

# ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī on Body, Soul and Resurrection

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## Introduction

A general belief in Islam is that after death, the human soul subsists. The traditional view is that, at the moment of death, an angel comes and separates the soul from the body.<sup>1</sup> Although the Qurʾān does not explicitly say that it subsists after death,<sup>2</sup> many Muslims believe that the soul of a deceased person stays in some place until the Day of Resurrection and that it will be joined with his resurrected body. Opinions differ about the place where the human soul stays in the meantime.<sup>3</sup> Some theologians say it remains together with the body in the grave.<sup>4</sup> Others say that the souls of the dead stay inside birds.<sup>5</sup> They believe that the souls of martyrs are inside green birds in paradise<sup>6</sup> and that those of unbelievers are inside black birds in hell.<sup>7</sup> However, it is also said that the martyrs' souls themselves are birds in paradise.<sup>8</sup> Another vision is that not only the souls of martyrs, but the souls of all believers are in paradise, whereas those of all unbelievers are in hell.<sup>9</sup> Although they differ as to the place where the human soul stays after death, they agree that the soul does subsist after death.

According to these views, the human body is mortal but the soul that exists inside it is immortal and leaves the body at the moment of death. This raises the question as to what determines the identity of a human being: the body or the soul? Is a human being a soul which exists in a human body? Is the body only a

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<sup>1</sup> Jane Idleman Smith and Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection*, Albany 1981, pp. 34-37.

<sup>2</sup> Hasanuddin Ahmad, "The 'Body versus Soul' Concept and the Quran," *Islam and the Modern Age* 29 (1998), p. 184; L. Gardet, "Kiyāma," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. New Edition, vol. 5, pp. 236-37.

<sup>3</sup> Ragnar Eklund, *Life between Death and Resurrection according to Islam*, Uppsala 1941; Smith and Haddad, *Islamic Understanding*, pp. 50-9, 103, 123-7; Josef van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra. Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam* 1-6, Berlin 1991-97, vol. 4, pp. 521-28.

<sup>4</sup> Eklund, *Life*, p. 38; Joseph Chelhod, *Les structures du sacré chez les Arabes*, Paris 1964, p. 176.

<sup>5</sup> Eklund, *Life*, pp. 16-20; van Ess, *Theologie*, vol. 4, p. 523; Smith and Haddad, *Islamic Understanding*, p. 55.

<sup>6</sup> Eklund, *Life*, pp. 16-17, 70; Smith and Haddad, *Islamic Understanding*, p. 49; Gardet, "Kiyāma," p. 237.

<sup>7</sup> Eklund, *Life*, pp. 70, 76.

<sup>8</sup> Eklund, *Life*, pp. 67-70.

<sup>9</sup> Van Ess, *Theologie*, vol. 4, p. 522.

wrapping or a prison for the soul?<sup>10</sup> The idea that the body is a wrapping for the soul finds a strong expression in the concept of reincarnation, which implies that after death the individual soul moves to a new body. However, other people doubt the existence of the soul because they cannot perceive it, whereas the existence of the body cannot be denied. In this world, humans cannot live without bodies which enable them to act and to communicate. They suffer when their bodies are hurt and take pleasure in bodily experiences such as touching, seeing beauty and hearing beautiful music. Considering all this, people might ask themselves: “Who am I? Am I a soul inside my body, or my body itself, or a combination of body and soul”?<sup>11</sup>

The Mu‘tazili *qāḍī l-quḍāt* Abu l-Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Hamaḍhānī al-Asadābādī (d. 415/1025) strongly opposed the idea that man is a soul inside the body. He declared that man is the body and denied the existence of an immortal soul inside the body. His denial of a subsisting soul raises the question of how he viewed the resurrection of the dead on the Day of Judgment. We know that after death, bodies decay and finally disappear. How can the identities of the resurrected be preserved if their bodies and souls have disappeared? How can one be certain that the resurrected are not simply look-alikes of those who lived in this world? In order to find ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s answers to these questions I have first investigated his teachings on the human body and soul and next his teachings on life, death and resurrection. With respect to the terms used, it should be observed that some Western authors use the term “soul” where others use “spirit”. I have chosen to use the term “soul” with respect to that which according to several theologians and philosophers is inside a human being and subsists after death. In Arabic texts, too, the terms *rūḥ* and *nafs* can both mean “soul” or “spirit”, although *nafs* can also have other meanings.<sup>12</sup> Several Muslim authors use both terms at the same time, although with different meanings.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Al-Nazzām considered the body to be a prison for the soul (van Ess, *Theologie*, vol. 3, p. 375). This opinion was also held by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, who were influenced by Greek ideas about the soul and immortality (C. Baffioni, “Bodily Resurrection in the Iḥwān al-Ṣafā’,” in *Philosophy and Arts in the Islamic World. Proceedings of the Eighteenth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants held at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (September 3 – September 9, 1996)*, eds. U. Vermeulen and D. De Smet, Leuven 1998, p. 204).

<sup>11</sup> For a survey of the philosophical thinking on this subject see C.A. van Peursen, *Body, Soul, Spirit. A Survey of the Body-Mind Problem*, London 1966.

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of the meaning of the terms *rūḥ* and/or *nafs* see Ahmad, “Body versus Soul,” pp. 182-92; M.G. Zubaid Ahmad, “The Islamic Conception of the Soul,” *Journal of the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute*, 1 (1943), pp. 165-68; E.E. Calverley and I.R. Netton, “Nafs,” in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. New Edition, vol. 7, pp. 880-84; Chelhod, *Structures du sacré*, pp. 147-77; van Ess, *Theologie*, vol. 4, pp. 513-20; Daniel Gimaret, *Les noms divins en Islam*, Paris 1988, pp. 151-57; Duncan B. Macdonald, “The Development of the Idea of Spirit in Islam,” *The Moslem World* 22 (1932), pp. 25-42; Michael E. Marmura, “Soul: Islamic Concepts,” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 13, pp. 460-65; Thomas O’Shaughnessy, *The Development of the Meaning of Spirit in the Koran*, Rome 1953; A.S. Trit-

‘Abd al-Jabbār’s discussion of body, soul and resurrection is to be found in the eleventh volume of his *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawhīd wa-l-‘adl*. The title of this volume is *al-Taklīf*.<sup>14</sup> As the title indicates, this volume deals with God’s imposition of obligations (*taklīf*). According to the Mu‘tazilī doctrine, all adult humans of sound mind, both Muslims and unbelievers, are *mukallaf*, subject to God’s imposition of obligations. In *al-Taklīf*, ‘Abd al-Jabbār explains that God has created humans with qualities that enable them to fulfil these obligations. In relation to this subject he discusses the question of what exactly is man.

## Man

The Mu‘tazilīs differed on the question of what is man. Abū Ishāq al-Nazzām (d. c. 221/836) believed that man is the soul (*rūḥ*) inside the body (*badan*). ‘Abd al-Jabbār reports that al-Nazzām considered the soul to be identical with life (*ḥayāt*). In the latter’s opinion, this soul/life consists of one atom (*jawhar*), which is strong, living and knowing, because of its essence. It penetrates the body in such a way that it is interwoven with it.<sup>15</sup> This opinion was rejected by other Mu‘tazilīs like Bishr b. al-Mu‘tamir (d. between 210/825 and 226/840), who declared that man is the combination of body and soul.<sup>16</sup> However, Abu l-Hudhayl (d. between 226/840 and 236/850) and several other Mu‘tazilīs rejected this view as well, declaring that man is the human body that we see with our eyes.<sup>17</sup> This does not imply that they denied the existence of a soul inside the human body: they just denied that man equals this soul. The conclusion is that among the Mu‘tazilīs, at least three opinions about man prevailed: firstly, man is the soul inside the body; secondly, man is a combination of body and soul; and, thirdly, man is the body.<sup>18</sup>

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ton, “Man, nafs, rūḥ, ‘aql,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 34 (1971), pp. 491-95.

<sup>13</sup> Calverley, “Nafs,” pp. 880-81; Eklund, *Life*, p. 12; Gimaret, *Noms divins*, pp. 154-57; Smith and Haddad, *Islamic Understanding*, pp. 18-20, 36; Tritton, “Man,” p. 491.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī, *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawhīd wa-l-‘adl* 4-9, 11-17, 20, ed. Muṣṭafā Ḥilmī [et al.], Cairo 1961-65, vol. 11, pp. 309-67 and 432-81.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 310:7-9; van Ess, *Theologie*, vol. 3, pp. 369-77, vol. 4, pp. 514-16; Majid Fakhry, “The Mu‘tazilite View of Man,” in *Recherches d’Islamologie. Recueil d’articles offert à Georges C. Anawati et Louis Gardet par leurs collègues et amis*, Leuven 1977, pp. 109-10, 114-16; Isma‘il R. al-Fārūqī, “The Self in Mu‘tazilah Thought,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 6 (1966), p. 372; Albert N. Nader, *Le système philosophique des Mu‘tazila (premiers penseurs de l’Islam)*, Beirut 1956, pp. 270-73.

<sup>16</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 310:9-11; van Ess, *Theologie*, vol. 4, p. 517; Fakhry, “Mu‘tazilite View,” pp. 108-9; Nader, *Système*, pp. 273-74. Al-Fārūqī (“Self,” p. 371) thinks that in this aspect Bishr b. al-Mu‘tamir was influenced by Aristotelism.

<sup>17</sup> Van Ess, *Theologie*, vol. 3, pp. 245-46, vol. 4, pp. 513-14; Richard M. Frank, *Beings and Their Attributes. The Teaching of the Basrian School of the Mu‘tazila in the Classical Period*, Albany 1978, p. 41. It is clear that ‘Abd al-Jabbār places great emphasis on perception as source of knowledge.

<sup>18</sup> Nader, *Système*, p. 268.

