

JTI

A Bi-Quarterly Journal of
Theosophia Islamica

Vol. 1, No. 2, 2021 Issue 2

2



Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy

In The Name of God

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Resurrectionism and the Bodily Criterion of Personal Identity from Early to Reformation-Era Christianity

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Received: 2021-09-22

Accepted: 2022-01-08

Abstract

This paper explores early and Reformation-era Christian attempts to render the idea of an afterlife coherent. The specific focus is on early Reformed Christians' unequivocal belief in a bodily criterion of personal identity and a physical afterlife. This article shows how Jewish divisions are partially responsible for the differences from this endeavor. Lending focus and structure to this broadly reconstructive project is a sustained critique of Princeton philosopher Mark Johnston's recent agenda-setting series of lectures published as *Surviving Death*. My general conclusion is that Christian resurrectionism—or at least, the most persuasive forms of it as presented by some of the more astute Reformed Christian thinkers—is at least a coherent idea regardless of whether or not it is true.

Keywords

Resurrectionism, Christianity, Personal Identity.

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* J. Sigrist, Michael. (2021). Resurrectionism and the Bodily Criterion of Personal Identity from Early to Reformation-Era Christianity. *Journal of Theosophia Islamica*, 1(2), pp. 7-29. Doi:10.22081/JTI.2022.60991.1021

Introduction

Christian thinking about the afterlife and immortality can be traced to two conflicting sources. The first is the Pharisaic doctrine of the resurrection. Not all Jews during the early Roman Empire believed in an immortal soul or an afterlife. The Gospel book of Mark records that during his trial, a group of Sadducees attempted to confound Jesus by putting to him questions that made the notion of an afterlife conflict with the laws of marriage (proof, thought the Sadducees, that resurrection was impossible) (Mark, 2010). By contrast, the Pharisees—notably, the Apostle Paul was a committed member of this group—believed in resurrection, an explicitly material afterlife in which the bodies of the dead are physically raised and reconstituted. The reconstituted body was clearly understood to be the same person as had died. The notion of an afterlife that will call following accepted precedent— ‘resurrectionism’ clearly presupposes a bodily criterion of personal identity. Immortality in the afterlife is achieved by the fact that one will enjoy the same body after the Great Day as one enjoys now.

The second source of Christian thinking about the afterlife comes from Greek philosophical and especially Platonic influences. While it is unlikely the earliest Christians (from the first century CE) were very conversant in Hellenic philosophy, by the fourth and fifth centuries—significantly, the time which witnessed the important Councils from Nicea to Chalcedon—the Church ‘doctors’ who would decide what the basic orthodox tenets of the Christian religion (most notably, Origen, Tertullian, and Augustine of Hippo) certainly were. From these sources and Plato especially that the notion of an afterlife came to rest upon the idea of an immaterial soul that could not be destroyed and therefore would survive the body's death.

These two traditions vie uneasily throughout pre-Reformation Christianity. The first portion of this paper (roughly a third) briefly

outlines and comments upon the juxtaposition of these conflicting sources and remarks upon attempts by Catholic philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas and Anselm of Canterbury to marry them in ways that were not explicitly inconsistent. However, the majority of the paper focuses upon the fundamental rethinking of the matter enabled by Reformed Christian thinkers who would reject accepted Catholic doctrine.

Specifically, Reformed Christian and Lutheran thinkers nearly universally rejected the Platonic conception *in toto* and resolutely affirmed the Pharisaic tradition of resurrectionism. That is to say, almost all Reform Christian thinkers of the 16th and 17th centuries insist upon a bodily criterion of personal identity vis-à-vis the afterlife. Histories of this era that touch upon matters of a dispute over the afterlife tend to explain the emergence of resurrectionism mainly by appeal to doctrinal forces: a desire to return to a conceived ‘early church’ and an associated deep mistrust of anything Hellenic. By contrast, philosophical work on personal identity rarely reaches back to sources such as the early Reformed Christians due to the professional burden that arguments should not rest upon assumptions about the supernatural. This research, therefore, turns to these texts and history with a philosophers’ eye and re-constructs attempts by early Reformed and Lutheran Christians to develop an entirely physical conception of the afterlife based upon the bodily criterion of personal identity assumed by resurrectionism.

This latter, longer portion of the paper is organized around the recent attempt at refutation of Christian physicalism by Mark Johnston. Johnston claims that the very idea of personal identity by bodily identity after death and physical corruption is ‘incoherent.’ As examining the writings and arguments of Reformed Christian resurrectionists and mortalists (those thinkers who believe that the

person ceases to exist from the period after death to the period of Judgment Day, at which time God brings the person back into existence) in order to show that (1) they are aware of the sorts of objections which Johnston raises and (2) offer rejoinders that, while not refuting Johnston's argument, subject them to reasonable rejection. Specifically, Johnston offers a moral argument that he claims is based upon a wholly 'mundane' notion of necessity. He claims that the mundane laws of necessity hold regardless of one's supernatural views. This paper provides an argument to show that Johnston's demonstration of this claim is weak. Therefore, how one views the supernatural, most significantly the purposes and nature of God, influences how one conceives of the afterlife. An examination of writings further reinforces this point precisely by Reformed Christians (which partly explains why esoteric disputes in this area were regularly heated). This research lays out the problem as early Reformed Christians determined what constitutes the same body and why the same body can be understood as being the same person.

The foundation of the Christian belief in an afterlife is supposed to be guaranteed by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Christians believe that, like Jesus, they too will die, but also like Jesus, that they will be resurrected again in the world to come. This much is settled Christian doctrine. Less universally agreed upon is any understanding about what exactly this means. This paper intends to analyze the doctrine of resurrection in light of the bodily criterion of identity and briefly discuss the historical and scriptural bases many, especially Reformation-era Christians, offer to support this interpretation of resurrection. Then turn to examine some of the philosophical difficulties this interpretation faces, and offer no opinion on the truth of the doctrine, but argue that some of the most important criticisms of it can be defeated and that the doctrine can be interpreted in a manner

consistent with the bodily criterion of identity.

Resurrectionism is a religious doctrine that a person will die but come to be again through a re-quickening or re-animation of the dead body. The origin of this doctrine is clouded behind millennia of lost texts, political upheavals, and civilizational tumult. There seems to be some consensus that resurrection emerged originally among the Zoroastrians and came to Judaism sometime during or just after returning from exile (Swain, 1986). There is some disagreement about exactly *when* the doctrine involves *personal* immortality, but most scholars agree that it is a belief commonly found in Judaism (Swain, 1986; Ferguson, 2003).

Resurrectionism in Judaism

The Christian doctrine of resurrectionism, as with most things Christian, is, in fact, a Jewish notion. There was hardly a consistent view on the afterlife and the nature of the soul in Judaism even after the return from exile. There was some agreement that the dead gather in a great cavity in the earth (the *Sheol*), but this may have been something like the old Roman view that the souls of the dead were not personal and became in death part of an impersonal *manes* (Ferguson, 2003). The idea might have emerged from pressure to acknowledge that life after death is a *reward* for virtue in this life—a doctrine that becomes essential for rabbinical orthodoxy. Importantly for later disputes, this entails that the soul is not *by nature* immortal (Stendhal, 1965). This point will be necessary for argument later in the paper.

The Pharisees, who figure prominently in the New Testament, argued for a bodily resurrection that would be much like daily life in the present, only better in the world to come. They were challenged on this claim by the Sadducees, who also figure prominently in the New Testament but deny both the immortality of the soul as well as

personal resurrection. During his trial, Jesus is questioned by the Sadducees in a way designed to lead him into an inconsistency, which avoids subtly changing Pharisaic law. Matters naturally are always fraught interpretatively, but Jesus probably held a view of the afterlife that was closest to the Pharisaic doctrine of resurrectionism, and it is important to note that Paul (or Saul) was himself a Pharisee.

Resurrectionism in Catholicism

By the second and third centuries, early Christianity thinkers such as Tertullian and Origen had begun to force some systematic coherence onto Christian doctrine. Christian philosophy, in other words, was starting to supplement and strengthen but, of course, also alter Christian dogma and doctrine. Issues such as the nature of the trinity, the status of Jesus, original sin, and the organization and authority of the clergy and church itself were by no means settled, nor is it a history of purely theoretical conflicts. All the same, the world in which these developments took root was the Greco-Roman world of the Imperium Romanum, a world that, among the educated and intellectual citizenry, certainly had become used to the doctrine of the immateriality of the soul even if there was not universal agreement.

By the time of the First Council of Nicea (325 ACE), Hellenistic philosophical language had become a common source for explicating many theological concepts (these sources, in turn, come from early Orphic and Pythagorean systems of thought). Thus by the end of the fourth century, Augustine could defend the doctrine of the soul's immortality by appealing to its immateriality and doing so along *explicitly Platonic lines*. The soul must be immaterial and therefore immortal, Augustine at one point argues, because it can grasp immaterial objects, for anything able to grasp an immaterial object must itself be immaterial. This, of course, is an argument found

in Plato's *Phaedo*. Notice that a Platonic doctrine is not being used to justify or lend further support to a doctrine already clearly articulated in scripture. There is no talk of an immaterial soul in the New Testament. Augustine is importing a belief into Christianity to make sense of a specific doctrine, in this case, resurrectionism. Catholic thinking on the subject remained more or less stable, if also contentious, throughout the millennium following Augustine's death. Resurrection is easily accounted for in a Platonic doctrine because, in this case, the soul survives the body's death. After all, it is not essentially embodied. The body can cease to exist while the person survives. Resurrectionism then, if it is admitted to be material, is the re-incorporation of an immaterial soul into a new body.

Indeed, the most significant change during this period was the introduction of Aristotelian rather than Platonic concepts. Aristotelianism can do justice to the basic idea of resurrectionism without rejecting *tout court* the soul's immateriality. According to the Aristotelian doctrine found, for example, in Aquinas, the whole person is a union of form and matter. However, the soul is a person's tangible form and can exist independently of the body. Aquinas' considered position seemed to be that at death, the *rational part* of the soul would find itself in purgatory, suffer the fires of iniquity to be purified for paradise, and unite again with the body on resurrection world to come. The benefit of this hylomorphic theory of immortality is that it returns the momentousness to the fact of the resurrection. The problem with this version complements its benefits: is *someone* in purgatory? If the point of purgatory is to do penance for the sins of one's life, then it would have to be *that person* doing penance, and if so, then the problem is just repeated within the hylomorphic framework.

Aquinas confronted one more problem that will be of interest to us later: suppose, he asks, that there exists a community of

cannibals wherein each generation gets sustenance by eating the remains of the previous generation? (Aquinas, 1989). According to Aquinas' hylomorphic doctrine, the whole person is the union of matter and body. Drawing from Aristotle, it is a *matter* that individuates forms into particular substances. So while the matter in its pure state may be pure potency (and therefore nothing), it is important that, if a substance is to be the substance it is, it retains the same matter. The problem the cannibal community poses for this model is that if the son eats the father, and the grandson the son, and so on, to whom, for example, does the liver go at the day of resurrection into the world to come? Aquinas' answer here is that *God's Justice* will not allow this to happen. Such an eventuality is perhaps *possible*, but God will not allow it to occur. Aquinas speculates that some essential part of the father will be only a superfluity in the son and that God will guarantee that an essential part will remain for each person, even if a part of the other persons, out of which the original person will be resurrected.

Resurrectionism in the Reformation

The end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries was an exciting time for the doctrine of the soul's immortality. For example, in Northern Italy, the re-discovery first of Aristotle and then of his Arabic-speaking commentators—importantly, Avicenna and Averroes—lead to a lively re-thinking of the nature of the soul, person, and immortality and the afterlife. Pietro Pomponazzi, to take just one case, was an important philosopher at the University of Bologna between 1511 and his death in 1525. Pomponazzi looked at the Aristotelian concepts we have just seen Aquinas use to explicate the doctrine of immortality and the afterlife but drew a scandalous conclusion: that the soul, and therefore persons, are mortal. The soul cannot exist without the body, Pomponazzi reasoned, since thought requires a

body—specifically, the phantasmata—to actively think and therefore exist; without the body, the soul has no actuality and hence is not.

Pomponazzi knew that this doctrine—known as Christian mortalism—was controversial because it directly contradicts the decrees of the fifth Lateran Council on precisely this matter known as the *Apostolici regiminis*. In response to both the rise of mortalism as well as the Averroist doctrine of a single possible intellect for all souls (denying personal immortality), the *Apostolic Regminis* decreed that the natural immortality of the soul and that each body has its soul to be a matter of revealed truth and immutable Church doctrine. As a way of hedging his argument, if not his well-being, Pomponazzi had concluded his work on the matter—*Treatise on the Immortality of the Soul*—by acknowledging that his conclusions were only probable and that Christian faith as known through revelation teaches us otherwise.

Pomponazzi, however, had no interest in leaving the Catholic faith. This is not true for his nearly—contemporary transalpine reformers in Germany, Geneva, and elsewhere. Chief among these is Martin Luther. The *Apostolic Regminis* was issued in 1513. In 1517 Luther had nailed his 95 theses to the doors of Wittenburg Castle, and by 1521 had been excommunicated from the church. Luther, therefore, felt little need to rectify his teachings with the Lateran decrees.

Nothing is said directly about the doctrine of immortality or resurrection in the 95 theses themselves. Luther does, however, offer qualified and tepid, yet all the same clear, assent to the doctrine of purgatory. His contention in the theses is not over the existence of purgatory but instead on the power of official clergy, and especially the Pope, to direct intercession on behalf of the souls there residing. It should be obvious that purgatory poses a problem for a materialist or

mortalist theory of resurrection. Whatever the nature of purgatory, it is clear that purgatory is not a place on earth and certainly nowhere where dead bodies are found. Therefore, it is difficult—as we have already seen in the case of Aquinas—to maintain a belief in the existence of purgatory without also believing that the soul is in some sense immaterial and hence able to migrate to some place where the body is not.

By 1530, however, Luther had rejected the doctrine of purgatory outright. Nevertheless, he still has a problem maintaining the doctrine of physical resurrection. These problems are based on scripture, not philosophy: on the one hand, Luther thought that both the Old and New Testaments were clear that judgment occurs immediately upon the moment of death. Souls do not undergo, as Catholics taught, a period of purgation and penance prior to judgment but after death. However, resurrection into everlasting life is not supposed to occur until the advent of the world comes. So how can it be the case both that one is judged immediately and yet not resurrected until the return of Christ and arrival of the world to come? Luther's answer is ingenious, if not wholly compelling. On scriptural grounds, he rejects the notion that resurrection occurs after judgment. If judgment were to occur after death but before the resurrection, we (our souls) would have received all that is decisively important before this (Althaus, 1966). Resurrection and the arrival of the world to come would not be, in this case, momentous events. On the last day, the person, not the person's body, is resurrected. On this very point in the entertaining and important *Tischreden* Luther declares: "If one says Abraham's soul lives, but his body is dead, this is rubbish! The whole man shall live!" (Luther, 1857). Elsewhere he protests his commitment to a material soul, commenting: "It is my opinion that the soul is not added from outside but is created out of the matter of the semen" (Luther, 1857). To make sense of both immediate judgment and to

wait for the arrival of resurrection, Luther evokes a doctrine later known as 'soul sleeping':

Thus, death is called sleep in the Scriptures. Just as one who falls asleep and wakes up unexpectedly the following day does not know what happened in the meantime, so we will suddenly rise on the Last Day without knowing that we were in death and have passed through death (Luther, 1857).

There are problems, of course, with this account. One that Luther addressed comes from the account in Luke of the thief on the cross. There Jesus says to the thief: "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke. 23:41). Doesn't it follow from Jesus' promise that the thief will be in paradise with Jesus *today*, not after a long nap? While there have been attempts to read 'today' as qualifying the time of utterance rather than the promised event, Luther deals with this problem in a different way, one familiar to apologists throughout the centuries: this is a mystery not because the soul-sleeping doctrine is unsound but because we have a limited concept of time. God reminds his fellow diners (this is again from the *Tischreden*), is the God of the living, and confusions like that are the rubbish that results when "philosophy is introduced to theology!"

Even if arguments *ad mysterium* suffices for rectifying Luther's doctrine of soul-sleep with the proclamations of scripture, they hardly suffice for rectifying the philosophical issue at hand. One problem is that the body does not retain its identity after death. The body decays; its parts are scattered over the existence and become the parts of other things, and significantly, other substances. We have seen this problem already with Aquinas. Milton, fired by religious zeal as much as any Lutheran or Calvin, addressed this question directly and drew a rather radical conclusion. Milton agreed with Luther and much of the reform Christian thinkers that the Catholic doctrine on the

soul's natural immortality was wrong philosophically and wronged theologically. Death, according to him, is neither the result of natural causes nor something that happens to the body alone; death, instead, is the wages of sin. In the supernatural order of things, the punishment of death is not eternal suffering, but something, to the mind of many at least, far worse: utter extinction. "For what could be juster," Milton writes, than that he who had sinned in his whole person should die in his whole person? Alternatively,... that the mind, which is the part principally offending, should escape the threatened death?" (Milton, 1825). Milton concludes that, between earthly death and the Day of Judgment, the person, the whole of body and spirit, ceases to be. The person is not asleep; the person is extinguished. How are we to think of the identity of the pre-death and post-death person? What makes them the *same* person? Milton's answer is again that dissatisfying argument *ad mysterium*: "Since then this mystery is so great, we are admonished by that very consideration not to assert anything respecting it rashly or presumptuously, on mere grounds of philosophical reasoning... If we listen to such passages and are willing to acquiesce in the simple truth of Scripture, unencumbered by metaphysical comments, to how many prolix and preposterous arguments shall we put an end?" (Milton, 1825).

Among Milton's near contemporaries was Thomas Hobbes, who agrees with Milton that death is the wages of sin. The eternal life humanity was intended to enjoy in the Garden of Eden was not a spiritual or other-worldly place; it was a real place, here on earth, with rocks made from minerals and humans from flesh and blood. Life in the world to come likewise will be of the same. Hobbes believes that it will be this very earth. All talk of spirit in the scriptures is too readily misunderstood, Hobbes argues:

In the most general acceptance, the word body signifieth that

which filleth or occupieth some certain room or imagined place; and dependeth not on the imagination, but is a real part of that we call the universe. For the universe, being the aggregate of all bodies, there is no real part thereof that is not also body, nor anything properly a body that is not also part of that aggregate of all bodies, the universe. The same also, because bodies are subject to change, that is to say, to a variety of appearance to the sense of living creatures, is called substance, that is to say, subject to various accidents: as sometimes to be moved, sometimes to stand still; and to seem to our senses sometimes hot, sometimes cold; sometimes of one color, smell, taste, or sound, sometimes of another. Furthermore, we attribute this diversity of seeming, produced by the diversity of the operation of bodies on the organs of our sense, to alterations of the bodies that operate and call them accidents of those bodies. Moreover, according to this acceptance of the word, substance and body signify the same thing; therefore, substance incorporeal are words which, when joined together, destroy one another, as if a man should say, an incorporeal body (Hobbes, 2002, p. 293).

Like Milton, Hobbes is committed to a physicalist interpretation of personal identity and, therefore, to a physicalist doctrine of the resurrection. However, when we examine pose the question to Hobbes, What happens to the body between the time of death and the moment of Resurrection? Furthermore, How can one be sure that it is the same body? We find not an argument *ad mysterium*, but no argument at all! Persons are bodies, plain and simple, Hobbes contends. At the resurrection, this body is resurrected, and in being so resurrected, *you* are resurrected. That is the doctrine, but we do not find any defense that might satisfy the contemporary metaphysician.

So while this paper shows how the Reform-era Christians were

committed to a bodily criterion of personal identity and a physicalist understanding of the resurrection, it remains to see whether this doctrine is conceptually feasible. We do not think that Luther, Milton, or even Hobbes have done a sufficient job showing it. The chief obstacle this account suffers is making an account for the identity of the pre-death and post-resurrection person. It has to be said that the consensus among philosophers is not in favor of the doctrine. Among philosophers today who argue on behalf of the bodily criterion of identity—that a person is a body—most believe this entails death. When the body dies, the person dies. As we have seen, Milton agrees with this but argues that this same person is yet resurrected—reborn, as it were—in the world to come. Hobbes and Luther suggest that some perpetual continuity is maintained but are vague as to what exactly it is that underwrites this perdurance. Luther has the most specific answer—the person is asleep—but hardly answers how such sleep is metaphysically possible. So let us now turn to examine the bodily criterion of identity and see if it can be consistent with the resurrection doctrine.

Resurrectionism for Philosophers

Here is a typical statement of the bodily criterion of identity:

(1) For any x and y , x is the same person as y only if x has the same body as y .

The problem most commonly thought to confront defenders of the bodily criterion of identity is that scenarios are at least conceivable that violate the criterion and yet seem, intuitively, to maintain personal identity; conversely, some scenarios are, again, at least conceivable, but seem to imply a loss of identity and yet satisfy the criterion. Relying solely on the bodily criterion—arguing that not only is bodily sameness over time necessary for personal identity over time, but *sufficient*—

thus is often thought to untenably challenge certain other criteria for personhood that we—philosophers and the public alike—are reluctant to give up. For example, consider a person who has entered into an irreversible vegetative state. Many would say that while the body still exists, the person no longer does. Alternatively, consider a person who, waking from a coma, has lost all memories, beliefs and desires from the earlier life. Again, many find it to be intuitively true about such a scenario that the former person no longer exists, even though that same body does. Venturing into more distant possible worlds, consider a person who steps into a tele transporter which records in perfect exactitude the physical state of the current body, destroys that body, and then creates an exact replica somewhere else. Again, many, like Derek Parfit, believe that this is good enough for personal survival even though it fails to meet the bodily criterion of identity. John Locke seemed to believe a person could go to sleep a prince and awake a pauper.

This is all familiar territory for anyone who has reviewed the literature on personal identity from the last forty years or so. What I would like to focus on is the specific and unique challenges that the resurrectionist faces in light of the debate over the bodily criterion. If my foray into the historical material is correct, then the doctrine of resurrection in Judaism, early Christianity, and Reform Christianity is explicitly understood in a manner consistent with the bodily criterion of identity. I want to claim that the resurrectionist faces especial problems when it comes to maintain this criterion consistently, but also has an especially powerful conceptual tool to cope with those problems—namely, God. So in what remains I want to discuss those problems and then examine whether this tool is powerful enough to overcome those objections.

