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## 3. TEBLİĞ

## “MÂTÜRÎDÎ ve NESEFÎ'NİN ATOMCULUK ve TABİAT ANLAYIŞI,,

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## ÖZET

Somut nesnelere kurucu unsurlarının analizi, (meselâ, cevher ve araz; madde ve sûret gibi) ve nedensellik teorisi, ister açıkça ve detaylı bir şekilde tartışılsın isterse, zimni ve dolaylı olarak ele alınmış olsun, kelâmcıların en temel ve anahtar konularındandır. Mâtürîdî *Kitâbü'l-Tevhîd*'inde, Mu'tezile ve Eşarîlikte hâkim olmuş atomculuğu benimsemez. Dahası o, somut nesnelere sıfatlarını tabiat kavramıyla izah eder ki bu hem Mu'tezile hem de Eşarîlerden farklı bir görüş olup felsefecilerin benimsediği bir tavrıdır. Hemen hemen iki yüzyıl sonra Mâtürîdî kelâmcı Ebü'l-Muîn en-Nesefî, Mu'tezilî ve Eşarî çevrelerde hâkim olan kelâm atomculuğunu benimsemiş ve tabiat düşüncesini reddetmiştir. Bu bakımdan Nesefî'nin görüşlerinin Mu'tezile ve Eşarîliğin görüşleriyle uyumlu olduğu, ancak mezhebin kurucusuyla zıtlık taşıdığı söylenebilir. Tebliğimizde, Mâtürîdî ve Nesefî'nin varlığın kurucu unsurları ve tabiat düşüncesi hakkındaki bu görüşleri incelenecek ve aradaki farklılıklara temas edilerek şu soru sorulacaktır: “Neden Mâtürîdî'nin bu konulardaki görüşleri kendi mezhebi içerisinde sonraki yüzyıllarda destek görmemiştir?”

## AL-MÂTURÎDÎ AND AL-NASAFÎ ON ATOMISM AND THE TABĀ'Î'

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The analysis of the constitution of sensible objects out of their constituent principles (for example atoms and accidents, or substance and form) and a theory of causation are key issues for the mutakallimūn—whether discussed explicitly and in detail, or implicitly and in passing. In his *Kitab al-Tawhîd*, al-Mâturidî notoriously fails to adopt the predominant atomism of the Mu'tazila and Ashā'ira. Moreover, al-Mâturidî also explains the properties of sensible objects through the

concept of of *tabā'i* (natures), a position which was also opposed by the Mu'tazila and Ashā'ira, and belongs properly to the falāsifa. Almost two centuries later, the Māturidī mutakallim Abū l-Mu'īn al-Nasafī adopted the prevailing *kalām* atomism and rejected the *tabā'i*, that is to say, his views were in conformity with those of the Mu'tazila and Ashā'ira, but were in conflict with positions taken by his predecessor and the eponymous founder of his school—al-Māturidī. My paper will analyze and contrast al-Māturidī's and al-Nasafī's positions on the material constitutions of objects and the *tabā'i* and raise the question: Why did al-Māturidī's position on these issues failed to garner support in his school in later centuries?

I was first introduced to al-Māturidī's distinctive use of *tabā'i* through Richard Frank's short article on this subject published in 1974—"Notes and Remarks on the *Tabā'i* in the teaching of al-Māturidī"<sup>65</sup>—in the course of my examination of the critique of the *aṣḥāb al-tabā'i* by the early *mutakallimūn*. As you are all aware, Richard Frank was a distinguished scholar of *kalām*, and through his numerous careful and precise studies of Ash'arī, Mu'tazilī, and with this article, Māturidī *kalām*, contributed immensely to, and in many cases was a pioneer of, the study of the ontological and cosmological foundations of *kalām*. He insisted on the seriousness, thoroughness and meticulous nature of *kalām's* intellectual enterprise and thereby the need for detailed and analytical scholarship, on the same level as the scholarship of *falsafa*, to which he had also contributed. I have benefited from his scholarship as well as his advice when I was working on *kalām* atomism. You may be aware that, Richard Frank passed away on May 5. *Rahimahu allāhu*—May God have mercy upon him.