‘Abd al-Jabbār adhered to this last opinion about man.<sup>19</sup> He rejects the idea that man is a soul, an atom, an accident, or something else that is hidden inside the human body and that uses the body as an instrument.<sup>20</sup> He reports that, according to the masters of his school, man is “this person (*shakhṣ*) with this specific structure by which he is distinguished from all other animals; to him, command and prohibition, blame and praise are addressed”.<sup>21</sup> In his definition he uses the term *shakhṣ*, which originally meant silhouette. This term refers to the outline of an object, by which the object can be recognized.<sup>22</sup>

From ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s definition it becomes clear that he conceives of humans as belonging to the class of animals.<sup>23</sup> In his opinion, animals are identified by their shape: each animal has a specific shape by which we recognize it. The same holds for man. Humans are distinguished from other animals by their specific shape. To support this view, ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers to the linguists (*ahl al-lughā*), arguing that they mention in their definition of man the outward form (*ṣūra zāhira*) and structure (*bīnya*) of a human being because these things distinguish a human being from other sorts of living beings.<sup>24</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s definition refers to that by which, in the first instance, a human being is distinguished from other living beings, namely, his form and structure. Because of their form and structure, people are referred to as humans, even if they are dead, whereas the word human is not used for something that does not have a human form and structure.<sup>25</sup>

‘Abd al-Jabbār rejects the definition of man as “living, mortal and able to speak” (*ḥayy mā’it nātiq*) because it excludes the dumb. When “able to speak” is understood literally it excludes the dumb, with the result that they are not to be identified as humans.<sup>26</sup> He adds that the dead cannot speak either, and yet they are to be identified as humans, albeit dead humans.<sup>27</sup> He admits that *nutq* can mean articulated speech or discrimination (*tamyīz*), but he points out that only philosophers and Christians use this term in the last sense; *nutq* does not have this meaning in the Arabic language.<sup>28</sup> Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī (d. 321/933) had

<sup>19</sup> For ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s definition of man, see Marie Bernand, *Le problème de la connaissance d’après le Muḡnī du Cadi ‘Abd al-Jabbār*, Algiers 1982, pp. 111-21; J.R.T.M. Peters, *God’s Created Speech. A study in the speculative theology of the Mu’tazilī Qāḍī l-Qudāt Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Jabbār bn Ahmad al-Hamaḡānī*, Leiden 1976, pp. 160-64.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār uses several arguments to establish this opinion and to reject the opinions of adversaries. See *Muḡnī*, vol. 11, pp. 314-44.

<sup>21</sup> *Muḡnī*, vol. 11, p. 311:12-14 (*hādihā l-shakhṣ al-mubniyyu bādhibi l-bīnya l-makhṣūsa allatī yufāriqu bihā sā’ir al-ḥayawān wa-buwa lladhī yatawajjahū ilayhi l-amr wa-l-nabī wa-l-dhamm wa-l-madh*). See also Fakhry, “Mu’tazilite View,” p. 112.

<sup>22</sup> Van Ess, *Theologie*, vol. 4, pp. 513-4; Gimaret, *Noms divins*, pp. 158-59.

<sup>23</sup> See also *Muḡnī*, vol. 11, pp. 359:5-6, 363:10.

<sup>24</sup> *Muḡnī*, vol. 11, p. 359:4-10.

<sup>25</sup> *Muḡnī*, vol. 11, p. 364:12-19.

<sup>26</sup> *Muḡnī*, vol. 11, pp. 361:1-363:3.

<sup>27</sup> *Muḡnī*, vol. 11, p. 361:3-5.

<sup>28</sup> *Muḡnī*, vol. 11, pp. 362:21-361:2. See also Frank, *Beings*, p. 49, n. 13

raised another objection to the definition of man as “living, mortal and able to speak”. He pointed out that this definition does not mention what is characteristic of man because many Arabs believe that *jinn* and angels also live, die, and speak.<sup>29</sup> In ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s opinion, a definition of man must mention what is specific to humans and should not include characteristics that humans share with other living beings.<sup>30</sup>

‘Abd al-Jabbār’s own definition of man as “this person with this specific structure by which he is distinguished from all other animals” lays a strong emphasis on the form of the human being as a distinguishing mark. However, it does not imply that everything that has a human form is to be identified as man. The reference to “other animals” makes it clear that the definition is meant to distinguish between living beings. Therefore, ‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that although a statue in the shape of a human has the structure of a human it cannot be referred to as “man” because it does not concern a living being. Humans, even when they are dead, are of flesh and blood, whereas a statue is made of inanimate material.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, a statue is not described as human.

### *The Human Body*

A human body consists of several different parts, each with a specific function. These parts together form one human being which functions as a whole. In ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s opinion, a human being thinks, perceives, and acts as a whole because the human being’s body forms a whole.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, he describes man as the totality (*jumla*) formed by the living parts of the body, which are joined together to constitute a whole. Although our bodies consist of several parts, we perceive, act, and think as a whole or totality. ‘Abd al-Jabbār clarifies this by the example of the will. When someone has the will to do something, he has this will as a totality and he acts as a totality in accordance with this will. If a single part of our body could have a will of its own, it would be possible for one foot to want to walk, while the other foot does not want to.<sup>33</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār points out that we know from our own experiences that we are totalities: we want, think, act, and perceive as totalities<sup>34</sup>. Each of us knows that when we feel pain in a part of our body, we feel this pain as a totality and we suffer as a totality because of it. This makes it clear that a human being is a totality.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 361:6-8.

<sup>30</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 362:16-20.

<sup>31</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 312:8-11.

<sup>32</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 313:6-9, 334:9-10. See also Frank, *Beings*, pp. 39-52. Frank translates *jumla* as “[living] composite”.

<sup>33</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 341:8-10.

<sup>34</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 313:19-20.

<sup>35</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 313:20-314:11.

However, in ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s theory, the totality of a human being does not include everything that exists in the human body but only living parts. Distinguishing between living and inanimate material, ‘Abd al-Jabbār applies the criterion of the ability to perceive. In his opinion, only body parts which can be used to perceive warmth, cold or pain, are living. These three perceptible phenomena are selected because they only need a living substrate in order to be perceived, whereas other perceptible things such as sounds and images need specific organs. Warmth, cold or pain can be perceived by each part of the body, whereas sounds can only be perceived by the ear and images can only be perceived by the eye. Therefore, ‘Abd al-Jabbār takes the ability to perceive warmth, cold and pain as a criterion for establishing the existence of life in a substrate.<sup>36</sup>

‘Abd al-Jabbār believes that only body parts in which life exists can form the human totality (*jumla*).<sup>37</sup> This means that, in his view, blood, hair, nails, saliva, and other bodily fluids cannot be components of the totality. They are excluded from it because they are not living, and this can be deduced from the impossibility of using them for perception.<sup>38</sup> In this respect, there was some doubt about the bones inside the human body. ‘Abd al-Jabbār assumes that most bones in the human body are not living because we do not feel any pain in them and therefore they are not components of the totality. However, he reports that Abū Hāshim had observed that in some bones pain can be perceived, such as teeth that are affected by toothache or bones that are affected by gout.<sup>39</sup>

Living parts of the totality are components of the totality as long as they are connected to it. ‘Abd al-Jabbār points out that when limbs are disconnected from the body they are no longer living.<sup>40</sup> A limb that has been severed cannot perceive, which means that the limb no longer meets the criterion of being living. Although connectedness (*ittiṣāl*) is a condition for being a component of the human totality, it is not a criterion. Hair and nails are connected to the totality but ‘Abd al-Jabbār does not consider them as components of the totality because they are not living. Only living parts are components of the totality. ‘Abd al-Jabbār doubts whether the brain (*dimāgh*) is living, because he does not know whether warmth, cold and pain can be perceived by it. For this reason, he doubts whether the brain is a component of the totality, although it is connected to it.

<sup>36</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 335:17-18.

<sup>37</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 334:8-10, 335:13-336:5.

<sup>38</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 314:14-16, 364:9-12. ‘Abd al-Jabbār reports in *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 365:10-14, that Abū Hāshim was convinced that blood cannot be used for perception but that he nevertheless wondered why someone whose veins are opened feels pain and weakness for some time. He supposed that the blood flowing through the veins hurts some parts of the flesh, which would explain the pain. As for the weakness, he thought that this was caused by a deficiency of what the body needs (i.e. blood), which makes it difficult to keep the body upright.

<sup>39</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 365:1-9, 311:16-312:4.

<sup>40</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 314:15. Modern physicians may disagree, but we should remember that ‘Abd al-Jabbār takes perception as the criterion for the existence of life.



He adds that because of this uncertainty, the Mu‘tazilis say that knowledge and will are situated in the heart.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, the brain is indispensable for a human being. In ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s view, there is a connection between the brain and the heart. He knows that a human being dies if this connection is broken: the perishing of the brain implies the perishing of the heart, which results in the death of the human being. Therefore, a human being cannot live without a brain, even though it is not certain that the brain is a part of the living totality.<sup>42</sup>

There are other things inside the body that are not living but that are, nevertheless, necessary for a human being in order to stay alive, such as blood, saliva, bile, and other fluids without which human bodies cannot function. Nonetheless, in ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s opinion, these things are not components of the totality because they are not living and, besides, they are not connected to the totality. He considers them as separate (*munfaṣil*) from the body, although they are in it. This does not mean that they are superfluous, although the blood inside a human body is not a component of the totality, a human being cannot live without blood.<sup>43</sup> Everyone knows that humans die if they lose all their blood. In what follows, we shall see that in ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s opinion, the human soul (*rūḥ*) is comparable to blood: it is not connected to the totality, nor is it living, yet it is indispensable.

