, while Baghdādī Muʿtazilites admit the differences and similarities between atoms and accidents.[59]

After a discussion of the argument proceeding from the construction of accidents, Bashīr addressed the issue of the diversions between atoms and accidents by asserting their underlying finiteness, and arguing that they have limits with beginnings and endings. The construction of events means an endless subdivision *ad infinitum*.

[58] Kindī, *al-Jawhar*, p. 43. This approval is mentioned in a correspondence between the Judge Abū Zakariyyā and the Imām al-Khalīl b. Shādhān (r. *c.* 450/1058-475/1082) in Oman.

[59] Abū Rashīd al-Nīsābūrī, *Masāʾil al-Khilāf bayn al-Baṣriyyīn wa-al-Baghdādiyyīn*, ed. M. Ziyāda and R. al-Sayyid (Beirut, 1987), pp. 29–37; *Anonymous Commentary on Kitāb al-Tadhkira*, p. 22b, 24a.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Similarly Abū al-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf's argument which denied the possibility of an infinite succession was also the opinion of most Baṣran Muʿtazilite scholars.[60] Al-Khayyāṭ (d. 290/903) preserved an interesting argument of al-Naẓẓām's, that successive movements of finite bodies must be treated as an act of creation, arguing that an infinite place would be impossible to traverse.[61] Moreover, he argued that in an infinite series there is no first. Immediately this will lead to other theories such as those of latency (*al-kumūn*) and leap (*al-ṭafra*).[62] Wolfson argues that at the same time that atomism was introduced into the Kalām, another theory was introduced, the theory of the infinite divisibility of matter, which in Greek philosophy meant a theory in opposition to atomism.[63] The Ibāḍī had an identical view as that of the Baṣran Muʿtazilites, represented by Abū al-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf. While the Baghdādī Muʿtazilites, who were influenced by al-Naẓẓām and Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, believe that particles are dividable *ad aeternum* and *ad infinitum*, despite a specific capacity of limitations. As al-Naẓẓām stated, God is one in meaning and entity: God is Himself not prone to subdivision or fragmentation, and none of His creatures may be similar to Him.[64] This case was one of the main difficult dissuasions with both groups. Indeed they were anxious to agree with the externalization and at the same time wanted to respond to their argument. Eventually, Wolfson assumed that the above arguments on the impossibility of the infinite extension of the body and the possibility of its infinite division, and the explanation of the former on the ground that infinite extension cannot be traversed, reflect statements in Aristotle's *Physics* and *De Caelo*. Therefore, the argument of al-Naẓẓām and Hishām is, like Aristotle's argument of infinite divisibility, based on the notion of potential infinite and not actual infinite. Wolfson in his discussion refers to the influence of Aristotle's infinite divisibility, which was infinite only in a potential sense, and could have been known by both al-Naẓẓām and Hishām from the Arabic translation of pseudo-Plutarch's *De Placitis Philosophorum*.[65]

V

In this passage we shall reflect upon the discussions in the texts on the nature of atoms and accidents, and how these were understood

[60] Mānkdīm, *Taʿlīq sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, ed. ʿAbd al-Karīm ʿUthmān (Cairo, 1965) (published as al-Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*), p. 117.
[61] Al-Khayyāṭ, *al-Intiṣār*, p. 31.
[62] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Hārūn (Cairo, 2004), vol. 5, p. 12.
[63] Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, p. 495.
[64] Kindī, *al-Jawhar*, p. 61; *Anonymous Commentary on Kitāb al-Tadhkira*, pp. 27b–29b.
[65] Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, p. 495.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in the early Islamic kalām. In addition, I will review the subject from the point of view of theologians regarding the phenomenal being and how the constituent parts of the body can be organized and understood. Bashīr agreed with Abū al-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf that atoms do not have length because length is based on line. In order to form a line it must be started by conjoining two atoms. The example for this argument is the impossibility of representing a line by drawing one point because the point has no length. Length is based on the line and the line on an alignment of points. Accordingly, the line, if it is parted and then ends at a point, it will not have length or space. This argument originated as a response to al-Naẓẓām that the single atom is defined and limited by the incidents, and also that it is corruptible, hence their divergences. For this reason, some insist that division requires length, so that division by folding may be possible.[66] As for the shape of atom, Bashīr agreed with Abū al-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf that body is made of six constituent parts. Al-Ashʿarī said that body is formed by at least two parts, because he considered body to be an essence. Furthermore, the later Ibāḍī theologian Abū Bakr al-Kindī held similar views to those of Muʿammar b. ʿAbbād al-Sulamī (d. 220/835) according to whom body has eight constituent parts. In contrast, al-Naẓẓām and Hishām b. al-Ḥakam considered the body to be indivisible. Perhaps they meant that the human body cannot be subdivided, but its atoms can be.[67]

