



The Opinion of Abū al- Ḥassan Al- Ash 'arī (Died 324 AH/ 936 AD): "Accidents do not Stay for Two Consecutive Times" and its Relation to Islamic Creed

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Received: 2/6/2020
Revised: 1/12/2020
Accepted: 9/3/2021
Published: 1/12/2021

Citation: Ahmad, E. R. . (2021). The Opinion of Abū al- Ḥassan Al- Ash 'arī (Died 324 AH/ 936 AD): "Accidents do not Stay for Two Consecutive Times" and its Relation to Islamic Creed. *Dirasat: Shari'a and Law Sciences*, 48(4), 193–201. Retrieved from <https://dsr.ju.edu.jo/djournals/index.php/Law/article/view/3228>

Abstract

This research concerns the notions underlying the axiom “an accident does not remain two consecutive times” in the Islamic Theology and its relation to issues in Islamic Creed according to one of the most famous scholars of *Kalām* (Islamic Scholastic Theology), namely *Abū al- Ḥassan Al- Ash 'arī*. His theological school is widely discussed in the Islamic world, in both ancient and modern times. This axiom has accurate implementations in issues of Islamic theology, which requires demonstrating and highlighting its importance through investigating its effect on adopting the issues of *Kalām* according to *Abū Al- Ḥassan Al-Ash 'arī*, using the inductive and analytical approaches in analyzing the texts under investigation. The research is divided into an introduction and five sections. The first section examines the concept of '*Al'araḍ*' (accident) from the perspective of Muslim theologians and philosophers. The second section explains the axiom “an accident does not remain two consecutive times” according to *Al-Ash 'arī*. The third section explains the pieces of evidence *Al-Ash 'arī* used to establish such an axiom. The fourth section tackles the ideological issues related to this axiom. The fifth section presents the main findings and recommendations of the research. The study found that if you know the characteristics of the physical world components, you know the characteristics that cannot be attributed to God due to the absolute difference between the Creator's characteristics and the creatures' characteristics. In addition, the researcher reached new proof concerning the axiom, its provisions, and its relation to accidents..

Keywords: Axiom, Al-Ash 'arī, Islamic scholastic theology (*Kalām*), Islamic creed.

رأي أبي الحسن الأشعري المتوفى سنة (324) هـ / (936) م في "الأعراض لا تبقى زمانين متتاليين" وعلاقتها بالعقيدة الإسلامية

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ملخص

تدور فكرة البحث حول تحديد مفهوم مسلمة [العرض لا يبقى زمانين متتاليين] في الفكر العقائدي الإسلامي، وبيان علاقتها بمسائل العقيدة الإسلامية عند أحد أشهر علماء الكلام الإسلامي ألا وهو (أبو الحسن الأشعري)، المتوفى سنة 324هـ/936م، الذي تعد مدرسته العقائدية والكلامية واسعة الانتشار في العالم الإسلامي قديماً وحديثاً، فهذه المسلمة وإن لم يكن الأشعري هو أول قائل بها إلا أن لها تطبيقات دقيقة وعميقة في مسائل علم الكلام الإسلامي، وكثرة توظيف الأشعري وأتباعه هذه المسلمة في مسائل العقيدة وعلم الكلام كان لا بد من إظهارها، وإبراز أهميتها من خلال معرفة تأثيرها على تبني مسائل العقيدة وعلم الكلام الإسلامي لدى أبي الحسن الأشعري على نحو خاص، مستخدماً في ذلك منهجية البحث الاستقرائي، والمنهج التحليلي للنصوص ذات الصلة بالبحث، وقد تم تقسيم البحث إلى تمهيد وخمسة أقسام، القسم الأول يبحث في تحديد مفهوم العرض في الفكر العقائدي الإسلامي بشقيه الكلامي والفلسفي، وأما القسم الثاني فهو خاص بتحديد ما المراد من مفهوم مسلمة [العرض لا يبقى زمانين متتاليين] عند الأشعري، بينما جاء القسم الثالث موضحاً أدلة الأشعري في إثباتها، في حين جاء القسم الرابع متخصصاً في معالجة القضايا العقائدية ذات الصلة الوثيقة بالمسلمة، وأخيراً جاء القسم الخامس في التوصل إلى أهم نتائج البحث وتوصياته. وصلت الدراسة إلى أن وجدت الدراسة أنه إذا كنت تعرف خصائص مكونات العالم المادي، فأنت تعرف الخصائص التي لا يمكن أن تنسب إلى الله بسبب الاختلاف المطلق بين خصائص الخالق وخصائص المخلوقات. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، توصل الباحث إلى دليل جديد بشأن البديهية وأحكامها وعلاقتها بالحوادث.