### *The Soul*

‘Abd al-Jabbār asserts that there is a soul (*rūḥ*) inside the human body. He describes this soul as a thin “body” (*jism*) (“body” used here in the sense of material thing<sup>44</sup>) that belongs to the class (*qabīl*) of wind (*rūḥ*) and breath (*nafas*).<sup>45</sup> In his opinion, the difference between these things is their location. When it exists inside a human body, it is called soul (*rūḥ*), but when it exists outside the human body, it is called wind or breath.<sup>46</sup> He says: “Soul is an expression for the breath

<sup>41</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 365:17-18. ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers to thinking, repenting, having convictions, and having a will, as “acts of the hearts” (*af‘āl al-qulūb*) (*Mughnī*, vol. 9, p. 13:15-16). However, Gimaret (*Noms divins*, p. 156) has observed that in *Mughnī*, vol. 12, p. 22:13-18, ‘Abd al-Jabbār says that with respect to certitude (*sukūn al-nafs*) the term *nafs*, and not the term *qalb*, is used, because *sukūn al-qalb* (silence / stillness of the heart) is not understood as “certitude”. *Nafs* in *sukūn al-nafs* refers to the totality (*jumla*). Probably, *nafs* in *sukūn al-nafs* is used in the sense of “self” because ‘Abd al-Jabbār does not use *nafs* in the sense of “soul”.

<sup>42</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 320:4-5.

<sup>43</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 337:12-14, 338:16-17.

<sup>44</sup> A material thing can be referred to as *jism*, whereas this term cannot be used for abstract things, such as knowledge, will or desire. Breath is a material thing and therefore ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers to it as *jism*. However, we are not able to see breath because of its thinness.

<sup>45</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 334:13. See also Peters, *God’s Created Speech*, pp. 164-65. In pre-Islamic Arabic poetry *rūḥ* means breath and wind (Macdonald, “Development,” p. 26; Calverley and Netton, “Nafs,” p. 880).

<sup>46</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 331:15-17, 338:8-9.

(*nafas*) that goes back and forth in the orifices (mouth and nose) of a human being”.<sup>47</sup> From this it can be concluded that in ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s view, the soul is identical with the breath that is inside the body.<sup>48</sup>

‘Abd al-Jabbār’s explanation that *rūḥ* means breath is in accordance with the meaning of *rūḥ* in some verses of the Qur’ān.<sup>49</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār points out that God mentions the soul (*rūḥ*) in the context of blowing (*nafakh*)<sup>50</sup> and exhaling (*nafth*).<sup>51</sup> From this description of the soul, ‘Abd al-Jabbār concludes that the soul is a thin body: thin bodies (*ajsām daqīqa*) are described in this way.<sup>52</sup> He probably considers that only thin bodies can be blown or exhaled. ‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that the soul is characterized by its thinness (*riqqa*) and this feature distinguishes it from the rest of the body.<sup>53</sup>

‘Abd al-Jabbār asserts that the soul is not living because no warmth, cold or pain can be perceived by it, which means that life does not inhere in it. Besides, the soul does not have the necessary qualities for the inherence of life, for life can only inhere in a substrate that has a structure (*binya*), that has moisture (*ruṭūba*) in it, and that is connected to a living totality. These things do not apply to breath and wind, nor do they apply to the soul. Therefore, the soul cannot be living.<sup>54</sup> From this it must be concluded that the soul is not a component of the totality. Nevertheless, a human being needs the existence of a soul inside his body in order to be living. If there is no soul in the “passageways” (*manfadh*, plural *manāfidh*) of a person’s body, he will die.<sup>55</sup> In this respect, the existence of a soul in a living human body is comparable to the existence of blood in it. Nei-

<sup>47</sup> *Li-anna l-rūḥ ibāra ‘an al-nafas al-mutaraddid fi makhbāriq al-insān* (*Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 338:8-9). See also *ibid.*, p. 335:1. For the translation of *makhbāriq* as orifices, see E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, London 1863-93, p. 729 (*makhbriq*). In *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 333:13, ‘Abd al-Jabbār says that there must be a soul in the “passageways” (*manfadh*, pl. *manāfidh*) of a human body.

<sup>48</sup> In *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 479:4 ‘Abd al-Jabbār mentions “the streams (*majāri*) of his *nafas*”. The editors of volume 11 have read this word as *nafsihī* (his self), but considering ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s view of the soul, I propose to read it as *nafasihī* (his breath).

<sup>49</sup> Macdonald, “Development,” p. 26; O’Shaughnessy, *Development*, pp. 25-33.

<sup>50</sup> Qur’ān 32:9, 15:29, 38:72, 21:91, 66:12. In these verses, it is said that God blew (*nafakha*) His soul (*rūḥ*) into persons. *Rūḥ* is the breath of life that God blew into Adam in order to give him life and it is the spirit that God blew into Mary.

<sup>51</sup> The editors of the manuscript of *Mughnī* vol. 11 comment that the manuscript is not clear. The text has: *bi-l-nafas* but they suggest reading *bi-l-nafth* (*Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 338 n. 1). The term *nafas* (breath) does not appear in the Qur’ān (Calverley and Netton, “Nafs,” p. 880). The only derivation of n-f-th in the Qur’ān is the word *naffāthāt* in Qur’ān 113:4, which means “women who blow upon the knots” (sorceresses). However, it is not used in relation to *rūḥ*. It is not clear to which Qur’ānic term ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers.

<sup>52</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 338:9-10.

<sup>53</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 331:15-17.

<sup>54</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 331:17-18.

<sup>55</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 333:12-13. As we have seen above, ‘Abd al-Jabbār also uses the term *makhbāriq*, which means orifices (*Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 335:1). See also Frank, *Beings*, p. 49 n. 14.



ther the soul nor blood are components of the living totality. They are not connected to the living totality and there is no life in them. Nevertheless, the existence of both inside the body is necessary: without them, we die. On the other hand, some parts of the living totality are dispensable; missing a hand or a foot does not imply that one dies.<sup>56</sup>

Although ‘Abd al-Jabbār admits that there must be a soul inside each living human being, he insists that man does not equal this soul, nor a combination of body and soul. His main argument in support of this opinion is that the soul is not living. As the soul is not living, man cannot be a combination of body and soul, just as the soul cannot be a component of the living human totality. In his opinion, the soul is comparable to something that sticks to the totality without being a component of it.<sup>57</sup> He applies the same argument – that the soul is not living – against those who maintain that man is the soul inside the human body. He argues that if man were the soul, this would imply that man was not living. Of course, this argument is only acceptable to those who agree with ‘Abd al-Jabbār that the soul is not living. As several of his adversaries assert that the human soul is living, ‘Abd al-Jabbār also advances other arguments in order to refute their opinions. For instance, he contests the idea that the body (*jasad*) is inanimate (*maḥwāt*), as was argued by some who believed that man is the living soul that uses the inanimate body as its instrument.<sup>58</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār points out that if the human body was inanimate we could not use it for perception.<sup>59</sup>

‘Abd al-Jabbār rejects the idea that the soul gives life to the body.<sup>60</sup> He argues that the soul is a thin body that is adjacent (*muḥāwir*) to the totality. Since bodies do not impart a quality (*ḥāl*) to what they are adjacent to, the soul does not give life to the totality. From this it can be concluded that, in ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s view, the human soul differs from the divine breath that God blew into Adam in order to give him life. According to ‘Abd al-Jabbār, the existence of a soul inside the human body does not cause this human being to be living. In this respect, the soul can be compared with blood and the bodily structure (*binya*). Blood is not the cause of life, even though humans die if they lose all their blood. Neither is the structure of the human body the cause of the existence of life, although one cannot be living if one’s body does not have a certain structure (see below). Similarly, the soul is not the cause of the existence of life in a human being, although one cannot be living without it.<sup>61</sup> The existence of a soul, blood and a

<sup>56</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 337:10-5.

<sup>57</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 336:6-8.

<sup>58</sup> Among those who held this opinion were several Ash‘arites, Sufis and Imamites; see R. Arnaldez, “Ma‘ād,” in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. New Edition, vol. 5, pp. 893.

<sup>59</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 334:12-13.

<sup>60</sup> Some Mu‘tazilis identified “life” with “soul” (Fakhry, “Mu‘tazilite View,” p. 111). We have seen that ‘Abd al-Jabbār reports that al-Nazzām said that “the soul is the life which is interwoven with this body” (*Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 310:7-8).

<sup>61</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 338:16-17.

bodily structure are the prerequisites for the existence of life, but they are not the cause of life. This leads us to the question of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s thoughts about the existence of life in a human being.

## Life

‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that living beings are living because of the existence in them of an entitative determinant (*maʿnā*), which is life (*ḥayāt*).<sup>62</sup> A living being is described as living if the *maʿnā* “life” inheres in particular parts of this living being’s body. These parts are characterized by their ability to perceive pain, warmth and cold. Life itself is not a living thing (*al-ḥayāt lā yajūzu an takūna ḥayya*).<sup>63</sup> Life inheres in the substrate formed by the connected living parts of the body. We have seen that these living parts together form the totality (*jumla*) of a human being.<sup>64</sup> Life can only inhere in a substrate that fulfils certain conditions. Firstly, there must be moisture (*ruṭūba*) in the substrate;<sup>65</sup> secondly, the substrate must have a particular structure; and thirdly, the substrate must belong to a totality whose parts are interconnected.<sup>66</sup> When ‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that life needs moisture, it is not clear whether he means bodily fluids in general or a specific bodily fluid such as lymph.<sup>67</sup> He knows that there is blood in the veins of a human body and he also mentions other bodily fluids by name, such as saliva (*baṣāq*), gall (*marār*)<sup>68</sup> and semen (*zarʿ*).<sup>69</sup> The moisture (*ruṭūba*) itself is not a component of the totality of a human being. Bodily fluids cannot belong to the human totality because they are not living; they are inside the body, but disconnected (*munfaṣil*) from it.<sup>70</sup>

The second condition for the inference of life in a substrate is the existence of a certain structure (*binya*). We have seen that ‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that the soul cannot be living, because it is a thin body that does not have a structure.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>62</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 338:16. Abu l-Hudhayl’s opinion on this subject was slightly different. He declared that life can be an accident, and that it can also be a body (*jism*, body in the sense of a material thing). Abu l-Hudhayl considered that humans are living if the accident of life and a soul (*rūḥ*) are inside them, and he called these two things together “life”. See also Frank, *Beings*, p. 42.