Students of *kalām* are well acquainted with the fact that questions related to agency are central to the discourse of *kalām*—in particular divine agency, whether there can be any other agency, for example human agency in particular, or perhaps more generally agency of living beings, and even the possibility of some sort of "natural" agency exercised necessarily, in the same manner, as when fire burns cotton. The *kalām* discussion of "natural" agency is usually linked to the proponents of this view, namely, the *aṣḥāb al-tabā'i* or *ahl al-tabā'i*. In his *al-Shāmil fī uṣūl al-dīn*, al-Juwaynī identifies the *aṣḥāb al-tabā'i* as: Those who subscribe to the [theory of] natures (*tabā'i*) belong to two groups:

65 Richard M. Frank, "Notes and remarks on the *Tabā'i* in the teaching of al-Māturidī", *Mélanges d'Islamologie: Volume dédié à la mémoire d'Armond Abel*, ed. Pierre Salmon (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), 137-149.

The first group agree with the Muslims regarding the doctrine of the temporal creation of the world and the affirmation of the Creator. However, they subscribe to the view that God created bodies in accordance with natures (*ṭabā'i*) and specific properties (*khawāṣṣ*) which entails that [their] natural actions do not arise as a result of choice (*ikhtiyār*). Thumāma ibn Ashras and a group of the Mu'tazila held this view ...

The second group subscribed to the eternity of the four natures (*ṭabā'i*) ...<sup>66</sup>

This report shows that by the middle of the fifth/eleventh century, the term *aṣḥab al-ṭabā'i'* could be applied to some Muslims, including *mutakallimūn*, as well as to those who believed in the eternity of the world, which he identifies as the *dahriyya*. Al-Juwaynī identifies Thumāma ibn Ashras (d. ca. 213/828) as one of the early *mutakallimūn* belonging to the Muslim *aṣḥab al-ṭabā'i'*.<sup>67</sup>

Further information on Thumāma's views on "natures" is provided by both al-Ash'arī and 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025) in their accounts of secondary generation (*tawallud*), thereby providing a perspective on the early *kalām* discourse of the theory of "natures". Whether or not things have "natures", and therefore specific properties which directly give rise to phenomena underlies the *kalām* discussion of agency. That is to say, one of the key questions is whether a phenomenon results from the agent's volition (*ikhtiyār*) or intention (*irāda*), or is a result of innate and specific properties of an object (*ṭabā'i'* or *khawāṣṣ*) and is therefore not the result of an agent's volition or intention. Of course volition or intention can only be predicated of living beings.

'Abd al-Jabbār begins his discussion of secondary generation (*tawlīd*) in his *Mughnī* as follows: Those engaged in this discourse (*al-qā'ilūn*) have differed regarding whether the human being is truly capable of agency (*bi-anna l-'abda yaf'alu fī l-ḥaqīqa*): Among them are those who hold that thinking (*fīkr*) is the only action that the human being can perform, and that he is incapable of all other actions, including willing (*irāda*) and the object of will (*murād*). These arise naturally (*tūḥdithu bi-ṭ-ṭabā'a*).

66 Abū al-Ma'alī al-Juwaynī, *al-Shāmīl fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. 'Alī Sāmī al-Nashshār et. al., (Alexandria: Munsha'āt al-Ma'ārif, 1969), 237-238.

67 According to Josef van Ess ("Thumāma ibn Ashras, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. [http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/uid=1397/entry?entry=islam\\_SIM-7532&resült\\_number=2&search\\_text=thumama#hit](http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/uid=1397/entry?entry=islam_SIM-7532&resült_number=2&search_text=thumama#hit)), Thumāma's view on this question was similar to the view of his contemporary Mu'ammār ibn 'Abbād al-Sulamī (d. 215/830), that is to say, "all beings have ṭabā'a, but at the same time he was convinced that those who really act are God and man".

Some of them hold the only action the human being (*insān*) can perform is illing, and nothing else. This is the position (*qawl*) of Thumāma and al-Jāhīz.

Those engaged in this discourse have differed regarding (the performance of) actions besides willing:

Abū ‘Uthmān al-Jāhīz held that they occur from the human being through his nature (*bi-ṭab’ihi*), and that not out of choice. This is what Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī has related in his *Kitāb al-Maqālāt*...