While discussing the interconnection between the atoms, Bashīr acknowledges the possibility of the contiguity (*tajāwur*) of particles, but not their mutual interpenetration (*tadākhul*). Bashīr justifies his view about accidents with an illustration of the absorber and the expander. The absorber cannot at the same time expand into the expander. Neither the absorber nor the expander can be both active and passive at the same time. Therefore he argues that when the two bodies interpenetrate they will require more expansion space than that required by one single entity. This opinion is corroborated by Abū Bakr al-Kindī and also by most Ibāḍī theologians.[68] Likewise, among the Baṣran Muʿtazilites distinguished this case of contiguity (*tajāwur*) and interpenetration (*tadākhul*) as argued by Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī and Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī (d. 321/933).[69] On the other hand, Ibrāhīm al-Naẓẓām (d. 230/845) who opposed this argument was likely influenced by the Shiite theologian Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 186/803). Al-Naẓẓām believed in interpenetration, that it is possible for two bodies to occupy one space. They argued

[66] Kindī, *al-Jawhar*, pp. 62–3.
[67] Kindī, *al-Jawhar*, p. 72.
[68] Kindī, *al-Jawhar*, p. 52.
[69] Abū Rashīd al-Nīsābūrī, *Masāʾil al-Khilāf*, p. 61; al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, vol. 5, p. 57.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

that an apple is an "incidental entity", as are its colour, taste and smell; the apple is found at the same place as its colour, taste and smell; if these characteristics were not interconnected, the colour could be there, but not the taste.[70] This argument provides evidence for another important issue for the Baṣran Muʿtazilites and the Ibāḍīs: the composite nature of the universe, which is related to the creation of the universe on the principle of contiguity, does not overlap or interpenetrate.

Now, we will turn to another argument of Bashīr's in which he tried to identify the accidents, and asserted that they are not all of the same nature. Accidents are made up of characteristics that can be similar or different or even contradictory. The same view is held later by Ibāḍī theologians such as al-Qāḍī Abū Zakariyyā (d. 475/ 1082), Abū Bakr al-Kindī and also Aḥmad b. Mūsā b. Nijād in his work *K. al-Akilla*.[71] The argument of the Ibāḍīs, with the exception of Abū al-Qāsim al-Kaʿbī, who differs from the Baṣran Muʿtazilites,[72] is that one instance may not necessarily be identical to another: the quality of blackness (or whiteness, or capability) does not imply that all other states of blackness (or whiteness, or capability) are similar to it. The Ibāḍīs also admit the possibility that entities be either identical or different, even when their appearances show consistent similarity. To support this position, they argue that opposites are by definition different and dissimilar, but not all difference or dissimilarity necessarily entails opposition. For instance, volition and cognition are different and dissimilar, but volition and action are different but not dissimilar.[73] Interestingly, one of the main arguments in support of atoms was, in the beginning 3rd/9th century, whether accidents exist or not. Hishām al-Fuwaṭī and Abū Bakr al-Āṣamm (d. 201/816) denied the existence of accidents because according to them, bodies are perceived through their spatial dimensions "with length, breadth and depth", hence the conclusion that the accidents are the same as atoms.[74] They justified their position by arguing that the components (*al-taʾlīf*) of accidents result in the atoms. This argument may have been confusing in that it identified the body first and then the atom. Their argument was rejected by the Baghdādī Muʿtazilites; Abū al-Qāsim al-Kaʿbī al-Balkhī (d. 319/913) who argued instead that components (*al-taʾlīf*) are but indicators of essence.[75] It is important to indicate that al-Balkhī's theory of components (*al-taʾlīf*) influenced