<sup>63</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 340:6-8.

<sup>64</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 334:9-10.

<sup>65</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 354:12.

<sup>66</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 331:17-18, 354:2. See also Peters, *God’s Created Speech*, p. 172.

<sup>67</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār thinks that a temporal insensibility (*khadar*) of a limb is caused by the flow (*inṣibāb*) of particles of moisture (*ruṭūbāt*) into this limb. When these particles penetrate a limb, its perception decreases, although there is life in it. If this moistness ceases, the limb regains its soundness (*salāma*) (*Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 366:1-6).

<sup>68</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 365:15-16.

<sup>69</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 366:15.

<sup>70</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 365:14.

<sup>71</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 331:17-18.

A human body can only be living if the body visibly has the structure and framework that it should have.<sup>72</sup> The human body has a specific structure, which differs from the structures of other animals. A body that does not have the required structure cannot be living. Not only must the body as a whole have the required structure, each part of the body each must also have its own specific structure. Parts of the body that have lost their necessary structure cannot have life in them.<sup>73</sup>

The third condition for the inference of life in the substrate is that it is connected (*muttaṣil*) to the living totality. The connection (*ittiṣāl*) between the parts of the body is important. Because of this interconnection, a human being can be seen as a whole, having certain qualities as a whole. Therefore, we can say that a person has a will or the ability to act. The whole person sees, speaks, and perceives warmth, cold and pain, even though these actions are performed by using only parts of the body. For this reason, ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers to a human being as a totality (*jumla*). However, if a part of the body becomes detached (*munfarid*) from the totality, the connection between the totality and this part of the body is broken. In that case life disappears from the detached part of the body.<sup>74</sup>

### Body Changes

If one loses an arm or a leg, one’s form and structure are changed by the disappearance of this part of the body. ‘Abd al-Jabbār points out that this change in the structure does not imply that life disappears from the entire body. The structure of the living totality may change without life disappearing from it. However, this is only possible within certain limits. There are parts of the body that one cannot do without. One dies if one loses one of these parts, because they are indispensable for staying alive. One can live without an arm or a leg,<sup>75</sup> but decapitation causes one’s death.<sup>76</sup> For this reason, ‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that life only inheres in a living being if its structure and form include those parts of the body that a living being minimally needs in order to be living.<sup>77</sup> He does not specify what these indispensable parts are.

<sup>72</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 334:18-335:3. See also Frank, *Beings*, p. 51 n. 29.

<sup>73</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 336:1-4. A change in the structure of an organ affects the existence of life in it (*Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 472:18-20). Life needs bodily soundness (*ṣiḥḥa*). ‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that by *ṣiḥḥa* he means the soundness that is needed for life (*al-ṣiḥḥa allatī taḥtāju ilayhā l-ḥayāt*, *Mughnī*, vol. 9, p. 52:23). A human body has soundness if it is intact and without injury. If a lesion is made in a part of the body, the soundness disappears from this part of the body; see my *Suffering in the Mu‘tazilite Theology. ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s Teaching on Pain and Divine Justice*, Leiden 2000, pp. 91-94.

<sup>74</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 354:2.

<sup>75</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 337:10-11.

<sup>76</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 319:20.

<sup>77</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 473:10-15.

The indispensable parts of a person's body cannot change, whereas the other, non-essential (*zā'id*) parts of the body may change or disappear without affecting a person's identity. We know that a human being can grow from childhood to adulthood without his identity changing. A person may grow fatter or thinner, yet his identity remains the same.<sup>78</sup> In 'Abd al-Jabbār's opinion, the indispensable parts of a human being do not change when this human being grows fatter or thinner. Body fat is seen as a non-essential part of the body. 'Abd al-Jabbār thinks that growing fatter implies that more particles (*juz'*, plural *ajzā'*) are connected to the interconnected particles that already form a person's totality. The life that inheres in these particles comes to inhere in the extra particles as well.<sup>79</sup>

This raises the question of whether life can inhere in all parts of the body that have the potential to grow. 'Abd al-Jabbār rejects this. He points out that life can only inhere in parts that can be used for the perception of warmth, cold and pain.<sup>80</sup> He declares that the fact that bones and nails grow is no reason to consider them as living, and he adds that their way of growing differs from the way in which the non-essential parts of the body grow: the body can grow thinner after it has grown fatter, but bones and nails cannot grow shorter.<sup>81</sup>

## Death

When the substrate formed by a person's body no longer fulfils the conditions for the inherence of life, life disappears from the body and the person dies. When this happens, life disappears from all parts of the body. Since these parts are no longer living, they no longer form a totality because a totality consists of living parts. Life may disappear for several reasons, as we have seen before. One of these reasons may be that an indispensable part of the body perishes or loses its structure. This may happen when the head is separated from the body,<sup>82</sup> so that the vital connection between heart and brain is broken. Life also disappears when the blood disappears from the body or when breathing stops. It moreover ceases when there is no longer a soul in the apertures (*manṣadḥ*, pl. *manāḥidḥ*) of the body.<sup>83</sup> When life has left the body, all parts of the human body are dead. The connection between them has been broken; the substrate formed by the parts of the body has acquired the quality of being abandoned (*mubāyan*).<sup>84</sup>

<sup>78</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 473:15-18.

<sup>79</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 354:18-19.

<sup>80</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 335:17-18.

<sup>81</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 366:9-13. However, in Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī's (d. 303/915-6) opinion, all growing things connected to the totality are components of the totality, even the inanimate things; see *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 364:4-5.

<sup>82</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 319:20-320:5, 333:10.

<sup>83</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 333:12-13.

<sup>84</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 354:2-5, 355:18.

In ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s opinion, life does not disappear because of the appearance of its opposite in the substrate. He rejects the idea that death is the opposite (*didd*) of life, and he points out that the existence of death cannot be established: only the absence of life can be established.<sup>85</sup> Making it evident that “being dead” is not a quality, he refers to Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī who explained that a substrate can only have the quality of “living” if it belongs to a living totality. The quality of “living” refers to the totality to which the substrate belongs. If “being dead” was a quality, it would also refer to the totality. This is not possible because after death, the totality no longer exists and therefore it cannot have qualities. Nevertheless, the substrate formed by the inanimate parts of the body does possess certain qualities,<sup>86</sup> one of them being that the deceased is a (dead) human being (*insān*) since the substrate has the specific form and structure that is characteristic of the human species.<sup>87</sup>

After death the whole human being is dead. The soul was never living and now the body is no longer living either. As a rule, the body is buried in a grave. Traditionally, Muslims believe that in the grave angels question the deceased.<sup>88</sup> Thereupon the deceased is punished or rewarded in the grave.<sup>89</sup> This leads to the question as to whether the dead are revived for some time in order to be able to hear and answer the angels’ questions and undergo the punishment or enjoy their reward. According to some exegetes the Qur’ān says that the dead are revived in the grave and then die a second time.<sup>90</sup> However, some people denied the interrogation in the grave altogether, declaring that it is at variance with common sense.<sup>91</sup> According to the Ash‘arites, the Mu‘tazilīs denied the punishment or reward in

<sup>85</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 355:16. See also Peters, *God’s Created Speech*, pp. 173-74. The Sunni theologians and the Mu‘tazilīs Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī and Abu l-Qāsim al-Ka‘bī al-Balkhī (d. 319/931) believed that death is an accident that is the opposite of the accident of life (Gimaret, *Noms divins*, p. 328). See also Frank, *Beings*, pp. 50-1 n. 23.

<sup>86</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 355:15-21.

<sup>87</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 364:12-15.

<sup>88</sup> These angels are named Munkar and Nakīr (Eklund, *Life*, pp. 4-6; Smith and Haddad, *Islamic Understanding*, p. 41). Some mention other angels with the names Rūmān and Nakūr (van Ess, *Theologie*, vol. 4, p. 528).

<sup>89</sup> Eklund, *Life*, pp. 2-15, 30-79; van Ess, *Theologie*, vol. 4, pp. 528-34; Smith and Haddad, *Islamic Understanding*, pp. 41-50, 108-10. Some theologians refer to Qur’ān 9:101, “We will punish them twice and then they will be returned to a severe punishment,” as evidence that there will be a punishment in the grave (A.J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed. Its Genesis and Historical Development*, London 1965, p. 117). Smith and Haddad (*Islamic Understanding*, p. 208 n. 36) mention several verses that are said to refer to the punishment in the grave.

<sup>90</sup> They refer to Qur’ān 2:28, “You were dead and He gave you life. Then, He will make you to die and He will bring you to life again,” and Qur’ān 40:11. Gimaret (*Noms divins*, pp. 329-31) mentions al-Ṭūsī, al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī as exegetes who adhered to this opinion or deemed it possible.

<sup>91</sup> Those who rejected the punishment in the grave declared that they had searched graves and failed to find any evidence for it (Eklund, *Life*, p. 115).

the grave.<sup>92</sup> However, ‘Abd al-Jabbār himself does not explicitly reject the possibility of a punishment or reward in the grave. He refers to it without any comment.<sup>93</sup> Possibly, his opinion on this subject resembles that of his student Mānakdim (d. 425/1034), who believed that the punishment in the grave will take place between the two blasts of the trumpet on the Day of Judgment.<sup>94</sup> According to this opinion, the punishment of the grave is one of the many events that will happen then. However this may be, ‘Abd al-Jabbār believes that before the Day of Resurrection the corpses of the dead will perish like everything else in this world because of the great annihilation that will take place.