It has related regarding Thumāma that he may have held that besides willing, an action has no agent (*lā fā’ilun lahu*); or he may have held that it is God’s action, in the sense that He has impressed (*ṭaba’a*) a nature upon body out of which the action occurs; or he may have held that the action is a natural action of the body.<sup>68</sup>

We clearly see the notion that phenomena that occur as a result of “nature” are necessary, and not the result of the volition and choice of an agent. Thumāma therefore seems to have arrived at the view that the agency linked to such a phenomenon is not attached to any volitional agent, and therefore the charge that he held the view of “an action which has no agent”.

One would suppose that Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 331/942) was aware of these discussions. He discusses the *aṣḥāb al-ṭabā’i* in his *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* in the standard manner of presenting and then refuting of the doctrines of the *dahriyya*. His focus is therefore on those who al-Juwaynī was to later classify as the second group of the *aṣḥāb al-ṭabā’i*, namely those who upheld the eternity of “natures”. Al-Māturīdī states:

Next we will mention the views of the *aṣḥāb al-ṭabā’i* relying on the account of Ibn Shabīb<sup>69</sup> and others so as to expose their doctrines, for the exposition of their doctrines is one of the ways (*adilla*) of refuting them. One will then know

68 ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī fi abwāb al-tawḥīd wa l-’adl*, ed. Tawfiq al-Ṭawīl and Sa’īd Zā’id, (Cairo: al-Mu’assasah al-Miṣriyah al-‘Āmmah lil-Ta’līf wa-al-Ānbā’ wa-al-Nashr, 1960-1965), IX:11. Al-Ash‘arī states, “Thumāma held that the human being cannot perform any action besides willing (*irāda*). Any other action is not produced by an agent (*ḥadatha lā min muḥdithin*), for example the movement of a stone as a result of pushing and so on. He claimed that this action is (only) attached (*yuḍāfu*) to the human being in a metaphorical sense (*‘alā l-majāzi*)” (Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn wa ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*, ed. Helmut Ritter, Wiesbaden: Steiner Verlag, 1963, 407).

69 On him, and al-Māturīdī’s use of him, see, J. Pessagno, “The Reconstruction of the Thought of Muhammad ibn Shabīb”, *JAOS*, 104 (1984), 445-453.

their concurrence regarding the eternity of the matter (*fīna*) of the world and their difference regarding the eternity of creation (*ṣan'a*) and its manner of production (*ḥuduth*). This is a summary (*jumla*) of their doctrines.

The *aṣḥāb al-ṭabā'i* claim that they (i.e. the natures) are four: hot, cold, wet<sup>70</sup>, and dry. The world is differentiated as a result of the differences of their mixtures; what is in balance is a result of the balance of equal mixtures of them. This occurs [also] to the sun, moon, and the stars. This will always occur in the future, as it has occurred in the past, just as you see, there is no beginning to things.<sup>71</sup>

We note here that al-Māturīdī's critique of the *aṣḥāb al-ṭabā'i* is of their position of the production of the world through the *eternal* mixing of these four natures and not of the view that bodies have agency of some kind through their natures and properties (as in al-Juwaynī's first group above). That is to say his critique is of the denial of the temporal creation of the world, and not of the agency of "natures". This is clear in the course of the refutation, Their doctrine on the production of the world through mixture and the movement of the stars, the transformation of the potentiality of prime matter (*ḥayūlā*), and of both prime matter and potentiality ... has been refuted.<sup>72</sup>

Unlike many other *mutakallimūn*, al-Māturīdī seems to agree in some respects with the position of al-Juwaynī's Muslim *aṣḥāb al-ṭabā'i*, that is to say he supports the view that entities in the world have natural properties or inclinations. This is evident from his account of God's creation of the human being:

God created the human being (*bashar*) in accordance with natural inclinations (*ṭabā'i*) which tend towards pleasures (*malādhdh*) which are present and which draw their owner (*ṣāḥib*) towards them.<sup>73</sup> They make the pleasures delightful in his eyes through the passions (*shahawāt*) which have been placed in him, to incline towards what is similar to his nature (*mithlu ṭab'ihī*). They turn away from that in which there is pain and hardship for him. His nature (*ṭab'uh*) therefore becomes one of the opponents of his intellect (*'aql*) with respect to determining what is good and what is repugnant.<sup>74</sup>

70 Māturīdī uses the term *nudūwa* for wet instead of the more usual *ruṭb*, *ruṭba*.

71 Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, ed. F. Kholeif, (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1970), 141. See also page 112 where al-Māturīdī also states that some held there were four natures while others held there was only one. Even though they believed in the eternity of the world, they believed in the need for a Maker (*ṣāni'*) who alone has the autonomous power of action (*qudra*) to bring together these natures, which have no power of their own.

