Islam and disability : perspectives in islamic theology and jurisprudence

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Chapter Two: Specualtive Theology

2.1 Introductory remarks

The existence of disabilities and other forms of suffering raised always perennial logistical questions such as "How to understand or justify the presence of nasty and painful things in the light of the fact that God the Compassionate, the Merciful is the Supreme Power and that He has control over this universe?"[1] Providing an answer to this question has occupied the minds of people throughout human history. Some explanations were at the expense of God by denying His existence or by ascribing evil to one god and goodness to another, etc.

However, for thinkers who adopted the theistic position and believed in a revealed faith, there were strict guidelines to be followed in any resolution of the tension between the affirmation of God's existence and the reality of the existent evil in what He created.[2]

In the Islamic tradition, the first one to raise the aforementioned question was the arch-father of humanity, i.e., Adam. In a Prophetic tradition, it is related that God showed Adam his offspring, and he found remarkable discrepancies among them; rich and poor, strong and weak etc. In another tradition, Adam saw among his offspring people with leprosy (*baraṣ*), elephantiasis (*judhām*), blindness and other forms of illnesses. Adam asked his Lord, "Why did you do so with my offspring?" Another form of the question was "Would not you [better] have made them equal?" God answered, "[I did so] in order to be thanked" and in another version, "so that My gift will be thanked for".[3] The simplistic presentation given in this tradition did not put an end to this complicated issue. The question posed by Adam continued to be posed in Islamic tradition.

For a good understanding of the theological discussions on this issue, a note on the image of God, His attributes and names in the Islamic tradition is indispensable.

The main entry to God's character in Islam is His names and attributes.[4] Studying these names and attributes has always been a central point of concern for Muslim scholars. For instance, it is a habit that a chapter in the theology manuals[5] and ḥadīth collections is devoted to the Divine names and attributes.[6]

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[1] See Maqsood, Ruqaiyyah Waris (2000), pp. 8-44; Ayoub, Mahmoud M. (1977), p. 267; Julaynid, Muhammad al-Sayyid al- (1981), p. 55. For the case of people with disabilities in particular see, Muṭawwaʿ, Munīra Khālid al- (1422-2001), in ʿAwaḍī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd Allāh al- & Aḥmad Rajāʾī al-Jundī (eds.) (1422-2001), vol. 2, p. 642.

[2] See Pessagno, J. Meric (1984), p. 65.

[3] Mawṣilī, Abū Yaʿlā al- (1404/1984), vol. 11, p. 264; Qurṭubī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al- (1372/1952), vol. 7, p. 315; Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al- (1410/1989), vol. 4, p. 107; Ibn Kathīr (1), vol. 1, pp. 78 & 88; Saʿīd, Nadyā Muḥammad al- (1425/2004), p. 90.

[4] Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid al- (1407/1987), pp. 52 & 53.

[5] See Gardet, L. (3) (2003), vol. I, p. 714.

[6] See for instance, Bukhārī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh al- (1407/1987), vol. 6, p. 2691; Muslim, Abū al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥajjāj (1), vol. 4, p. 2062; Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al- (1414/1994),

This holds true to the extent that a vast genre of literature was developed on God's attributes and names.[7] This genre set up, according to some scholars, an independent science known as *ʿIlm al-asmāʾ wa al-ṣifāt* (Science of [Divine] names and attributes).[8]

The central point of agreement was the perfect and spotless character of God implying that no defect or deficiency can be attributed to Him, neither to His mercy, wisdom, justice nor omnipotence. This is traced back to more than one point.

First, His names are described in the Qur'ān as *Al-Ḥusnā* indicating that these Names denote the fairest, most beautiful and perfect meanings.[9] Secondly, there are a number of God's names whose meaning clearly and directly indicate this perfect character. The most well-known name in this regard is *Al-Quddūs* (The Holy) which indicates the absence of all blemishes, and also that neither imagination nor sight can penetrate the mystery of God.[10] Finally, the Qur'ān harshly warns those who practice *ilḥād* concerning these Names, "…. but shun such men as use profanity in his names: for what they do, they will soon be requited" (8:180). Linguistically, *ilḥād* means deviating from the right path. Used in this context, it refers to those who deny any of these Names or their connotations. In short, the perfect character of God as depicted by these names was, for Muslim scholars, a red line that should not be overstepped.[11]

In this vein, the overarching concern, while fathoming out the issue of pain and suffering, continued to be that if adversity and suffering are to be confronted, this must proceed in acknowledgment that no human catastrophe can call into question the omnipotence and all-embracing will of God, or place in doubt His justice, mercy and solicitude for the welfare of mankind.[12] These remained red lines of which the transgression was not allowed.