### *Annihilation (fanā’)*

One of the Arabic terms for resurrection is *i‘āda*. It is the verbal noun of the verb *a‘āda* which means “to cause to return” or “to repeat” or “to restore”. The meaning of this verb implies that something that existed and then disappeared is brought into existence again.<sup>95</sup> As long as a thing exists, it cannot be returned into existence. This is logically impossible because something has first to disappear before it can be brought into existence again. Therefore, the resurrection (*i‘āda*) of the dead implies that their bodies, having disappeared, are brought into existence again. For this reason, ‘Abd al-Jabbār discusses annihilation (*fanā’*) before he discusses resurrection.<sup>96</sup>

According to the Mu‘tazilī doctrine, material things consist of atoms (*jawāhir*, sg. *jawhar*) that form a substrate in which accidents inhere. The accidents determine the qualities of these material things. Some accidents inhere in the substrate until their opposites appear in the substrate or until the moment the substrate no longer fulfils the conditions required for their inherence.<sup>97</sup> Other acci-

<sup>92</sup> Gardet, “Kiyāma,” p. 237. Gardet points out the Ash‘arites’ assertion is wrong.

<sup>93</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 466:6-7: “We know from the revelation that one who dies is only revived in order to be punished in the grave or to see his place in paradise”.

<sup>94</sup> Mānakdim Shashdiw, *Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-kbāmsa*, ed. [as a work by ‘Abd al-Jabbār] ‘Abd al-Karīm ‘Uthmān, Cairo 1384/1965, p. 733:15-16.

<sup>95</sup> Resurrection can be seen as a second creation. In order to distinguish between the two creations, the verb *bada‘a* (or *abda‘a*) is used for the first creation. The verb *a‘āda* refers to the second creation, when God returns the creatures to exist after a period of non-existence (Gimaret, *Noms divins*, pp. 296-99). The term *a‘āda* is used in theological discussions. Other terms used for resurrection are *qiyāma* and *baḥṭh* (Gardet, “Kiyāma,” p. 235; Arnaldez, “Ma‘ād,” p. 893; Maurice Borrmans, “Resurrection,” in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur‘ān*, vol. 4, p. 434).

<sup>96</sup> For a survey of different opinions about the way in which annihilation and resurrection take place, see Sabine Schmidtke, *The Theology of al-‘Allāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325)*, Berlin 1991, pp. 211-22. See also Gardet, “Kiyāma,” p. 238.

<sup>97</sup> For instance, the ability to act (*qudra*) can only inhere in a substrate in which life inheres. At the moment that life disappears from the substrate, the ability to act ceases to exist (*Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 354:12).



dents disappear of their own accord. But while accidents appear and disappear, the atoms continue to exist. They form the substrate of ever newly formed material things. The question to be discussed is whether the atoms will cease to exist at some moment in the future. If this happens, all material things, along with the accidents inhering in them, will disappear.

‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that, viewed rationally, there is no decisive answer to the question of whether the atoms will disappear. It is impossible to prove that they will disappear at some moment, just as it is impossible to prove that they will never disappear. Both the annihilation and persistence of the atoms are rationally possible, but there is no sound proof that either of these events will occur.<sup>98</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār refutes some arguments for and against the persistence of the atoms. One argument supporting the disappearance of the atoms is that their persistence would mean that the atoms are equal to God with respect to their continuing existence, an argument rejected by ‘Abd al-Jabbār. He points out that atoms are not equal to God in this respect because God exists eternally (without beginning and without end) because of His essence (*dhāt*), whereas atoms, even if they do continue to exist for ever, have not existed from eternity. They were created at some point in time and did not exist before this point in time. This indicates the difference between God’s eternal existence and the continuing existence of the atoms.<sup>99</sup>

One argument in support of the persistence of the atoms is that they can only disappear if there is an opposite (*ḍidd*) that causes the end of their existence. As we will see, ‘Abd al-Jabbār thinks that the atoms do indeed have an opposite, but he points out that the persistence of things does not imply that they must have an opposite; there are continuous things which disappear without opposite, such as pressure (*ḥimāḍ*), composition (*ta’līf*) and life (*ḥayāt*).<sup>100</sup> Therefore, although atoms exist continuously, it is theoretically possible that they disappear without the appearance of an opposite. Refuting these kinds of arguments, ‘Abd al-Jabbār makes it clear that, rationally, there is no evidence that at some point the atoms will disappear nor that they will continue to exist for ever.

Because reason does not give a decisive answer to the question whether the atoms will disappear, ‘Abd al-Jabbār resorts to divine revelation (*samʿ*).<sup>101</sup> He explains that he only uses divine revelation in order to find out whether or not the atoms will disappear; for other aspects of the disappearance of atoms he will apply

<sup>98</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 432:8-10, 436:1-4.

<sup>99</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 432:11-17.

<sup>100</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 434:10. These things disappear for other reasons. We have seen before that life disappears from a substrate if this substrate no longer fulfils the conditions for the inherence of life.

<sup>101</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 437:7-8. For what revelation says about annihilation see, for instance, Gardet, “Kiyāma,” p. 235, and Jane I. Smith, “Eschatology,” in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, vol. 2, p. 47.

reason again.<sup>102</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers to verses in the Qur’ān that, in his opinion, indicate that God will annihilate everything. One of these verses is, “He is the first and the last” (Qur’ān 57:3).<sup>103</sup> In his opinion, there are two explanations of this verse. One is that God will continue to exist after all possible things have existed, which implies that [for a period] God is the only one who will exist after everything else has disappeared. The second explanation is that God will be the last one who exists, which implies that only God will exist for ever. ‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that if there are two explanations for a verse of the Qur’ān, one conflicting with reason (‘*aql*) and the other acceptable to reason, the explanation that is acceptable to reason must be the right one.<sup>104</sup> Applying this method to the verse “He is the first and the last,” ‘Abd al-Jabbār rejects the explanation that only God will exist for ever because it contradicts reason. This explanation must be wrong because it implies that paradise and its inhabitants will not exist for ever.<sup>105</sup> This contradicts God’s promise to give an everlasting reward: a reward can only be given everlastingly if the persons to be rewarded can live in paradise for ever. This is only possible if paradise, and everything in it, can last for ever. Therefore, only the first explanation, that God will exist after all things have existed, can be right.<sup>106</sup>

‘Abd al-Jabbār finds another indication for the annihilation of the atoms in the Qur’ānic verse, “All those who are on it (= earth) will cease to exist”.<sup>107</sup> In this verse the word *fānin*, the active participle of the Arabic verb *fanā*, is used. ‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that the definition of *fanā*, the verbal noun of this verb, is “non-existence” (‘*adam*).<sup>108</sup> He denies that the interpretation of the verse is: “all those who are on earth will die”. He points out that this is a metaphorical explanation of the verse because “to cease to exist” is explained as “to die”. Death means the disappearance of life from the body and not the disappearance of the deceased. The Qur’ān clearly says that all those who are on earth will cease to exist, and not that their lives will cease to exist. He points out that those who are acquainted with the disappearance of the accidents (*fanā’ al-‘rād*) should not use the term *fanā’* metaphorically in the sense of “death”.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>102</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 437:9-16.

<sup>103</sup> *Huwa l-awwal wa-l-ākhir* (Qur’ān 57:3).

<sup>104</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 438:7-8.

<sup>105</sup> This is the opinion attributed to Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 129/746). The Jahmiyya believed that the reward is not everlasting and that those rewarded will cease to exist (Binyamin Abrahamov, “The Creation and Duration of Paradise and Hell in Islamic Theology,” *Der Islam* 79 (2002), pp. 99-100; Smith and Haddad, *Islamic Understanding*, p. 95). See also *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 433:15, 438:5.

<sup>106</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 437:18-438:8. ‘Abd al-Jabbār also disapproves of explaining “first” and “last” metaphorically (‘*alā l-majāz*). He explains that a metaphorical explanation is only allowed for something that is impossible in reality (*Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 438:15-439:4).

<sup>107</sup> *Kull man ‘alayhā fānin* (Qur’ān 55:26).

<sup>108</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 439:5-6.

<sup>109</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, 439:6-11.

According to 'Abd al-Jabbār, another verse of the Qur'ān also affirms the annihilation of the atoms, *viz.*, "Everything will perish, except for His face".<sup>110</sup> In this verse the active participle of the Arab verb *halaka* is used. 'Abd al-Jabbār admits that the verb *halaka* can have different meanings, but he declares that in this verse it must mean "to cease to exist" because this is indicated by the words "except for His face". We know that God will never cease to exist and, therefore, the explanation of the verse must be that everything except God will cease to exist.<sup>111</sup>

'Abd al-Jabbār adds that the masters of his Mu'tazilī school (*shuyūkhunā*) used to refer to consensus (*ijmā'*), as well, in order to establish that the atoms will cease to exist. They argued that there is no disagreement about the point that God will annihilate the world and then recreate it.<sup>112</sup> Although 'Abd al-Jabbār knows some scholars who reportedly had a different opinion on this question, he admits that the Companions (*ṣaḥāba*), the Followers (*tābi'ūna*) and the next generations explicitly said that God will annihilate the world and then recreate it.<sup>113</sup>

Atoms are not mentioned in the verses of the Qur'ān in which 'Abd al-Jabbār finds affirmation that everything except God will be annihilated. Consequently, these verses do not indicate in which way the atoms will disappear. 'Abd al-Jabbār therefore applies what the Mu'tazilī doctrine says about the disappearance of accidents (*'araḍ*, pl. *ā'rāḍ*) in order to explain how it is possible for atoms to disappear.<sup>114</sup> He denies that they disappear of their own accord, as was suggested by those who believe that God creates the atoms again and again (*ḥālan ba'da ḥālin*).<sup>115</sup> He also denies that atoms disappear because the conditions for their existence are no longer fulfilled. We have seen that some accidents, such as the accident of life, disappear because the substrate in which they inhere no longer fulfils the conditions for their existence, for instance, when other accidents needed for their existence have disappeared from the substrate. 'Abd al-Jabbār declares that this cannot happen to atoms, for atoms do not need the ex-

<sup>110</sup> *Kull shay'in ḥālikun illā wajhahū* (Qur'ān 28:88).

<sup>111</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 440:13-18.

<sup>112</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 441:6-7.