الكلمات الدالة: العرض، البقاء، مسلمة، زمان، الأشعري، علم الكلام الإسلامي، العقيدة الإسلامية..



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Introduction

In the introduction of any topic and before going deep in details, it is important to display some introductory points including research problem, research questions, research objectives, research importance, previous related studies -if existed-, and the research methodology.

First: *Research Problem:*

In this study, the research problem has two sides, the first side is the ambiguity of the perception related to the axiom “Accidents do not stay for two consecutive times” which in turn leads to another ambiguity in its rational evidential proofs. And the second side is that the axiom “Accidents do not stay for two consecutive times” is not agreed on among Muslim theologians, which means that judgments related to creedal issues are also not agreed on, except for some Islamic Theology scholars, such as Abū al- Ḥassan Al- Ash‘arī who has built many doctrinal judgments which will be clarified in the search body later.

Second: *Research Questions:*

This study answers many important questions related to the axiom “Accidents do not stay for two consecutive times”, including the following:

- What is the meaning of the axiom “Accidents do not stay for two consecutive times”?
- How did it emerge?
- Is it an agreed axiom among Muslim Theologians?
- Did philosophy have a role in proving or denying it?
- Why did Abū al- Ḥassan Al- Ash‘arī stick to saying it?
- What is the evidence on it according to Abū al- Ḥassan Al- Ash‘arī?
- What is its relationship to creedal issues and matters of faith, whether in proof or in denial, particularly according to Abū al- Ḥassan Al- Ash‘arī?
- Is the rational evidence that Al- Ash‘arī has used to prove the axiom “Accidents do not stay for two consecutive times” considered a significant and strong argument?

Third: *Research Objectives:*

The main objective of this study is the collection and analysis of the scientific and theological material related to the axiom “Accidents do not stay for two consecutive times”, in terms of the axiom concept, the evidence for its proof, and its relationship to the creedal and faith matters according to Abū al- Ḥassan Al- Ash‘arī.

Forth: *Research Importance:*

The importance of this study lies in the fact that it is a specialized study that gathered in one place all the work of an Islamic theology scholar, Abū al- Ḥassan Al- Ash‘arī, in investigating the axiom “Accidents do not stay for two consecutive times” in terms of the axiom’s concept, evidence, and creedal implementations.

Fifth: *Previous Related Studies:*

According to the references and sources available to the researcher so far, it was revealed that old Muslim Theologians, both Ash‘arites and Mu‘tazilites, have concluded to the axiom “Accidents do not stay for two consecutive times”. As for modern academic studies, a book entitled “The Atomic Doctrine Among the Muslims and its relationship with the doctrines of Greece and the Indians” by Dr. S. Pines, explains the concept of an accident and occasionally points to the opinions of Al- Ash‘arī and Mu‘tazilites in the matter of accident staying in general, and that it does not stay for two times and the creedal issues related to this concept (Pines, 1946, pp. 25-27).

Sixth: *Research Methodology:*

According to the nature of this study, it depends on two approaches. The first approach is the inductive approach in which all opinions and evidential proofs related to the axiom were collected from Al- Ash‘arī’s books and all other related theological and philosophical references. The second approach is the analytical approach for Qur’ānic verses and theological texts that were related to the axiom “Accidents do not stay for two consecutive times”.