72 Ibid., 151.

73 Reading *ilayhā* for *ilayhi*.

74 al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, 223.

Thus, for him, the human being is constituted out of two diverse opposite constituents, natural inclinations and intellect (this may be compared to the Mu‘tazilî account of the human being as a specific composite (*binya makḥṣūṣa*) of atoms and accidents). The aim of this manner of constitution is to account for the nature of the human being as moral agent who chooses between being tempted by passions and the deliberations of the intellect (thus for the Mu‘tazila, the human being is the entity which is the object of praise or blame for his actions). Hence the opposition between the intellect with “nature” which al-Māturīdī clarifies in the following passage:

The human being is created with a disposition towards nature (*ṭabī‘a*) and intellect. What is good to intellect is not the same as what nature desires. What is repugnant to intellect is not the same as what the natures turn away from.<sup>75</sup>

Here, the role of natural inclinations in the human being is clearly negative. In this respect, at least in the case of the human being, al-Māturīdī has a rather different position than the one attributed to Thumāma and other early *mutakallimūn*—a position which is also understood within a different problematic and framework, namely, whether or not there is non-volitional agency. In al-Māturīdī’s case, while he mentions the constitution of the human being from “natures” or “natural inclinations”, he does not enter into any discussion of the agency of these natures. Rather, these natures provide the explanatory framework for why the human being does not always make the “right” choice, but is “tempted” by these natural inclinations. In themselves, then, these natures do not have a place in al-Māturīdī’s discussion of agency. Hence we do not find any such discussion in al-Māturīdī’s account of divine and human agency, nor does he consider the possibility of non-volitional agency, whether in Thumāma’s terms or in another framework.

Leaving aside the question of agency, we may ask why does al-Māturīdī construct this kind of account of God’s creation of the human being constituted out of “natures” and intellect? This position is of course radically different from the way in which the Mu‘tazila and Ashā‘ira construct the formation of the human being. The evidence suggests that al-Māturīdī’s motivation is theological, relating “temptation” to God’s deliberative design for testing human beings to make them discerning:

When God created human beings for the trial (*lil-miḥna*) by means of which he would make them a discerning community (*ahl tamyīz*), He taught them the matters which are praiseworthy and the ones which deserve blame.

75 Ibid., 11.

He made the ones which deserve blame repugnant to their intellect, and those that are praiseworthy good ... He created them according to natural inclinations which turn away from things and incline towards things ... Then He tested them.<sup>76</sup>

This provides a reason for the notion of “natures” in the human being. However, “natures” are not just confined to human beings but are found in the constitution of the entire created world:

The world, in its constitution<sup>77</sup> (*bi-aṣlihi*), is constructed (*mubniyan*) out of diverse natures and opposed aspects (*‘alā ṭabā‘i‘n mukhtaliḥin wā wujūhin mutaḍādatin*).<sup>78</sup>

It follows then that the human being is just one of the entities of the world composed in this manner. Al-Māturīdī makes this clear by employing the parallelism of the macrocosm and microcosm:

He (*huwa*) is what the sages (*ḥukamā*) have called the microcosm (*‘ālam al-ṣaghīr*). He is (constructed) out of diverse desires (*ahwā*) and various natures.<sup>79</sup>

Like the world as a whole (i.e. macrocosm), the human being, is also constructed out of diverse entities. But in the human case, the negative role of desires and natures is reiterated through the use of the term *ahwā*. Even though the notion of microcosm derives from *falsafa*, as Frank notes, al-Māturīdī does not engaged in any further discussion of it.<sup>80</sup>

Al-Māturīdī provides further evidence that he considers all objects to be composed of diverse natures in his discussion of the composition of sensible objects:

Every sensible object (*maḥsūs*) must be [composed] from the combination of diverse and opposite natures, which by themselves would reject and be distant from each other. Their combination is the result of something else, and in this lies the fact of its (temporal) creation.<sup>81</sup>

76 Ibid., 221-222.

77 Cf. Frank, “Notes and remarks”, 138 note 6.

78 al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-tawhīd*, 5.