<sup>113</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, 441:7-9. Later, the belief developed that some things will be spared from annihilation, such as God's throne, paradise, hell, the Tablet and the Pen. Afterwards, the prophets, the martyrs, the houris and important angels were added to the things that will not be annihilated (Louis Gardet, *Dieu et la destinée de l'homme*, Paris 1967, pp. 264-65). Several later theologians said that human souls will not be annihilated either. Others said that an essential part of the human body, the coccyx (*'ajb al-dhanab*), will be spared from annihilation (Gardet, *Dieu*, p. 265; Smith and Haddad, *Islamic Understanding*, pp. 72-23).

<sup>114</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 441:13-16.

<sup>115</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 443:11-16. It seems that al-Nazzām believed that atoms are created anew every moment (Ibn Mattawayh, *Kitāb al-Majmū' fī l-Muḥīṭ bi-l-taklīf*, vol. 1, ed. [as a work by 'Abd al-Jabbār] J.J. Houben, Beirut 1965; vol. 2, eds. J.J. Houben and Daniel Gimaret, Beirut 1986; vol. 3, ed. Jan Peters, Beirut 1999, vol. 2, p. 288:8-9). The Baghdādī Mu'tazilīs believed that accidents need to be created again and again (Schmidtke, *Theology*, p. 212). 'Abd al-Jabbār refutes this, arguing that it is impossible for the accident of composition (*ta'līf*) to be constantly brought into existence.

istence of something else for their own existence, and therefore, the lack of something cannot cause their disappearance.<sup>116</sup> He also denies that God can directly annihilate atoms by making them non-existent (*ʿidām*), without first creating an opposite. According to ʿAbd al-Jabbār's theory of acting, the ability to act (*qudra*) only applies to bringing things into existence (*iḥdāth*), but not to rendering them non-existent.<sup>117</sup> Taking all these things into consideration, ʿAbd al-Jabbār concludes that atoms disappear (*taṭaffi*) because their opposite (*didd*) comes into existence. God is the only one who can create such an opposite.<sup>118</sup>

ʿAbd al-Jabbār declares that this opposite, which causes the disappearance of the atoms, is annihilation (*fanāʾ*). He explains that annihilation can be the opposite of the atoms because it fulfils the conditions for being an opposite. The conditions for things being each other's opposite are that they belong to the same sort (*jins*) and exist in the same way, for instance, by inhering in the same substrate. ʿAbd al-Jabbār explains this by using the example of two opposites: whiteness (*bayāḍ*) and blackness (*sawād*). The appearance of whiteness in a substrate causes the disappearance of blackness, but only if they both inhere in the same substrate. Whiteness does not end the existence of blackness that inheres in another substrate that is not connected to the first substrate.<sup>119</sup> ʿAbd al-Jabbār points out that neither annihilation nor atoms inhere in a substrate.<sup>120</sup> In his opinion, this is comparable to opposites inhering in the same substrate. It means that annihilation and atoms exist in the same way, just as whiteness and blackness exist in the same way when they inhere in the same substrate and consequently end the other's existence.<sup>121</sup> In his view, atoms and annihilation similarly fulfil the condition of existing in the same way. Annihilation can end the existence of the atoms because none of them inheres in a substrate. ʿAbd al-Jabbār does not explain that atoms and annihilation also fulfil the condition of belonging to the same sort of things.

The appearance of an opposite results in the disappearance of all there is of the firstly existing thing that fulfils the conditions for being its opposite. ʿAbd al-Jabbār explains this using the example of whiteness and blackness again. He

<sup>116</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 442:1-3.

<sup>117</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 442:18-443:3. ʿAbd al-Jabbār does not explain this theory. He says that he has already explained it before and that there is no need to discuss it again. See also Schmidtko, *Theology*, p. 212. It seems that Abu l-Ḥusayn al-Khayyāt (d. ca 300/913) adhered to this opinion (Ibn Mattawayh, *Majmūʿ*, vol. 2, p. 293:18-19).

<sup>118</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 444:5-7.

<sup>119</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 444:11-18.

<sup>120</sup> ʿAbd al-Jabbār declares that it is possible that annihilation does not inhere in a substrate, just as will (*irāda*) can be the opposite of disgust (*karāha*) without inherence in a substrate (*Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 444:7-10). He rejects the argument that annihilation can first inhere in a substrate (which consists of atoms) and then cause the disappearance of this substrate. He points out that this is impossible because it implies that for a moment the two opposites, annihilation and atoms, exist together (*Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 446:6-8).

<sup>121</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 445:4-8.

points out that the appearance of one [particle] of blackness in a substrate in which several particles (*ajzāʾ*) of whiteness exist causes the disappearance of all the particles of whiteness. If this principle is applied to annihilation (*fanāʾ*) and atoms, it means that the appearance of one “unit” of annihilation causes the disappearance of all atoms. Not a single atom will continue to exist if “annihilation” appears. This is so because the cause (*illa*) of their disappearance, the appearance of annihilation, affects them all. No atom can exist together with annihilation. ‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that an atom could only be exempted from disappearance if it could exist differently. But since atoms cannot exist in another way than they do, they must all disappear.<sup>122</sup>

According to ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s theory, all material things (*ajsām*) will disappear because of annihilation; none of them will remain. This raises the question of whether God does not have the power to spare some things. If He does not, does this indicate powerlessness on His part? ‘Abd al-Jabbār rejects this. He points out it that the impossibility for things to be exempted from annihilation has nothing to do with God’s power. This is a logical impossibility, comparable with the impossibility of blackness and whiteness existing at the same time in the same substrate.<sup>123</sup>

‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that annihilation (*fanāʾ*) disappears of its own accord because it is not continuous (*bāqī*) in the way atoms are.<sup>124</sup> This means that when annihilation has ceased, atoms can exist again without being annihilated. ‘Abd al-Jabbār points out that divine revelation (*samʿ*) affirms this, for it says that God will resurrect the bodies of the dead after He has annihilated them. ‘Abd al-Jabbār rejects the assertion that annihilation must be continuous because atoms are continuous, and argues that it is possible that of two opposites, one is continuous and the other is not.<sup>125</sup> However, he does not give an example of opposites that differ from each other in this respect. Closing the discussion of the subject of annihilation, he explains that he has devoted attention to it because the discussion of resurrection is based on it, and not because he thinks it is absolutely necessary to discuss annihilation.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>122</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 445:13-15. See also Schmidtke, *Theology*, pp. 212-14.

<sup>123</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 449:10-19.

<sup>124</sup> Ibn Mattawayh points out that if annihilation (*fanāʾ*) were continuous and did not disappear of its own accord, it would continue for ever because of the lack of an existing opposite. The persistence of annihilation would also be in contradiction with the verse in the Qurʾān, “Everything will perish, except for His face” (Qurʾān 28:88) (*Majmūʿ*, vol. 2, pp. 287:10-14, 301:13-21).

<sup>125</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 450:14-20.

<sup>126</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 450:21-451:2.

## Resurrection

‘Abd al-Jabbār begins his discussion of resurrection (*i‘āda*) by making it clear that people can indeed be resurrected.<sup>127</sup> Since human beings, like all material things, consist of atoms and accidents, he has to establish that God can restore the atoms after they have disappeared. Evidently, ‘Abd al-Jabbār means that God can return the same atoms that existed before the annihilation. Atoms, like many existing things, are the result of an act. Atoms are the result of God’s act of creation. Therefore, ‘Abd al-Jabbār has to make it clear that there are things (results of acts) that can be restored after they have disappeared. This implies that there are acts that can be performed twice with the same result. In order to confirm this, ‘Abd al-Jabbār distinguishes different groups of things. There are things that remain after they have been brought into existence and others that do not remain and that disappear of their own accord after they have been brought into existence. An example of the last kind of things is sound. Sounds cannot continue to exist; they disappear immediately after they have been produced. It is possible to make a sound a second time, after which it disappears again. It can then be produced a third time and disappear again, and so on. ‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that for that reason, non-continuous things cannot be returned into existence.<sup>128</sup>

The continuous things consist of those that can be restored and those that cannot be restored. A continuous thing cannot be restored if it is the result of an act which can be performed at one specific moment only. This applies to all acts performed by humans and other living beings. ‘Abd al-Jabbār explains that their power of acting (*qudra*) is limited. This power concerns only one possible thing (*maqdūr*) of one kind (*jins*) at one moment (*waqt*). A living being can use this power for only one particular act. In ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s view, if someone could use this power several times over, it would result in an act of enormous proportions. In this respect, human acting differs from God’s acting. God’s acting is not limited because He does not need the power to act in order to act. He is able to act (*qādir*) because of His essence (*nafs*). He is omnipotent. He can bring things into existence at any moment; His acting is not limited to one moment.<sup>129</sup>

‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that only continuous things that can be brought into existence at different points in time can be restored after they have disappeared.<sup>130</sup> The production of atoms is not limited to one particular moment. God can bring them into existence at each moment.<sup>131</sup> It implies that when the

<sup>127</sup> In several verses of the Qur’ān it is said that God, who created people for the first time, can return them into existence for a second time or create them again. See for instance Qur’ān 29:19, 36:81, 46:33, 50:15.

<sup>128</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 459:15-16.

<sup>129</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 460:10-16, 462:8-13. See also Gardet, *Dieu*, p. 269; Gimaret, *Noms divins*, pp. 298-99.

<sup>130</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 451:12-13.