[70] Kindī, *al-Jawhar*, p. 52.
[71] Kindī, *al-Jawhar*, p. 45.
[72] Al-Nīsābūrī, *Masāʾil al-Khilāf*, p. 115.
[73] Kindī, *al-Jawhar*, p. 44; al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayawān*, vol. 5, 15.
[74] Kindī, *al-Jawhar*, p. 55.
[75] Al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq*, p. 114–16.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

later theologians especially the Ashʿarīte, and became an aspect of their argument on the creation of the world.[76]

Bashīr then moved on to the issue of bodies and their dimensions. Although Abū al-Qāsim al-Kaʿbī al-Balkhī does not relate the extension of bodies to their dimensions and therefore restricts them to accidents, a view which was later adopted by the Ashʿarites. Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī held that essences are not bodies with dimensions.[77] Al-Fuwaṭī, on the other hand, assumed that the atom is not considered a body and therefore it should not be considered to bear accidents neither in its composition nor in its contiguity. Abū al-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf and Muʿammar b. ʿAbbād, followed by Bashīr, differentiate between the body and atom. They argue that indivisibility is the very definition of a body.[78] Al-Kindī in his commentary on the text shows that Bashīr denies the principle of integration in heterogeny, and that what is intended by "integration" is the accident into the subject of accident. Bashīr's argument attempts to establish a coherence between particles and capacity by saying that if God removes all integration from the subject of accident, it will not become void and non-existent, however, they are essentially separated.[79]

VI

Most of the modern research in Islamic theology when dealing with atom and accidents are based on the controversy between Muʿtazilite and Ashʿarite theologians, therefore it is rare to find arguments based on this subject prior to the 3rd/9th century and Muʿtazilite views mostly are preserved by al-Jāḥiẓ.[80] The early Ibāḍī presentation of atoms and accidents as seen in the work of Bashīr b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbūb reflects the importance of the development of Islamic theological literature, a move away from a polemic style in response to the polemic theology of other schools within early Islam. Bashīr's monographic prose presents a genre that sought to define broad themes for discussion with other schools of philosophy during the first half of the 3rd/9th century. It is rare to find texts such as this that present arguments in prose form during this period. The oldest Islamic theological texts that have been discovered in recent years, generally do not date earlier than the 4th/10th century. Thus these texts reflect an important transformation in Islamic theological literature.

[76] Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, pp. 392–400.
[77] Al-Nīsābūrī, *Masāʾil al-Khilāf*, p. 8.
[78] Kindī, *al-Jawhar*, p. 70.
[79] Kindī, *al-Jawhar*, p. 76.
[80] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Hayawān*, vol. 5, pp. 5–96.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Bashīr borrowed from Aristotelian philosophy to support the sovereignty of divine power, the universal creation and the finitude of universal matter within Islamic theology. Indeed it is a remarkable quality of Bashīr and the Ibāḍī theologians that they endeavored to revise the Aristotelian philosophy in a way that both rejected his conclusions and accepted his terms and framework, elements of his theology, and employed them to develop an Islamic theology of atoms and accidents that preserved the primacy of God's sovereignty within early Ibāḍī theology.

Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Rev. Douglas Leonard (American Reform Church) and Dr Adam Gaiser (Florida State University) for their comments in this article; Dr Sophia Vasalou who kindly revised a large part of its first version and Dr Ahmed Hasnaoui for his corrections.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423912000100 Published online by Cambridge University Press