79 Ibid. The reference to the pronoun *huwa* cannot be intellect, as this would mean that the intellect is constructed out of desires and natures, contradicting the sense that the intellect is the “opponent” of natural inclinations. It makes much more sense to consider the pronoun referent to be the human being (as Frank does in “Notes and remarks”, 139).

80 Frank, “Notes and remarks”, 139 note 7.

81 al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-tawhīd*, 12.



We may ask here, that the “natures” in the human being are clear, at least in terms of their effects of desires and passions, but what does al-Mâtūrîdî mean by his use of the term “nature” or “natures” with respect non-human entities? There is no clear discussion to flesh this out, and we can only form a view on this through al-Mâtūrîdî citation of the examples of heat rising and cold descending “as a result of its nature (*bi-ṭab’ihā*)” or the “heat of fire and the cooling of snow... occur necessarily through the nature they have (*alladhî lahu ṭab’ bil-iḡtirār*)”.<sup>82</sup> These examples show that by “natures” al-Mâtūrîdî is referring to specific properties of objects, a view that is consonant with the position of Thumāma, but without specification of the causal implications. But what is the role of these “natures” for al-Mâtūrîdî’s world-view? Here too the aim is theological. This nature is imposed on entities by God and provides a sign leading to knowledge of God and His Unity.<sup>83</sup>

Despite his embrace of “natures”, al-Mâtūrîdî did not abandon the normative *kalām* view of atoms/bodies and accidents as constitutive of the entities of the world. He juxtaposes the notion that bodies are composed from diverse natures, and that they therefore have natural properties with the normative *kalām* view. Nevertheless, al-Mâtūrîdî’s position—that diverse and opposed “natures”, compose the objects of the world, including human beings and that in the case of the human being, these “natures” or “natural inclinations” represent a negative aspect of human being, which inclines towards pleasure and opposes the intellect—is a position that makes him stand out. The non-human examples of “natures” he cites are consistent with the notion of specific properties of the Aristotelian qualities and the view that these properties have necessary effects, i.e. of burning in the case of fire, and cooling in the case of snow. As such, al-Mâtūrîdî’s views seem resonate with al-Juwaynî’s first group of the Muslim *aṣḥāb al-ṭabā’ī*.<sup>84</sup>

However, as we have seen, al-Mâtūrîdî’s view is not formulated within the context of natural agency, of the sort that al-Juwaynî and ‘Abd al-Jabbār attribute to Thumāma, al-Jāḥiẓ and others. When he turns to the discussion of causality, al-Mâtūrîdî restricts his analysis to issues of divine and human agency and takes for granted that objects in the world have natural properties, imposed on them by God, and which lead to necessary effects. There does not seem to be a place

82 Ibid., 117, 264.

83 Frank, “Notes and remarks”, 139.

84 Hence Frank suggests the al-Mâtūrîdî is “to some degree, to be associated with the *aṣḥāb al-ṭabā’ī*” (Ibid., 137-138).

for the kind of analysis that we find among the Mu'tazila and Ashā'ira that what seems to be natural causal agency is nothing but God's customary action.<sup>85</sup> It is indeed surprising that despite his frequent resource to criticizing the Baghdādī Mu'tazilī Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī al-Ka'bī (d. 319/931), al-Māturīdī does not make any reference to the positions of necessary "natural" agency of the early *mutakallimūn*—surprising because 'Abd al-Jabbār's report on such positions derives from al-Balkhī's *Maqālāt*. Indeed, al-Māturīdī makes no reference to Thumāma in the *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*, but perhaps this is because he agrees, to some degree with Thumāma's view/I now turn to the examination of the views of Abū Mu'in al-Nasafī (508/1114) primarily as discussed in his *Tabṣirat al-adilla*. Unlike the case for al-Māturīdī, al-Nasafī discusses Thumāma ibn al-Ashras in several places in the *Tabṣira*. Al-Nasafī tells us that,