Preface

The Islamic thought, in both of its theological and philosophical branches, has focused on the determination of the relationship between God and His creatures in terms of the fundamental difference between both of them. Such a matter requires the research to know the components of the physical world. By knowing its components, Islamic theologians could reach the distinction between attributes of God and the characteristics of His creatures according to Islamic Religion and the Holy Qur'an verse: "There is nothing that is anything like Him" (Ḥammād, 2014). This means that God has no equal and there is nothing like Him as He does not resemble His Creatures in any of His attributes (Al- Qurtūbī, 1964, p. 8).

Based on the previous Qur'an verse, God has certain characteristics attributed to Him alone and indicating that He is Deity and Creator, where creatures also have their own characteristics indicating that they have been created. There is no overlap in the Islamic creed between the characteristics of God and those of His creatures. Thus, examining the creatures' characteristics was a path to know God for scholars of Islamic creed in both of its theological and philosophical branches. Negating attribution of creatures' characteristics to Divine Entity is a type of paying glorification to God according to the Islamic creed. This glorification is called "Tasbīḥ" in the Holy Qur'an, which means divine transcendence above any defects that cannot be attributed to God. Such was the famous Arabic meaning used by the ancient Arabs before Islam, and is the same meaning intended also in the Holy Qur'an verses (Aṭ-Ṭabarī, 2000, p. 474). Tasbīḥ' has been repeated (84) times in the Holy Qur'an, indicating its creedal importance in the Islamic religion.

Based on the principle of God's glorification, divine transcendence and sanctification, scholars of Islamic creed examined the relevant issues between the Creator and the creature, including God's transcendence above physicality and accidental qualities. Abū al- Ḥassan Al- Ash'arī reached to some characteristics of accidents, including that accidents do not stay for two consecutive times. In demonstration of this axiom¹, Al- Ash'arī adopted creedal opinion closely related to it. Now, what is the meaning of the axiom:[accidents do not stay for two consecutive times] according to al-Ash'arī? What are his evidential proofs to establish such concept? What is its relationship with Islamic creed issues according to al- Ash'arī's creedal opinion?

1. The Concept of Accident in the (Theological and Philosophical) Islamic Opinions

1.1. Components of the World in the opinion of Islamic theologians

The Islamic theologians stated that the world is composed of Jawaher (plural of Jawher, meaning a substance) and A'arāḍ (plural of 'araḍ, meaning an accident). A substance is the smallest material thing that is indivisible into other parts. Due to its indivisibility, it is called 'Jawher Fard' (atom or monad). When atoms combine together, they form what is called "Jism" (body or object). On the other hand, accidents, in the opinion of the Islamic theologians, are the characteristics carried by objects, such as heat, coldness, color, movement and other acts and effects. This classification of the physical world components is agreed upon by the most famous Islamic theological schools, namely the Mu'tazilites, Ash'arītes and Matūrīdites (Ibn Fūrak, 1987, p. 276; Al-Ghazālī, 2008, p. 91).

1.2. Components of the World in the opinion of Muslim philosophers

The Muslim philosophers consider that the world and universe are made up of Haūlah (hyle, matter) and Surah (form). Hyle is the origin of physical matter and is also called Maūḍū' (subject). Surah, on the other side, is a form taken by hyle, it is various in occurrence, and is called predicate or accident. Ibn Sīna explained this idea with the example of a wooden bed, where wood is the hyle, and the bed is a form of wood. Wood can have forms of bed, house, or horse-drawn carriage. The

¹ Muslim logic scholars, Muslim theologian scholars, and Muslim philosophers distinguish between the two terms of "badīḥīah" (self-evidence) and "musallama" (axiom). Self-evidence is a self-evident truth by mere mental perception and therefore does not need evidence; so all rational people unanimously agree upon its correctness. It is certainly a certain statement, such as the statement "the whole is greater than the part". Self-evidence is usually called "aūalīīah" (fundamental truth). An axiom is an acknowledged principle, despite lacking evidence, upon which a scholar depends to prove something. Therefore, an axiom is not considered a concept leading to certainty (Al-Kātibī, 1937, p. 29-30). An axiom may pertain to one scholar, hence, it is called "Musallamh Maqḅūlah" (accepted axiom), be widely-known to many scholars, then it is called "Musallamh Muqāīadah" (restricted axiom), or be known to all the people, then it is called "Musalamh Mashhora Muṭlaqah" (well-known absolute axiom) (Al-'āmidī, 2015, p. 442-443).

same applies to every physical object (Ibn Sīna, 1974, p.135-136).