It has to be said that most defenders of the bodily criterion of identity do not believe that there is any such thing as life after death.

This is for the obvious reason that, when the body dies, so does the person. The especial problem that resurrectionism poses for the defender of the bodily criterion of identity is explaining how the person can survive the death of the body, or at least survive an intermittent period of death, given that the person *is the body*. When the body dies, it starts to decay. Given time enough, the body decays completely, and its parts become the parts of other things—rocks, soil, trees, hedgehogs, even other persons. It's important to note though that the death of the body, unlike perhaps the death of a person, does not mean that the body ceases *to exist*. The body proper does not cease to exist until it has sufficiently decayed. What constitutes 'sufficiently' is probably a vague boundary. At the extreme, we can certainly agree that decomposition down to the atomic level and re-absorption of those atoms into other things constitutes the *destruction* of the body.

Let's deal with each of these problems in turn. First, there has to be strict or numerical identity between the resurrected and the current me. A person exactly like me will not be me. The bodily criterion can handle this insofar as it stipulates that the resurrected person will be me just in case the same body has been resurrected. Two objections might be raised here, one scriptural and the other philosophical.

Paul says that through resurrection we will be raised in a new, glorified body—in fact, in an incorruptible body. Similarly, while it is clear that Jesus was resurrected in a body very similar to his corruptible body (there were, after all, the stigmata and spear wounds shown to Thomas), his resurrected body still does things we cannot imagine a corruptible body to do. I see no reason why we cannot believe that the corruptible and incorruptible bodies cannot be comprised of the same stuff. Of course there would have to be some

miraculous re-ordering of things such that carbon-based life-forms like ourselves do not suffer the types of injuries or corruptions that we do today, but I see no reason why God, in his infinite power, could not make the suitable arrangements.

The philosophical answer, coming off the scriptural one, has to be that, in order to satisfy the bodily criterion, it is the *same body*, and this means, a body made from the *same stuff*. Again, I am assuming—on the basis of intuition and expectation of agreement less than argument—that disassembly and reassembly are disassemblings and reassemblings of *the same thing*. So for the resurrection of my body to constitute *my* resurrection it has to be the *same body* and that means the re-collection, reassembly and reanimation of the same stuff that constitutes my body today.

I want to defend this idea against two important objections. The first objection denies that this criterion is even satisfied *in this life*, let alone in the world to come. Being metabolic, bodies are constantly shedding material and incorporating new material. I am the same person today—let's stipulate—that I was twenty years ago, but I am not the same body. Today I have gray whiskers but twenty years ago I had none at all. This seems to be a problem, but there is an easy, if unsatisfying, solution. We can say that Michael Today is the same person as Michael 1990 insofar as Michael Today had no whiskers in 1990 and that Michael 1990 has gray whiskers in 2010. To make this solution satisfying we need to adopt some criterion that allows for there to be the same body at times as dispersed as 2010 and 1990 I recommend the following, taken from Quinn 1978:

- (2) For any x and y , some body of person x is spatiotemporally continuous with some body of person y only if there are spatiotemporal loci l_1 and l_2 such that some body of x is at l_1 and some body of y is at l_2 and there is a continuously ordered set of

spatiotemporal loci such that l_1 and l_2 are members of that set and there is some physical object at every locus in that set.

Observe that this criterion is satisfied even if my bones turn to dust between l_1 and l_2 , or if I am burned and my ashes scattered to the winds. It could be the case, as Quinn claims, that my body today is spatiotemporally continuous by this standard with my body in 1990 even though these bodies do not share a single proper part (Quinn, 1978, p. 112)!

(2) as an interpretation of (1) implies that resurrection is consistent with the bodily criterion of identity just in case the parts that make me in the world to come are spatiotemporally continuous in the way outlined by (2) with my body now. There is one strong objection to this view: what is to stop elements of the same set from comprising proper parts—at different times, admittedly—of different persons? For example, the atoms that were part of Michael 1990 might also be part of Thomas 2010. Who then *is* this set of atoms?

This of course is just an iteration of the problem that Aquinas confronted, and I am going to argue that Aquinas' solution to this issue is passable and consistent with (1) and (2). Mark Johnson has argued that this problem, the problem of perimortem duplicates, effectively refutes bodily accounts of resurrection based upon principles like (2).

Recall that the problem posed by duplicates is that multiple persons could be constituted from the same matter. Aquinas considers this in the case of cannibals: the matter that constitutes the persons of generation X is the same that constitutes the persons of generation Y and Z. Thus, when at the Resurrection everyone is raised at once, there will not be enough matter to go around to reconstitute each person, and creating new matter won't solve the problem because that would violate (2). Aquinas' solution, you will recall, relies on a *deus*

ex machina; God vigilantly monitors our earthly going-ons to ensure that such potential outcomes are never realized. The *deus ex machina* appeal can then be given some credibility when supplemented with an argument from justice (it would be unjust for God not to forestall such possibilities).

Johnston's argument against this is somewhat complicated, but I believe it can be summarized briefly as follows:

Assume that perimortem duplicates are possible—that some elements of the set of stuff that constitute Michael also constitute James, although never at the same time. It's important for Johnston's argument that this *could* happen—however unlikely, through the normal workings of the laws of nature; it is a highly *improbable* outcome, but not a *miraculous* one. Assume also a principle like (2). At the Resurrection, a body is reproduced out of elements that constituted at one point both Michael and James. If so, Johnston reasons, “the one body that then results would be the body of *each* of the perimortem duplicates” (Johnston, 2010, p. 33). In this case two distinct people have become one and the same person, an absurd result. “Bodies are stuck in this life,” he concludes (Johnston, 2010, p. 36).

My response to this, like Aquinas, is to accept that God would never allow this potential outcome to take place. Johnston argues that this will not do. This solution brings God in ‘too late,’ he says. If it is true that,

- (a) necessarily, if a body y at t_2 is spatiotemporally continuous with a body x at t_1 , then y is the very same body as x ,
- (b) perimortem duplicates are possible, and that
- (c) necessarily, if a body z reproduces exactly bodies x and bodies y at some later t_3 , then z is the very same body x

come back into existence and the very same body y come back into existence

So,

(d) necessarily, there are no distinct bodies x and y with the same perimortem state such that z reproduces both x's perimortem state and y's perimortem state.

Now, what if someone argues, as I have suggested before, that (d) in fact is true because God's justice is inconsistent with the problem of perimortem duplicates insofar as if they were allowed than one, another, or neither would face their just desserts? If so, then (d)'s truth does not follow from (a), (b) or (c), but is rather added after the fact. This is the sort of move that Johnston argues is 'too late,' for (d) is a logical consequence of (a), (b), and (c). (d), Johnston argues, does not follow from divine, but from merely *mundane* necessity. As he puts it, "[i]t is not thanks to God's just will that if $x = y$ and $y = z$ then $x = z$. A will has no room to insert itself *here*." (Johnston. 2010, p. 37).

I agree, not as a matter of divine but of mundane necessity (d) follows from (a), but the problem, I submit, with its following from (a), (b) and (c) is not a problem for the bodily criterion of identity but for the idea that we need to be *essentialists* about identity.

Johnston is offering a familiar sort of argument: from the fact that some unlikely counterfactual *could obtain* we conclude that some actual state of affairs logically implied by the principle is affected. For example, we might be tempted to conclude that because some other being *could* have all of my memories, perceptions and experiences and yet not be me that I now am not *essentially* this collection of memories, perceptions and beliefs. I don't deny that this is true, but this does not show that I am not *in fact* these things; it shows only that I am not *essentially* these things. The same applies to Johnston's

arguments: If Johnston is right, then (2) does not reveal anything true about what a person is *essentially*, but to this one may reply, why worry about essences? Consider, as Johnston does, the Ship of Theseus: it leaves port from Athens on a circuitous journey to Delos. Along the way, it *could be* the case that every board of timber is replaced as it weathers with new boards found as driftwood. It could also be the case that some enterprising sailor picked up the discarded boards and reconstructed them in the exact model of the ship that left the port from Athens. Let us say that these two ships arrive in Delos simultaneously. Which is the ship of Theseus? This scenario would precisely present the absurd result that Johnston worries about it. We should not know what to say, not because the facts are not all available, but because the facts cannot settle the matter. Of course, Johnston is correct: because this is possible, it shows that the ship of Theseus is not *essentially* the form and material of the ship that left Athens. All the same, we think it is equally absurd to claim that, *because this could happen*, on normal journeys, when there is no duplication or other such shenanigans, that we are unsure what to say about whether the ship is reaching port in Delos *is* the ship of Theseus. Just so, we conclude that (d) *is* a logical consequence of (a), but only if we qualify (a) with *necessary*. However, we see no reason why we need to do that. (2) is just fine, and (2) is not modally qualified. So long as we give up on a commitment to essentialism, then we are free to assert (a), (b), and (c) along with an auxiliary premise stating God's ultimate justice such that (d*) follows:

(d*) there are no distinct bodies x and y with the same perimortem state such that z reproduces both x's perimortem state and y's perimortem state.

This paper claim that we can accept (2) as a statement of the bodily criterion of identity without getting caught in the sort of

absurdities staked out by Johnston only if we can accept that a person is his or her body, but not *essentially* so. Room in the literature already exists for this sort of theory in the work of Parfit and Nozick.

Returning in summary to the question of resurrectionism and the bodily criterion of identity: resurrectionism maintains that each person will die but will also, on the last day, be resurrected in the world to come. Reform Christian thinkers thought that this should be interpreted to mean that the same body, dead at one point, is resurrected by God and the person resurrected insofar. So long as we can accept that this is so by God's fiat rather than essential, the Reform Christian commits no inconsistency in holding to the doctrine.

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Immortality in the Aristotelian Christian Tradition

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Received: 2021-05-31

Accepted: 2021-10-03

Abstract

In Christian Aristotelianism and Thomism, immortality is not endless continuity in time after death but assimilation and participation in God's eternity. Life of the Saved does not undergo changes *per se* since there is no passage of time in eternity. For Aquinas, the subjects of immortality are, on the one hand, the resurrected human beings and, on the other, the subsistent souls, which should not be confused with substances proper. Personal identity and thus the resurrected body's identity *form substantial individuals*. In Aristotelian hylomorphism - presupposed by the two theses, the *materia* is not mattered in the modern sense, but rather potentiality.

Keywords

Immortality, Eternity, Aristotelian, Christian tradition.

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*Runggaldier, Edmund. (2021). Immortality in the Aristotelian Christian Tradition. Journal of *Theosophia Islamica*, 1(2), pp. 30-47. Doi: 10.22081/jti.2022.61067.1015

Introduction

Among modern theologians and Christian philosophers until thirty of forty years ago, it was fashionable to ignore or minimize the question about immortality. According to them, the notion of immortality does not fit into the biblical tradition. Instead of believing in the immortality of the human soul, Christians should rather believe in the resurrection of the whole human being.

In the days immediately after the Council Vaticanum II, even the hope of resurrection was relegated into the realm of subjective spirituality. Questions as to the identity of the resurrected body were considered misleading: relevance is only the inner attitude of the believer. Even the mind - body relation was considered a problem only for those influenced by the Greek way of accounting for the human person. In contrast, there is no duality between the soul and the body in the biblical tradition.

The theological tendencies of those days strongly diverged from the traditional catholic doctrine stressing the immortality of the soul. The Council Lateranense V, e.g., had declared the contrary belief a plague: “...*contra huiusmodi pestem... damnamus et reprobamus omnes asserentes, animam intellectivam mortalem esse, aut unicam in cunctis hominibus...*” (D 738)

Nowadays, things have changed again. We are once again confronted with an intense debate, especially among analytic philosophers of religion, on the presuppositions or implications of the soul's immortality. In this paper, we want to concentrate on one aspect of the debate: how we tackle immortality depends on how we account for the nature of time and eternity.

1. Immortality and time

In the discussion on immortality, philosophers nowadays normally

presuppose the modern notion of time and have, thus, limited resources to solve several puzzles of immortality. Although the modern relativistic notion of space – time differs from the Newtonian account of time, both modern approaches to the nature of time differ widely from the Aristotelian: Thomistic one.

In science, for representing processes and changes, it has proven extremely helpful to work with four dimensions: in addition to the three spatial dimensions, depth, length, and height, scientists add the fourth temporal dimension, which allows the representation of various relevant states at different time instances. They thus work with the so – called four – dimensional space – time – system.

Philosophers of time discussing whether the successful use of this space – time – system implies that not only events but all entities are spread out in time too or not. According to the first position – called “*perdurantism*” or “*eternalism*” – every actual entity is spread out in time like a process or an event and thus composed of temporal stages: parts. According to the second position – called “*endurantism*” or “*actualism*” – in addition to four – dimensional events, there are also three – dimensional *endures continuants*. According to this last position, things – human persons included – move in time and thus remain. As such, they are fully present at each moment of their existence.

Perdurantists viz. eternalists consider space and time on a par. However, their difficulties are due to the disanalogies between space and time stemming from our practical rationality and emotional attitudes. In our lives, we presuppose “the fact” that something has happened, is happening, or will happen as the reason for what we do and how we feel.

Should we account for immortality *paternalistically* or *ritualistically*? Does everlasting life consist of an infinite extension in time or an unending ongoing *now*? It seems that especially protestant theologians think of God's reality and immortality actualistically. They tend to oppose and reject eternalism.

The presuppositions of this modern debate are alien to the Aristotelians and Thomists. They share a different account of the nature of time: time is the *measure of change*. Thus, there is no change, and there is no passage of time.

1-1. Eternity

According to the Aristotelian and Thomistic accounts, God's eternity is not an endless succession of moments. God is eternal in not undergoing any change. According to this classical understanding of eternity, God has no before and after. Nowadays, we are so acquainted with the modern notion of time that it seems impossible to have continuity with no succession, with no before and after.

The Aristotelian notion of eternity (*ratio aeternitatis*) follows from immutability, as the idea of time (*ratio temporis*) follows from movement. Hence, as God is to the highest degree immutable, it belongs to Him to be eternal in the highest sense (S.th. I, q.10, a. 2, c). That God has no beginning and no end should thus not be interpreted as endless existence in time but as being entirely outside time. In this sense, His eternity has no succession, being *simultaneously whole* (*ipsa aeternitas successione caret, tota simul existens*) (S.th. I, q.10, a. 1, c).

The common conception of eternity as never-ending time is due to our experience of the flowing *now* (nunc) being, on the one hand always the same and on the other continuously changing. We are always in the now, but continuously this changes since it moves from

one moment to the other. However, it would be wrong to conceive God as a now that stands still.

Thomas interprets in this sense the saying of Boethius "the now that flows away makes time, the now that stands still makes eternity;" (*De Trinitate, iv*). According to our apprehension, the "now" that stands still makes eternity. As the apprehension of time is caused in us by the fact that we apprehend the flow of the "now," so the apprehension of eternity is caused in us by our apprehending the "now" standing still (S.th. I, q.10, a. 2, ad 1). From this, it does not follow that God is in a now that stands still. The way something is apprehended should not be confused with how it is in itself.

However, even within the Aristotelian tradition, it is difficult to grasp the difference between time and eternity adequately. Aquinas, therefore, mentions various objections, which seem very plausible to us today. If, e.g., we always are in the now, so must God be in the now; otherwise, He could not be real. There must be a relation between the now in our temporal sense and the now of God.

Aquinas derives the answer to the various objections against the difference between eternity and infinite time from his account of the essence of eternity, which is, in the words of Boethius, "totally simultaneous" (*totum simul*). Eternity consists of the *total simultaneous presence at once* (*aeternitas est tota simul, non autem tempus*) (S.th. I, q.10, a. 4, c). It is possible to deduce the other main differences between eternity and endless time from this notion.

Those theologians, who account for God's eternity as lasting permanence in time, evidently see the soul's immortality too as an endless continuation in time. However, this leads to various problems, which can be avoided by the Aristotelian understanding of eternity as the absence of time and its positive account in the tradition of

Boethius, understanding eternity as “*totum simul*”.

Nowadays, we are confronted with an ongoing debate on the nature of time, ignoring time's dependence on change stressed in the Aristotelian tradition. On the one hand, we have – as seen – four – dimensionalists or eternalists and on the other three – dimensionalists or actualists. The discussion among analytic philosophers of religion on immortality seems to take for granted the presuppositions of the modern notion of time and completely to ignore the Thomistic peculiarities of eternity and thus to ignore immortality conceived as being outside time.

1-2. Immortality and *aevum*

The Thomistic notion of immortality does not mean survival and consequent everlasting existence. For the Saved, it consists in the participation (*participatio*) in the eternity of God. The *visio beatifica* of the *beati* consists in unification with, and assimilation to, the reality of God. The technical term for immortal beings' status is “*aevum*.” Aeviternity (*aevum*) is a problematic notion, but it might help spell out the idea of immortality as participation in God's life as being outside time. “*Aevum nihil aliud est quam aeternitas quaedam participata....*” (Comm. Sent. I, d.19, q. 2, a.1 ad1)

Aeviternity means eternity and time (*medium inter aeternitatem et tempus*). Time has "before" and "after"; aeviternity in itself has no "before" and "after," but “before” and “after” can be annexed to it (*aevum autem non habet in se prius et posterius, sed ei conjungi possunt*); while eternity has neither "before" nor "after," nor is it compatible with it at all (S.th. I, q.10, a.5, c).

The account Thomas gives presupposes that duration in being (*permanencia, duratio*) has different degrees. It is highest if it is entirely alien to change. Eternity excludes any change and thus measures the

highest degree of duration. Some things recede from duration to such an extent that they consist of change. Time, all movements measure these things, and all things corruptible. Nevertheless, others, i.e., the *aeviternal*, recede less from duration in being, for their being neither consisted in change nor is the subject of change (*quia esse eorum nec in transmutatione consistit, nec est subjectum transmutationis*), nevertheless they have change annexed to them either actually or potentially (*tamen habent transmutationem adjunctam, vel in actu, vel in potentia*) (S.th. I, q.10, a. 5, c).

Crucial for this Thomistic position is the distinction between *per se* immutability and *accidental* change via some “adjunction”: immortal beings conceived as “aeviternal” are *per se* not in time, and their permanence is “totum simul,” even though they are not eternal as God is, because “before” and “after” are compatible with them (*aevum est totum simul, non tamen est aeternitas; quia compatitur secundum prius et posterius*) (S.th. I, q.10, a.5, ad 2) Of God we can predicate only properties which do not imply change and thus time (pure attributes); of the *aeviternal* we can say that they understand and have affections connected to a before and after. But even in this case, we should not overlook that *per se*, for all *aeviternal*, immortal souls included, and there is no difference of past and future.

2. Subjects of immortality

What is immortal? The resurrected personal being or the human soul? Since the whole personal being is called to enjoy “happiness” (*beatitudo*) in God, it is plain that the resurrected person is endowed with immortality. For Thomists, the human soul guarantees the resurrected person's identity.

For many Christians, the subject of immortality is the soul taken to be a spiritual substance. They seem to adhere to some or other

version of substance dualism of soul and body. The Thomistic account, on the contrary, seems to be neither dualistic in the complete sense nor monistic. Aquinas certainly is not a substance – dualist in the modern Cartesian sense. On the other hand, because of the thesis that the human soul guarantees the resurrected identity, he cannot escape dualism.

Aquinas' notion of the human soul is Aristotelian but diverges from it in various ways. It might be that not all the passages referring to the human soul in the large *Corpus Thomisticum* are consistent, but some of his views on the human soul might still help clarify the tricky questions concerning immortality, viz., the hope of resurrection.

Aristotle defines the soul as the *form* of a natural body, which potentially has life (De Anima II, 1, 412a 21) and as the *first actuality* of a natural body that has life potentially or that has organs (De Anima II, 412a 29f and 412b 5f). In Aristotelian scholastic philosophy, it was thus commonplace to conceive the soul as the individual *forma substantial* of a natural body. This conception of the soul presupposes Aristotelian ontology with substances (endurers or continuants) and *hylomorphism*, the ontological doctrine that each individual is “composed” of *matter* and *form*. Thomas shares this approach. For him, the soul being the principle of the life of a body or organism, is its *act* (*corporis actus*). Thomas explicitly says: like heat, which is the principle of calefaction, the soul is not a body, but an act of a body (S.th. I, q.75, a.1 c).

2-1. The subsistent intellectual soul

The Thomistic notion of the human soul, on the one hand, implies that it is not a substance proper. On the other hand, Thomas stresses that the soul can exist independently, being subsistent (*subsistence*) and that it is separable (*separabilis*) from the body. The subsistence and separability are essential for the identity of the resurrected human being as a whole.

According to Aquinas and the Thomistic tradition, what survives death, being subsistent and separable, and thus guarantees the resurrected person's identity is, however, not the whole human soul. Only that part of it is responsible for the intellectual or rational acts of the human person. The whole soul cannot exist independently and is not separable from the body.

Why should the principle of understanding and knowledge be that part of the soul which survives death? The Thomistic argument boils down to the following intuition: Since human beings can in principle know all kinds of things (*omnia*), the intellectual principle cannot be body - like. If it were, its determinate nature would impede knowledge of all bodies (*quia natura determinate illius organi corporei prohiberet cognitionem omnium corporum*) (S.th. I, q.75, a.2 c). The intellectual principle or the intellectual soul must be different from any biological organ, any merely organic function. It has operations *per se* apart from the body. But only that which subsists or exists on its own can have operations *per se*. Thus, the intellectual soul is incorporeal and subsistent (*...eo modo aliquid operatur quo est... Relinquitur igitur animam humanam... esse aliquid incorporeum et subsistens*) (S.th. I, q.75, a.2 c).

Occasionally Aquinas concedes that it is better to say that the human being knows instead of saying that the human soul knows as is better to say that the architect constructs instead of saying that the art of architecture constructs. "*Sed sicut melius est dicere quod aedificator aedificat, non ars, licet aedificator aedificat per aedificativam artem, sicut fortasses melius est dicere quod anima non misereatur neque addiscit, neque intelligit, sed homo per animam*" (In De Anima, I, l.X, nr.152) or "*Sed magis proprie dicitur quod homo intelligat per animam.*" (S.th. I, q.75, a.2, ad 2) However, the subject of knowledge is something that does not depend on the body and has the capacity of knowledge *per se*.