Thumāma ibn al-Ashras, one of the leaders of the Mu'tazila, managed—against his own position!—to invalidate the proof for the existence of the Maker. For he claimed that objects of secondary causation (*mutawalladāt*) are actions which have no agent. But there is no doubt that they are temporal entities, coming into being after not having existed (before). If it were possible for the coming into being of some entity without a Maker who brings it into existence, then this would (also) be possible for the entire world.<sup>86</sup>

Al-Nasafī is therefore well-aware of the critique of Thumāma's position on non-volitional causation, and he rejects this view of al-Juwaynī's Muslim *aṣḥāb al-ṭabā'ī'*.

Yet even through al-Nasafī repeats the assertion that Thumāma held that there are actions which have no agent, he does not portray it in 'Abd al-Jabbār's manner, that is to say, that these actions could be said to have God as their agent as a result of the view that these actions derive from the "nature" God has impressed on the body.

Nor is such a portrayal of secondary causation found in the chapter of the *Tabṣira* that al-Nasafī devotes to the refutation to the doctrine of secondary causation. Does al-Nasafī's reluctance to frame the issue without any mention of God's impression of natural properties on bodies stem from the fact that this position is similar to that of al-Māturīdī?

85 For this the classical locus is discussion seventeen of al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut*.

86 Abū al-Mu'in al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adilla fī usūl al-dīn*, ed. Claude Salamé, (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1990), I:80; see also I:229, I:261, II:681; Idem., *Kitāb al-Tawhīd li-qawā'id al-tawhīd*, ed. J.A. Ḥusayn Aḥmad, (Cairo: Dār al-Ṭibā'a al-Muhammadiyya, 1982), 303-304.

That al-Nasafi continues to maintain al-Mâturîdî's distinctive position regarding "natures" and "natural inclinations" is evident in his assertion that "in every body (*'ayn*) in the world diverse natures are combined, whose propensity is to be distinct and whose nature is to be mutually repelling".<sup>87</sup> This formulation echoes al-Mâturîdî's assertion that "The world, in its foundation is constructed out of diverse natures and opposed aspects". Like al-Mâturîdî, al-Nasafi also maintains the normative *kalāmview* of the constitution of the world:

The world in its entirety (*bi-asrihi*) is as, as we have mentioned, composed out of accidents (*a'rād*) and bodies (*a'yān*). Bodies are either composite (*murakkab*) or non-composite. No part of the world fails to fall under [the division] we have mentioned—sublunar (*sufli*) or supralunar (*ulwī*), inanimate or animate, plant or animal, irrational or rational—as there is no intermediary [entity] between that which is self-subsistent (i.e. body) and that which is not self-subsistent (i.e. accident).<sup>88</sup>

The composition of the world out of accidents and composite or non-composite bodies (i.e. atoms<sup>89</sup>), is consistent with the normative *kalāmview*. So is the identification of body as self-subsistent and accident as not self-subsistent. However, the further classification of the world into sublunar/supralunar, inanimate/animate, plant/animal, rational/irrational is a departure from the normative *kalām* position and reflects the cosmology of the *falāsifa*. Al-Nasafi's embrace of both of these views of the constituents of the world is also evident in his conclusion to the argument for the temporal production of accidents and atoms:

Since the temporal production of all accidents and atoms (*jawāhir*) has been established in what we have explained, the temporal production of natures (*tabā'i*), prime matter (*hayūlā*), and everything which the Eternalists (*dahriyya*) and Naturalists (*tabī'iyūn*) call elements (*'anāsir, ustuqsāt*) is established as is the temporal production of the spheres (*aflāk*) and what they contain, namely, the zodiac (*burūj*), the planets (*kawākib*), sun and moon, as well as the temporal production of time (*zamān*) and void (*khalā*).<sup>90</sup>

Al-Nasafi's inclusion of "natures" as one of the constituents of the world is repeated here. But what can we make of all the other entities that he mentions? Is this just rhetoric to highlight his assertion that if atoms and accidents are

87 al-Nasafi, *Tabṣira*, I:79.