It is crucial to point out that Muslim philosophers' theory about hyle and form differs a bit from Aristotle's theory of hyle and form. Aristotle (2012) considers the material world composed of hyle, form and accidents. Hyle is the original matter of soil, air, water, and fire. Form is the power taking place in hyle, and it is immortal. Accidents are whatever happens to exist and subject to degeneration and corruption, such as effects of heat and coldness. Thus, accidents are exposed to annihilation. For example, when water is poured continuously in wine, the latter eventually becomes water. However, there are two remaining forms: wine and water. What changed here is the accident of quantity and quality (Aristotle, 2012, p.193-197 & 235-237).

2. Impossibility of Staying of Accidents for Two Consecutive Times in the opinion of al-Ash‘arī.

Al-Ash‘arī had a genuine affiliation with Kalām. He thought the world was composed of substances and accidents, each of them had its own conditions and that they share some common conditions. Here, we will present the opinion of al-Ash‘arī regarding a condition of accidents, which is his statement that accidents do not stay for two consecutive times (moments), and the relationship between that axiom and creedal issues of Al-Ash‘arī.

There are two types of the sources that clarified al-Ash‘arī's opinion that an accident does not stay for two consecutive times; the first source type is Al-Ash‘arī's own sources which are his printed books; and the second is the sources close to his era, particularly the book "*Mujarrad Maqālāt ash-Shaīkh abīl- Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī*", by (Ibn Fūrak, 1987). This book is specialized in Al-Ash‘arī's creedal opinions and other related opinions in different branches of knowledge. It is noteworthy that Ibn Fūrak was close to Al-Ash‘arī in terms of time; Ibn Fūrak died in 406 AH (1015 AD); this makes his book a much authentic source concerning reporting of Al-Ash‘arī's opinions especially that Ibn Fūrak got his creedal education through Abūl- Ḥassan al-Bāhilī who died in about (370 AH), and was a student and friend of Abū al-Ḥassan Al-Ash‘arī (Al-Thahabī, 1985, p. 216; Aṣ-ṣafadī, 2000, p. 193).

2.1. Reporting al-Ash‘arī's Opinion that [An accident does not stay for two consecutive times]

Al-Ash‘arī expressed his opinion that an accident does not stay for two consecutive times when reviewing the evidence of occurrence using the theologian approach. He said: "It is untrue to credit accidents in inference except after going through many widely disputable degrees, of these degrees [i.e. regarding knowledge of accidents' conditions] some are needed..., and they are defined [i.e. the accidents] as not existing..." (Al-Ash‘arī, 1997, p. 52-53).

Al-Ash‘arī also stated the same opinion in other positions in his books in his debate with the Mu‘tazilites on their opinion that human creates his/her actions independently of God. Al-Ash‘arī advocated the impossibility of continuous existence (i.e., staying) of human capacity since it is an accident that does not stay for two consecutive times. Thus, Mu‘tazilites' opinion is nullified because a human being needs another entity that will create his/her capacity at the very moment when it will be annihilated. It is only God who can create things from nothingness. Inevitably, God has a role in creating human actions (Al-Ash‘arī, 1955, p. 93).

2.2. Ibn Fūrak Reporting al-Ash‘arī 's Opinion that [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times]

Reporting al-Ash‘arī's opinion that an accident does not stay for more than one moment, Ibn Fūrak said: (He [i.e. al-Ash‘arī] said: it is absolutely untrue that human capacity stay by no way, and so do for all other accidents. The only remaining entity is the one that survives by itself not by others. Thus, accident is impossible to stay depending on others.) (Ibn Fūrak, 1987, p. 108).