For Aquinas, the human soul is something particular. However, "particular thing" (*hoc aliquid*) can be understood in two senses. Firstly, for anything subsistent; secondly, it subsists and is complete in its specific nature. Therefore, the human soul can be called "this particular thing" in the first sense, as being something subsistent, but not in the second. (*Sic igitur cum anima humana sit pars speciei humanae, potest dici hoc aliquid primo modo, quasi subsistens; sed non secundo modo*) (S.th. I, q.75, a.2, ad 1).¹ A hand, for instance, is a "hoc aliquid" but not a substance.

The intellectual soul is the subject of intellectual operations but is not identical to the human person. Thomas tries to be charitable to those taking the soul to be the individual human endowed with a body but rejects the Platonic understanding of the soul: man is not his soul (S.th. I, q.75, a.4, c). Especially P. Geach stresses that the immortal soul is not identical with the resurrected human person. It is evident – he says – that the surviving soul is not the person who died but a mere remnant of him. Geach quotes Aquinas' dictum in his Commentary on I Corinthians 15, "anima mea non est ego," and continues: "If only souls are saved, I am not saved, nor is any man. If sometime after Peter Geach's death there is again a man identifiable as Peter Geach, then Peter Geach again, or still, lives: otherwise not." (Geach, 2000, p. 727).

2-2. The incorruptible intellectual soul

Aquinas takes the incorruptibility of the rational soul as a sign of the following argument: the senses do not apprehend reality, except under the conditions of "here" and "now," whereas the intellect

1. see: Quaestio unica *De Anima* in: Quaest, Disp., art.1.

apprehends it *absolutely* and for all time. Since everything naturally aspires to be in its manner (*suo modo esse desiderat*), everything with an intellect naturally desires always to exist. Nevertheless, a natural desire cannot be in vain. Therefore the intellectual soul must be incorruptible. (*Unde omne habens intellectum naturaliter desiderat esse semper. Naturale autem desiderium non potest esse inane. Omnis igitur intellectualis substantia est incorruptibilis*) (S.th. I, q.75, a.6, c). The decisive reason for the thesis of the incorruptibility of the intellectual soul is, however, that it is not a “*compositum*.” Being something on its own, which exists *per se* and being only *forma* (*forma tantum*), cannot fall apart and thus not go out of existence. Only “*composita*” can cease to exist, as only these can be dissolved into their parts.

The thesis of the soul’s incorruptibility presupposes its *separability* from the body. The common opinion is that Aristotle already held the intellectual principle's separability thesis. Explicitly, however, Aristotle states this only for the, and according to the main interpreters, the universal and not the individual principle as part of the individual human soul. Besides, for Aristotle, it seems clear that the soul as an act cannot be separated from the subject of the act and *formae* always are *formae* of some matter or other: “That, therefore, the soul or certain parts of it, if it is divisible, cannot be separated from the body is quite clear... .” (De Anima, 413a 3f).

In his comment of Aristotle’s *De Anima*, Aquinas tackles the objections against immortality, stemming from the thesis that the soul is the first actuality of the human organism. In particular, he looks for hints in *De Anima* at the possibility of separating those aspects of the soul, which are responsible for the intellectual acts. He is eager to identify them to defend the immortality of at least one part of the human soul stressing the difference between the and the rest of the soul: they might be divine and unaffected (In De Anima, Nr. P. 166).

Aquinas concedes that most potencies and capacities of the human soul are not separable from the body but stresses the exception of intellectual capacities. The intellectual capacity is of a different kind “...videtur quod sit alterum genus animae ab aliis partibus animae, idest alterius naturae, et alio modo se habens...” (In De Anima, Nr. P. 268). Nowadays, the arguments for the separability of one part of the soul, i.e., the intellectual principle, are not convincing because of their presuppositions, which we no longer share. However, the arguments for the “*subsistentia*” and “*in corruptibilitas*” can be taken as valid arguments against the naturalistic programs of reduction of the mental to the physical. The human capacities and powers are such that they cannot be assigned to bodies conceived physicalistically.

In order to save immortality, what we need is something guaranteeing the personal identity of the risen human person. This cannot be the physical body but must be the individual *forma substantialis*.

3. Hylomorphism

There is a significant difference between the notion of body in a physicalistic sense and organism in Aristotelian philosophy. The physicalistically conceived bodies are for the Aristotelian fictions or the results of abstractions. Human bodies, as presupposed by physicalists and most dualists in mind: body debate, do not exist. Human bodies of daily life are organisms, and if they exist, they are alive, having various capacities.

On the other hand, in Aristotelian hylomorphism, people's bodies are not the *material* of humans. They are already *composita*. Aristotelian hylomorphism should not be taken as the doctrine of the relation between *matter* in the modern sense and *function* in modern

functionalism. It is somewhat concerned with the relation between *potencies* and *actualities*.¹

These short remarks should suffice to see that the context of the Aristotelian tackling of the mind – body problem differs from the modern one. Contemporary discussions of the problem presuppose a different conception of matter, i.e., that of the sciences of physics and chemistry. Their origins are due to the new scientific method explained by Bacon, Galileo, and Descartes. Primarily Descartes argues for a single, uniform matter for everything. Its essence is an extension and nothing else.

Cartesian bodies cannot thus have substantial forms. For Descartes, the soul is not the individual form or nature of a physical body, nor is mental activity the body's natural activity. The soul must be something completely different. On the one hand, Descartes' new scientific treatment of the body made discoveries of the body's functioning possible; on the other hand, the mechanical principles he used to account for bodily functioning could not account for the higher functions of the organism, like thought.

In Aristotelian philosophy, the soul is, as we have seen, the actuality of the organism or its *forma substantialis*. Nowadays, we call it "sortal" or "sortal determination." However, the human soul is not the general sortal but the *sortal token*, i.e., the individual *forma substantialis* of an organism. Our talk about living beings presupposes – as Aristotle did – that as soon as an individual loses this sortal determination, i.e., its form token viz. its soul, it ceases to exist. To lose one's soul is tantamount to dying.

1. see below.

3-1. Aristotelian form and matter

Substantial forms in the Aristotelian tradition are not attributes and thus cannot be predicated contingently. Substantial form as actuality is neither a contingent disposition nor function nor a contingent complex of such dispositions or functions. The relation between form as actuality and its matter is an essential one. The form becomes one with the matter means that matter as potentiality gets actual. The medieval comments on Aristotle stress this point. Aquinas, e.g., comments: that matter is one with the form is to say that matter is in the act. “*Ostensum est ... quod forma per se uniat materia, sicut actus ejus; et idem est materiam uniri formae, quod materiam esse in actu.*” (In De Anima, Nr. P. 234).

Aristotle, in fact, explicitly rejects the thesis that the soul is something like *harmony*, i.e., the view that it is form understood as some contingent configuration or a complex relational property, which holds together the different parts and functions of the body. This is puzzling only for those who tend to interpret Aristotelian forms functionalistically. The functional order is multiplied realizable for functionalism and has compositional plasticity. The relation between a functional order and a physical system is thus a contingent one. However, the Aristotelian text suggests that even single mental states are intimately associated with specific body parts or organs.

For Aristotle, there is no general concept of physical matter, no one kind of matter for all-natural objects (as in the modern understanding of Descartes). What counts as a matter varies from case to case. Aristotle’s conception of matter is thus not congenial to a contemporary type of physicalism. Each living being has a unique kind of proximate matter that is idiosyncratic to just that kind of being. The powers and potentialities of the proximate matter are unique to it.

We have seen that for Aristotle, there cannot be a mind - body problem in the Cartesian sense: the matter of the body is like “animal matter”: it has the living functions built-in at the ground level. The proper matter for sentient beings is essentially alive, essentially capable of awareness: a not alive body is for Aristotle, a body in name only. It is not a body at all, just as an eye, which cannot see, is not an eye. The material constituent of the animal depends for its very identity on its being alive, in - formed by psyche. There is no such thing as face or flesh without a soul in it (See: also: De Generatione Animalium, 734b 24).

Aristotle conceives of matter as *potentiality*. But potentialities are not as real as their realizations. Thus they cannot be basic. As mere potentialities, they are “posterior” to actualities. Actuality is “prior” to capacity even in time (1049b 18 - 25). Moreover, if, in general, actuality is “prior” to potentiality, then substance or form must be “prior” to stuff.

3-2. Identity conditions

In Aristotelian ontology, the living substances, i.e., the individuals having souls as their actualities, are the fundamental entities or the primary units. They are continuants: endurers in time and have, therefore, diachronic identity. They act and cause through their actions various changes in the world.

In Aristotelian ontology, things and living substances like animals are not identical with the material they are made of or the sum of their parts. The kind of composition, their dispositional properties, tendencies, potencies, powers, and mode of activity are constitutive. These potencies, types of activity, and identity - and persistent - conditions, i.e., the conditions of coming to be and passing away,

depending on their *sortal* or *forma substantialis*.

The identity – and persistence – conditions of organisms, humans included, are not results of conventional posits or linguistic conventions, but given. One has, thus, to distinguish between the stuff making up a substance and the sortally determined substance or living being itself, between the *materia* and the *compositum*. The tree and the aggregate of cellulose molecules that constitute that tree are not the same, even though they occupy the same region.

If we conceive the human body or organism physicalistically – based on the modern notion of matter – and of the self, viz. the human soul functionalistically, we are faced with a dilemma: either we must opt for a reductionistic variant of naturalism or a version of dualism. On the other hand, if we accept a kind of Aristotelian hylemorphism interpreted as doctrine of potency and actuality, we have an alternative.

Within Aristotelian ontology, the soul is the ultimate sortal determination or the individual *forma substantialis*, i.e., the first actuality of the living individuals. Their identity – and persistence – conditions depend on this *forma*. Within this ontological framework, we can accept the thesis that human persons' identity – and persistence – conditions depend on their soul. It is the soul that guarantees the risen human body's identity.

Conclusion

We have tried to defend the view that immortality in the Christian sense should not be interpreted as endless continuity in time after death but as assimilation and participation in God's eternity. God's eternity differs from endless time in "*totum simul*" outside time.

For Thomas, the subject of immortality is the subsistent and

separable intellectual soul and the transformed human individual after the resurrection of the dead. The intellectual soul is not identical with the human individual but guarantees its identity and persistence.

Since there is no *per se* change in God's eternity and the "aevum" of the Saved, I share that it is not necessary to assume continuity in the existence of one part of the soul between bodily death the general resurrection. It might be more consistent to assume that *per se*, death and resurrection coincide.

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Compatibility or Incompatibility of Bentham's Utilitarianism with the Quran's Doctrine

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Received: 2021-05-31

Accepted: 2021-10-03

Abstract

Moral utilitarianism is one of the most significant and common theories in normative ethics, which gained prominence with the utilitarian utterance of Bentham's crime, and different interpretations of it have always been presented with various modifications. Some Muslim thinkers, familiar with Bentham's theory of utilitarianism, have tried to make it compatible with Quranic teachings by adding a clause or constraint. In addition, they have considered Quranic verses to support Bentham's seven criteria. The basic objection of such thinkers to Bentham is that he has limited profit to pleasure only, and that is worldly pleasure, while from the point of view of religion, profit and pleasure are both worldly benefits, pleasures and include the pleasures of the Hereafter. The important point is that before we look for the verses that confirm Bentham's utilitarian theory and his seven criteria, we must see whether there is any possibility of a new interpretation of utilitarianism based on the verses of the Quran. Therefore, in this article, in addition to reviewing and criticizing this view, the impossibility of a new interpretation of utilitarianism based on the verses of the Quran is explained.

Keywords

The Quran, Moral Utilitarianism, Moral Theories, Bentham's Seven Criteria

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* Alebouyeh, A. R. (2021). Compatibility or Incompatibility of Bentham's Utilitarianism with the Quran's Doctrine. Journal of *Theosophia Islamica*, 1(2), pp. 48-74. Doi: 10.22081/JTI.2022.63049.1025

Introduction

Consequentialist theories, especially moral utilitarianism, are among the normative moral theories in Western moral philosophy that Muslim thinkers have welcomed. Although the origins of consequentialist theories go back to ancient Greece and Epicurus, Aristotle and his disciples, Jeremy Bentham found himself lost in the reading of Prestley's essay on government and the phrase "best for most people" saying "I found, I found" (Palmer, 1995), he tried to interpret his moral theory based on what became known as moral utilitarianism, because his theory is based on the principle of profit.

There are three major theoretical, normative ethics theories: virtue ethics, teleology, and conscientiousness. The standard moral theory in Islamic ethics texts is the theory of moral ethics that started from Aristotle, and Islamic ethicists in their works have usually offered a version of it that is compatible with religious teachings, including Abu Ali al-Miskawayh in the *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, Khajeh Nasir in *Nasirean Ethics*, Mullah Ahmad and Mullah Mehdi Naraqī in the *Jami' al-Sa'ada* and the *Mi'raj al-sa'ada*. Of course, the inherent goodness and ugliness of the intellect on the one hand, and the divine goodness and ugliness of the Shari'a on the other, although in theological discussions on the occasion of the inclusion of God's action in goodness and ugliness became a famous conflict between the Ash'arites and Mu'tazilites. It has a moral philosophy interpreted as the theory of the divine. Although this debate was later followed to some extent among Muslim philosophers and scholars of principles, including Ibn Sina, Mulla Sadra, Muhaqiq Isfahani, and Akhund Khorasani, it was not seriously discussed in ethical matters, except in recent decades when the Ayatollah Sobhani has also dealt with it from a moral point of view (Sobhani, 1998).

On the other hand, in recent decades, some Muslim thinkers, familiar with the teleological theories in the philosophy of ethics, have tried to give a consequentialist interpretation of Islamic ethics. Hence, some have interpreted the theory of Islamic ethics as consequential, without explicitly specifying its type, such as Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Mesbah Yazdi (Mesbah Yazdi, 1995; Mesbah Yazdi, 2005). Some have offered selfish narratives of it, such as Ali Shirvani (Shirvani, 1999). Considering the acceptance of Bentham's utilitarianism and adding a clause or restriction based on Quranic teachings, he considered the theory of Islamic ethics utilitarian, and Sobhaniniya tried to interpret verses from the Quran that confirm Bentham's seven criteria. The verses referring to Bentham's seven criteria have added other conditions to Bentham's utilitarianism, including Bentham considers profit to be limited to material and worldly profit. However, Sobhaniniya, according to the verses referring to the afterlife, profits including material profit, and The world knows. In addition to examining and criticizing this view, this article proves the impossibility of a utilitarian interpretation of the theory of Islamic ethics.

Ethical Utilitarianism

One of the critical issues in the philosophy of ethics is the criterion of moral value. Some moral philosophers determine the moral value of actions according to the consequences, which is known as moral consequentialism. According to practical teleology, it is morally good to have good consequences, but it depends on who or what the good consequences are, and therefore, depending on whether the consequences only concern the actor, or others, or most people. Three moral theories have been formed. (Frankena, 1997) Some believe

that an action is morally good that provides the interests of the actor, which is called moral selfishness. Some believe that it is a moral practice if only the interests of others are considered and the actor should not be considered at all, which is called moral heterogeneity. The third theory, known as moral utilitarianism, is that it is a moral practice that benefits the most people.

There is a difference of opinion as to what is meant by profit. According to Bentham, benefit means pleasure, and therefore an act is moral if creates the greatest overcoming of pleasure over suffering for most people, and in contrast, an act is bad if creates the greatest overcoming of suffering over pleasure for most people. If the amount of pleasure and suffering that an action creates is equal, the action is morally neutral and doing or leaving it is no different from a moral point of view.

Bentham sums up pleasure only in material pleasure and does not consider spiritual pleasure at all, and hence he has a serious form which is known as the form of tortured prison guards. Suppose there are several prison guards in a prison far from the city and they do not have more than one prisoner. This prison is so far from the city that no matter what happens in it, the news does not reach the city. Prison guards have no means of entertainment to keep them busy and entertained. The only thing they can do to make them happy is to torture the prisoner (Palmer, 1995). The implication of Bentham's theory is that such a thing is morally right, because it is assumed that only one person suffers and several people enjoy doing so.

Bentham's student John Stuart Mill, who has been instrumental in promoting his theory, considers pleasure, both material and spiritual, to be a serious form of torture, given the serious forms of

tortured prison guards. Because in this case, it is true that the sum of pleasure in terms of quantity is greater according to the number of people, but the amount of mental and psychological suffering that a prisoner experiences in terms of torture is not comparable to the material pleasures of prison guards (Palmer, 1995).

The Main Components of Moral Utilitarianism

Bentham utilitarianism has two main components, without which utilitarianism becomes meaningless in general: one is pleasure and the other is the greatest pleasure for most people. If for any reason pleasure is left out altogether or pleasure is considered but the greatest pleasure is not considered for most people in the calculation of pleasure, that theory cannot be considered utilitarian. Hence, with the modification that the desire created in utilitarianism and considered pleasure, including material pleasures, and considered it as including spiritual and spiritual pleasures, his theory is again considered as a utilitarian theory. Therefore, in order to provide alternative interpretations of Bentham's utilitarianism, given the drawbacks that have been encountered, these two components must be considered. This is why some, considering other serious forms of Bentham's theory, namely the problem of calculating profits, have presented another interpretation that does not include the forms of calculating profits, and have called it normative utilitarianism. (Palmer, 1995)

Bentham utilitarianism is pragmatic; That is, measuring and calculating pleasure and pain must be calculated in each of human actions. It is clear that it is not possible to calculate pleasure and sorrow even according to the seven criteria that he has provided for this purpose. Humans are constantly confronted with people throughout the day who have to make moral decisions about how to

treat them. Now how can one calculate the greatest pleasure over pain in doing the most for the most affected people? In addition, his seven criteria in practice may be in conflict with each other, and resolving conflicts and summarizing between the criteria is itself problematic. But in normative utilitarianism, it is the rules that measure the greatest overcoming of pleasure over most people, not just individual actions. As a result, it is a morally sound rule that must be followed in order for the greatest pleasure to prevail over most people. For once, if such a thing is done and the pleasure and knowledge that follows a rule are weighed, everyone acts according to that rule, and there is no longer any problem in calculating the profit, unless the two rules are in conflict with each other in practice. Conflict can be resolved based on the principle of profit.

In the meantime, the second component is more important, because although Bentham has defined profit as pleasure, but if one considers benefits other than pleasure, it can still be considered a utilitarian theory, because the principle Profit is actually "the most profit for most people" and of course Bentham means profit for pleasure. But if the term "most people" is not considered, it can no longer be considered a utilitarian theory, because the principle of profit is "the most benefit for the most people" and without considering this condition, a utilitarian theory cannot be interpreted.

An important point that is not one of the components of utilitarianism alone but of the component of teleology in general (selfishness, heterogeneity and utilitarianism) and should not be neglected is that actions are empty regardless of their purpose and consequences. They are of moral value and are the consequences of actions that actually make good and bad. Hence, the answer of a consequentialist to the question of whether justice and truthfulness are

good or bad? That is, I do not know, and I can answer such questions only by examining the consequences. Some who have given a utilitarian account of Islamic morality have stated that "according to the theory of utilitarianism, actions have no moral value per se, but rather the effect of things on the state of the world (the happiness of individuals). In fact, the only dimension of the world that is of immediate moral importance is the happiness of the people" (Nasiri, 2010)¹.

Utilitarian Interpretation of Islamic Ethics

Some Muslim thinkers, such as Nasiri and Sobhaniniya, have considered Bentham's utilitarianism as one of the theories that is interesting and compatible with some human tendencies and inclinations. Therefore, they have accepted it in themselves, but due to the drawbacks that it has, including the allocation of pleasure to material pleasures, they have tried to give an interpretation consistent with the verses of the Quran by modifying it. Nasiri, by introducing objections to Bentham's utilitarianism and presenting his narration according to the Quranic teachings, has called it supreme utilitarianism or utilitarianism, and considers profitable utility in the lasting interest of the individual, and the meaning of lasting utility is a benefit that is not limited to the world. Include the Hereafter. (Nasiri, 2010) According

¹ As will be seen, it seems that the main reason for the mistake of Islamic thinkers in the interpretation of the theory of Islamic ethics is from this area, and it is interesting that Nasiri himself has not adhered to this fundamental point in the interpretation of the theory of utilitarianism. In short, according to this theory, actions are in themselves devoid of moral value and acquire their value from the end, and as a result, the present is morally good to have the greatest overcoming of pleasure over suffering, and we must do the present. To create the greatest happiness, that is, pleasure for most people. In fact, this is the end that is good and bad, and regardless of the end, the moral value of actions is zero.

to him, the axis of all things in Islam is set on the axis of eternal profit, and of course, according to people's understanding, different things are introduced as profit: sometimes different types of heavenly blessings are mentioned and sometimes The pleasure of God is emphasized. According to him, all these things can be achieved by obtaining divine consent. (Nasiri, 2010)

Sobhaniniya also considers the most important forms of Bentham's theory as not paying attention to the supernatural and monopolizing pleasure and profit in pleasure and material gain. In his view, although Bentham has explained seven important criteria, by limiting those criteria to material and natural matters, he has "degraded the level of his theory and prevented his theory from being a logical and defensible theory from the perspective of a "Let the thinker believe in the heavenly religion." (Sobhaniniya, 2010) Therefore, he has tried to explain the criteria for measuring his pleasure based on Islamic teachings by considering the acceptance of Bentham's principle of utilitarianism. In the first step, in order to reconcile Bentham's utilitarianism with Islamic teachings, he considers profit beyond material benefit in a way that includes spiritual and otherworldly benefits and is not limited to the benefits of this world. In other words, if Bentham's worldview changes and he believes in the world of the hereafter, pleasure will not be limited to the material pleasures of this world, but will also include spiritual and otherworldly pleasures. With such an alteration to the principle of profit, the fundamental forms which Bentham had acquired (the monopoly of profit on worldly pleasures) no longer enter. He goes on to try to provide narrative Quranic evidence for Bentham's criteria.

Quranic Evidence of the Validity of the Seven Criteria

To measure pleasure, Bentham has proposed seven circumstances

includes: intensity, duration, certainty, propinquity, fecundity, purity, and extent, and Sobhaniniya, citing the acceptance of utilitarianism and recognizing profit from worldly gain, has given narrative Quranic evidence for them:

1: Intensity

According to Bentham, one of the criteria for choosing between pleasures is their intensity, and more intense pleasures are preferred to weaker pleasures. As a result, any act of intense pleasure is good and should be considered. The Quran also invites people to do good deeds and rewards them for doing them: "Allah has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds [that] for them there is forgiveness and great reward" (Holy Quran, al-Ma'idah, 9)¹. According to Sobhaniniya, this Quranic point strengthens man's motivation to do good deeds and prevents him from doing bad deeds (which may have only fleeting material and worldly benefits and consequently smaller and weaker).