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vol. 10, p. 27; Nasāʾī, Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad b. Shuʿyab al- (1411/1991), vol. 4, p. 393; Ibn Māja, Muḥammad b. Yazīd (1), vol. 2, p. 1269.

[7] Among the well-known scholars who wrote on this topic, we mention Ibn Khuzayma (d. 311 /923), Abu Isḥāq al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923), Al-Dāraqutnī (d. 385/995), Al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1065), Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209). For their books on this topic, see Ibn Khuzayma (1387/1968); Zajjāj, Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm al- (1974); Dāraqutnī, ʿAlī b. ʿUmar al- (1402/1981); Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al- (1); Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid al- (1407/1987), Ibn al-Jawzī (2002); Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn al- (1400/1980). For a Ṣufī perspective in this regard, see Qushayrī, ʿAbd al-Karīm al- (1968). For contemporary studies on the same topic, see Shanqītī, Muḥammad al-Amīn al- (1404/1983); ʿUthaymīn, Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ, al- (1412/1991); Muẓaffar, Muḥammad Riḍā al- (1422/2001), pp. 30-35; Jamal, Ḥasan ʿIzz al-Dīn al- (1405/1985); Qaraḍāwī, Yūsuf al- (1426/2005), pp. 13-179.

[8] See Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, Muḥammad, (1), vol. 1, p. 130.

[9] Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn al- (1400/1980), p. 47. God's Names have been described as *Al-Ḥusnā* four times in the Qur'ān; 7:180, 17:110, 20:8, 59:24.

[10] Gardet, L. (3) (2003), vol. I, pp. 714 & 715. see also, Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn al- (1400/1980), pp. 185 & 186.

[11] See Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn al- (1400/1980), pp. 47 & 48; ʿUthaymīn, Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al- (1412/1991), pp. 20-22

[12] Conrad, Lawrance I. (1999), p. 229.

Two main groups transgressed these lines. The first group included those who were declared to be heretics and infidels. The main representatives of this group were Jahm b. Ṣafwān (executed 128/745),[13] to whom the Jahmiyya[14] is ascribed, the poet Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī (d. 1057), the philosopher Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq (d. ca 247/861)[15] and his pupil Ibn al-Rāwandī (died at the middle or at the end of the 4th/10th century).[16] The joint thesis of this group concerning the justification of evil and pain was read by Muslim scholars as casting doubts about the perfect and spotless character of God.[17]

Jahm b. Ṣafwān outspokenly denied that God is merciful. To him, this denial was the way to glorify God and distinguish Him from His creatures and also to understand suffering in life. It is related that he used to gather his followers by the lepers rotating in sufferings and started to deride by saying, "The most merciful of the merciful [i.e., God] does such things!" To him these evils showed that there was no space to speak about mercy but just about might and power void of mercy or wisdom.[18] Such ideas cost Jahm b. Ṣafwān many charges and ultimately his life. The Ashʿarī heresiographer ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037) says about him, "We condemn him as a heretic for all his errors and the Qadarites (Indeterminists) declare him a *kāfir* (non-believer) for his assertion that God is the Creator of the acts of mankind. The various divisions of our community therefore coincide in charging him with unbelief."[19] Doubts about the mercy of God were also uttered by the blind poet Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī.[20] Deeming that slaughtering animals caused undeserved and unjust pain, he decided to stop eating meat and eggs. According to the historians, al-Maʿarrī lived more than eighty years, forty-five of these as a vegetarian. The Ḥanbalī theologian and jurist Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751/1350) called him, "the one whose eyes and heart are blind (*aʿmā al-baṣar wa al-baṣīra*)."[21] Contrary to Ibn al-Qayyim, the late Egyptian scholar, Aḥmad al-Sharabāṣī (1918-1980), although disagreeing with al-Maʿarrī on this point, he opined that al-Maʿarrī adopted this point out of his tenderness, mercy and compassion for animals.[22] Like al-Maʿarrī and for the same reasons, Abū ʿĪsā

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[13] On him, see Watt, W. Montgomery (3) (2003), vol. II, p. 388.

[14] For further information on this sect, see Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad (1393/1973); Ashʿarī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al- (1397/1977), p. 143; Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1977), pp. 199 & 200; Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1920), p. 14; Ibn Manda, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Isḥāq b. Yaḥyā (1); Ibn Taymiyya (1392/1972); Ibn al-Qayyim (1358/1939), vol. 1, p. 239; Subhan, Abdus (1937), pp. 221-227; Frank, Richard (1965), pp. 395-424; Watt, W. Montgomery (3) (2003), vol. II, p. 388**;** Abrahamov, Binyamin (1996), p. 73 & 74, note 42.