Ibn Fūrak also reported the opinion of al-Ash‘arī, saying: "Accidents are impossible to change because they exist in only one time." (Ibn Fūrak, 1987, p. 265). In another place, Ibn Fūrak stated: "He [i.e. al-Ash‘arī] said: no accident can by no way stay" (Ibn Fūrak, 1987, p. 238).

2.3 Al-Ash‘arī 's Agreement with the Muslim theologians adopting the axiom:[An accident does not stay for two consecutive times]

Al-Ash‘arī was not the only one adopting the axiom that [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times]. He himself cited opinions of many preceding theologians who adopted this axiom. Most of these scholars are Mu‘tazilites, such as Abūl-

Qasim al-Balkhī, Dirār bin 'amr, and Al-Ḥassan an-Najjār. However, others were of the opinion that some accidents stay for more than one time. Those include the Mu'tazilite Muḥammad bin 'abdel-Wahhāb al-Jubbā'ī (Al-Ash'arī, 2005, p. 268), and some Ash'arītes such as al-Baqillānī (Al- Baqillānī, 1987, p. 299), and at-Taftazānī (At- Taftazānī, 1989, p.160-166).

3. Al-Ash'arī's Evidence to prove the Axiom: [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times]

Ash'arītes have tackled evidences of the axiom [An accident does not stay for two consecutive times] in their theology books (Al-'amidī, 2004, p.164-165). However, they did not mention but some of the evidential proofs upon which al-Ash'arī based in supporting his opinion in demonstration of the axiom [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times].

3.1. The Evidence, "Taking up² Space of an accident is subsequent to Taking up Space of an atom' negates that an accident stays for two consecutive times

According to Al-Ash'arī, an accident has an existence connecting to the existence of atoms and bodies, not that an accident is positioning in atoms and bodies. Al-Ash'arī differentiated accident's existence in atom from accident's positioning in atom. The reason for al-Ash'arī's denial of the accident's positioning in atom is that a positioning thing must have a place or a position to reside in, and taking a space is a characteristic of atoms not accidents. Thus, Al-Ash'arī said that accidents are not autonomously taken up space, but their taking up space is subsequent to the atom's taking up space (Ibn Fūrak, 1987, pp. 265). Then, Al-Ash'arī believes that an accident has an occurring existence independent from the occurring existence of an atom. Moreover, accident does not take up space autonomously due to its existence, and the existence of accident only occurs when it is concurrent with the atom's existence. If accident has autonomous space, it would turn to be an atom, which is impossible.

The researcher considers that this introduction is necessary in order to find out how it is impossible that accidents stay for two consecutive times according to Al-Ash'arī, in terms of abstract intellectual approach that is not based on experiment, but merely depends on profound contemplation on Al-Ash'arī's existential concepts; this is concluded by the researcher in the form of a new evidence as follows:

- If there were a positionless thing, that has no autonomous place occupied by itself, and this thing stayed for two times, then, in the first time, it (such an accident) must have coexisted with another thing in order to be apparent, and this appearance is only possible through an atom.

- It is impossible that an accident in the second time is existing in the same atom that an accident was existing in it in the first time; and the reason why the accident existing in the first time has specialist own atom is that time has the property that it begins at a certain moment and ends with the end of that certain moment. Thus, beginning and ending renew continuously and consecutively. It is known that Al-Ash'arī believes that time is either an occurring accident or occurring body. According to Al-Ash'arī, occurrence is the change and exchange between the existence and annihilation states (Ibn Fūrak, 1987, p. 277). His followers such as al-Fakhr ar-Rāzī considers the necessity of beginning and ending in the same one time (Ar-Rāzī, 2015, p. 402-403). When the first time annihilates, the accident annihilates too. The atom by which the accident exists annihilates too. The same is true to the accident occurring in the second time. This is the case in all renewing times.

- Thus, we conclude that the accident in the second time exists by an atom which is not the same atom existing in the first time. Therefore, each time there is an accident existing by only one atom in only one time.

Despite the importance of this evidence, none of the Ash'arītes mentioned it in this detail, as far as I know.