2: Duration

Bentham means that the criterion of duration is that any verb that has a longer duration of pleasure, in other words, a more stable pleasure, should be selected. As a result, if two things are equal in pleasure, but the pleasure of one is more stable and more lasting, it is considered morally good and should be chosen. According to Sobhaniniya, Bentham has chosen this criterion based on reason and

¹. Or this noble verse: Allah has promised the believing men and believing women gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally, and pleasant dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence; but approval from Allah is greater. It is that which is the great attainment (Holy Quran, At-Tawbah, 72).

logic, and now based on this reason and logic, if there is another world, in measuring pleasure, we must also consider the pleasures of that world. According to the divine worldview, the world is fleeting and mortal, and there is another world before man, which is interpreted as the world of the hereafter, and man does not die and dies, and will continue to live in that world. Hence, it is a morally good thing to pursue long-term and hereafter interests. Of course, the interests of the hereafter are not incompatible with the worldly interests and can be combined, but if in some cases there is a discrepancy between the two, common sense dictates that long-term and otherworldly interests are preferable. Hence, God has warned mankind to be content with the fleeting life of this world, and has guided them to true and hereafter bliss and salvation: "And those who believe and do good, we will soon admit them into Gardens under which rivers flow, to stay there for ever and ever. Allah's promise is 'always' true. And whose word is more truthful than Allah's?" (Holy Quran, An-Nisa, 122)¹.

3: Certainty

Another criterion Bentham has set for measuring pleasure is the assurance of pleasure. Pleasure makes the action good that is sure to be achieved. Consequently, any act by which pleasure is more likely to be realized is moral and must be performed. According to Sobhaniniya, this criterion has not been neglected in religious teachings, and "in many verses and hadiths, the certainty of achieving the benefits of the Hereafter has been specified, and any doubt about the Hereafter has been considered incorrect.", Including: " Allah's

¹. Or this: Allah has promised the believing men and believing women gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally (Holy Quran, At-Tawbah, 72).

promise is 'always' true. And whose word is more truthful than Allah's?" (Holy Quran, An-Nisa, 122); "Surely Allah's promise is 'always' true, but most of them do not know" (Holy Quran, Yunus, 55; Holy Quran, Al-Qasas, 13) and "'That is' the promise of Allah. 'And' Allah never fails in 'His' promise" (Holy Quran, Az-Zumar, 20). Such verses indicate the confirmation of the criterion of Bentham's certainty and its rationality and rationality, of course, adding that the benefit that God has promised to give to the believers is the benefit of the hereafter and not the benefit of this world, and therefore, He warned them against being deceived by fleeting worldly benefits: "O mankind, indeed the promise of Allah is truth, so let not the worldly life delude you and be not deceived about Allah by the Deceiver" (Holy Quran, Fatir, 5).

4: Propinquity or remoteness

Another criterion used to measure pleasure is proximity or distance. The action is morally good that its pleasures are realized sooner. Consequently, if two acts cause the same pleasure, but one of them is obtained sooner than the other, it is the same moral act and must be done. Sobhaniniya has pointed out that Bentham uses the criterion of closeness and distance in cases where the benefit of two works is equal, and only then can the current criterion be preferred, whose benefit is obtained sooner. However, in cases where the benefit of one of the two works is greater than the other but its achievement is farther away, it is unlikely that he will prefer the near and lower profit to the greater profit because it is sure to consider the greater profit and pay attention to other criteria, will make him doubt Nasdaq's profit preference. In any case, this criterion is also accepted by common sense, but since the Hereafter is farther from the world, it may seem that this criterion is incompatible with Islamic teachings and does not agree with them, but given that the Quran considers the world to be

near and, on the other hand, considers the world to be mortal and short and its blessings to be insignificant, God, in order to strengthen the motivation of the believers, which is the same as the benefit of the Hereafter, prevents people from imagining Hereafter and the consequences of deeds in faraway: "Do not spread corruption in the land after it has been set in order. And call upon Him with hope and fear. Indeed, Allah's mercy is always close to the good-doers." (Holy Quran, Al-A'raf, 56)

Moreover, Imam Ali (PBUH) also says: "You are in a place - and a part of the world - and you are close to the Hereafter." He also says: "The Hereafter is near, and the stop in this world is short" (Nahj al-Balagha, Maxims, 168). We see that even according to religious teachings, the proximity of benefit as a motive influences the choice of action, and for this reason, knowing the proximity of the Hereafter makes people less inclined to prefer worldly interests to the hereafter."

5: Fecundity

According to the criterion of fecundity, pleasures that are productive and have more benefits are preferred to pleasures that are not. Sobhaniniya, to explain this criterion religiously, says that the Islamic teachings of the world are not generally rejected, and the use of legitimate and lawful blessings is desirable and sometimes necessary. It is further noted that "the least worldly benefit of any moral behavior is the evolution of the perpetrator and his attainment of higher degrees in terms of moral and human dignity." According to him, if these moral acts have no benefit for the actor other than spiritual development and are performed by a person who believes in the divine religions, especially Islam, they are productive, because he can achieve the divine intention in addition to the highest levels of

humanity, to enjoy the divine reward and reward of the Hereafter. Among its Quranic evidence are: Whoever comes with a good deed will be rewarded tenfold (Holy Quran, Al-An'am, 160), So whatever thing you have been given - it is but [for] enjoyment of the worldly life. However, what is with Allah is better and more lasting for those who have believed, and upon their Lord relies (Holy Quran, Ash-Shuraa, 36), So Allah gave them the reward of this world and the excellent reward of the Hereafter (Holy Quran, Ali 'Imran, 148), And We will surely give those who were patient their reward according to the best of what they used to do (Holy Quran, An-Nahl, 96), and the home of the Hereafter is better. Moreover, how excellent is the home of the righteous (Holy Quran, An-Nahl, 30).

6: Purity

According to the criterion of purity, any work that creates only pleasure is preferable to work whose pleasure is mixed with suffering. This criterion is considered in all the pleasures of the Hereafter, and the pleasures of the Hereafter are free from any misfortunes, and absolute comfort is possible only in the Hereafter, unlike the worldly pleasures which are always accompanied by pain and suffering and comfort free from suffering, and there is no hardship in the world. It is noteworthy that although, for Bentham, the profit that is not accompanied by suffering is preferable to anything else, such a thing is unattainable in this world because the world is always accompanied by hardship. As a result, according to this criterion, in case of conflict between worldly interests and otherworldly interests, otherworldly interests take precedence and should be preferred. Among the Quran evidence of this criterion are those who do good will have the finest reward and 'even' more. Neither gloom nor disgrace will cover their faces. It is they who will be the residents of Paradise. They will be

there forever (Holy Quran, Yunus, 26), There they will be reclining on 'canopied' couches, never seeing scorching heat or bitter cold. (Holy Quran, Al-Insan, 13), There they will never hear any idle or sinful talk, only excellent and virtuous speech (Holy Quran, Al-Waqi'ah, 25 & 26).

7: Extent

The final measure of Bentham's profit is inclusion and breadth. This criterion implies that the broader the scope of the current pleasure and the more people it includes, the more preferable it is. According to Sobhaninya, being called a religious brother of Muslims, not being considered a Muslim who does not care about the affairs of Muslims every day, paying attention to others, including mercy, neighbors, and even those who believe in God, are considered God's family, including God's creation, including Religious evidence, is this criterion.

Sobhaninya concludes by noting that Bentham's utilitarianism uses the history of humanity and civilization for many centuries to calculate profits. However, from the point of view of a person who believes in the heavenly religions, religious teachings help him practice moral action. Choose and get rid of the calculation of profits and its problems to a large extent. He states that "religion, by determining its moral practices and behavior, has relieved mankind of the burden of this calculation." He concludes the analysis of the compatibility of Bentham's seven criteria with religious doctrine: 1. Bentham's theory of utilitarianism can be refined according to Islamic teachings, which he calls "religious or Islamic utilitarianism," and 2. It is unnecessary to interpret Islamic utilitarianism that Islam "considers utilitarianism the only moral theory." Because the pleasure of God and gaining His pleasure is higher and more complete than

Islamic utilitarianism, and according to Imam Ali (as), the first is the worship of the free, and the second is the phrase of merchants.

Problems Of Utilitarian Interpretation Of Islamic Ethics

There are several drawbacks to Sobhaniniya's interpretation of Islamic utilitarianism; Including 1. Impossibility of a utilitarian interpretation of Islamic ethics, 2. Incorrect interpretations of Quranic verses in affirmation of moral utilitarianism, 3. Internal conflicts, 4. Purpose of presenting a moral theory, 5. Ambiguities in the analysis of the seven criteria, 6. One-sided view to the verses of Quran and lack of comprehensive view.

1. Impossibility of a Utilitarian Interpretation of Islamic Ethics

Every theorist in presenting a theory must pay attention to the components and accessories of his theory and adhere to them. Philosophers of ethics are no exception, so James Rachel pays attention to one of the fundamental components of utilitarianism, the consequences, and considers it to be the most fundamental component of utilitarianism in such a way that utilitarianism will collapse without it. He considers the most serious argument against utilitarianism to be from this area, in which non-profit matters are also involved in determining the rightness or wrongness of actions. (Rachels, 2003) On the other hand, he relies on their implications and consequences in his critique of some moral theories. For example, in his critique of moral relativism based on cultural relativism, he says that if cultural relativism is taken seriously, it has implications and consequences that relativism itself cannot be bound to, including 1. We can no longer talk about lower etiquette and comment on the customs of other societies concerning the customs of our society, 2. We cannot even criticize the customs of our society, 3. The idea of moral progress is

questionable and meaningless, resulting in belief in reform and reform and the work of reformers. Society is morally doomed to transform society. (Rachels, 2003, pp. 21-23) Given the two points that have passed, it seems impossible to provide a utilitarian account of Islamic ethics.

A. The nonsense of Islamic utilitarianism.

As we have seen, the two primary components of Bentham's utilitarianism are profit, which according to Bentham's meaning is "pleasure" and the other is "the most pleasure for most people," so that if a description of utilitarianism is presented, one of these two components If not, it cannot be considered utilitarianism consistent with Bentham's account. In the meantime, the second component is more important. Without such a constraint, it cannot be considered a utilitarian theory. Therefore, for a utilitarian interpretation of Islamic ethics, the meaning of pleasure, both worldly and otherworldly, can be considered. It was considered, but the maximum benefit for most people must be considered.

Can the report presented by Sobhaninyia provide the maximum benefit for most people? According to this narration, pleasures are both worldly and otherworldly pleasures, and as a result, the principle of profit is that "the action is morally good to bring the worldliest and otherworldly pleasures to the most people." Now the question is, through what is the "greatest pleasure" of people in the Hereafter provided? Because of what they have done in the world or what we do as moral agents? In the world, it can be imagined that we do something. It brings the most pleasure to most people, and this makes my work good, but how can it be imagined that I do something in the world and get the most pleasure for Most people will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection, except that the pleasures of the Hereafter depend on their own deeds (Every soul, for what it has earned, will be

retained). Everyone will see the result of his suffering in the Hereafter (there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives). Assuming that according to Islamic literature, some of our works bring rewards to the souls of the dead, it is by divine grace and care and has nothing to do with the issues in question.

On the contrary, it is a bad thing to create the greatest overcoming of pleasure for most people in this world and the hereafter. The loss of a person's lousy deed will return to him in the Hereafter, and his work will not be noticed by others (That no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another) unless it can be imagined that someone does a bad deed, but another will feel the pain and resentment in the Hereafter. Is such a thing compatible with God's justice? All the verses that indicate the rewards of the Hereafter and mention their intensity, duration, certainty, closeness, purity, fertility, and breadth refer to the rewards of each individual who have been promoted due to their deeds, not more than one person. Therefore, the theory of Islamic morality cannot be utilitarianism just by generalizing pleasure to the pleasures of the hereafter, and the condition of the most pleasure for most people plays a fundamental role in utilitarianism.

B. Conflict of divine satisfaction with the greatest pleasure of most people

Divine satisfaction from individuals and closeness to God play an essential role in Islamic morality, and even reward is for those who are pleased with God and have approached God through their actions. Sobhaniniya himself has been subjected to divine approval. Other Muslim thinkers who have tried to interpret the theory of Islamic ethics in a consequentialist and utilitarian way have mentioned those two constraints and considered them as fundamental. (Mesbah Yazdi, 2005;

Nasiri, 2010) If we consider the amount of moral value as the most pleasure for most people if a job pleases the most people and brings them the most pleasure, but God is not satisfied with doing it, what should we do? Or something should bring us closer to God, but people are unhappy with what we do; what should we do? How can one combine divine satisfaction with the greatest pleasure for most people? How can one reconcile God's closeness with people's unhappiness? In other words, if the satisfaction and nearness to God are taken, the moral theory turns away from egoism, and if it is taken for the greatest pleasure for most people in order to preserve the primary component of utilitarianism, a specific thing in Islamic ethics must be left out. In any case, by considering two components, namely, the greatest pleasure for most people in the world and the end, as well as divine satisfaction and nearness, it is possible to imagine a conflict between the two, and in the event of such a conflict, it is not possible to combine the two.

C. Impossibility of proving the existence of God and prophecy

As we have seen, based on utilitarianism, actions are devoid of moral value, regardless of their purpose, and it is due to the consequences of actions that their moral value can be understood. With such a view, how can one prove God and prophecy and present a utilitarian account of Islamic morality by relying on religious teachings? In other words, if we do not understand the goodness of justice, benevolence, honesty, and other moral values, how can we prove a god with moral and perfect attributes such as just, benevolent, honest, and kind while these actions depend on good utilitarianism? Considering their consequences and their goodness is not inherent, and considering the benefits of the Hereafter and recognizing it through divine revelation, we must first accept religion in order to be

able to give such an account of morality. Even if one says that we reach God through intuition, one must still have an intuitive understanding of moral values and intuition of a moral god.

Also, if we do not understand the ugliness of God's deception, how can we prove the prophecy of a particular prophet? One of the ways to prove a particular prophecy is to present a miracle by the claimant of prophecy, and if a false prophecy is spread by God Otherwise, how can the prophecy of the valid claimant be proved? That is why Islamic theologians have said that it is ugly for God to perform a miracle at the hands of a false claimant of prophecy.

Some verses of the Quran confirm this view, such as the verse "Allah is not ever unjust to [His] servants," which means that it is not God's honor to oppress His servants. From this noble verse, it is understood that the evil of oppression is clear and obvious, and oppression is not in the dignity of God. This meaning is consistent with the inherent goodness and ugliness, not with the utilitarian view of morality, which is not inherently evil and depends on the consequences. Therefore in some cases, oppression may be considered good, but the inherent ugliness of oppression does not go away at all. Alternatively, in another verse, God commands justice and benevolence and does not command prostitution and denial. This type of verse indicates that human beings, regardless of the consequences of some actions, are familiar with their good and bad, and if God wants to rule on moral values, He will rule on the same moral values as promised.

2. Confusion between the criterion of moral value and moral motivation

In the theory of normative ethics, the philosopher of ethics seeks to obtain the criterion of moral value. In this regard, some have become consequentialist, some conscientious, and some virtuous. With

such a philosophy, the man finally realizes moral value. Nevertheless, is moral knowledge alone sufficient for moral action? Although Socrates believed that the only moral virtue is knowledge, and as a result, whoever acquires moral knowledge will realize a moral act, the thinkers after him typically did not follow his words and criticized it. In other words, according to Socrates, there is no gap between moral knowledge and moral action, but most other thinkers believe that there is a gap between the two, and we see many people who have moral knowledge and the good and bad of actions (by any criteria). Those who accept are aware but do not follow them in practice. This is where the critical issue of moral motivation comes into play; That is, many people with moral knowledge are not motivated to moral action alone, and other stimuli are needed to motivate them to moral action. That is why one of the most important topics for ethics psychologists is the issue of moral motivation.

Given the above, the fundamental question about the verses on which Islamic utilitarians have relied is whether these verses serve as a criterion of moral value or as a motivator. A review of the verses of the Quran confirms the second view. Conclusion On the issues raised in the fourth criterion (Propinquity or remoteness), he says: "The Hereafter does not make human beings less inclined to prefer worldly interests to otherworldly interests." In other words, he says: "In order for a man not to prefer the meager possessions of the world to the great blessings of the Hereafter, he has been reminded of the torments and losses of the Hereafter ... and in this way, the motivation to do good deeds is doubled in him." Interestingly, in the abstract of the article, which mentions the main focus of the discussion, he writes: "The author ... seeks to complete and correct Bentham's seven criteria by relying on the moral themes of the Quran and Hadith in order to encourage mankind to believe in God and the Resurrection and to

observe moral principles." What follows from these statements is that the verses cited are motivating to uphold moral values, not providing a criterion for moral value. In other words, there is a confusion between the ontological and psychological direction of the debate; Obtaining the criterion of moral value is related to the ontological direction of the discussion, but the motivation for looking at psychological issues is examined first in normative ethics the second in moral psychology.

3. Internal conflict

As Sobhaninya has said, he tries to modify Bentham's utilitarianism concerning the benefits and pleasures of the Hereafter, to introduce the normative theory of the Quran as utilitarian and therefore seeks to make Bentham's seven criteria compatible with the Quran and to document He mentions verses from the Quran for it. However, in conclusion, he points out a point that is not compatible with utilitarianism. According to him, "the conversion of Bentham's moral theory to the theory of Islamic utilitarianism does not mean that the religion of Islam considers utilitarianism as the only moral theory because by referring to religious sources we will see that God is pleased with him and gains his pleasure. Furthermore, it is more complete than Islamic utilitarianism, and according to Imam Ali (as), it is the worship of the free, and this is the worship of merchants." It is understood that what causes the moral value of actions is the pleasure of God. It is clear that God's satisfaction is with each individual, not the most individuals (which is one of the essential components of utilitarianism), and requires moral selfishness, not utilitarianism. In other words, man must do something that God is pleased with, and God's pleasure causes something to have moral value, whether the greatest pleasure is obtained for others or not. Therefore, the main criterion of moral value is God's satisfaction with man, not the greatest

pleasure for most people. Of course, other fundamental problems occur in this case: where and how should we obtain divine satisfaction? It is better to keep this debate going for now.

Of course, the requirement of a utilitarian interpretation of Islamic ethics and the explanation of the seven criteria for measuring profit and its Quranic evidence also indicate moral selfishness, not utilitarianism, because the rewards and pleasures of the Hereafter are for the actions of individuals, not most people. How can moral theory be considered utilitarian on the one hand and moral selfishness on the other?

The words of Amir al-Mu'minin, who has divided people into worship into three categories (some worship God because of the hope of heaven, and some because of the fear of hell, and some find God as worshippers) indicate the criterion of value. Its morality does not have a utilitarian criterion, but it is in the position of expressing the motivation of people to worship. The goodness of worshiping God cannot be conditioned on its consequences, but the goodness of worship is because God deserves worship, but some do not understand this meaning Motivated to worship heaven or fear of worship. In any case, the worship of the free to gain the pleasure of God, even if it is in the position of expressing the criterion of moral value, does not indicate motivation, moral selfishness, or utilitarianism.

4. The purpose of presenting a moral theory

The purpose of presenting a moral theory, in addition to defining the basis of moral value, which is a theoretical goal, is to provide a practical guide for moral actors so that in practice, they can recognize the morality of actions and act accordingly and not be surprised and confused in moral decisions. That is why some have defined normative ethics as obtaining the criterion of moral value and

implementing it in exceptional and partial cases. The first part of the definition refers to theoretical, normative ethics, and the second part refers to practical, normative, or applied ethics. Some, such as Bernard Gert, have defined applied ethics as applying moral theory to specific and partial cases (Gert, 1998). Someone, like Beauchamp, considers this definition of applied ethics to be a narrow one and defines applied ethics as any use of philosophical theories and methods to solve ethical problems in professions, technology, etc. (Beauchamp, 2003). In any case, whether we accept the narrow definition of applied ethics or the broad definition, ethical theory must be put into practice.

Bentham utilitarianism, regardless of the forms of profit calculation, is a practical and straightforward theory in this respect and can easily be a practical guide. But does Islamic utilitarianism have this feature, and can it be a practical guide for people? It seems that not only the proposed theory does not have such a function and cannot help man in action, because access to the afterlife pleasures of most people is not possible for man, but also the presenter does not expect much from his theory because the burden of guidance He puts action on the shoulders of religion and says that religion has removed the burden and burden of this calculation from human beings by determining moral actions and behavior. With such an attitude, there is no theory that is a guide to human action, and in all matters, one should refer to religion and use religious teachings as a guide for one's action and act according to them. Of course, it is clear that the suggestion of referring to religion in all cases of moral values without considering reason and values that are understood through reason alone, and religious teachings in this field, guidance is the same as a rational rule, can have implications and consequences. Notice that some of them were mentioned.

5. Ambiguities in the analysis of seven criteria

There are some ambiguities in the analysis of the seven criteria, including that Sobhaniniya has interpreted the Quranic affirmations of utilitarianism as if the intended rewards are the same as pleasure. However, the concept of reward is different from pleasure because of pleasure. The description becomes severe and weak, but the benefit of the description does not become severe and weak, but the description becomes more or less. In other words, intensity and weakness are from the bags category, but more or less from low. The second criterion of Bentham is the term for quantity, not the first criterion (intensity).

The third criterion speaks of the certainty and certainty of pleasure and its absence. The question is, from whose point of view is certainty and certainty? According to Bentham, the certainty or not of pleasure is from the point of view of the moral agent and not another person, while in his explanation, the certainty of the Hereafter is discussed from the perspective of God. Here, too, there is confusion between the assurance of profit from the perspective of the moral agent and God. The same can be said about the fifth criterion, namely distance and proximity; People see the Hereafter far away, but God sees it near. Bentham wants to choose between various actions, one that creates near pleasure and the other far-away pleasure, with distance and closeness.

In the fifth criterion, fertility is meant for most people or the moral actor himself. Bentham means fertility for most people, not a moral agent, while what he has mentioned in this regard is fertility for the moral agent himself, and it requires a selfish interpretation of Islamic morality, not utilitarianism. Bentham's criterion of fertility is to choose and do what is produced in the face of two currents, one that is productive and the other not productive. In other words, fertility is a criterion for distinguishing good work.