88 Ibid., I:55-56.

89 Idem., *Kitāb al-Tamhīd*, 124.

90 Idem., *Tabṣira*, I:72.

temporally produced, then any other entities that opponents, in this case the Eternals and Naturalists, may uphold as constituting the world must also be temporally produced? Or does this conclusion entail al-Nasafī's commitment to all of these entities (natures, prime matter, elements, spheres, etc.)? The problem is that some of these entities are incompatible with the normative *kalām* worldview of atoms, bodies and accidents, or even the Māturīdian reformulation of this as bodies and accidents, for example prime matter and its implied hylomorphism. But we have seen that al-Nasafī, like al-Māturīdī, is committed to "natures" as constituents in every body. Further, in his *al-Tamhīd li-qawā'id al-tawhīd*, al-Nasafī states that the argument for the temporal production of the world applies also to heavens, the celestial spheres, the planets, inanimate, animate etc.<sup>91</sup>

It appears then that al-Nasafī does not consider the conclusion that bodies and accidents as constituents of the world are temporally the world. Perhaps the same is the case in the passage from the *Tabṣira*, and this would entail that the entities he mentions: natures, prime matter, elements, spheres, etc., exist in his view, and are somehow composed of the bodies and accidents which constitute the normative *kalām* view of the constituents of the world. Al-Nasafī seems rather more committed to the entities which originate in the *falsafa* view of the world than one would have anticipated. Al-Nasafī is familiar with *falsafa* terms and utilizes them in the *Tabṣira* as well as the *Tamhīde*.g. Ibn Sīnā's concepts of necessary and possible existence (*wājib al-wujūd*, *jā'iz al-wujūd*, and *jā'iz al-'adam*), and the concepts of potentiality and perfection (*quwwa*, *kamāl*) etc.<sup>92</sup> Of course this is not surprising. After all he is the contemporaneous with al-Ghazālī.

Unlike the case we of al-Māturīdī, we do find the discussion of natural inclinations as constituting the human being in al-Nasafī. Nor does he provide the kind of examples of specific properties and effects provided by al-Māturīdī. We may therefore ask, what is the role of these natures and natural inclinations in al-Nasafī's world-view? The answer to this is clear. Al-Nasafī has adopted the theological perspective of his shaykh, al-Māturīdī'. This is evident in the following passage:

God created the earth with different parts (*ajzā*), distinctive sections (*ab'ād*), different actions (*af'āl*) and traces (*athār*) namely beneficial, harmful, pleasant, repugnant, hot, cold, rough, soft, etc. so as to show by means of this the perfection of His power, the penetration of His will and His Lordship. That whose action is

91 Idem., *Kitāb al-Tamhīd*, 127.

92 Idem., *Tabṣira*, I:78.

of a single kind is like what has been imposed on, that which has been subordinated, for example. fire upon heat, and snow upon cold. Hence. through God's creation of different kinds of entities (*mukhtalifāt*) are signs (*dalāla*) of power and of penetration of will.<sup>93</sup>

We can see here a reiteration of al-Nasafī agrees with the view that God created the world having diverse parts (supralunar, sublunar, animate, inanimate, speres, etc.) and that these parts manifest specific properties. Moreover, we see in this passage that diverse and distinct parts of the world are signs of God's power, will, and Lordship. This, as we have seen above, corresponds to al-Māturīdī's perspective that the natures imposed on entities are signs leading to knowledge of God.

That the *ṭabā'ī'* were part of the intellectual discourse and milieu of the second to sixth/eighth to twelfth centuries is evident. Many intellectuals, particularly those who were influenced by *falsafa*, and a few of among the *mutakallimūn*, embraced the *ṭabā'ī'* in their world-view. The Ashā'ira rejected the *ṭabā'ī'* on the grounds that they entail a usurpation of God's sole causative power. For the majority of the Mu'tazila, the *ṭabā'ī'* entail the existence of non-volitional causative agents which, in their view is impossible. But al-Māturīdī, and later his follower al-Nasafī, like others, embraced the *ṭabā'ī'* as constituents of God's world, but within the theological perspective that they are signs leading to knowledge of God's authority and power.