3.2 The evidence of the occurring human capacity negates the continuous existence (i.e., staying) of an accident for two consecutive times

Al-Ash'arī stated an evidence in his book (Al-Ash'arī, 1955, p. 94), through which he concluded to the impossibility of an accident staying for more than one moment. He based his conclusion on the evidence that the accidental capacity does not stay for two consecutive times. Al-Ash'arī provided his evidence in his response to the Mu'tazilites; he said, "If they (the Mu'tazilites) say why do you claim that capacity does not continuously exist?"

2 The concept of 'Taking up Space' has a special Arabic term for Islamic Scholastic Theology which is 'Tahayyoz'.

We say to them: because if it continuously exists (i.e., stay) it (capacity) must be continuously existing for itself or for another continuous existence depending on it.

If it is continuously existing for itself, then itself must be continuous existence for it, and it must be continuously existent. This necessitates that it is continuously existent at the very moment of its occurrence³.

If it stays depending on another staying, and the staying is a quality, then, a quality is existing in another quality, and an accident is existing in another accident. Such a case is void. If it is possible that a quality is existing in another quality, then a capacity can be existing in another capacity, one life in another life, and science in science. Such is invalid (Al-Ash‘arī, 1955, p. 93).

Refuting staying of an occurring capacity which is a type of occurring accidents, Al-Ash‘arī depended on two axioms:

First axiom: the impossibility of accident endurance (i.e., staying) at the moment of its occurrence, due to the impossibility of body endurance at the moment of its occurrence. This is tackled below in the point (4.2).

Second axiom: Accidents’ sequence is impossible to be infinite. If we accepted that accident 1 is existing in accident 2 in order to realize staying of the accident 1 for more than one time, this would mean that for accident 2 to stay, it must exist in another accident which would be number 3. The same applies to accident 3, which will need to accident 4 to stay. This necessitates infinite sequence which is rationally impossible.

Many of the late Ash‘arītes have adopted the second evidence in explaining impossibility of accident staying for more than two consecutive times (Al-‘āmidī, 2004, p. 164). However, the first evidence is more logical form according to the researcher opinion, because the first evidence strongly approaches the concept of the accident and atom according to al-Ash‘arī. Yet, the second evidence depends on axioms having their own independent evidences.

4. Creedal issues related to the axiom [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times] according to al-Ash‘arī

Creedal issues closely related to Al-Ash‘arī’s axiom saying that an accident does not stay for two consecutive times, can be listed as follows:

4.1. Continuity of divine creation and its relation to the axiom [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times].

Al-Ash‘arī considers bodies, which is the combination of individual atoms, cannot stay for more than one time, just like accidents. The observed continuity of body existence is that "the continuous existence (i.e., staying) of a body is realized by instant renewal of existence for the body" (Ibn Fūrak, 1987, p. 238). Ibn Fūrak explained Al-Ash‘arī’s theory on the renewal of body endurance (i.e., staying) saying that "Body is not empty of its accidents in the second (time/moment) too. Body cannot exist without accidents’ existence. Existence of the body’s accidents does not necessitate an existence for that body (Ibn Fūrak, 1987, p. 238). Therefore, accident constantly exists and annihilates, the same is true for bodies as well. This continuation of nihility and existence in all the occurring times means the staying (i.e., continuous existence or endurance) of bodies. Then, what is the relationship between divine creation and this issue?"

Al-Ash‘arī believed that the reason for body transfer from existence to nihility is that accident annihilates in the second time. However, body existence for one more time after nihility is not due to the accident’s existence for one more time but because of God’s direct creation of body. At the moment body is created, God creates accident’s existence together with it. Thus, the obvious staying of bodies as we watch them is God’s continuous creation of bodies and accidents, followed by annihilation and then re-creating them directly. This circle of creation and annihilation happens too rapidly to be observed by sensory tools such as a seeing by eye and touching by hand. Every transition of bodies from a state to another must be created by God, as believed by Al-Ash‘arī. Therefore, he generally applied this type of body transition in every creedal issue related to it, such as the issue of proving the existence of God. Al-Ash‘arī considers that transition from infancy to oldness in human beings does not happen because of the human being itself, but because of God’s creation of this transition (Al-Ash‘arī, 1955, p. 18).