In the criterion of fertility, he has relied on verses and hadiths that God has considered double rewards for the deeds of people in the world, but he ignored the fact that increasing rewards are for doing moral deeds in the world, not for the world recognizing good deeds. Therefore, he has said that he who does good deeds will be rewarded ten times more; That is, good deeds must be discovered and done through something other than the reward of the Hereafter, and if it is done, God will reward ten times as much. Therefore, such words motivate the believers to do moral deeds, not to give a standard for moral value. In addition, such themes confirm the previous point and imply moral selfishness, not utilitarianism.

6. One-sided view to the verses of Quran and lack of comprehensive view

In order to deduce the moral theory of the Quran, in addition to rationally examining the theory, one must have a comprehensive and comprehensive view of the verses of the Quran. Irrespective of the first forms, it means the impossibility of a utilitarian interpretation of Islamic ethics, and regardless of the other objections to the utilitarian interpretation, verses from the Quran indicate the inherent goodness and ugliness of actions. Accordingly, the accepted theory must be conscientiousness. Not utilitarianism. Now the question is, how can a conservative narrative be combined with a utilitarian narrative? Is utilitarianism at all compatible with the inherent goodness and ugliness of reason? According to moral utilitarianism, actions are devoid of moral value regardless of the consequences, but according to inherent goodness and ugliness, actions have moral value in themselves.

Conclusion

Some have given utilitarian lectures of Islamic ethics and have relied

on verses and hadiths in this regard, including Mohammad Taqi Sobhaniniya, who, by accepting the principle of Bentham's theory of utilitarianism, has tried to modify it and offer it as a theory of Quranic ethics. By generalizing profit and pleasure to the profit and pleasure of the Hereafter, he has brought evidence from verses and hadiths in explaining Bentham's seven criteria. This narration faces several problems, which are: the impossibility of a utilitarian narration of Islamic ethics, confusion between the criterion of moral value and its motivation, internal conflict, inability to achieve the purpose of presenting moral theory and practical guidance for moral actors, there are ambiguities in the analysis of the seven criteria based on the verses of the Quran, lack of comprehensiveness to the verses of the Quran.

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Should Christians or Muslims Be Dualists? A Critical Review of Two Articles¹

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Received: 2021-05-31

Accepted: 2021-11-08

Abstract

Charles Taliaferro's "Philosophy of Mind and the Christian" begins with a loaded question: "Are we thoroughly physical beings, or do we contain some nonphysical part, something we may call a soul, spirit, or mind?" The question presents us with a false dilemma, for there is also the possibility that we are neither merely material beings nor do we contain a soul as a nonphysical part of us. Taliaferro follows this with a list of other questions pertaining to the philosophy of mind and asks whether Christians should give answers to these sorts of questions that differ from non-Christian colleagues. It seems odd to divide colleagues based on Christianity with regard to these questions, for it means that if the Christian colleagues do have a particular take on these issues, it will be different from that of non-Christian theistic colleagues. Perhaps, however, Taliaferro's department consists only of Christians and atheists. In this case, however, Taliaferro seems to think that there will be a uniformity in Christian thought that seems somewhat doubtful.

Keywords

Christians, Muslims, Dualists, Interaction, Individuation

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* Legenhausen, M. (2021). Should Christians or Muslims Be Dualists? A Critical Review of Two Articles. *Journal of Theosophia Islamica*, 1(2), pp. 75-104. Doi: 10.22081/JTI.2022.61070.1017

Methods and What is at Stake

Taliaferro thinks Christians should have their particular philosophy of mind: “a philosophy of the divine mind or person, God, and created minds or persons.” Without such a distinctive philosophy of mind, they will not be Christians “in anything remotely like the classical understanding of Christianity.” Here we fail to understand what is meant by “classical.” Does it refer to the Hellenistic period of Christianity, the high middle ages, or something else? It seems that there were many Christian thinkers in the Hellenistic period and throughout the middle ages who did not think of God and created persons as having this feature in common: both have a soul or mind.

Taliaferro continues with the presentation of twenty religious doctrines covering everything from divine omnipresence to the existence of devils and of heaven and hell, and he claims that such beliefs require a particular view of the issues in the philosophy of mind. In order to narrow down exactly where Christians should stand on issues of the philosophy of mind, Taliaferro presents the significant theories debated in this field: eliminative materialism, identity theory, functionalism, property dualism, substance dualism, and idealism. Some of these seem incompatible with Christianity, like eliminative materialism. However, we would not be so quick about this, for there is no limit to the ingenuity of philosophical interpretations of religious beliefs. It would not surprise us if some such interpretation could be given according to which religious beliefs would be compatible with eliminative materialism.

Suppose some group of devoted Christians find the philosophical arguments in favor of eliminative materialism convincing. According to Taliaferro, such people have deviated from Christian orthodoxy and should revise their philosophical views or face the prospect of losing

their faith. There is, however, another alternative. Some Christians could develop a philosophical interpretation of Christianity compatible with eliminative materialism, a daunting task, to be sure, but not one that we should judge impossible merely because of the prima facie incompatibility of religious teachings and materialism. Seriously, we have doubts about whether such a task could be accomplished. Our point is only that to come to a considered judgment about this would require much more than a mere comparison of a list of doctrines. We should have to find out that attempts, such as those of van Inwagen, Zimmerman, and others, to provide reinterpretations of religious and materialist teachings with the aim of reconciliation run into dead ends, and that the prospects for alternative routes are dim. (Of course, much of the argumentation in favor of Christian materialism was not yet written when Taliaferro published this article; but Taliaferro discusses such views in the second article, reviewed below).

1. Dualism

In this section of his paper, Taliaferro does two things: first, he defends dualism against some Christian theological misgivings; and second, he proposes that dualism provides the theologian with a tool whereby a philosophical explanation can be given for various religious claims that would seem absurd if persons were identified with their bodies.

The guiding assumption of the discussion is that if persons are not their bodies, then we should adopt some form of dualism to describe the relationship between bodies and souls. This is questionable. Suppose, for example, that one is an Aristotelian. The Aristotelian will grant that the human person is not the body, for the body remains as a corpse after the person dies, and the person is not the corpse. The Aristotelian holds that a person is constituted by body and soul, where

the soul is not a mental substance in contrast to the extended substance of the boy but is the form that gives life to the body, or entelechy.

2. Minds and Bodies

Taliaferro begins this section with some methodological remarks: we have to start philosophizing somewhere better than with a common-sense view of things. This is hardly convincing. Descriptive metaphysics is undoubtedly a valuable way of drawing out metaphysical principles inspired by how one may consider things and talk about them independently of other philosophical traditions. However, the alternative to descriptive metaphysics is not, as Taliaferro would suggest, “to begin with what does not seem to be the case,” but to begin with other views that have been expounded regardless of how intuitive they may or may not be. Alternatives to descriptive metaphysics may be found by starting with views advocated in the naturalist and materialist traditions or any other philosophical traditions. We might, for example, begin with the view that selves are monads, as described by Leibniz. The so-called common-sense view has no special authority in metaphysics any more than it does in geometry.

In the course of his methodological reflections, Taliaferro proposes a principle of property non-identity that we would like to examine more closely:

If there is reason to believe one can conceive of some property, be it the property of being a father or being in pain, without conceiving of another, being a bank robber, or being in a specific material state, then one has reason to believe the properties are not identical (Taliaferro, 1990).

We can find no reason to accept this claim unless the following assertion support it:

(I) If one can conceive of some property without conceiving

another, then the properties are not identical.

By contraposition, (I) is equivalent to (II):

(II) If properties F and G are identical, then one cannot conceive of F without conceiving G.

Both (I) and (II) are ambiguous, as is the quotation from Taliaferro's text, and the ambiguity is one to which recent philosophy has devoted much attention. Let F be the property of being made of gold, and let G be made of metal with the atomic number 79. From the fact that one might not know that the metal with the atomic number 79 is gold, one should not conclude that the properties F and G are not identical (whether or not they are identical is another question that need not be addressed here, for it would require a metaphysical theory of properties).¹ So, if not knowing that gold is the metal with the atomic number 79 makes it possible for one to conceive of F without conceiving of G, then there is good reason to suspect that (I) and (II) are incorrect.

All of this will be beside the point. However, if Taliaferro wants to target eliminative materialism, the eliminative materialist does not say that pains and states of the central nervous system are identical but rather that the mental states are illusory. According to such eliminative materialists as Patricia Churchland, being in pain, for example, is not a real property at all. So, the argument for property dualism based on the claim that one can conceive mental properties without conceiving physical ones fails for at least two reasons:

1. one may deny that this is a good criterion for the non-identity of properties;
2. it is irrelevant to eliminative materialism.

1. For a comparison of various identity conditions that have been proposed for properties (Swoyer, 2009).

Taliaferro insists that conceivability is a good indicator of possibility—despite arguments from such philosophers as Margaret Wilson and Sydney Shoemaker, which he rejects—and that since we can conceive of any physical state without the accompaniment of any mental state and vice versa, we should embrace dualism.

Taliaferro is right to object to the arguments of Wilson and Shoemaker since they consider conceivability of the mind without the physical to show no more than that no contradiction has been noticed in the supposition of mental states without physical states or that a priori entailment from the mental to the physical has not been noticed. When Taliaferro considers conceivability to indicate the possibility, he does not mean conceivability due to neglect of a contradiction! Perhaps we should consider it inconceivable that there should be a gold nugget that is not formed from a metal with atomic number 79. At least one might hold the position (call this “position A”) that once one understands the atomic structure of gold, it is inconceivable that there should be gold without that structure—for, without the structure, it just would not be gold. On the other hand, some philosophers might claim (“position B”) that since there are people who know that certain coins are pure gold, but they do not know anything about atomic numbers, this by itself is enough to show that gold and metal with atomic number 79 are independently conceivable. If we take position A, we will reject the claims of Wilson and Shoemaker, for the ability to conceive will show not only that there is no unnoticed logical relation that would block the conception, but also that one does not have knowledge of a posteriori necessary truths that would invalidate the conception. This, however, will not help Taliaferro to win plausibility for dualism, since a materialist might claim that if one understood a posteriori necessary truth about the essence of the

mental, one would no more be able to conceive of mental phenomena in the absence of any supporting physical phenomena than one would be able to conceive of gold without the element of atomic number 79. If, on the other hand, one adopts position B, then the ability to conceive the independence of the mental from the physical does not show that it is so independent, any more than the ignorance of one who does not know the atomic number of the gold in a coin would show that atoms of gold might have more or less than 79 protons.

We conclude that the thought experiments considered by Taliaferro give us no reason for accepting the substantive dualist point of view.

Taliaferro argues:

If we have properties no physical object can have, it follows that we are not a physical object. Physical objects cannot enjoy disembodied existence, nor can they be destroyed and gain new bodies (Taliaferro, 1990, p. 244).

A Christian materialist might respond that persons have properties no merely physical object can have or that no physical object except a person can have. It will be more difficult for materialists to deal with disembodied existence, but there have been people, including some Christian apologists, who have considered the soul to be a subtle body (Martin & Barresi, 2006).

Of course, God will be considered as an exception by most Christian materialists, even though there have been anthropomorphists who have considered God to have a body, and hylomorphic views of God as embodied in the world arise from time to time. Perhaps Taliaferro does not consider such views because they are not taken seriously by most philosophers today, and one certainly cannot be

expected to offer arguments against every view that someone might have that is opposed to the one that is defended. Taliaferro does, however, consider the analogy between arguments for the independence of the mind from the body and the independence of God from the world: since in both cases we can conceive the former without the latter, we have reason to believe in both forms of independence. Taliaferro does not, however, consider the analogy between his “thought experiments” and the fact that many people would claim that they can conceive of the world without God, and the Churchlands conceive of persons without souls. Should these be taken as a reason to believe that the world is independent of God or that persons do not necessarily have souls? Such ideas are not incoherent, even if they are wrong, but Taliaferro claims that his independent arguments based on what one can conceive should be taken as reasons to believe their conclusions in the absence of reasons to believe that his arguments are incoherent (Taliaferro, 1990).

3. Causal Interaction and Individuation

Taliaferro considers the two objections to substance dualism that form its title in this section.

According to the first objection, material and non-material things are so different that it is inconceivable how they could causally interact. His case would have been stronger if he provided a detailed analysis of a philosopher who makes this claim instead of considering a straw man form of the argument. In any case, one of the most challenging problems for dualism is not a priori claims that material and non-material entities cannot interact but how such interaction can be understood. Despite its incredible difficulty, we do not think such a project is hopeless. Our point is instead that the difficulty for dualism posed by the issue of causal interaction cannot be answered with the

claim that the opponent of dualism has not proved that there can be no such interaction. Anyone who proposes causal interaction between the mental and the physical, regardless of whether they are dualists or not, should be expected to field the question of how this interaction is supposed to work.

The second objection is that if souls are not physical, they cannot be individuated physically. So, two persons with the same beliefs, desires, memories, and other mental properties, would not have anything to distinguish them. Taliaferro tosses this objection off almost as quickly as the first with the rejoinder that there are also philosophical problems with the ultimate grounds for distinguishing physical objects. No mention is made of the long history of this problem. That matter was taken to distinguish entities of the same species in medieval philosophy so that Aquinas would hold that each angel had to be of a distinct species. Because of this historical background, the second objection becomes prominent; and so, a response to this objection that does not consider the reasons that Aquinas and others had for their views will be unsatisfactory.

Some recent philosophers would answer that the individuality of souls is primitive (Adams, 1979; Legenhausen, 1989). Taliaferro does not provide a defense of such a position.¹ To answer the objection that immaterial souls cannot be distinguished, some indication of this or some other position should be given.

4. Concluding Reflections

Taliaferro presents his views as natural implications of Christian

1. He writes: "I think there are plausible grounds for believing that there are haecceities, though these are not, in my view, strong enough to carry the day fully against the antidualist attack." (Taliaferro, 1994, p. 209).

religious beliefs. At the same time, he does not acknowledge the wide variety of Christian philosophical views related to mind and soul that have been elaborated through the ages, some of which—including some essential ones—are inconsistent with his own. In the sketchy form in which he admits to having treated the issues, his arguments should not be expected to be very convincing. We find it is more like a statement of the author's position: Christian and dualist. Often the position is overstated to suggest that dualism is the only reasonable option for a Christian philosopher. Consider the following, fairly typical, remark: "But any worldview recognizably Christian must preserve a fairly robust sense in which God and we are persons. We are in the image of God." (Taliaferro, 1990) First of all, Christians seem to have gotten by reasonably well for several centuries without any robust concept of persons, let alone a univocal sense of being a person that applies to humans and God. Tacking on the Biblical allusion to man being created in the image of God indicates that Taliaferro thinks that the Bible verse is to be interpreted in terms of ordinary personhood. A glance through the history of Biblical exegesis and Christian theology would suffice to show that other interpretations are possible.

Most Greek Christian writers link the divine image with the soul and exclude the body from participation in it. But, while this is the majority opinion, it is not the universal view, for there is a significant minority that associate the divine image with the total human being, body, soul, and spirit together. Irenaeus of Lyons is a noteworthy exponent of this second standpoint (Ware, 1999).

Although we are neither Christian nor materialist, and we are not sure whether Taliaferro would consider me a dualist or not, we can find several reasons to study the position Taliaferro sketches. First,

Christians and Muslims have much theology in common. We believe in one God who is the Creator of the world and all things in it. Many of the attributes we ascribe to God are also the same. We also believe that God chose Abraham, Noah, Moses, and others, as His prophets. We believe in angels, in a final day of judgment, and the resurrection of the dead. Given so much creed in common, if a philosopher says that Christianity requires us to have certain philosophical beliefs, this gives us some *prima facie* reason to think that the requirement is taken to apply to Islam, too. Since we think that Islam does not require us to be dualists, and we do not think this depends on any difference between Christianity and Islam, it follows that we should deny Taliaferro's claim that Christianity requires dualism. Secondly, we may benefit from examining specific arguments raised by Taliaferro, such as the relationship between possibility and conceivability that we discussed above. Thirdly, and finally, there are critical methodological points of which we might never have given a second thought were it not for considering the positions stated by Taliaferro:

1. Philosophy ignores history at its peril. We believe that good philosophy of religion should consider the historical traditions of thought that have contributed to what Christians, Muslims, and others have thought about the issues. We should not be slaves of tradition, but it needs to be understood. When we show their relations to historical reference points, our positions become more apparent.

2. We would like a plea for tolerance concerning what religious doctrines require of philosophical positions. Religious doctrines are given in a language designed to be accessible to ordinary believers. Philosophical doctrines require expression in a more subtle form of language with the result that its claims can be easily misunderstood by those who lack appropriate training. Religious

philosophy is often speculative because it seeks to provide a theory that can accommodate religious doctrine through a unique interpretation using which the doctrine finds expression in the philosophical theory. Because of this, we would resist claims that religious doctrine requires us to be dualists, personalists, realists, haecceitists, or opposites. The plea for philosophical tolerance is not due to fears of an inquisition as much as fears that statements that all believers must hold some set of philosophical views will stifle the development of what might turn out to be better viewed. We agree with Plantinga and Taliaferro that religious beliefs should inform good religious' philosophy. However, we think that informing can be carried out in many different ways, as is evident from a review of the history of Christian, Muslim, and other kinds of religious philosophies.

3. We are thus very skeptical about how much philosophical mileage can be gained from a common-sense approach to what religious creeds seem at first glance to be saying. What scripture seems to be saying, in many cases, turns out to need radical reinterpretation: both the Bible and the Quran seem to many people to say that the earth is young, that the sun moves around the earth, that there is nothing wrong with slavery, that humans did not evolve from other primates, and that God walked through the garden or sat on His throne. Attempts to develop philosophical views to accommodate an uneducated interpretation of these claims are wrongheaded.

Goetz and Taliaferro divide the second article, "The Prospect of Christian Materialism," into three parts. The first introduces Christian Materialism; the second part argues that the Christian materialist critique of dualism fails and that dualism provides a more plausible interpretation of Christian doctrine than materialism; the third recapitulates the argument against materialism from the Incarnation.

I. Some Reasons for Going Materialistic

Goetz and Taliaferro consider four arguments for Christian materialism.

1. The Argument from Simplicity and Self-Awareness

Van Inwagen takes as primary his belief that he is a living animal. Here, he places himself in the same metaphilosophical camp with Taliaferro, who applauds the reliance on common sense and takes things to be the way they seem to be unless presented with sufficient argument to the contrary.

2. The Argument from Interaction and Individuation

Both of these arguments were considered in the earlier paper. Here they are represented in the work of Lynn Rudder Baker. Baker argues that dualists have never been able to give a satisfying answer to how mind and body can interact. She also argues that since souls are individuated by their bodies when embodied, they lose any principle of individuation when disembodied. She also holds that nothing exists that does not always and everywhere have a principle of individuation. She concludes that immaterial souls do not exist.

3. The Argument from the Necessary Dependence of Thinking on the Physical

This argument is taken from van Inwagen, who claims that if we correctly understood the dependence of thinking on the condition of the brain, we would not claim to be able to imagine ourselves as disembodied.

4. The Argument from Religious Doctrines of Death and Resurrection

Trenton Merricks has argued that if dualism were true, then

disembodied existence would be sufficient for life after death, and there would be no need for belief in the Resurrection. Since the Resurrection is emphasized in Christian (and Muslim) teachings, it must be because there would be no life after death without it. Hence, Christianity (and Islam) presuppose that dualism is false and there are no souls. Both van Inwagen and Merricks also argue that scripture teaches death to be an evil that is overcome by the Resurrection. If dualism were true, however, it is hard to see why the bodily resurrection should be needed to overcome the evil of death.

II. Reasons for Remaining Dualistic

Before addressing the arguments mentioned above, Taliaferro reminds us that “Christians down through the ages have believed that human beings are composed of physical bodies and non-physical souls.” If this is supposed to be an argument from consensus for dualism, there have been enough nondualistic interpretations of the soul and afterlife to answer it, Tertullian being the most notable example from the Church Fathers.¹

Taliaferro seeks to support dualism as a Christian view, and dualism has dominated most of Christian thought history. However, the question may be raised as to whether this domination is due to original Christian teachings or the influence of various strands of Platonism among early theologians. There is no scarcity of Biblical scholars who hold that the Biblical view of the soul is not immaterialist, and there is much disagreement on the view or views to

1. Tertullian argued that souls had to be corporeal because otherwise they could not be kept in a place in the afterlife where they would be punished, and they could not have the corporeal punishments described in the Bible (Schaff, 2006).

be found in the New Testament.¹ Furthermore, despite the predominance of dualistic views, numerous Christian thinkers have challenged dualism in the modern period (Thomson, 2008). So, it should not be presumed that if no definitive case can be made to refute dualism, it should win by default. This is not an area in which decisive refutations are to be expected. What is needed is the careful weighing of philosophical argumentation and sincere efforts to seek the guidance of religious and philosophical tradition.

1. The Argument from Simplicity and Self-Awareness

In response to van Inwagen, Taliaferro and Goetz find it odd that anyone can introspect that one is an animal but explain it by supposing that what can be introspected is one's spatial limitation: we seem to occupy the space occupied by our bodies. However, this need not imply that we are our living bodies, for we would have the same introspective experience if Taliaferro's own "integrative dualism" were true. Furthermore, Taliaferro and Goetz argue that our failure to be able to introspect spatial parts makes the facts of introspection count more in favor of dualism than animalism:² "it is what is not included in this awareness that is the basis for a belief in dualism." (Taliaferro, 2008)

Although we would grant that introspection provides essential insight into the nature of the self, reports by different thinkers about the philosophical import of introspection vary widely. Tertullian, for example, reports that the soul is transmitted in the sex act because, during the climax, he introspects the emission of part of the soul!

1. See the discussion and references in (Murphy, 2006).

2. Animalism is the view that persons are most fundamentally animals (Snowden, 1990).

Taliaferro seeks to undermine the materialists' introspective evidence by showing that dualists can explain how it arises. Since the body and soul are associated, the soul takes the spatial perspective of the body, producing the illusion that the soul is material.

If the materialist cannot account for the introspective evidence of the dualist, it would seem that introspection should count in favor of dualism. However, materialists have their explanations for dualistic intuitions! Paul Bloom, for example, maintains that studies of child development suggest how our dualistic intuitions could result from evolutionary pressures (Bloom, 2004). David Papineau holds that dualistic intuitions are due to some different factors, for each of which he provides extended discussion (Papineau, 2002). Hence, both the defenders of dualism and their attackers have their ways of showing that the intuitions utilized by the other side are misleading.