[15] On him, see Stern, S.M. (2003), vol. I, p. 130.

[16] On him, see Kraus, P. & G. Vajda (2003), vol. III, pp. 904-906.

[17] Ibn al-Qayyim (1358/1939), vol. 1, p. 251.

[18] For an overall ideal of this sect, see Ibn al-Qayyim (1358/1939), vol. 1, p. 239; Subhan, Abdus (1937), pp. 221-227; Frank, Richard (1965), pp. 395-424.

[19] See Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1977), pp. 99-200; Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1920), p. 14.

[20] Ritter, Hellmut (1952), p. 6.

[21] Ibn al-Qayyim (1358/1939), vol. 1, p. 251.

[22] Sharabāṣī, Aḥmad al- (1375/1956), vol. 1, pp. 345 & 346.

al-Warrāq wrote his book *Al-Nawḥ ʿalā al-ḥayawānāt* (Lamenting the Animals) in which, according to Ibn al-Qayyim, the author disclosed his clear infidelity (*al-zandaqa al-ṣurāḥ*).[23] As for Ibn al-Rāwandī, he was accused of adopting a jeering and personal attack on God by claiming that God is vindictive, quarrelsome, weak in artithmatic etc.[24] Speaking about this figure, Ibn al-Jawzī said that Ibn al-Rāwandī, "added his ill manners and tasteless humor, and spoke of the Creator in a way in which it would be inappropriate to speak even of one of the common people. We have not heard of any one who spoke of the Creator with such disrespect and jeering as this cursed one." In another place, Ibn al-Jawzī described him as "the pillar of heresy" (*muʿtamid al-malāḥida wa al-zanādiqa*).[25]

The other transgression of the red lines, discussed earlier, was made by some Sufis. Contrary to the first group who were declared heretics and infidels because of their viewpoints, criticism of God expressed by the Sufis was permitted to a certain extent and did not end up by placing those who uttered such statements beyond the boundaries of Islam. That is because they criticized the divine government but continued to submit with resignation to what God had ordained and decreed. Additionally, their claimed intimacy with God was so well-founded and secure that it could not be disturbed by occasional audacities, like in the case of reproaches and lovers' disputes, which sometimes occur between lovers but do not disturb their friendly relations.[26] Besides this class of God's friends, there were also the saintly or religious fools who benefited from ostensible lunacy as a special privilege when speaking to God more audaciously than other people. Some of them complained and criticized the activity of God. The story of the great mystic al-Shiblī (d. 334/945)[27] with the young madman in the lunatic asylum serves as a clear example here. The young madman begged al-Shiblī to ask God, why He was tormenting him so much, why he was keeping him in a place away from home, far from his parents, hungry and shivering with cold. When al-Shiblī was about to go, the young madman cried, "No, do not tell God anything! Otherwise He will make it worse. I shall not ask Him for anything. For nothing can impress Him. He is self-sufficient."[28] The German orientalist Hellmut Ritter (d. 1971) commented on such stories by saying, "Whatever happens to them is, in their eyes, always a direct action of God or on His behalf. Always they have to deal with God directly. And this direct and intimate relation to God characterizes them as genuinely mystic, as *mystical* fools, and distinguishes them from heretics and philosophers, who have become alienated from God altogether like Ibn al-Rāwandī and Abu al-ʿAlā al-Maʿarrī."[29]

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[23] Ibid.
[24] Ritter, Hellmut (1952), p. 6; Stroumsa, Sarah (1987), p. 769.
[25] Stroumsa, Sarah (1987), pp. 767 & 768.
[26] Ibid, pp. 7 & 8.
[27] On him, see Sobieroj, F. (2003), vol. IX, pp. 431-433.
[28] Ritter, Hellmut (1952), p. 4.
[29] Ibid, p. 9. For similar Sufi practices in the Shīʿī tradition, see Navar, Iraj & Peter J. Chelkowski (1994), pp. 111-129.

Apart from such exceptional cases, the main line in Islamic theology continued to be devoted to the belief in God's perfect and spotless character including all divine names and attributes reflecting this character. Scholars of Islam remained unanimous on the fact that the existence of pains in life cannot be a valid reason for casting doubts on the perfect character of God. As stated in the introduction, two groups of Muslim scholars, namely Sufis and philosophers approached the phenomenon of pain, evil or afflictions in general as no *real* problem. Below, we give a summing up of their viewpoints in this regard.