³ [This is a comparison with the issue tackled in point (2.4) concerning Al-Ash‘arī’s opinion that God is characterized by continues existence (i.e., staying, endurance), while bodies and accidents cannot be characterized by continues existence. Continues existence here means eternity that does not have renewal of existence and nihility].

4.2. Divine Staying and its relation to the axiom [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times]

Before discussing this matter, we should know that Al-Ash'arī is of the opinion that the Divine Entity is neither an atom nor a body and the Divine qualities associated with the Divine Entity are not accidents, because atoms, bodies and accidents are liable to annihilation. Indeed, they continuously annihilate and exist in the sensory reality of world. If the Divine Entity and its attributes were atoms, bodies and accidents, this would lead to say that Divine Entity may be annihilated, and such matter is impossible for God and His attributes (Al-Ash'arī, 1955, p. 19-20 & 23).

Al-Ash'arī considers that Divine Entity and Its attributes are old in the sense that They were previously not non-existent, and They are also eternally existent (i.e., enduring) in the sense that They cannot by no way be annihilated (Ibn Fūrak, 1987, p. 240). Al-Ash'arī believes that staying and eternity in this sense is a divine attribute, and that God's attributes are enduring due to the staying that is existing in Divine Entity (Ibn Fūrak, 1987, p. 237). There is another opinion for Al-Ash'arī cited by Al-'āmidī, an Ash'arīte scholar; in this opinion, al-Ash'arī considers that staying is a quality specific to Divine Entity Self and is unrelated to the other Divine attributes and the staying entitled to each of other Divine attributes is mainly originated from that attribute itself (Al-'āmidī, 2004, p. 441).

Al-Ash'arī's evidence for proving the staying attribute for God, and its relation to the axiom of accident's non-staying for two consecutive times, is revealed to us through acknowledging that existence of God and His attributes are not linked to existence of time. A thing whose existence relates to time must be occurring in the current time, because the time concept involves renewal, and whatever is renewed must be occurring. Here, occurrence means that when a moment elapses, a new moment comes afterwards. That is the first moment annihilates along with accidents and bodies that were co-existing with it in that first time (Al-Baqillānī, 1987, p. 301). At the moment of the first time annihilation, the axiom [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times] is clearly manifested to us. Thus, God Self and His attributes must be different than occurring accidents and bodies. As well, the staying attributed to Divine Entity is rationally impossible to be attributed to the occurring accidents and bodies. Accordingly, Al-Ash'arī cited the unanimous agreement of his precedent and contemporary theologians that "it is untrue that a body during its occurrence can be continuously existed" (Ibn Fūrak, 1987, p. 238). Al-'āmidī considers that this rule was contradicted only by Al-Karāmmīah (Al-'āmidī, 2004, p. 441). The reason why all scholastic theology scholars are of the opinion that the occurring body during its occurrence cannot be described as continuously existent, is that continuous existence (i.e., staying) is only entitled to the entity that is by no means not exposed to annihilation and non-existence. Such a condition applies only to God, while bodies and accidents annihilate and occur in every time as previously explained. Thus, bodies and accidents are not entitled to be described as continuously existent while they are created from nothingness.

4.3. The relationship between Predestination and the axiom [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times]

In the point (3.2) we stated that among the evidences which Al-Ash'arī adopted in proving the axiom [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times] is the evidence of the human occurring capacity. Here, the reason is clearer concerning Al-Ash'arī's usage of this evidence and its relation to the issue of the occurring capacity.