<sup>131</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 451:13-17, 454:5-6, 462:8-13.



atoms have disappeared, God can bring them into existence a second time. Therefore, it is possible that God first brings atoms into existence, then annihilates them, and then brings them into existence again. With respect to God's bringing atoms into existence, it makes no difference whether these atoms are created for the first time or for the second time, after they had existed before and had disappeared.<sup>132</sup> However, God cannot bring into existence something that already exists. Therefore, He cannot bring an existing atom into existence. This is a logical impossibility and does not contradict the fact that God can bring atoms into existence at any moment.<sup>133</sup>

Having explained that atoms can be restored, ‘Abd al-Jabbār has to establish that accidents can be restored; accidents determine the qualities of the people to be resurrected. When addressing the question as to which accidents can be restored, ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers to Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī. We have seen that there are two groups of accidents: continuous accidents and non-continuous accidents. Abū Hāshim agreed with his father, Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī, that God cannot restore non-continuous accidents. However, he disagreed with Abū ‘Alī about the continuous accidents. While Abū ‘Alī stated that it is impossible to restore any accident, Abū Hāshim believed that God can restore continuous accidents; God can restore all continuous things that He is able to create, unless something causes their non-continuance.<sup>134</sup> Life is a continuous accident and therefore God can restore it.<sup>135</sup> God can also restore the other continuous accidents. This means that people can be restored after their annihilation.

With respect to returning humans to existence, the term resurrection is used instead of restoration. In fact, both terms have the same meaning, for resurrection means: causing something to exist again after it has disappeared or ended.<sup>136</sup> Having made it clear that people can be resurrected, ‘Abd al-Jabbār goes on to discuss whether God will indeed resurrect them. In his opinion, the resurrection of the dead will certainly happen. He points out that God has an obligation to resurrect at least those people who deserve a reward and have not yet received

<sup>132</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 454:7-13. Ibn Mattawayh states that ‘Abd al-Jabbār referred to the verse, “Say: He who brought them into existence for the first time, will revive them” (Qur’ān 36:79), in order to support his vision that God can restore the atoms after their annihilation (*Majmū’*, vol. 2, p. 308:12).

<sup>133</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 454:14-455:4. *Ba’d al-luma’* in p. 454:20 should be read as *Naqd al-luma’*.

<sup>134</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 463:20-464:1. For instance, God cannot return the knowledge that is the result of reflection (*nazar*) because reflection is not continuous (*Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 463:6-8). According to Ibn Mattawayh, ‘Abd al-Jabbār later changed his opinion and said that it is impossible to restore things that are produced through generation (*tawlid*) from a cause which is not continuous (*Majmū’*, vol. 2, p. 305:11-14). However, this does not differ very much from what ‘Abd al-Jabbār says in the *Mughnī* because God mostly acts directly.

<sup>135</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 460:3-10.

<sup>136</sup> *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary*, Glasgow 1995, p. 1419.

it.<sup>137</sup> The promise of a reward is an essential element of God's *taklif*, His imposition of obligations on all adult people of sound mind.<sup>138</sup> God has promised to reward those who fulfil the obligations He has imposed on them. The annihilation of these people does not relieve God of His obligation to give them the reward they deserve. 'Abd al-Jabbār points out that in our world the obligation to reward someone only ends when it is completely impossible to transmit the reward to this person. However, as long as there is the slightest possibility of giving the reward, the obligation holds. Therefore, 'Abd al-Jabbār believes that God, being able to resurrect living beings, is obliged to resurrect those who deserve a reward from Him.<sup>139</sup>

Another category of living beings that must be resurrected is that of those who have not yet received compensation (*'iwaḍ*) for suffering imposed by God. 'Abd al-Jabbār admits that it is rationally possible that God compensates them during their lifetime because the amount of compensation is limited (*munqati'*), as opposed to the amount of the reward that will be given to all eternity. If God has already given people their full compensation in this world, He is not obliged to resurrect them. Adversaries might argue that God must resurrect all deceased people because He has to compensate them for taking their lives. 'Abd al-Jabbār explains that this argument is wrong. God does not have to compensate them because He gives life for only a definite period. God taking back life is comparable with a moneylender who asks for the return of the loan. The borrower has to return the loan and is not compensated for losing what he borrowed.<sup>140</sup>

On the other hand, those who have died in a painful and distressing way must be compensated for their suffering. Since this can only happen after death, God is obliged to resurrect them, so that they can receive the compensation due to them in the hereafter. According to 'Abd al-Jabbār's theory, all those who are entitled to receive compensation from God himself or, through God's intervention, from those who have inflicted pain on them, must be resurrected for this reason.<sup>141</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār asserts that, rationally, God could revive the dead in this world, compensate them and then end their lives a second time. In that case it would not be necessary to resurrect them. However, he denies that this will happen, referring to divine revelation, which does not state that people are revived in their graves in order to receive compensation but says that people are revived in their graves in order to be punished or to see their places in paradise. From this he concludes that nobody is revived in the grave in order to receive compensation

<sup>137</sup> God postpones the giving of the reward if this is better for the recipient (*Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 464:18-465:2).

<sup>138</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 431:18-22. See also Heemskerk, *Suffering*, pp. 142-51.

<sup>139</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 464:5-20.

<sup>140</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 465:10-466:3.

<sup>141</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 466:3-4. See also Heemskerk, *Suffering*, pp. 157-90.

for a painful death.<sup>142</sup> In ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s opinion, this means that God is obliged to resurrect in the hereafter those who died painfully. This also applies to others who have not received in this world the compensation they are entitled to.<sup>143</sup>

According to ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s theory of compensation for suffering, living beings must compensate for pain they inflict on other living beings, unless they acted on God’s command or with His permission, such as the legal slaughtering of cattle.<sup>144</sup> Since living beings themselves cannot pay out the compensation for the suffering they inflicted on other living beings, God will in the afterlife administer justice between living beings by transferring amounts of compensation from one living being to another. ‘Abd al-Jabbār points out that from divine revelation it can be concluded that God’s administration of justice (*intiṣāf*) between the wronged and those who have wronged them will not take place until the hereafter.<sup>145</sup> This implies that those who died without first receiving compensation for pain inflicted on them by other living beings must be resurrected.

The living beings mentioned above are entitled to receive a reward and/or compensation from God. A different category of people concerns those who deserve to be punished. Rationally, God is not obliged to resurrect them because He can refrain from punishing them and pardon them instead.<sup>146</sup> However, ‘Abd al-Jabbār says they must be resurrected as well, because God has said that He will punish them.

‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that in addition to those who deserve compensation, reward or punishment, God will resurrect living beings that did not deserve these things. Although he does not specify who they are, he means probably living beings that are not entitled to receive compensation in the hereafter, and do not deserve a reward or punishment, such as children who die before reaching adulthood, the insane and animals. These living beings are not subject to God’s imposition of obligations and are not, therefore, deserving of a reward or punishment. According to ‘Abd al-Jabbār divine revelation says that some of them will be chosen to be resurrected although, rationally, they need not be resurrected. Divine revelation says that children will be resurrected to be in paradise.<sup>147</sup> God will also resurrect some animals. With respect to the existence of animals in the

<sup>142</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 466:4-9. ‘Abd al-Jabbār does not explicitly assert that the deceased are punished or rewarded in their graves but he uses what revelation says about this subject in order to establish that people certainly do not receive compensation in their graves.

<sup>143</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 466:10-11.

<sup>144</sup> Heemskerk, *Suffering*, pp. 166-69.

<sup>145</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 466:20-21. Mānakdim refers to a *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet said: “On the Day of Resurrection God does justice (*intaṣāfa*) between wrongdoer (*ẓālim*) and wronged (*mazlūm*), and even the hornless (*jammāʾ*) and the horned (*qarnāʾ*) [animals]” (*Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-khamsa*, p. 505:6-9).

<sup>146</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 466:14-17. ‘Abd al-Jabbār adds that he will explain later that it is good, on God’s part, to pardon unbelievers and evildoers.

<sup>147</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 467:4-8. See also Smith and Haddad, *Islamic Understanding*, pp. 168-82.

hereafter, ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers to Muḥammad’s words: “Sheep belong to the animals (*dawābb*) of paradise” and to another *ḥadīth* that says that animals will be a pleasure for the people in paradise or a punishment for the people in hell.<sup>148</sup>

### *The Identity of the Resurrected*

We have seen that God can restore people after their complete annihilation, so that each resurrected person (*mu‘ād*) will be the same person he was in this world. This is necessary because one must be rewarded or punished for what one has personally done. It would be wrong to reward or punish someone who is only a look-alike.<sup>149</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār is convinced that the identities of the resurrected will be maintained because God will resurrect these people with their own bodies. God can do this because He knows the parts of each person’s body.<sup>150</sup> We have seen before that a person’s identity is determined by the indispensable parts of his body. In ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s opinion, the living totality of a human being consists of parts one needs in order to be living and other, non-essential, parts that one can lose and yet stay alive. Although he does not specify these parts, it is evident he regards arms, legs and other protuberant parts of the body as non-essential parts.<sup>151</sup>

One’s identity is not affected by changes in non-essential parts of the body. We know that when someone is old, his appearance is different than when he was young, yet he is the same person. Our outward forms may change by growing fatter or thinner and yet our identities do not change. The same holds for losing a limb. After losing a limb, a person’s identity is the same as it was before. Changes in the non-essential parts of a person’s totality, such as an increase or decrease in body fat, do not influence this person’s identity. ‘Abd al-Jabbār explains that this is so because the indispensable parts are not affected by these changes.<sup>152</sup>

In ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s opinion, God must at least restore these indispensable parts because a person’s identity is determined by these parts. By restoring these parts, a person’s identity is maintained. The non-essential parts of a person’s body need not be restored. ‘Abd al-Jabbār considers it possible that non-essential parts will be replaced by identical non-essential parts, because this does not affect the person’s identity.<sup>153</sup> We have seen before that God can restore continu-

<sup>148</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 467:1-3. See also Smith and Haddad, *Islamic Understanding*, pp. 76-77; Heemskerk, *Suffering*, pp. 187-89.

<sup>149</sup> On this question, see Gardet, *Dieu*, p. 270.

<sup>150</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 455:19-456:3. Al-Ḥilli (d. 726/1325) also believed that a living being consists of basic parts (*ajzā’ aṣliyya*) that do not change and non-essential parts that may change (Schmidtke, *Theology*, p. 218).

<sup>151</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 467:9-468:3, 473:8-18.

<sup>152</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 468:14-20.