2.1.1 Sufis

The method adopted by the Sufis was highly spiritual and focused on the nature of God and the spiritual relation that creatures can develop with Him as Creator. Al-Ghazālī's starting point was that a proper knowledge of God and developing a spiritual relationship with Him, based mainly on mutual love, would eliminate any sense of being in trouble. The distinction between good and evil would be meaningless since everything coming from God was good.[30]

From the side of God, an important sign of loving His servant was to make him an object of afflictions and difficulties (*ibtilā'*). The Prophet is reported to have said, "When God loves a servant, He will visit him with afflictions. When He loves him, with a fully-fledged love, He will preserve him." Being asked what 'preserve him means', the Prophet said "God does not leave for him family or property." One of the scholars said, "When you love God and notice that He is visiting you with afflictions, know that He wants to purify you." One of the mystic teachers advised his student by saying, "O my son, do not aspire for love as He does not give it to anybody without testing him with afflictions first."[31]

From the side of the human being, always named a servant (*'abd*), an important sign of being in love with God is to love what his Beloved (God) loves. Al-Ghazālī related the story of one of the Companions of the Prophet who, at the eve of a battle, invoked God to face in the battle a strong man to fight with and that this enemy would cut off his nose and ears and pierce his stomach. The purpose of this invocation was clarified by the Companion as follows, "When I meet you tomorrow [on the Day of Resurrection], You will ask me, O servant of God! who cut off your nose and ears? I will say, for the cause of You and Your Messenger. You will say, you have spoken the truth."[32] It is clear here that disability is invoked because in the Hereafter it will prove the servant's sincere love for God.

Such mutual spiritual love strengthens the bonds between the lover (servant) and the Beloved (God). Concerning physical pains, someone experiencing such a relationship finds himself in one of two main states. *First*, being immersed in love with God would remove the sense of physical pain. When severe

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[30] Kader, Abdel (1954), pp. 222 & 223.
[31] Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid, al- (1), vol. 4, p. 329.
[32] Ibid, vol. 4, p. 330.

afflictions befall a lover, they cannot cause him pain. In order to rationalize this argument, al-Ghazālī recalled here the example of a fighter in the battlefield who, at the time of fear and wrath, does not feel pain because his mind is fully engaged at this critical moment. The same holds true for the case of one immersed in love with his beloved to the extent that he cannot feel physical pains such as the ladies who wounded their hands with knives and remained unconscious of the pain because they were in deep love with the Prophet Joseph as mentioned in the Qur'ān (12:31).[33] The common rationale here is that when the mind is fully engaged with one thing, it cannot grasp another thing at the same time.

In the *second* state, one would feel the pain but be satisfied with it at the same time and even willing to experience it although one could detest it by nature. A mystic leader said in this respect, "He who sees the rewards of afflictions will not desire to get out of them."[34]

Al-Ghazālī was aware of the eccentricity of experiencing these two states while having pain and troubles. To prove the validity and practicality of this rationale, he quoted a long list of statements and stories of pious figures. Here we just mention one example which has direct relevance to the case of disability. The well-known mystic Bishr al-Ḥāfī (d. 226/840)[35] is related to have met, at the beginning of his religious life, a man afflicted with blindness, elephantiasis, madness and epilepsy. Bishr saw that ants were eating the man's flesh and thus raised up his head, put it in his lap and tried to speak to him. The man recovered his consciousness and wondered, "Who is this curious man who interferes [his nose] between me and my Lord. Had he cut me into pieces, it would have done nothing but increasing my love for Him." [36]

While some mystics were content to pursue a pious life motivated by the love of God, others became involved in esoteric and even antinomian practices in which they hoped to experience oneness with God or to be "annihilated in His unity" as expressed in the mystic doctrine of *fanā'* (lit. passing away, effacement).[37] In such a state, in which the Sufi experiences the passing away of the consciousness of all things, including him/herself, and the annihilation of the imperfect attributes of the creature and their replacement by the perfect attributes of God,[38] the question about the wise purposes of evil in life will be

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[33] Ibid, vol. 4, pp. 347 & 348.
[34] Ibid, vol. 4, pp. 347 & 348.
[35] On him, see Meier, F (2003), vol. I, pp. 1243-1246.
[36] Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid, al- (1), vol. 4, p. 348. For more stories with relevance to disabiltiy as well, see Ibid, pp. 348 & 349; Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al- (1410/1989), vol. 4, p. 118; Aṣbahānī, Abū Nuʿaym al- (1405/1984), vol. 2, pp. 319 & 320, vol. 4, p. 68, vol. 6, p. 156; Ibn al-Jawzī (1399/1979), vol. 2, pp. 463-466, 501, vol. 4, pp. 18, 19, 60, 86, 282, 283; Ibn al-Qayyim (1), vol. 1, p. 117.
[37] Otten, Henry J. (1985), p. 7. On the term "fanā'", see Ibn Taymiyya (1401/1981), pp. 44-46; Kader, Abdel (1954), pp. 219-228; Dawūd, ʿAbd al-Bārī Muhammad (1417/1997); Rahman, Fazlur (2003), vol. I, pp. 950 & 951.
[38] See Rahman, Fazlur (2003), vol. I, p. 950.

irrelevant. That is because such an experience will leave no room for experiencing evil not to mention asking why it exists.