Nancey Murphy has argued that the conflicting intuitions that figure so prominently in discussions of the philosophy of mind are due to the linguistic resources that participants in the debate utilize (Murphy, 2006). Our intuitions are shaped by the research paradigms in which we work and the linguistic resources through which explanations are requested and given. Dualism and physicalism may be seen as competing for research programs, each of which has its linguistic resources employed to explain various phenomena. She observes:

In this light, it is clear that the physicalist program is doing exceptionally well: all recent advances in the neurobiological understanding of cognition, emotion, and action, as well as progress in certain forms of cognitive science, are the product of a physicalist understanding of human nature. In contrast, scarcely any research follows from a dualist theory.... Thus, however inconclusive the philosophical arguments may be, we can say that science provides as much evidence as could be desired for the physicalist thesis (Murphy, 2006).

Murphy concludes (for these and other reasons) that Christians would do better to abandon their traditional dualism in favor of physicalism. Whether or not she is right about the advisability of physicalism, she provides good reason denying that an appeal to intuitions will suffice to convince anyone that we have or do not have immaterial souls.

2. The Argument from Interaction and Individuation

Taliaferro and Goetz argue that Christian materialists can be hoisted on their petards, for if they argue against the immaterial soul that it poses difficulties for causal interaction with the material world, then they will face the same problem themselves concerning God's action in the world since nearly all Christian materialists admit that God is immaterial.

There are several responses open to the Christian materialist. The basic structure of these responses is to hold that God's action in the world is significantly different from the soul's action in a human; and that while immateriality is an obstacle to understanding the soul's governance of the person, divine action in the world can be understood in such a way that immateriality poses no problem there. Consider, for a moment, Avicenna. Avicenna held that both souls and God are immaterial, so Goetz and Taliaferro might consider him an ally. However, according to Avicenna, how the soul governs the body is considerably different from how God acts in the world. God's action in the world is through emanation, which

is a non-temporal relationship through which existence extends from God, as that which is necessary concerning existence (*wajib al-wujud*), to the contingent (*mumkin al-wujud*). The emanationism model of God-world causal interaction is a metaphysical relation rather than an efficient temporal causal interaction, presumably to

govern the relationship between body and soul. Immateriality is no obstacle to emanationism, but it is a problem if one holds a dualistic view that material and mental events are related by efficient causality.

For a contemporary answer to this objection, we can turn again to Nancey Murphy. She advocates a non-interventionist account of divine action (Murphy, 2009). According to this account, God acts by realizing the potentialities of quantum events and by realizing natural laws and effecting His will through human action. Regardless of the merits of this proposal, what is clear is that the account given of divine action need not have any bearing on the account one may offer for human action, and, thus, accounts of divine action that assume the immateriality of God need not undermine objections to mind: body dualisms because the causal interaction between minds and bodies is inexplicable on dualist principles.

Another problem for the Christian materialist raised by Goetz and Taliaferro pertains specifically to the Christian doctrine of the incarnation. If Christian materialists maintain that dualism is wrong because the immaterial cannot have any causal relationship with a physical body, they will be at a loss as to how to explain the incarnation, in which God, who is immaterial, is immaterial takes the body of Christ as His own. It is tempting to dismiss this problem and take a cheap shot at Christian doctrine as a Muslim commentator. Instead, we will offer two brief suggestions.

First, according to Christian teaching, the relation between the divine nature of Christ is not that a divine soul enlivens the body of Jesus, whereas human souls enliven other bodies. Christians hold that Christ is divine in soul and body. Christ is said to have two natures, divine, and human, but they do not divide along the lines of soul and body, respectively.

Second, Christians might understand the incarnation in terms of manifestation. One could hold that Christ is a perfect manifestation of God. This would not seem to require any dualistic causal interaction. Taliaferro argues that since Christ is the second person of the Trinity, and since Christ, as the second person of the Trinity, existed before his corporeal birth, Christ cannot be understood as identical to his body, or his living body, or even as being constituted by his body. The Christian materialist, however, may hold that the second person of the Trinity exists eternally and that when Jesus (peace be with him) comes is born, he may be said to be the incarnation of the second person in the sense that he manifests the second person in knowledge and will without being composed of a body and soul as dualistically conceived.

Trenton Merricks goes further by arguing that not only is the incarnation compatible with a non-dualist view of persons, but that dualism is inconsistent with the doctrine of the incarnation and, hence, that Christians should be physicalists (Merricks, 2007).¹

Lynne Rudder Baker holds that her constitutional view of the human person provides a “neater picture” of the doctrine of the incarnation than is available to the dualist because “it allows believers to hold that Christ is wholly immaterial in his divine nature and wholly material in his human nature.” (Baker, 2007)

No matter how this issue is to be sorted out, there is no clear-cut argument from the doctrine of the incarnation to dualism. A plea for tolerance should be heeded in the absence of any overwhelming

1. The main idea of the argument is that dualists interpret having a body in terms of knowledge and control by the soul of the body. But God has knowledge and control over all bodies, yet they would not want to say that God has a multiplicity of bodies.

argument in favor of dualism or against it. Christians should accept that some of them will be dualists, and others will reject dualism without any of them being less Christian because of the side they favor in this debate.

3. The Argument from the Necessary Dependence of Thinking on the Physical

Goetz and Taliaferro appeal to the authority of Thomas Nagel to argue that the relation between the mental and the physical is contingent and that, therefore, the relation between the soul and the body is contingent. However, reductive laws can be given. No theory identifying mental states and brain states does not mean that the relationship is contingent. Token identity theorists, for example, allow mental and physiological concepts not to correspond, yet one cannot have had different mental states without having had a different physiological condition.

So, the abandonment of reductionism or type identity theories does not imply an endorsement of any dualism. One can maintain that the person and body are necessarily associated, either because persons are their bodies or because they are constituted by their bodies, without accepting any kind of psychophysical reductionism.

4. The Argument from Religious Doctrines of Death and Resurrection

Christian materialists claim that a great advantage of materialism is that it makes sense of the resurrection. If souls are immaterial and can go to heaven after death, why should they have to come back down to earth at the resurrection? What advantage would there be to being resurrected? The materialist claims that without a body, there is no afterlife. So, the resurrection is necessary for there to be divine rewards and punishments in the afterlife.

Goetz and Taliaferro argue that an embodied life is a great good, and even if there is disembodied existence for the soul in heaven, it will still be better to become re-embodied at the resurrection.

Goetz and Taliaferro also claim that the Christian materialist's resurrection account is problematic. According to the materialist, the problem is that if the body is destroyed and the body and the person are identical, then the person is destroyed. If the person is destroyed, it is not easy to understand the criteria that could be used to support the contention that the same person (i.e., same body) will be brought back to life with the general resurrection. It is this problem that has led van Inwagen to the clever suggestion that God might miraculously prevent bodies from being destroyed and store them in some unknown manner until the resurrection (Inwagen, 1978).¹ If the body is destroyed and the person is not identical to the body but is constituted by the body, as in Lynne Rudder Baker's view, then the body of the resurrection will have to constitute the same person as the one that lived before the resurrection as constituted by its mortal body. Since Baker's form of materialism is one in which the same person does not imply being constituted by the same body, Dean Zimmerman has accused her of holding a kind of "dualism in disguise." (Zimmerman, 2004, pp. 338)

Even if the resurrection poses problems for Christian materialists, dualists will also face their problems about the resurrection. The traditional view held by both Muslims and Christians is that at the resurrection, one is not given a new body, but one's

1. Hud Hudson notes that "whereas the view originated with van Inwagen, it was put forth as an answer to a "so-just-how-can-it-be-done challenge" and not as a thesis fully endorsed by its author." (Hudson, 2007, pp. 216).

former body is resurrected and transformed in some way (glorified, immortalized, or in some other manner perfected). So, both dualists and materialists must come up with some explanation of the sense in which the resurrected body can be said to be the body that had previously died, or else they can argue that the religious doctrine of the resurrected body is to be interpreted in some way compatible with the idea that the resurrected body will be a new body and not the same body that had died. There are several candidate criteria based on which one may claim that body a that died at t will be resurrected at some future date, even if this body has been pulverized in the meantime.

1. Psychological state criteria. If body a and body b are related to one another so that the psychological states of a are carried over through the psychological states of b, regardless of the temporal gap, then both a and b may be identified as some person's body.

2. Corporeal component criteria. Body a at t_n is the same body as b at t_m if only if a and b have the same parts. In order to avoid a regress, advocates of this view usually assume that there are ultimate indivisible parts or atoms.

3. Haecceitism. This is the view that the identity of a with b is primitive and unanalyzable and that there is a brute metaphysical fact of the matter that haecceity of a is the haecceity of b and, so, that a is identical to b, or that a and b do not have unique haecceity and are not identical.

4. Conventionalism. The identity of a with b is a matter of arbitrary convention.

5. Moderate Anti-Haecceitism. This is a form of conventionalism that places constraints on the conventions to be validated, usually by

appeal to some corporeal or psychological state criteria. According to moderate anti-haecceitism, such constraints are not sufficient to determine the identity, and a conventional determination within such limits may be given if identity is not left indeterminate.

Dualists might suggest a version of psychological state criteria and hold that the body with which one is incarnated at the resurrection is one's former body. Through the embodiment of the immaterial soul, the resurrected body embodies the psychological criteria that make it count as the body that had died.

On the other hand, materialists could adopt any of the five criteria suggested supporting the claim that the same body continues after the gap between death and the resurrection. Conventions, for example, may be humanly or divinely instituted. So, one could hold that there is no fact of the matter that might determine whether the resurrected body is identical to the body of the deceased; but that by divine convention, God may determine that the resurrected body is the same as that which had died, perhaps within the metaphysical constraint that the resurrected body support psychological functions continuous with those of the previously deceased body.

One of the most contentious issues in Islamic theology is whether the Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sina and Mulla Sadra accepted the resurrection of the body (*ma'ad al-jismani*). Opponents accuse them of rejecting the corporeal resurrection and instead relegating it to a product of the imagination or taking place in an imaginal world. A moderate anti-haecceitist divine conventionalism, however, could be used to defend the position of the philosophers because according to this position, the divine decree that the resurrected body, whether existing in the sensible or imaginal worlds, is the same as that of the deceased would make it so in reality.

However, our point here is neither to defend the Muslim philosophers nor moderate anti-haecceitism but to suggest that there will be a wide range of options open to whether one is Christian or Muslim, dualist or materialist believing philosophers for solving problems about the resurrection. The doctrine of the resurrection does not require Muslims or Christians to be dualists or materialists.

This is not to say that it makes no difference to one's religious beliefs whether one is a dualist or a materialist. Dualists hold that the person exists in a disembodied form after death and before the resurrection, while contemporary Christian materialists deny this. No matter which position one takes on this issue, Christian and Islamic sources seem to raise difficulties. This might be interpreted to mean that the sources should not be taken too literally on such issues. Rather than attempting to devise complex exegetical theses to fit with a preferred philosophical view, we may interpret that lack of any clear metaphysical position that can be derived from scripture to indicate that at least some religious truth is independent of the metaphysical theories through which it is to be understood by philosophers.

III. A Positive Christian Argument against Materialism

The "positive argument" given by the authors against materialism is not new but a restatement of their conviction that the Christian doctrine of the incarnation is incompatible with materialism. Above we pointed out how some Christian materialists have responded to this problem, and we suggested another way the Christian materialist might counter such an argument by re-interpreting incarnation in terms of manifestation.

In their introduction to this discussion, the authors confess a conviction that "if some object or substance is nonphysical, then it is essentially nonphysical." They also hold, "if an object or substance is

physical, then it is essentially physical.” Moreover, they conclude, “Thus, it would be absurd (we suggest) to hold that this physical journal might become (either slowly or instantaneously) nonphysical. Would such a change amount to parts of the journal being replaced by a hallucination or journal after-image?” (Talafierro & Goetz, 2008, pp. 319-320)

Contrary to the view of the authors is that advocated by Mulla Sadra. According to Mulla Sadra’s view, a physical object or substance might become nonphysical. In order to understand this suggestion in a manner in which it is not absurd, we need to introduce two principles and one thesis of the philosophy of Mulla Sadra. The principles are the graduated nature of existence (*tashkik al-wujud*) and substantial motion (*al-harakat al-jawhariyyah*). The thesis is: that the soul is corporeal in its origination and spiritual in its survival (*jismani al-huduth wa ruhani al-baqa’*).

The Grades of Existence.

According to Mulla Sadra, a thing might have more or less existence, or its existence may be more or less intense. Pure existence, the most intense existence, is identified with God. Created existents are divided into sensible, imaginal, and intellectual realms, with successively more intense levels of existence.

Substantial motion.

According to Mulla Sadra, when a substance changes, the change does not only involve the accidents of the substance so that the substance stays the same while the accidents change; instead, changes in accidents reflect changes in the substance underlying them.

Through substantial motion, Mulla Sadra holds, the existence of a thing may intensify so that it may even change from being merely physical to becoming spiritual, and this is what he takes to happen

with the development of the soul. The human soul begins as a corporeal principle of the fetus's life. Gradually, however, it becomes spiritual and even becomes a separable substance.

This view may be considered a kind of dualism if dualism only means the denial that everything is merely physical. Mulla Sadra's view differs considerably from Cartesian dualism, however. It does not divide the world into mental and physical substances, but, instead, it considers a continuum of increasingly intense levels of existence with the matter at the low end and God at the apex. It is not a psychophysical dualism because it does not identify the immaterial with the mental. Even vegetable souls are nonmaterial substances that emerge out of vegetable material.

Finally, by way of illustration, consider the example of the philosophical journal mentioned by Taliaferro and Goetz. We may begin by considering not the temporal development of the journal but its metaphysical development from the physical to the spiritual. Physically, the journal consists of some bound pages covered by some ink patterns. This is not all that the journal is, however. If the letters printed in the journal were erased and replaced by others, the physical magazine might remain through a process that ended by destroying the journal so that it would no longer be the *Christian Scholar's Review*. At a higher level of existence, the journal does not consist of paper and ink (and does not change into hallucinations or after-images) but consists of articles circulating among scholars as objects of their reflection. At a higher level of existence, the journal exists independently of whether it is printed on paper or published in electronic format, and it exists whether or not anyone reads all the articles. It is a purely spiritual entity. So, what begins (not temporally but at the lowest level of the chain of being) as material paper and ink evolves or emerges through

substantial motion into something imaginal and finally intellectual.

We do not claim that Mulla Sadra would approve of the way I have presented this example. It is only meant to draw on the mentioned principles of Mulla Sadra to illustrate how one may deny that what is physical must be essentially and exclusively so without absurdity.

IV. Concluding Reflections

Materialist views of human nature may be found among both Christians and Muslims. However, the development of sophisticated forms of Christian materialism differs markedly from the forms in which it appeared among early Christian and Muslim theologians. These developments should not be condemned as inconsistent with religion. If materialism is condemned because of inconsistency with a literal interpretation of scripture, the way is opened to the driest forms of scriptural literalism. If materialism is condemned as contrary to religious teachings because it is inconsistent with cherished philosophical intuitions, the way is opened to a philosophical dogmatism that may skew a proper understanding of religion.

There is much to recommend in Taliaferro's integrative dualism. Integrative dualism can avoid many of the objectionable features of Cartesian dualism. Indeed, Taliaferro's integrative dualism and Baker's constitution view of human nature seem to have more in common with one another than Taliaferro's view has with that of Descartes or Baker's view has with the materialist views surveyed by Lang. Given such similarities and differences, it seems rather crude to issue blanket condemnations of anything that comes under the heading of "materialism" as being contrary to religious teaching.

Judgments in favor of materialism or dualism or some other

alternative should be made based on the promise one sees in these theories for philosophical development and the philosophical elucidation of religious ideas. At this point, the advocates of the positions reviewed do not have strong enough arguments to warrant judgments that Christians (or Muslims) should abjure materialism or dualism on religious grounds.

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Is the Human Death A Result of Adam's Sin? A Comparative Study of Quran and Bible on Death

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Received: 2021-03-10

Accepted: 2021-09-07

Abstract

The story of the Original Sin that is Adam and Eve and their sin of eating from the Forbidden Fruit is mentioned in the Bible as well as the Quran. . Although there are some similarities in the narration of this event in these holy books, there are some nuances in some significant points. One of the significant differences is the consequences of Adam's Original Sin in eating the Forbidden Fruit. Traditional narratives of the Bible emphasize human death as one of these consequences. This belief has been considered one of Christian theology's fundamental assumptions. However, there is no narrative in the Quran. This paper discusses that human physical death is not necessarily the result of Adam's Sin, as narrated in Torah. Instead, the spiritual death that is considered a result of human sin is the consequence of Adam's Original Sin, like other human sins. Despite some Christian interpretations that completely changed the story, this study shows that the Torah's statement is entirely interpretable and reasonable. In this respect, the Quran has never mentioned anything about Adam and his progeny's physical and spiritual death. Instead, the Quran states that merciful God forgave his fault in eating the Forbidden Fruit, and God will never punish people for the sins of others; thus, sin is not hereditary.

Keywords

Quran, Bible, Death, Sin.

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* Sadatmoosavi, Zohreh; Shokouhi, Mohammad Ali. (2021). Is the Human's Death A Result of Adam's Sin? A Comparative Study of Qur'an and Bible on Death. *Journal of Theosophia Islamica*, 1(2), pp. 105-124. Doi: 10.22081/jti.2022.60424.1011

Introduction

The issues such as life, death, and destruction and achieving pure and eternal life, health, prosperity, and redemption have permanently been significant concerns of humanity. Traditionally and theologically, one of the critical elements in the Bible that have impacted beliefs on human death is the story of Adam and Eve, which has typically been considered a fundamental subject and paradigm for many discussions and perceptions regarding human life and death. Adam and Eve's temptation, their sin of eating from the Forbidden Tree, and their eventual descent to the earth are significant in holy books in Abrahamic religions. Quran and Torah have narrated this story in detail. Also, in the New Testament, the Book of Paul has narrated this story and has reinterpreted it in new ways.

Despite some resemblances in the narration of this event in these holy books, some crucial themes differ. One of the significant differences in the consequences of Adam's sin --i.e., human death as God's punishment. As we will see in this paper, human physical death is not the consequence of Adam's sin in the Torah. Instead, the spiritual death is an expected outcome of human sin, emphasized in the Old and New Testaments as the consequence of Adam's sin. This clarification for the account of the Torah is comparable and adaptable despite some certain traditional interpretations and perceptions in the Book of Paul.

Physical Life and Physical Death in the Bible

In the holy book of Judaism, Tenakh or Tanakh, also known as the Old Testament, as a part of the Christians' Bible, the types of life and death of the human being are indicated. In the Torah, after the creation

of heavens and the earth, God began the creation of man and gave him life:

"The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." (Torah, Genesis 2:7)

In the opposite of this life granted to the human being, there is physical death as a separation between the soul and body. As the bible states:

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Eccl 12:7)

Spiritual Life and Spiritual Death in the Bible

Besides the physical life and death, both books of the Old or New Testament have mentioned spiritual life and spiritual death several times in different words. Here, we would instead write a few extra sentences that explain precisely what we mean by the term 'spiritual death because it may be misleading (Kulikovsky, 2001). Anyway, Bible discusses another type of life that is considered hard to be achieved, which is called spiritual life:

"But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." (Matthew 7:14)

Terminologically, spiritual death is a separation between man and God which has greater significance than physical death:

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you that He will not hear." (Isa 59:1-2).

"The person [soul] who sins will die (spiritually)." (Ezek 18:4,20)

For example, the proverbs of Solomon in the Old Testament

mentions some sins, which lead to spiritual death. (Prov. 2:16-19¹ 6:32-33 25: 1-7³) In these aphoristic statements, many various points have been discussed, which will be mentioned briefly as follows:

- 1- Attention to some advice would lead to preserving the spiritual life.
- 2- The soul (spiritual life) of a prostitute is destroyed.
- 3- Also, a person who goes around a whore, will not be able to achieve the ways of spiritual life.

So, traditionally, the Jews believe that obeying the commands of God and observing His laws and practices can preserve their spiritual life. For example, as a religious practice, the head covering serves as a reminder that the *Shekinah* (the Divine Presence) is the Omnipresent God and, in reciting a *Berakhah*, becomes a basis for the spiritual life (Fuchs, 2012). Also, there are several statements in the New Testament that emphasize the significance, difficulty, and value of the spiritual life:

"I tell you the truth if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." (John 8:51).

\. "It will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words, who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God. For her house leads down to death and her paths to the spirits of the dead. None who go to her return or attain the paths of life."

Υ. "But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroy himself. Blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be wiped away."

Υ. "My son, pay attention to my wisdom, listen well to my words of insight, that you may maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge. For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. She gives no thought to the way of life; her paths are crooked, but she knows it not."

"He who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal (spiritual) life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of (spiritual) death into (spiritual) life." (John 5:24)

"And this is what he has promised us—even eternal life." (John 2:25)

Undoubtedly, this eternal life must be spiritual, not physical, because humans die physically. Even prophets and Jesus are no exceptions. Jesus said:

"Follow Me, and allow the (spiritually) dead to bury their own (physically) dead." (Mat 8:2)

These statements show that the believers continue to live spiritually forever in the presence of God, even when they die physically. Generally, spiritual death is considered as the result and consequence of sin:

"For, the wages of sin is (spiritual) death..." (Rom 6:23).

These verses are speaking about spiritual death, not physical death, as Bible says:

"But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." (Tim 5:6).

The Lord Himself taught how the righteous could prevent their spiritual death:

"Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11/25-26)

According to the statements mentioned in the New Testament regarding the spiritual death, it indicates a state of separation between the Creator and individual created spirit beings. Thus, Satan is spiritually dead in Biblical expressions, although he continues to exist as God's archenemy (Gurney, 2001). Therefore, according to the Old

Testament (in Isa 59:1-2 and the New Testament in Eph 2:1,5¹), sins, as the separation of the law of God, bring about a separation between the man from God -- i.e., the spiritual death. Nonetheless, spiritual death has not been precisely mentioned in the Scripture (Gurney, 2001).

Is the Physical Death a Consequence of Adam's Sin in the Bible?