Al-Ash'arī needs the axiom [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times] to negate pre-existence of human capacity or ability to the human action. This is a subsequent issue to the famous theological issue titled "Predestination or creation of Human actions". Al-Ash'arī denied that the human capacity precedes action performance, because according to him capacity is an accident. If accident is preceding and does not stay for more than one time, this means that its precedence was non-existent. Thus, human capacity is not existing before creating the action (Ibn Fūrak, 1987, p.113). If this is the case, God must interfere to create the occurring capacity at the time of creating the human action. Mu'tazilites rejected such matter because it leads to saying that God forces His human creatures to do a specific performance. Such matter contradicts Mu'tazilites's doctrine that the human being has free will of choosing actions. However, Al-Ash'arī considers Mu'tazilites's opinion of the free choice without God's interference means that human actions are out of the control of God and the Divine will and capacity, and that contradicts with God's glorification, transcendence and sanctification. Therefore, Al-Ash'arī used the axiom (an accident does not stay for two consecutive times) to prove his opinion regarding the creed of predestination.

- Al-Ash‘arī believes that the relationship between Divine Entity and Its characteristics and the axiom [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times] requires two matters:

First: Divine Entity and Its characteristics are sanctified and are neither bodies nor accidents, because both body and accident are unstable in their existence, and are constantly transitioning between existence and annihilation. This change and transitioning is called the occurrence or creation. Thus, everything is prone to annihilation cannot be attributed to Divine Entity and Its attributes.

Second: the Eternity (i.e., staying) concept for Divine Entity and Divine attributes according to Al-Ash‘arī totally differs from the accident concept. An accident does not stay for two consecutive times, and therefore it is occurring and unworthy to have the staying attribute. When such attribute is ascribed to it, such matter is just a metaphor, not reality. The concept of Divine eternity of Divine Entity and Its attributes means the continuity of the existence of Divine Entity and Its qualities without any annihilation. None but them are entitled to have real eternity.

- The concept of predestination will was related to the axiom [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times] according to Al-Ash‘arī, in terms of that a human capacity is an accident. If the axiom [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times] is applied to human capacity, such matter means that human capacity does not stay for two consecutive times too. Therefore, it is necessary to say that the human capacity needs to be created by God when the human action is generated. Such matter was required by Al-Ash‘arī who stated that human action is occurred due to two reasons together, Divine creation and human acquiring. Divine creation means that human action is created by God, and human acquiring means that human action is acquired by the human capacity that is already created by God too. Such opinion was contradicting his opponents from Mu‘tazilites who stated that human act only exists by human without any interference of Divine creation.

5. Research findings

Perhaps the most important findings concluded in this research are the following:

5.1. One of the foundations that prompted the Muslim theologians and Muslim philosophers to search for the components of the physical world is to activate the principle of Divine transcendence in accordance with the Divine saying: "There is nothing that is anything like Him" (Ḥammād, 2014). The highest degree of sanctification entitled for the only creator God shall be reached. If you know the characteristics of the physical world components, you know the characteristics that cannot be attributed to God due to the absolute difference between the Creator’s characteristics, on the one hand, and creatures’ characteristics on the other hand.

5.2. Some Muslim theologian concluded that the physical world’s components include accidents and among conditions of accidents is that an accident does not stay for two consecutive times.

5.3. It is apparent in this research that al-Ash‘arī adopted the opinion of some theologians that an accident does not stay for two consecutive times, attempting to demonstrate evidence through proving that the human capacity is accident and does not stay for two consecutive times.

5.4. The researcher concluded a new proof concerning the axiom [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times] starting from the perceptions of al-Ash‘arī regarding body, its provisions and its relation to accident. The researcher considers that this evidence has priority in proving the axiom than the proof mentioned in point (6.3).

5.5. Al-Ash‘arī was able to link the axiom [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times] with the genuine Islamic creed concepts and issues, namely:

- Concept of Divine creation of world and its components; where there is a pertinent relation between the Divine creation to the physical world and the axiom [an accident does not stay for two consecutive times]. Such relation necessitates that bodies and accidents are in a state of continuous existence and annihilation in every moment being existed and annihilated. This matter unstopably continues. That was an intellectual opinion of Al-Ash‘arī and some Islamic theologians adopting the same opinion.

6. Regarding recommendations

The idea of an accident does not stay for two consecutive times and its relation to Islamic Creed needs to be studied according to other scholars.

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