The *real* disability which men should deem as a *real* problem, according to this approach, is the type of disability afflicting one's heart and soul rather than one's body. One of the mystic authorities explained this point by saying "What heartbreak, one can suffer, would be greater than seeing the one with blindness in this life as a sighted person in the Hereafter, while the sighted one in this life will be blind?!"[39] This is a reference to the Qur'anic verses (20:124 & 125) speaking about the person who suffered this *real* disability which diverted him from the right path to God in this life. As a punishment, this person, who was sighted in the worldly life, gets afflicted with blindness on the Day of Resurrection.[40] Modern Muslim scholars paid considerable attention to this type of disability. As mentioned above, the Syrian scholar Saʿdī Abū Jayb said that the disability which impairs one's soul and thus drives the person away from God is the true (*ḥaqīqiyya*) disability. One's status and dignity in Islam are to be injured by this type of disability rather than that afflicting one's body.[41]

2.1.2 Philosophers

A number of Muslim philosophers shed light on the necessity of understanding the general nature of suffering or evil on the one hand and the life we are living on the other hand. To them, comprehending these two dimensions would demonstrate that actually there is no *real* problem.

In this vein, suffering is simply an inevitable concomitant of existence in this life. So, it is something that must happen rather than that could happen.

Ibn Sīnā, the main exponenent of philosophers in this regard, advanced a Neoplatonic ontological analysis of the problem of evil, which aims to prove that God, the absolutely good First Cause, produces a good world.[42] He said in this respect, "There is nothing whatsoever in the entire world, and in all its high and lower parts, which is excluded from the statement that God is the cause of its being and its origination in time, that God has knowledge of it and disposes it and that God wills it to exist […] For if this world were not compounded of good and evil forces and of producing of both righteousness and corruption in its inhabitants, the world order would never have been fulfilled completely."[43]

As for disabilities in particular such as the absence of an arm or sight, Ibn Sīnā classified them under the category of essential evil (*al-sharr bi al-dhāt*)[44] because they imply the lack of perfections that are fixed for the nature of human beings.[45] Some of the examples of fixed perfection given by Ibn Sīnā are

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[39] Aṣbahānī, Abū Nuʿaym al- (1405/1984), vol. 4, p. 214.
[40] Alūsī, Abū al-Fadl Mahmūd al-(1), vol. 16, p. 278.
[41] Abū Jayb, Saʿdī (1402/1982), pp. 17-25; Bazna, Maysaa S. & Tarek A. Hatab (2005), p. 12.
[42] Shihadeh, Ayman (2006), p. 771.
[43] Otten, Henry J. (1985), pp. 8 & 9.
[44] On the reasons for translating this term in that way, see Inati, Shams C. (2000), p. 79. for a full presentation of this notion in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, see Inati, Shams C. (2000), pp. 67-85.
[45] Inati, Shams C. (2000), p. 69.

organs, such as the human eye; some are capacities or powers, such as human sight; and some are the act or fulfilment of such powers, such as the act of seeing. The real perfection among these three is *the act* because, for instance, what is the human eye or its capacity to see, if it does not actually see?[46] This type of evil, according to Ibn Sīnā is evil in all respects, "As for the lack of perfection and health [of the harmed thing], it is evil not only in relation to [the harmed thing] so that it would have a presence by virtue of which it is not an evil. Rather, its very presence is nothing but an evil in it, and in the manner of being evil. Thus, blindness cannot be except in the eye; and, inasmuch as it is in the eye, it cannot but be evil, with no aspect to it by virtue of which it would be other than evil."[47]

In his bid to justify the existence of such evils, Ibn Sīnā placed himself within the aforementioned limits by assuring his firm belief in God's absolute goodness which leads to providence (*ʿināya*) whose presence is evident.[48] Thus, the explanation should not be at the expense of the divine perfection of God. The question now is how can we understand the reality of this world including evils in the light of God's absolute goodness?