The Old Testament, unlike Bible, does not talk about the transmission of hereditary sin and its consequences (Merriam-Webster's, 1999). According to the Book of Genesis, God warns that if Adam and Eve eat from the Forbidden Tree, they will die:

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen 2:17)

In this verse of the Book of Genesis, God tells that when Adam eats from the forbidden tree, he will "surely die." However, when Adam does fall to the earth, his physical death does not occur immediately. Thus, God must have had another kind of death in mind, i.e., spiritual death. They died spiritually and separated from the presence of God when they ate Forbidden fruit. This separation from God is seen precisely in the Book of Genesis (3:8), when Adam and Eve heard the voice of God and hid from the presence of God. Their union with God had been broken, and they were spiritually dead....

Also, the price the male would have to pay was that of working hard to eke out a living (Genesis, 3:17-19). In other words, death was not included in the price! The narrator merely stated that the man would pay the price until death (Spangenberg, 2013). Moreover, God has

\. "And you were (spiritually) dead in your trespasses and sins ... "

not necessarily desired man to have eternal life in the first place :

"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and also take of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" (Genesis, 3:22).

This verse shows that God has not wanted man to know the good and evil, but He has not desired man to have eternal life, and this was not considered as the punishment of man's sin yet. Moreover, Adam failed to obtain and eat a tree of eternal physical life. So, anyhow, he could not obtain eternal physical life only to lose it later. Undoubtedly, this tree must be for physical life because the man successfully ate, while he may have eternal spiritual life.

We must remember that, in earlier centuries, theologians supposed that the Book of Genesis (verses 1-3) is a single narrative of creation, including two episodes. The first episode narrates how creation came into being. The second narrative narrates how this perfect creation became defective (Spangenberg, 2013). However, today scholars of the Old Testament have approved that (the Book of Genesis, verses 1-3) comprises of two different sections called the P (for Priestly author) and the J (for Yahwistic) narratives, and none of them is a historical account of what happened at the beginning of creation (Westermann, 1972).

The first narrative (the Book of Genesis, 1:1-2:4a) tells how the whole universe was created in six days. This creation story probably originated in Babylonia during the exile (586-539 BCE) and is assigned to the P-document (Bandstra, 1995).

The second story of creation (Gen 2:4b-3:24), which forms part of the J-document, explains why humans possess divine knowledge but not divine life. They can distinguish between good and bad, but they

do not live forever. Anyway, nothing in the narrative suggests that he was created to be immortal (physically) (Spangenberg, 2013).

So unlike the claim of Augustine (354-430), in the Book of Genesis (2:4b-3:24) is not an account about death as punishment because the Hebrew word for 'sin' is not used anywhere in the narrative (Tucker, 1978; Primavesi, 2000); and none of the other biblical books ever referred to this story to explain the origin of sin and mortality of the human being. The ancient Israelites thought that death was a typical event in life. Death is only 'unnatural' when it arrives before a person has lived a whole life (Smelik, 2003; Alexander, 2008; Spangenberg, 2013).

Therefore, as *Spangenberg* also emphasizes, the conviction that death could be linked to the events narrated in Genesis (2-3) is non-existent in the Tanakh (Smelik, 2003; Alexander, 2008; Spangenberg, 2013). Moreover, even if we accept the mortality for Adam, there is a statement in Torah that it must not be transmissible to all of his descendants. The Torah says:

"The fathers shall not be put to death for the children; neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his sin." (Deut 24:16)

Therefore as Ross argues, Adam's spiritual death occurred immediately when he ate the Forbidden Fruit, but it is wrong to conclude that Adam's physical death did not inevitably result (Ross, 1994). Therefore:

1- Adam died spiritually in the Garden but remained alive physically when he disobeyed (Gurney, 2001).

2- Adam died physically many years after the Fall and expulsion from the Garden (Gurney, 2001).

In Christian theology, some accounts of Paul in his epistles

that refer to the story of Genesis consider human death as the result of Adam's sin, while there are no records and demonstrations by Jesus in the New Testament in this regard. Historically, since the 4th century, Christian theologians have linked the account of Genesis (2-3) with Paul's letter to Romans (5:12), which states that: "It was through one man that sin entered the world, and through sin death, and thus death pervaded the whole human race since all have sinned.").

As Spangenberg writes, Paul did not write a philosophical or theological treatise. Instead, He proposed a model to convince the readers of his epistle that they had been released from the death penalty (Rom, 5).¹ Anyway, Paul's explanation of this matter in his letter made an enormous impact on Augustine and eventually Western Christianity (Pagels, 1994).

As one of the Latin fathers of the Church and one of the most prominent Christian scholars in the history of Christianity, St. Augustine expounded the idea of Original Sin and death. He argued that without Adam's sin, there would be no death. Such a view became the predominant view in Christianity (Augustinus-Lexikon; Spangenberg, 2013).

Therefore, Adam's sin did not transform nature. Adam's sin did not transform nature. This understanding of the story of Genesis (2-3) represents Augustine's approaches rather than Paul's. Humans are not

¹. It is important to remember that when Augustine (354-430) became the Bishop of Hippo (395), Christianity was already the official religion of the Roman Empire, a development to which the Emperors Constantine (275-337) and Theodosius (346-395) contributed most. Constantine declared Christianity as the official religion of the Empire and Theodosius made it the dominant religion of the Roman Empire. Both Emperors contributed to the development of creeds to establish unity amongst Christians and to keep the empire safe (Spangenberg, 2013).

as being 'rooted' in Adam to Paul, nor does he believe that they are consequently condemned to physical death, as Augustine maintains in his *Enchiridion* (Van Bavel, 2008).

Pelagius repudiated the idea that 'death is a consequence of Adam's disobedience' (Knowles, 2004) and that there was a universal and permanent change in nature' after the Fall (Pagels, 1994). As Fredriksen argues, Augustine had almost no knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, so he had read only Latin translations of the Bible (Fredriksen, 2012). The Roman 5 Latin translation:12d ('*in whom* all sinned, not '*since* all have sinned' in the representation of the Greek) encouraged him to develop his Adam's progeny idea of being 'rooted' in him and thus co-condemned by God (Spangenberg, 2013). According to Pelagius' argument, his orthodox convictions are declared by two councils of bishops in Palestine.

So, the Catholic Church accepted Augustine's doctrine, and the Protestant reformers embraced his views without any serious criticism. So, his theological view was embedded as Christian principles (Pelikan, 2003). Nevertheless, there was a radical change by the change in paradigm in the Biblical studies to the end of the 19th and the start of the 20th century (Noll, 1991; Saebø, 1995). By scientific improvements in recent decades, life and death have been discussed and considered more important. So as some research indicates, St. Augustine's opinion on death could no longer be defensible. However, conservative theologians and church members are still reluctant to acknowledge it (Bowler, 2007). As Spangenberg emphasizes, a change in traditional Christian theology seems to presuppose a meaningful dialogue between religion and science (Spangenberg, 2013). In this regard, Loader, a scholar in ecology and religion, argued that death is a prerequisite for new life; so, life on earth cannot evolve without death (Spangenberg, 2013).

Primavesi was the first theologian who argued that we could never claim that our theological doctrines and convictions are eternally valid (Primavesi, 2000). Thus, abandoning Paul's and Augustine's accounts on sin and death is what theologians should entertain and step into formulating new concepts on death according to our contemporary knowledge (Spangenberg, 2013).

Moreover, as we know, Jesus's complete obedience to God did not bring him eternal physical life. Adam's death could not influence human death in general. Therefore, the Old Testament has not implied the physical immortality of Adam before eating from the forbidden fruit, although there is an agreement on his spiritual death immediately after his disobedience.

In Christianity, while there are no implications by Jesus in the New Testament on humanity's death due to Adam's sin, some reinterpretations of Paul about genesis (2-3) refer to it. Although St. Agustin's ideas became the dominant doctrine in Western Christianity, by the end of the 19th century, a paradigm shift in biblical studies put the idea that death is linked to Adam's sin under severe criticism (Spangenberg, 2013). In this regard, several explanations discuss that Adam's Sin caused his spiritual death like many other sins in the bible that would lead to death.

The Physical Life in Quran

In Islamic teachings, God first created Adam from the soil. A few verses of the Holy Quran have discussed human creation via blowing God's spirit in the material body, including:

Behold, your Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man from clay. When I finished it (in due proportion) and breathed

into him of My spirit, fall down in prostrate before him."¹

Therefore, by blowing God's Spirit into the human body, physical life and material life were granted to Adam.

The Concept of Spiritual Death in the Quran

Like other Abrahamic faiths, Islam believes that God shall grant every faithful man and woman who believes and does good deeds a real pure life. This spiritual life is called *Tayyibah* life in Quran. God, who is Omnipresent, gives any person a degree of spiritual life according to how well they do; a life that only faithful and pure people will enjoy. Also, sins are actions done against God's will and originate from ignorance, arrogance, and persistence in disobeying God. So, they can cause a spiritual death in this world and hereafter.

The main aim of legislation in Islam is closeness to Allah (SWT), which is obtained through piety and self-purification. The ultimate goal of sending prophets and holy books is the purification and evolution of man.²

Allah (SWT) awards the greater spirituality to those who attend His worship:

Whoever works righteousness, whether man or woman and has Faith, verily, We will give them a new life, a life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions (Holy Quran, An-Nahl, 97). In this verse, two

١. "اذ قال ربك للملكة اني خالقت بشرا من طين. فاذا سويته و نفخت فيه من روحي فقعوا له ساجدين"
(Holy Quran, Sad, 71-72)

٢. "It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom - although they were before in clear error" (Holy Quran, al-Jumu'a, 2)

conditions of achieving this life are expressed: Faith and good deeds

God, who is Omnipresent, gives any person a degree of spiritual life according to how well they do in obeying Him, a life that only faithful and pure people will enjoy. Also, spiritual life is considered a consequential result in response to the Prophet's word:

“O ye who believe! give your response to Allah and His apostle when He called you to that which will give you life.”¹

Quran has emphasized the importance of living a faithful life (the spiritual life) and has come to warn and fear those who have the benefit of real life:

“...that it may give admonition to any (who are) alive and that the charge may be proved against those who reject (Truth).”²

In another verse, Allah gives faithful people light for progression:

"Is who was dead and whom we have revived and given a light, which can help him to walk among people, to be compared to him who blunders about in darkness from which he will never emerge? As such, what the unbelievers have done appears decorated to them." ³

In this verse, God describes faithful people as alive with (spiritual) light. In this respect, although a pagan person is alive, he is regarded as dead (spiritually) and out of (spiritual) light, and thus, obviously, a believer would enjoy a proper life while a pagan would not have a chance to enjoy it.

١. "مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً..." (Holy Quran, An-nahl, 97)

٢. "لينذر من كان حيا و يحق القول على الكافرين." (Holy Quran, Ya-Sin, 70)

٣. "أومن كان ميتا فأحييناه و جعلنا له نورا يمشي به فى الناس كمن مثله فى الظلمات ليس بخارج منها" (Al-An'am, 122)

Is Human Death a Consequence of Adam's Sin in the Quran?

Despite some similarities on the general theme and structure of the creation story of Adam and Eve in the Quran and Torah, they differ in some essential points and conclusions such as:

1-According to Quran, Adam (Arabic: آدم) is honored with being both the first human being and the first prophet (Yousuf, 1981; Holy Quran, Ali 'Imran, 33).^١

2- Basically, Islamic scholars believe that this command of God (in forbidding Adam from eating out of the Forbidden Fruit) was a "guidance prohibition," not "*Mowlavi* prohibition."^٢ So, it was not considered a sin for Adam.

3-The Quran says that God commanded that Adam and Eve not eat from one tree in heaven, but *Iblis* enticed them to taste it (Thorp, 1982). Anyway, they both repented, and God accepted it (Holy Quran, Taha, 121; Holy Quran, Al-Baqarah, 37).

4- God had already decided that humanity would be living on earth, even before the creation of Adam:

A. Islamic teachings do not ascribe human's life on earth as a punishment, instead of as part of God's primary plan for humans, because God says to the angels in the Quran (Holy Quran, Al-Baqarah, 30 - 33),

١. "Allah did choose Adam and Noah the family of Abraham and the family of Imran above all people."

”إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ“

٢. There are two kinds of commands: "*Mowlavi*" and "guidance". *Mowlavi* order or prohibition is about unlawful activities that has been promised to hell for it such as murder or leaving the obligatory religious duties, but "guidance" is the advice that will bring along peace and tranquility (Tabatabaei, 1995).

"Behold thy Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth."¹

C. God Created humankind out of clay from the earth, so he must return to it:

"From the (earth) did We create you and into it shall We return you and from it shall We bring you out once again."²

D. Basically, the discussion about the tree of life has not come in the Quran like Torah. Nevertheless, the tree of life and immortality are temptations of Satan:

"But Satan whispered evil to him: he said, "O Adam! shall I lead thee to Tree of Eternity and to a kingdom that never decays?"³

"... he said: "Your Lord forbade you from this tree only lest ye should become angels or become of the immortals."⁴

Satan pretends that eating from the Forbidden Tree causes:

1. Obtaining the Tree of Eternity or becoming of the immortals.

This issue shows that it was clear that Adam was a mortal being in the first place, even before eating from the Tree.

2. The kingdom that never decays;
3. Becoming angels.

However, Satan's promises proved to be false:

"So by deceit, he brought about their fall."⁵

١. " وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً .

٢. " مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَ فِيهَا نَعِيدُكُمْ وَ مِنْهَا نَخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى " (Holy Quran, Taha, 55).

٣. " فَوَسْوَسَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانُ قَالَ يَا آدَمُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكَ عَلَى شَجَرَةِ الْخُلْدِ وَ مَلَكَ لَا يَبْلَى " (Holy Quran, Taha, 120).

٤. " وَ قَالَ مَا تَهْتِكُمَا رُبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَتَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ " (Holy Quran, al-A'raf, 20).

٥. " فَدَلَّاهُمَا بِغُورٍ " (Holy Quran, Al-A'raf, 22).

E. In addition, when Satan disobeyed in prostration before Adam and God expelled him, he requested: "He said: "give me respite till the day they are raised." (Holy Quran, al-A'raf, 14)

The phrase "till the day they are raised" displays the clear strategy and requirement of living and death of a man on the earth and the certainty of the day of rising.

In a nutshell, according to the holy Quran, Adam and Eve repented, and through God's acceptance, they were cleansed of the sin¹ Anyway, everyone is responsible only for their sins, and there is no responsibility on the shoulders of his progeny.² Even none of the Islamic scholars have implied the spiritual death for Adam and Eve in this event.

Conclusion

As discussed, the story of Adam and Eve and their sin of eating from the Forbidden Tree are mentioned in Torah, Quran, and Bible. There is some agreement among these holy texts, which is mentioned in Islam, Christian, and Judaism. These significant similarities are as follows:

1. there exist two kinds of lives for humans: physical and spiritual;
2. God has given a physical life to humans by blowing onto his spirit;

\. "Then Adam received Words (of forgiveness) from his Lord, and He accepted his repentance. Verily, He is the One Who repeatedly accepts repentance, the Most Merciful." (Holy Quran, Al-Baqarah, 37)

Ÿ "... No person earns any (sin) except against himself (only), and no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another..." (6:164) Also Quran states: "No one laden with burdens can bear another's burden. And We never punish (people) until We have sent (to them) a Messenger (to give warning)." (17:15)

3. Faith and good deeds would cause spiritual life;
5. Sins cause human spiritual death.

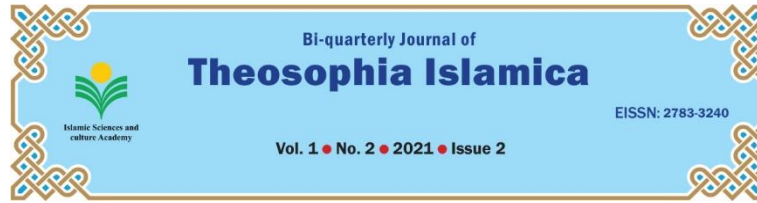
Despite such similarities in these three holy books, they differ in some critical points—one of these significant differences in the consequences of Adam's sin. Traditional views, particularly some accounts of Paul in the New Testament that Augustine later exaggerated, imply that the human's death is considered the direct consequence of Adam's sin. This doctrine has been developed as one of the fundamental assumptions in Christian theology. However, nowhere in Torah has explicitly stated that human physical death results from Adam's Original Sin. Also, none of the Prophets before Jesus were known to believe in this concept. Instead, as a direct consequence of human sin, spiritual death can be a consequence of Adam's sin like other human's sins. Quran has never stated anything about Adam and his progeny's physical and spiritual death. Instead, Quran states that merciful God forgives his fault, and God will never punish people for the sins of others, and basically, sin is not hereditary.

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Swinburne, the Gift of Life, and the Soul

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Received: 2021-09-13

Accepted: 2021-11-31

Abstract

In his attempt, to make plausible the Christian doctrine of Atonement, Richard Swinburne faces many objections. One objection has been that no sense can be made of the belief that life is a gift. This is because humans have no responsibility to God and no subsequent need to atone to God for wrongdoing. One way out of this objection requires belief in a soul. This paper, based on descriptive analytics, outline Swinburne's Atonement theory to give a flavor of what depends on the belief that life is a gift from God. Then categorize and present the objections Swinburne faces. As for the objection it will focus on, and also provide its remedy and suggest that the remedy is quite digestible from an Islamic perspective.

Keywords

Atonement, Christianity, Swinburne, Richard, dualism.

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* Dastmalchian, Amir. (2021). Swinburne, the Gift of Life, and the Soul. *Journal of Theosophia Islamica*, 1(2), pp. 125-146. Doi: 10.22081/jti.2022.62989.1022

Introduction

Richard Swinburne show no qualms about the belief that life is a gift from God, describing it as a normal Christian view (Swinburne, 1989). Because humans are so utterly dependent on God for existence and sustenance, says Swinburne, it makes sense that we humans owe it to God to obey him. But, regrettably, we humans are not good at obeying God – in both subjective and objective senses. For this reason, God had to teach us how to atone to Him and to make available for us a means of reparation and atonement.

Swinburne's stance on the human moral relationship with God has faced a range of objections. One objection has called into question the idea that life is a gift from God. However, the objector concedes, admitting that the idea that life is a gift from God can be made coherent if we assume that life is a gift offered to a soul before it becomes embodied on earth.

This paper outline Swinburne's Atonement theory to give a flavor of what depends on the belief that life is a gift from God. Then categorize and present the objections Swinburne faces. As for the objection it will focus on, and also provide its remedy and suggest that the remedy is quite digestible from an Islamic perspective.

Swinburne's Atonement Theory

One of the central doctrines of Christianity is the doctrine of the Atonement. This doctrine explains the Christian belief that humankind has been saved from the consequences of its disobedience to God by Jesus (A) reconciling man with God. Jesus is believed to have provided a mechanism for human beings to atone for their sins. Other theistic religions, such as Judaism and Islam, have not spoken of the need for an intermediary between man and God in matters of

reconciliation (atonement). According to these other religions if a person sins then they should repent to God and implore his forgiveness directly. Christianity is different because it has described an apparatus for reconciliation between man and God involving the life and death of Jesus.

In order to illustrate how Christianity differs regarding atonement we can quote from an Islamic scriptural source. It has been recorded that God spoke to the Prophet Muhammad (S) the following words:

Oh Son of Adam whatever you call upon me for and hope for, I will forgive you for what you have done, and if you approach me with sins as great as the earth, I would approach you with forgiveness no less great, so long as you did not ascribe a partner to me. And even if you have sinned so much that your sins have reached the firmaments of the sky but you asked me for forgiveness, I would forgive you.¹

This sacred narration (*hadith qudsi*), not part of the Quran, can be found in both Sunni and Shi'a sources.

Given the centrality in Christianity of the view that atonement with God is required, the preaching of the Christian Gospel has traditionally begun with the preaching of a specific outlook regarding issues of human culpability in the light of moral failings. This has corresponded with a specific outlook regarding how these moral failings should be addressed (Swinburne, 1992, p. 5; Swinburne, 1989, p. 5). It is

1. This is the narration as reported by Majlisi (1983) in his *Bihar al-Anwar* (vol. 90, p. 283). The Arabic text of the narration is as follows:

وعن أبي ذر الغفاري رضي الله عنه قال : قال النبي صلى الله عليه وآله : قال الله تبارك وتعالى : يا ابن آدم ما دعوتني ورجوتني أغفر لك على ما كان فيك ، وإن أتيتني بقرار الأرض خطيئة أتيتك بقرارها مغفرة ، ما لم تشرك بي ، وإن أخطأت حتى بلغ خطاياك عنان السماء ثم استغفرتني غفرت لك .

for this reason that Swinburne begins his Christian apologetic with *Responsibility and Atonement*, which is a defence of a somewhat “liberal” version of the Christian moral outlook (Swinburne, 1989).

Unlike the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the Incarnation, the doctrine of the Atonement has never received canonical formulation, that is, an authoritative endorsement. The doctrine of the Atonement has therefore been open to, and subsequently the subject of, much discussion. Different theorists have all been concerned to describe how exactly, in accordance with Christian belief, Jesus has affected the salvation of humankind. (Porter, 2004; Swinburne, 1989). Swinburne’s understanding of the Christian doctrine of the Atonement reparation (McNaughton, 1992), and satisfaction-type (Porter, 2004) theory. Swinburne calls his understanding of the significance of the life and death of Jesus a sacrifice model, following Anselm and Aquinas (Swinburne, 1989).

Swinburne’s View of the Atonement

According to Swinburne (1989), there exist universal moral principles which correspond to objective moral facts such as the badness of killing and the goodness of keeping promises (all things being equal). There is broad consensus among people about what the moral facts are.¹ Swinburne says that a person can be either objectively guilty or both subjectively and objectively guilty. Guilt arises from failure to fulfil obligations, in other words, the performance of actions contrary to universal moral principles. If somebody unwittingly does a wrong

1. Swinburne has mentioned that the way to achieve agreement on matters of morality is appeal to intuition by way of debating practical examples. Swinburne refers his readers to the “reflective equilibrium” of John Rawls (Swinburne, 2005; Swinburne, 2004; Swinburne, 2001).

then they are objectively guilty, otherwise they are both subjectively and objectively guilty. For a wrongdoing person to perfectly remove the guilt with which he has sullied his soul, he must make atonement for his wrong act and be forgiven by his victim. Making atonement for a wrong action is a moral obligation and involves four factors: repentance, apology, reparation, and penance. Making atonement can also be thought of as reconciliation, so when a wrongdoer is seeking to be atoned with his victim he is seeking to be reconciled with his victim (for an example of Swinburne substituting talk of “atonement” with talk of “reconciliation”).