<sup>153</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 475:7-11. ‘Abd al-Jabbār refers to Abū Ishāq b. ‘Ayyāsh (fl. 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century) who asserted that a person may be resurrected in a fatter or thinner form, but only

ous accidents such as life and composition (*taʿlīf*). However, ‘Abd al-Jabbār thinks that it is not necessary for God to restore someone’s life because the life that inheres in a living person does not determine this person’s identity.<sup>154</sup> People may be resurrected with different accidents of life in them than they had before. The same holds for the accident of composition that inheres in a living being’s substrate and gives the body its form, and for other accidents that inhere in the substrate.<sup>155</sup> It means that God must restore someone’s indispensable bodily parts in order to maintain this person’s identity. However, with respect to the non-essential parts and the accidents, God can choose: He may restore the same non-essential parts or He may bring into existence identical parts that replace the former ones.<sup>156</sup>

The fact that God may restore non-essential parts of the body leads to the suggestion that the restoration of someone’s fat means that this fat is unjustly rewarded in paradise if this person deserved the reward when he was still thin and later became fatter. ‘Abd al-Jabbār rejects this suggestion. He points out that the reward is given to the person who deserves it, and not to separate parts of this person’s body. A person has the same identity, whether he is fat or thin. ‘Abd al-Jabbār clarifies this using the example of blaming (or praising) someone. When someone deserves blame (or praise) for having done something, and he then grows fatter or thinner, or loses one of his limbs, he still deserves the blame (or praise), just as if his body had remained the same.<sup>157</sup>

The following situations resemble the one described above. A man loses a hand while he is still obedient to God. Later the one-handed believer becomes an apostate. Conclusion: if this man is punished in hell, his hand is unjustly punished because it was not a part of the man’s body when he was obedient. The

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within certain limits. The increase or decrease in body fat cannot be more than would have been possible in this world, if he had continued to live. ‘Abd al-Jabbār [or Abū Ishāq] adds that the additional parts may increase, but only on the condition that the increase happens gradually and does not affect the indispensable parts or the places in which the breath and soul are (*Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 474:4-13, reading p. 474:12 *marwādī* *al-nafas* instead of *marwādī* *al-nafs*). Probably, he means that it should not cause tightness of the chest or shortness of breath.

<sup>154</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 469:10-13, 469:18-472:9. Objections to this idea probably came from those who thought that the identity of a person is determined by his soul/life.

<sup>155</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 475:14-21.

<sup>156</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 478:1-4. ‘Abd al-Jabbār points out that for this reason it is possible that God will enlarge the bodies of those who are in hell and resurrect people as blind even if they were able to see when they were alive. Evidently, he refers to divine revelation. See, for instance, Qur’an 20:124-127. ‘Abd al-Jabbār reports that Abū ‘Alī said in the last part of *Kitāb al-Insān* that both the obedient and the disobedient people will be resurrected as they were before they died. He points out that Abū ‘Alī did not say that they cannot be resurrected in another form. He mostly said that they would be resurrected [as they were] because of [God’s] wisdom. With respect to Abū ‘Alī’s opinion in *Kitāb al-Insān*, Abū Hāshim said that perhaps the copyist (*kātib*) made a mistake (*Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 478:5-10).

<sup>157</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 477:14-18.

opposite is the case of an apostate who loses his hand. Later the one-handed apostate repents. Conclusion: if this man is rewarded in paradise, his hand is unjustly rewarded because the hand was not a part of the man's body when he repented. 'Abd al-Jabbār declares that both these conclusions are wrong. He points out that the reward concerns the person, and not a part of this person's body.<sup>158</sup>

We have seen that God is not obliged to restore non-essential body parts, such as limbs and eyes, and may replace them by similar ones. Therefore, 'Abd al-Jabbār considers it possible that God will give a resurrected person new non-essential body parts that this person did not have before. These new parts do not change the identity of this resurrected person because they are non-essential. However, God will not provide new indispensable body parts. Indispensable parts must be restored unchanged because they determine a person's identity. Therefore, 'Abd al-Jabbār thinks it possible that God will give a resurrected person more body fat, but only as far as it does not affect this person's indispensable parts or bronchial tubes (*majāri nafasihi*).<sup>159</sup>

It is known that corpses may be eaten by worms. Apart from this, there are several other cases in which living beings become food for other living beings. In 'Abd al-Jabbār's opinion, the eaten bodies become body fat on the bodies of those that have eaten them.<sup>160</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār strongly denies that an indispensable part of one living being can become an indispensable part of another living being.<sup>161</sup> An indispensable part cannot first belong to one particular living being and next to a second living being. It can only become the body fat of the second living being and body fat is a non-essential part of the body. If the eaten living being need not be resurrected, it is possible that God will restore this body fat.

This raises the question as to the form in which consumed living beings will be resurrected after they have been consumed and turned into body fat.<sup>162</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār denies that they will be resurrected in the form of the body fat of those who have eaten them. He points out that body fat belongs to the non-essential body parts that need not be restored. The original fat may be replaced by similar fat.<sup>163</sup> If a living being has been consumed so that its indispensable parts have become fat on another living being, God will resurrect the first living being with its indispensable parts. He will not resurrect the first living being as body fat of a

<sup>158</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 478:11-17.

<sup>159</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 478:19-479:5. I propose to read in p. 479:4 *nafasihi* instead of *naḥsihi*.

<sup>160</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār reports that Abū 'Alī said that living beings that are eaten do not become parts of those who have eaten them, but they become as sediments (*thuff*) in their bodies. In Abū 'Alī's opinion those who have deserved a reward must be resurrected in the form they had before they died, including their non-essential parts. For this reason he denied that the totality of one who deserves a reward can become a part of another totality (*Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 480:19-481:3).

<sup>161</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, pp. 479:19-480:5.

<sup>162</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 479:7-13. About this question see Gardet, *Dieu*, pp. 275-6.

<sup>163</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 480:11-13.



second living being because the second living being may be resurrected without this fat.<sup>164</sup> Therefore, cattle that has been consumed and consequently transformed into body fat, can be resurrected with their own indispensable parts in order to receive their compensation in the hereafter.<sup>165</sup>

### *Summary*

‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that man is the body that we see with our eyes and rejects the idea that man is something hidden inside the body. He does not deny the existence of a soul inside the body, but he is convinced that this soul is not living and that it does not give life to the body. ‘Abd al-Jabbār does not describe the function of the soul. He declares that it is some kind of breath inside the body, the existence of which is necessary in order to be living. If our body has no soul inside it, we die. ‘Abd al-Jabbār describes the soul as a thin body, comparable to the wind, but without specifying what happens to it after death.

‘Abd al-Jabbār distinguishes between living parts of the human body, which have life inhering in them, and inanimate parts. The living parts are interconnected and together form a person’s totality. Because a human being is a totality, he (or she) acts, thinks and perceives as a whole. Inanimate parts of the body, such as blood, hair, and nails, do not belong to the totality, even though some of them are connected to it. Another distinction to be made with respect to the body is between indispensable parts that one needs in order to be living, and non-essential parts that one can lose and yet remain alive, such as eyes or limbs. Although ‘Abd al-Jabbār does not specify which parts of the body are indispensable, he states that they determine a person’s identity, whereas the non-essential parts can be missing without affecting this person’s identity. For this reason, the indispensable parts are important with respect to the resurrection. Restoration of these parts guarantees that the identity of the resurrected is preserved. This provides the certainty that a reward, punishment and compensation are given to those who indeed deserve them.

Resurrection implies that something is brought into existence for a second time after it has disappeared. ‘Abd al-Jabbār believes that at some moment God will annihilate everything in this world. All will disappear because all atoms will disappear at the moment that God creates their opposite, annihilation. One “unit” of annihilation ends the existence of all atoms. The resurrection of the dead implies that God brings atoms into existence again after they have disappeared. ‘Abd al-Jabbār does not specify whether all atoms that ever existed will be returned to existence, but he makes it clear that God is obliged to resurrect at least those living beings that deserve a reward or compensation. Rationally, God

<sup>164</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 480:7-13.

<sup>165</sup> *Mughnī*, vol. 11, p. 480:13-16.

is not obliged to resurrect those who have deserved punishment, because He may pardon them instead. However, divine revelation indicates that God will resurrect them, too, because He has said so.

‘Abd al-Jabbār declares that God will restore at least the indispensable body parts of living beings, so that their identities are preserved. With respect to non-essential body parts, ‘Abd al-Jabbār considers it possible that God will replace them by identical ones. He rejects the idea that one part of a person’s body will be resurrected in hell and the rest of the body in paradise, or the reverse. He points out that reward, punishment or compensation concern the person, and not separate parts of his body. ‘Abd al-Jabbār also rejects the view that a living being will be resurrected as part of another living being that has eaten it. Living beings that have been eaten will be resurrected with their own bodies.

These issues may be seen as subtleties, put forward by adversaries in order to embarrass ‘Abd al-Jabbār. However, not only the Mu‘tazilis, but also modern Muslims are interested in this subject. Some years ago Muslims in the Netherlands were interviewed about their willingness to donate organs. It appeared that some of them were anxious about the form in which they would be resurrected if they donated an organ.<sup>166</sup> They feared that the recipient of their organ might use it to sin against God and wondered who would be held responsible for these sins on the Day of Judgment: the donor or the recipient. Some of them feared that a heart transplant implied that the donor would be resurrected without a heart because his heart would be inside the recipient. Others feared that a person who donated his eyes would be blind in the hereafter. This shows that this subject was not only a topic for discussion among the medieval Mu‘tazilis and their adversaries, but that it remains of interest for Muslims today.

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<sup>166</sup> Cor Hoffer and Hub Zwart, *Orgaandonatie en lichamelijke integriteit. Een analyse van christelijke, liberale en islamitische interpretaties*, Best 1998. See also Birgit Krawietz, *Die Ḥurma. Shariatrechtlicher Schutz vor Eingriffen in die körperliche Unversehrtheit nach arabischen Fatwas des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 1991, pp. 201-2.

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