Ibn Sīnā advanced two main arguments both of which are applicable to the case of disabilities. *First*, essential evil, to which the phenomenon of disability belongs, is privation of being. For instance, disability is privation of ability which is being and blindness is privation of seeing which is being. Because essential evil is non-being, it is uncaused. In other words, it cannot have a cause for a cause is always the cause of something. By "cause" here is meant an agent or efficient cause, not just any principle required for the production of an effect. The agent or efficient cause always produces something and not nothing. It follows that no being, including God can be a cause of essential evil.[49] However, whether considered as being or non-being, human beings still experience suffering because of the disability. This was the criticism of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210). He countered Ibn Sīnā's ontological and cosmological theodicy with the very human experience of suffering. This is what "minds and hearts are perplexed by" and consequently any attempted theodicy ought to address. Ibn Sīnā's theodicy merely circumvented the real problem of evil. Al-Rāzī wondered why Ibn Sīnā attempted a theodicy in the first place, given that he is not a moral realist and that he did not consider the Creator to be a voluntary agent, in which case He cannot be morally responsible for His acts. His introduction of the terms "good" and "evil" into the context of ontology is superfluous (*fuḍūl*) and inapt. Instead, al-Rāzī added, Ibn Sīnā should have left the attempt to justify evil in this world to those for whom it is a real problem, since they adhere to these two doctrines, namely the Muʿtazila.[50] However, this argument and the following one are meant rather to

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[46] Ibid, p. 70.
[47] Ibid, p. 81.
[48] Ibid, p. 127.
[49] Ibid, pp. 81 & 148. See also Ghoraba, Hammouda (1956), pp. 81-83.
[50] Ayman (1) (2006), pp. 163 & 164.

minimize the problem than to solve it. By the last argument, it will get clear that Ibn Sīnā also sees no *real* problem. It is to be noted here that the mystic Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240) advocated this argument of Ibn Sīnā in his work *Tāj al-rasā'il* (The Crown of Epistles) written in 600/1203. He said in this regard, "Existence in general is purely good and non-existence is purely evil. However, such evil that may exist is imbued with good […] For one cannot appreciate anything without relating it to its opposite […] The whole world then enjoys complete happiness."[51] Again this approach is rejected by the modern researcher Adīb Nāyif Diyāb (PhD Cambridge University, 1981). He criticized Ibn al-ʿArabī for following the footsteps of traditional philosophy which seems to be incompatible with the conventions of common sense and with the reality of human suffering, quite apart from the obscurity of "nonthingness" as a concept.[52]

The *second* argument advanced by Ibn Sīnā in this regard is that there is more good than evil in the universe, "Evil only strikes individuals, and at certain times. The species are preserved. Except for one kind of evil [i.e., accidental evil], real evil does not extend to the majority of individuals."[53] This is of course easily applicable to people with disabilities that represent a minority among the populations on earth. However, Ibn Sīnā's view in this respect was not generally accepted by other philosophers. For instance, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 313/925) opined that evil is prevalent in this world, a contention which follows from his notion that pleasure is purely relief from pain.[54] Now, suppose that the evils are few, why would this life be free from these *few* evils?

Here comes the *third argument* of Ibn Sīnā, namely, that the universal order cannot be sustained without the occurrence of evil.[55] "This was not possible in a mode of existence such as this, even though it was possible in the absolute existence, since that mode of absolute existence free from evil is other than this one."[56] By extending this notion to disability, one would say that being human necessitates that one would be prone to both ability and disability. If we want to remove disability, the human being will not be a human being anymore. In this vein, although God's unrestricted power is not denied explicitly, it is denied implicitly. If God is the cause of everything, including this sphere, and if this sphere cannot be other than it is, it would follow that its cause has no power to make it other than it is. Everything that God does is done necessarily. It is "necessity" that seems to have the upper hand in every action in the universe, including the divine ones. God, like everything else, is an instrument in the hands of necessity. It is true that Ibn Sīnā speaks of God's will and sometimes of God's choice, but even God's will runs by necessity.[57] Despite his

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[51] Ibn ʿArabī, Muhyī al-Dīn (1328/1910), p. 610, quoted by Diyāb, Adīb al-Nāyif (2000), p. 36.
[52] Diyāb, Adīb al-Nāyif (2000), p. 37.
[53] Inati, Shams C. (2000), p. 133; Shihadeh, Ayman (1) (2006), p. 161. see also Ghoraba, Hammouda (1956), p. 83.
[54] Shihadeh, Ayman (1) (2006), p. 161.
[55] Inati, Shams C. (2000), p. 145.
[56] Otten, Henry J. (1985), pp. 8 & 9; Inati, Shams C. (2000), p. 147.
[57] Inati, Shams C. (2000), p. 147.

disagreement with Ibn Sīnā in the aforementioned arguments, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī inclined to concede the logicality of this specific argument in his *Al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya* (Oriental Themes).[58]

2.2 Anti-Theodicy Approach

The proponents of this approach laid more emphasis on the second side of God's character, especially God's self-sufficiency and omnipotence, than on the first side. To them, the main manifestation of God's perfect character was His omnipotence and limitless power.