The four factors, just mentioned, are involved in making atonement contribute towards undoing the consequences of a wrongful deed. Firstly, making atonement requires repentance which is an acknowledgement of the wrong nature of the act to oneself and a resolution to amend the situation. Secondly, atonement requires an apology, that is, an expression of repentance to the victim. Thirdly, reparation is needed, in other words compensation to the victim for the harm caused to him. Fourthly, something which is costly to the wrongdoer by way of penance is needed in order for the wrongdoer to express his sorrow and to disown his wrongful act. Swinburne believes that if the wrongdoer is unable to provide the victim with reparation and penance a third party may provide it on his behalf. It is good that this be so rather than reparation and penance be waived by the victim, or neglected by the wrongdoer, so that the wrongdoing is not trivialized. In some cases, not all four factors are required for making atonement, for example there is no reparation for an insult. When the wrongdoer fulfils his acts of atonement and when the forgiveness of the victim follows, the process of atonement becomes complete and the wrongdoer’s guilt is removed. If the victim does not forgive, guilt will eventually be removed from the wrongdoer

provided that he perseveres with his sincere acts of atonement (Swinburne, 1989).

Given that there is a God humans have a duty to live good lives, says Swinburne (1989), because we are so utterly dependent on Him for our existence and sustenance and for the gift of life which He has given us. This is a point which Swinburne argues for in greater detail in the first volume of his trilogy. In the context of arguing for the coherence of theism Swinburne (Swinburne, 1993) argues that God is, of logical necessity given his other attributes, a source of moral obligation. Given that God exists wrongdoing is wrongdoing against God and therefore wrongdoing is – according to conventional usage – sin. Even if a person unintentionally commits wrong this does not detract from his guilt before God and his need to put things right by atoning (Swinburne, 1989). Swinburne says that a good God might provide men with the reparation and penance needed for them to atone. The life and death of Jesus – especially his death by crucifixion – would be an adequate reparation and penance. According to Swinburne (Swinburne, 1989), the life and death of Jesus is to be understood as an offering of a perfect life, the type of life which humans should lead. Jesus' life and death was a sacrifice to God which humans can benefit from in that it amounts to the reparation and penance needed for human atonement with God. Insofar as Jesus is God then the sacrifice must be understood as not automatically benefiting humans but rather something which humans can offer to God as reparation and penance. So, on Swinburne's account, the wrongdoer might address God with the following words:

We have made a mess of the life which you gave us, we have made no reparation of our own for our sins, nor have we helped others to make atonement for their sins. But we have been given a perfect

life, not owed to you, O God. We offer you this life instead of the life we should have led, and instead of the lives which others (in whose sins we are involved) should have led. Take its perfection instead of our imperfection. We are serious enough about our sins to repent and apologize and to offer you back an offering of this value as our reparation and penance (Swinburne, 1989).

A life not owed to God is what Jesus' life is said to be. Because Jesus supposedly is God he owes God nothing and therefore virtually all of Jesus' life was available to be given away. On the other hand, mere mortals owe God so much, specifically their existence and sustenance. The life of a mere mortal could not possibly be a valuable sacrifice. If a person sacrifices his life to God when he is already in debt to God then there would not be much left of his sacrifice to give it value (Swinburne, 1989).

As we have seen, Swinburne draws religious conclusions from secular philosophy. This is characteristic of Swinburne's apologetics because, he insists, that detailed philosophical accounts lead to stronger conclusions (Swinburne, 2005). The crucial link between secular philosophy and Christian religion in Swinburne's account of the Atonement is Swinburne's contention that reparation and penance, along with the other acts of atonement, are an important part of atonement. Insistence upon reparation and penance on philosophical grounds gives Jesus a clear role in the atonement of man with God. The acts of atonement, according to Swinburne (1989), should not be forsaken by a victim in serious cases of wrongdoing. This is in order for wrongdoing to be treated with proper gravity by both the victim and the wrongdoer. Similarly, it would not be good for God to forgive sin unconditionally and therefore, suggests Swinburne, we can expect the Atonement to be as he describes it. Swinburne's account of what is required for atonement, as presented in the previous paragraphs, aims

to avoid the condonation of wrongdoing which he thinks is implied by unconditional forgiveness, for if the victim did not insist on any acts of atonement from the wrongdoer then it would seem to Swinburne that the victim did not really think the wrongdoer did anything wrong. Forgiveness by the victim, maintains Swinburne, must be in response to something from the wrongdoer; the very least which would be required is an apology.

Criticisms

The numerous criticisms of Swinburne's Atonement theory that have been made generally fall into three main groups. Firstly, there are criticisms of the underlying moral theory, for example, that there is such a thing as objective guilt. Secondly, there are criticisms of the application of the moral theory to Christianity, for example, that reparation can be made by Jesus of Nazareth on behalf of others. Thirdly, there are a few theological objections which have been made. I present these objections below, however, the objection which is the focus of this paper falls outside of these three groupings and will be discussed in the next section.

There is No Such Thing as Objective Guilt

If people can be objectively as well as subjectively guilty, as Swinburne has it, then the extent of human sin will be very great indeed and so too, therefore, will the need for an atoning savior such as Jesus of Nazareth. But Schellenberg (2002) claims that a person is only guilty if they do something wrong intentionally – this means that they set out to do something wrong and are therefore negligent or else they willfully do not take steps to avoid doing wrong and are therefore irresponsible. There is no such thing as objective guilt, says Schellenberg. Suppose that a driver injured a child through no fault of

his own. The driver may well express how sorry he is that such a thing happened, that the child has been hurt and his parents worried. However, many would surely be of the opinion that the driver only owes an apology out of good etiquette and a kind heart, but certainly not out of any guilt. Although driving over children is wrong it is only wrong if it is done intentionally, in other words there is no objective guilt incurred (for example) by the alert and conscientious driver if a child jumps out in front of him.

Suppose further that someone is forced to walk a tightrope and told that if they fall they would pay a heavy fine. Being forced to walk the tightrope is wrong and being fined for doing something almost inevitable is even more wrong. Similarly, if God forces us to live and then punishes us for the wrong we almost inevitably do we would have to make negative conclusions about God's goodness. Perhaps we can say that God makes up the rules and can force us to live – that is, to walk a tightrope – but it would be rather unkind of God to punish us should we slip and fall. So, perhaps there is no guilt for failing to do something that we could not do and therefore perhaps there should be no need for atonement in such a circumstance.

Swinburne (Swinburne, 1989) recognizes that there is a difference between subjective and objective guilt. On Swinburne's account and using the analogy I have coined, a person who unintentionally falls from a tightrope nevertheless fails even if to a lesser degree than had they jumped from the tightrope. In life we have the responsibility not to cause harm to others. If something happens that means that we do cause harm to others unintentionally then this is still a failing. Swinburne (Swinburne, 2002) gives an example of a debtor who – through no fault of his own – fails to repay his creditors. In such a case the debtor and creditor do not just forget about the debt. The failing of the

debtor to repay his debt is, according to Swinburne, analogous to the failing of an objective wrongdoer.

Swinburne, in response to Schellenberg, cites two philosophers “very far from the Christian tradition” (Schellenberg, 2002) in support. However, I suspect that many people will not be able to give credence to the claim that a person is culpable for objective wrongdoing. This is especially given that Swinburne (Swinburne, 1989) claims that actions are judged by intention; how can it be that a person acquires guilt (which suggests fault and moral impurity) from a wrong action they did not intend to do?

The goodness which belongs to one who forwards the good for the reason that it is good, surely belongs also to one who tries to forward the good, but fails due to circumstances beyond his control. For the agent’s intentional contribution is the same in both cases. The most he can do intentionally is to try; the rest is not up to him. He who tries but fails to rescue his dying companion, or who sends a large cheque to Oxfam which is lost in the post, has just as much value in respect of his intentional contribution to what is done as one who succeeds (Swinburne, 1989).

Given the foregoing statement by Swinburne, should he not concede? If somebody intends to do good but in fact does bad for circumstances beyond his control, then surely he “has just as much value in respect of his intentional contribution to what is done as one who succeeds” (Swinburne, 1989).

Reparation is not Necessary for Atonement with God

I have already mentioned that Swinburne stresses the importance of reparation in bringing about atonement but offering reparation for atonement is only appropriate when we hurt somebody. However,

God cannot be hurt, as Schellenberg (Schellenberg, 2002) says and McNaughton (McNaughton, 1992) recognizes. From this consideration we must conclude that if God cannot be harmed then there is nothing to be compensated for. All that would be needed for atonement with God, contrary to Swinburne's account, is repentance and apology. If God has created the world to be the way, it is then He will expect us to make mistakes and He cannot be injured by them. After all, our mistakes are a direct result of how God created the world, there is little blame on us for them let alone objective guilt. Besides, reparation is not the only way to show sincere remorse and can even be offered grudgingly or insincerely, "I'll put things right if it will shut you up", one might say. It would be much better reparation to God if a person was to change his life for the better, thinks Schellenberg.

Although, according to Swinburne (2002), God may not have been physically or psychologically hurt it remains the case that his plan for creation has been disrupted by the moral failings of humans. Moreover, says Swinburne, if somebody has been wronged reparation is owed to them whether they are upset or not.

One Reparation is Enough

Given the assumption of the existence of God in the picture of morality that Swinburne has painted, a wrongdoer needs to atone to both the victim and to God. For example, if I steal someone's property I have to make it up to them and make it up to God as well. As we have seen this, according to Swinburne, is a moral obligation and is required for genuine forgiveness of sin. However, some may hold that if somebody wrongs another then they must make reparation to them alone. There is no need for separate reparation to God. If one has wronged God by way of wronging another then surely, as

Schellenberg (2002) points out, they must seek to make things right via the same route that things were made wrong. So, to atone to God one must right what was wronged and nothing more. Certainly there would be no need for Jesus to sacrifice himself. So, as an additional example, if a child hurts another child then it will be sufficient for the child to make things right with the other child; the separate atonement is not needed for the parent of the injured child even though the parent may have been hurt as well as a result of the pain of his child.

The Life and Death of Jesus is not a Reparation

Schellenberg (2002) believes that it would be better to offer reparation to God by working acts of righteousness rather than plead the sacrifice of another which is what Swinburne's Atonement theory enjoins upon us. The latter takes much less effort and would therefore suggest that the sacrifice of Jesus would not be much of a reparation for sin. Yes, says McNaughton (McNaughton, 1992), the sacrifice of Jesus is costly but it is not the wrongdoer who has to pay for it. Yes, McNaughton adds, the sacrifice of Jesus may indeed humble the sinner and force the sinner to take his sin seriously and to lead a good life but this is not enough because leading a good life is already a part of genuine repentance so cannot be offered as reparation (contrary to the suggestion of Schellenberg) – as Swinburne (Swinburne, 1989) himself seems to believe. The sinner leading a reformed life of goodness is part and parcel of the sinner being repentant and apologetic and hence something the sinner should be doing anyway regardless of Jesus' sacrifice.

Swinburne (1989) admits that God could forgive without the need for reparation and penance. Swinburne also admits that even if God were not to waive his right for reparation and penance he could

have accepted a different type of reparation other than the life and death of Jesus. This is especially given that reparation to God does not have to be equivalent to the extent of human sin (Schellenberg, 2002).

There follows from these considerations an objection: a good God could not have tolerated seeing His son suffer if He did not have to, hence Swinburne's account of the Atonement is untenable (unless Swinburne admits God is not good). Quinn (1994) does not believe that this objection is insuperable but it does appear to show, he thinks, that Swinburne's understanding of the Atonement is morally counterintuitive.

The former is an objection which Porter (2004) also makes. Given that even on Swinburne's view God could forgive a sinner without reparation, if God did insist upon reparation then reparation other than the sacrifice of Jesus could be morally acceptable. Porter asks why was the life of Jesus not enough as reparation? Why was his terrible crucifixion also needed? Porter says that "it is implausible to think that a good God would require such an event for forgiveness". Swinburne (Swinburne, 2007; Swinburne, 1989) appears to assume that Jesus voluntarily proceeded to his crucifixion but a voluntary sacrifice of life is not morally valuable unless it is for a good reason. However, it seems that on Swinburne's account there is no good reason independent of revelation for Jesus' harsh death. If Jesus did not have to sacrifice his life, then his sacrifice can only be interpreted as either foolish or suicidal. These are things that Swinburne would not want his Atonement theory to attest to.

We have seen that Swinburne believes that because of human inability to sufficiently compensate God for sin God became incarnate in Jesus and sacrificed Himself so that humans could in fact sufficiently compensate God for sin by pleading this sacrifice. McNaughton

(McNaughton, 1992) asks why God insists upon reparation for human sin given that He knows that humans cannot provide it. If God did not insist on reparation (compensation) then the costly sacrifice of Jesus would not have been required. If God did not insist on reparation, then it would have meant that Jesus would not have had to undergo the great troubles of his life and death. Although insisting on reparation may help the wrongdoer to take his wrongdoing seriously, unless he provides the reparation himself it is all too easy to offer.

To sum up, if on Swinburne's account atonement can be achieved without the sacrifice of Jesus then the sacrifice of Jesus becomes pointless. But changing the focus of attention we can note that McNaughton (McNaughton, 1992) tries to make sense of Swinburne's claim that God has given mankind the life of Jesus to offer back to God in atonement. The claim seems strange to McNaughton because the life of Jesus is neither money nor property that can be transacted. Even if the life of Jesus could be made available to sinners as reparation to God in the way Swinburne describes, how can it be offered more than once? Similarly, how can a cheque to pay for a broken window be made available to pay for all broken windows again and again? McNaughton mentions a private response to these points in which Swinburne makes sense of the life of Jesus being a reparation which sinners can offer to God. In summary, Swinburne says that the reparation which a sinner offers to God when pleading the sacrifice of Jesus is the furtherance of God's plans for mankind. This includes men living morally good lives, seeking atonement with God, and not letting Jesus' sacrifice go to waste. (If a sinner did not plead Jesus' sacrifice then the sacrifice would have been in vain.) So, McNaughton concedes, there would appear to be a way in which the life of Jesus can be offered to God. However, McNaughton does not

think this offer can count as reparation because it involves a vicious circularity.

It is circular, claims McNaughton, for God's forgiveness to depend on reparation when the reparation involves God's forgiveness. The reparation, on Swinburne's account, involves God's forgiveness because God's plans for mankind include that they should atone for their sins and be accordingly forgiven. It makes no sense to seek the forgiveness of God for hindering His wish that man should be forgiven by offering a sacrifice which is only beneficial if men are forgiven. Furthermore, the aim of the sacrifice of Jesus was for men to be forgiven and it is only a beneficial sacrifice if men are forgiven. It follows that it would also be circular if this sacrifice was offered as reparation seeking forgiveness.

Only a Wrongdoer Can Make Reparation

According to Swinburne (1989) nobody can atone for the sins of another but there are special cases where the wrongdoer can be helped to atone. For example, if the wrongdoer has no means to make reparation himself a third party – or even the victim – could provide the wrongdoer with the required means. McNaughton (1992) disagrees. He maintains that only the wrongdoer can make reparation for himself and nobody else can do it for him. If a third party or the victim provides reparation to the wrongdoer for him to offer in atonement to the victim, then this does not count. The wrongdoer associating himself with the reparation provided by another is not the same as the wrongdoer making reparation. The only way a wrongdoer could offer reparation to the victim with the help of somebody else, maintains McNaughton, is if the item used as reparation was gifted to the wrongdoer with no conditions attached. If the wrongdoer, then chose

of his own volition to use his gift for reparation it would be acceptable as reparation from the wrongdoer to the victim.

Life is Not a Gift

Aspenson's (1996) contention is that little sense can be made of Swinburne's idea that life is a gift from God. As a result of this Swinburne has not shown why humans have a duty to obey God. Perceiving life as a gift from God is a normal Christian view, as Swinburne (Swinburne, 1989) notes. In the cases where it does make sense to think of life as a gift then, according to Aspenson, still no duty to obey God arises. So, as Aspenson sees it Swinburne's view of the Atonement is inconsistent.

A gift is something which is given to someone, but to whom would a human life be given to? Clearly, life could not be given to somebody before they are alive. Neither could life be given for the first time to somebody after they are alive unless life is something given to a soul before it is embodied. In this case we would have to expect that the soul before it is made 'alive' is competent enough to accept the supposed gift of life and the responsibilities involved. If the soul has no such competency, then there is no duty on the part of the ensuing person toward God.

Perhaps it is the sustenance which God provides to humans which is properly described as a gift. However, if this were so it would be a moral duty of God to provide sustenance to that which He created, unless the choice to be created was ours. It would certainly not be the case that a duty was owed to God.

Perhaps by "gift" is meant the type of endowment with which institutions are founded. This type of gift is logically impossible to decline and therefore gives rise to no obligation toward the benefactor by the one receiving the gift.

So, the only way in which it makes sense to speak of the gift of life giving rise to duties is when life is earthly embodiment given by God to a soul competent enough to accept the gift and the risk of undergoing various evils.¹ This is problematic for Swinburne because it seems that in his view the aim of earthly life is ideally for a person to undergo a process of character training. On successful formation of a good character the soul becomes suitable for residing in heaven. (Swinburne, 2005; Swinburne, 1989) But if the soul was already mature enough to accept the gift of life then it would seem that there would be no point of living, on Swinburne's account.

The Atonement is Multifaceted

There are many different accounts of how the life and death of Jesus can provide atonement between mankind and God. Some accounts stress only one aspect of the life and death of Jesus, for example, that it was a sacrifice. Some accounts allow for various understandings of the life and death of Jesus. Swinburne's account of the Atonement falls into the former category, it is what Quinn (Quinn, 1994) calls "monistic". This is because Swinburne only allows rival understandings of the Atonement to have metaphorical meaning. Accordingly, Quinn finds Swinburne's Atonement theory unsatisfactory.

Salvation is Not the Result of Effort

Brümmer (1992) assesses the implications for the doctrine of Atonement given different models for the relationship between God and humans. We have seen that Swinburne views the relationship

1. This would appear to be like the Islamic view which results from the covenant between God and mankind mentioned in various places in the Quran.

between God and humans to be based on duties and obligations. Brümmer calls this type of relationship a contractual relationship. According to Brümmer a contractual relationship implies merit for the person who achieves salvation. This is because atonement between God and a sinner is achieved through the sinner's effort for offering reparation. However, Brümmer (1992) points out that the idea of salvation being earned is against Christian scripture: "For it is by his grace you are saved, through trusting him; it is not your own doing. It is God's gift, not a reward for work done. There is nothing for anyone to boast of." (Ephesians, pp. 2, 8-9).

The Relationship Between God and Humans is Loving

Swinburne (1989) criticises an understanding of the Atonement which rivals his own understanding for being too "mechanical". Swinburne maintains that reconciliation is intimate and personal. Brümmer notes that a model of the Atonement which involves obligations and duties is also rather impersonal. If the relationship between God and man is a loving relationship then talk of obligations is out of place, says Brümmer (1992). This seems reasonable, after all rights and obligations are rarely mentioned – if at all – in relationships involving love such as parent-child relationships and married relationships.

Life is Not a Gift

Although the objection I would now like to discuss, and which I the focus of this paper, has been made directly to Swinburne it would seem it could apply to many Atonement theories. Aspengon's (1996) contention is that little sense can be made the Christian idea that life is a gift from God, and idea which Swinburne (1989) describes as normal.

As a result of this Swinburne has not shown why humans have a duty to obey God. In the cases where it does make sense to think of life as a gift then, according to Aspenson, still no duty to obey God arises. So, as Aspenson sees it Swinburne's view of the Atonement is untenable.

A gift is something which is given to someone, but to whom would a human life be given to? Clearly, life could not be given to somebody before they are alive. Neither could life be given for the first time to somebody after they are alive unless life is something given to a soul before it is embodied. In this case we would have to expect that the soul before it is made 'alive' is competent enough to accept the supposed gift of life and the responsibilities involved. If the soul has no such competency, then there is no duty on the part of the ensuing person toward God.

Perhaps it is the sustenance which God provides to humans which is properly described as a gift. However, if this were so it would be a moral duty of God to provide sustenance to that which He created, unless the choice to be created was ours. It would certainly not be the case that a duty was owed to God.

Perhaps by "gift" is meant the type of endowment with which institutions are founded. This type of gift is logically impossible to decline and therefore gives rise to no obligation toward the benefactor by the one receiving the gift.

So, the only way in which it makes sense to speak of the gift of life giving rise to duties is when life is earthly embodiment given by God to a soul competent enough to accept the gift and the risk of undergoing various evils. This is problematic for Swinburne because it seems that in his view the aim of earthly life is ideally for a person to undergo a process of character training. On successful formation of a good character the soul becomes suitable for residing in heaven. (Swinburne, 2005; Swinburne, 1989) But if the soul was already mature enough to accept the gift of life then it would seem that there would be no point of living, on Swinburne's account.

Interestingly, the Quran seems to point us towards the idea of people existing as souls before they became embodied as humans.

And [remember] when thy Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their backs, their seed, and made them testify of themselves, [saying]: ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They said: ‘Yes, verily. We testify.’ [That was] lest ye should say at the Day of Resurrection: O! of this we were unaware (Holy Quran, al-A'raf, 172).

The view that there was a primordial state before human life on earth has not met with universal acceptance among Muslims. However, the idea can be found among Sunnis and has been defended by the celebrated Shi‘a exegete, Muhammad Husayn Tabataba‘i, in his commentary of the above verse in *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran*,

Conclusion

In this paper I have sought to draw attention to an objection to Swinburne’s Atonement theory. The objection can be rebutted by appeal to the concept of the ‘soul’. The idea is that if life is earthly embodiment offered by God to a soul mature enough to recognize the implications, and if the gift is accepted willingly and happily, then humans do indeed owe obedience to God. It follows that, if life is a gift in this way, that human sin requires atoning to God.

Although Muslims believe that a human can be reconciled to God without offering reparation to Him and although life has not been described as a ‘gift’, the idea of a primordial soul will still have currency. This is because, if for no other reason, that Muslims will still want to argue that humans do owe obedience to God. It would be methodologically unsound to offer Islamic solution to Christian problems, and vice versa, but in the spirit of dialogue I highlighted an area where both traditions have something in common.

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* Quran

** Ephesians

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