Exposing the main articles of the Ashʿarī school, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī elaborated this theme as follows, "We assert that God has prowess (*quwwa*), as He says "Saw they not that God who create them mightier than they in prowess" (Qur'ān 41:14) […] and that there is not good nor evil on earth, save what God wills and that things exist by God's will and that not a single person has the capacity to do anything until God causes him to act and we are not independent of God nor can we pass beyond the range of God's knowledge; and that there is no creator save God and the works of human beings are things created and decreed by God. He has says 'God has created you and what you make' (Qur'ān 37:94). Human beings have not the power to create anything but are themselves created […] Human beings do not control for themselves what is hurtful or what is helpful, except what God wills and that we ought to commit our affairs to God and assert our complete need and dependence upon Him."[59] Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), one of the towering personalities in the Ashʿarite School, reiterated this theme by affirming that God can inflict pain on man – indeed He can torment man – without hope of reward and for no reason.[60] In this sense, all sorts of disabilities and by default sufferings and evils are to be traced back to God. He is the one who created them, willed them and did them and man has no role in this regard. The question then is, why does God create and will all these evils? What is the wise purpose (*ḥikma*) behind all this? Where is the justice of God in this case?

The Ashʿarites in fact condemned posing questions to God because He is the Almighty who runs His own kingship (*mulk*) as He pleases and thus is not to be questioned.[61] This point is also advocated by the Ẓāhirī scholar Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064).[62] Furthermore, searching for the wise purposes (*ḥikam*) of God's actions is not only meaningless, but also grave disobedience to Him.[63]

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[58] Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn al- (1343/1924), pp, 522 & 523; Ibn al-Qayyim (1358/1939), vol. 1, p. 251.
[59] Ashʿarī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al- (1940), pp. 50 & 51.
[60] See Ormsby, Eric L. (1984), p. 237, quoting from Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid (1334/1916), vol. 1, p. 99. It will be noticed down that Imam al-Ghazālī himself, in the light of criticism directed to the Ashʿarites that they have neglected the role of divine wisdom, he pronounced emphasis on the role of wisdom but this was something repugnant to many of his fellow Ashʿarites, for whom any attempt to rationalise God's actions was suspect. See Ormsby, Eric L. (1984), p. 47. Cf. Ibn al-Wazīr, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm (1987), vol. 1, 202.
[61] Ashʿarī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al- (1988), vol. 1, p. 268.
[62] Ibn Ḥazm, Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī (1), vol. 3, p. 41.
[63] Rahman, Fazlur (2000), p. 62.

The Ashʿarites considered this contrary to the perfect and spotless character of God. Defending their contention, the Ashʿarites advanced more then one argument.[64]

First, if God's act is precipitated by a cause (*ʿilla*) then that cause is originated (*ḥāditha*) and requires a cause, and so on *ad infinitum*. If God acted or originated on account of a cause or wise purpose, this would entail an endless chain or infinite regress (*tasalsul*) of causes, which the Ashʿarīs deem impossible.

Second, it implies need in God. They argued that one acting by virtue of a specific cause will be perfected by it, because if the occurrence of the cause were not better than its nonexistence, it would not be a cause. One who is perfected by another is imperfect in himself. This is impossible for God. It is clear that the Ashʿarīs' concern to deny need in God is rooted in their belief that God's acts are completely free and unbound by any necessity. A God who acts for a wise purpose must be acting out of prior lack and imperfection.

The *third argument* was directed specifically against the Muʿtazilī account which maintained that God acts for a cause that is disjoined (*munfaṣil*) from His essence. The Ashʿarīs countered that this cause must have some impact on God; otherwise it would not be a cause. If then it is disjoined from God, His acting for its sake implies that the cause – which is something outside of Himself – perfects Him. Conversely, if the cause is "subsisting in Him" (*qāʾim bih*), the Ashʿarīs argue, "It necessarily follows that He is a substrate (*maḥall*) for originated events (*ḥawādith*)."

It is noteworthy in this regard to state that by denying the wise purposiveness of God's acts, the Ashʿarites did not deny the name of God, *al-Ḥakīm* (All-Wise). To them, God was undoubtedly All-Wise but they had their own specific understanding of this name. Al-Ghazālī explained this name by saying, "*Al-Hakīm* is the one who has wisdom. Wisdom is equivalent to knowledge of superior things through the highest modes of knowledge […] He is the truly wise because He knows the most sublime things by the most sublime modes of knowing."[65] Thus God's wisdom was, to the Ashʿarīs, knowledge and does not necessarily entail purposiveness in His acts. The same holds true for the name *al-ʿAdl* (All-Just). They did not deny the name but they had their own understanding of its purport, i.e., justice which they saw as expression of God's will, only. The prominent Ashʿarī scholar, ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071) defined this term as "what the doer can do (*mā li al-fāʿil an yafʿalah*)". On the other hand, the antonym of justice, i.e., injustice is "Dispose of someone else's property without his consent (*taṣarruf fī milk al-*

[64] The Ashʿarī arguments in this regard are sporadic throughout their sources and manuals. For one of the extensive and detailed presentation of these arguments, see Ījī, ʿAḍud al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al- (1997), vol. 1, pp. 422-474. These arguments have been summed up in three main points by the Ḥanbalī scholar Ibn Taymiyya and translated by Jon Hoover. See Ibn Taymiyya (1406/1985), vol. 1, pp. 144 & 145; Hoover, Jon (2002), pp. 85 & 86.

[65] Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid al- (1992), pp. 116 & 117.

ghayr bi ghayr idhnih)."[66] In this sense, it is inconceivable to classify any of God's acts as injustice because He runs His own kingship as He pleases and He is in no need of other's permission to act.[67]

Another important point in this regard, in which the Ashʿarites contradicted the Muʿtazilities, was that God's acts are not subject to the human intellect and thus cannot be measured thereby. For instance, the value of justice, injustice and so forth are to be specified solely by the Lawgiver, i.e, God. Accordingly, God does not command an act *because* that act is just and good; it is His command (*amr*) which makes it just and good. [68] One of the main advocates of this argument at the present times is the Syrian scholar Muḥammad Saʿīd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī (b. 1929).[69]

In this theological framework, the Ashʿarites would not face considerable troubles in explaining the existence of disabilities, evils and sufferings. For instance, speaking about torturing infants in this life with leprosy which cuts off their hands and their feet, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī stressed that the Muʿtazilī theology cannot explain the justice of God in such a case. However, such an act is just and wise, according to the Ashaʿarī theology, because God is running His own Kingship.[70] Recently, this approach was advocated by G. Legenhausen stating that this way "solves the problem of evil not by limiting God, but by exalting Him above human morality."[71]

2.3 Pro-Theodicy Approach

To the proponents of this approach, the divine perfection of God's character is to be measured by His oneness and justice. From these two qualities, the Muʿtazila derived their name, the Partisans of Justice and Oneness (*Ahl al-ʿAdl wa al-Tawḥīd*). Justice in the Muʿtazilite thought is even more central, for if Oneness describes God's existence as One, justice is His very essence. It is His unique nature that distinguishes Him from everything else.[72] This holds true to the extent that the Muʿtazila were also known as *al-ʿAdliyya* (Advocates of Justice).[73] Like the Muʿtazila, the Shīʿa have selected justice, out of all attributes to be a principle of their creed. They believe that justice is the basis of God's acts, both in the ordering of the universe and in the establishing of laws.[74]

In the Shīʿī tradition, justice included naturally the avoidance of oppression and all foolish acts. Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765) explained God's justice by saying, "Justice in the case of God means that you should not ascribe

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[66] Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid al- (1985), vol. 1, p. 204.
[67] Julaynid, Muḥammad al-Sayyid al- (1981), p. 225.
[68] Ibn Ḥazm, Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī (1), vol. 3, p. 21; Gardet, L. (1), (2003).
[69] Būṭī, Muḥammed Saʿīd Ramaḍān al- (2001), p. 183-187. On him, see http://www.bouti.com/ar/index.php?lang=en
[70] See Ashʿarī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al- (1940), p. 112; Julaynid, Muḥammad al-Sayyid al- (1981), p. 224.
[71] Legenhausen, G. (1988), p. 266.
[72] Khadduri, Majid (1984), pp. 44 & 45.
[73] Ibn Taymiyya (7), vol. 17, p. 352; Muṭahharī, Murtaḍā al-(1424 A.H.), p. 35.
[74] Lari, Sayyid Mujtaba Musavi (2003), p. 134.

anything to God that if you were to do it would cause you to be blamed and reproached." Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq defined justice as requiting a good act with a good act and an evil act with an evil act.[75] Besides avoiding injustice and foolish acts, justice also implies benefitting others.[76] Doing service for others, appears also an important element of justice in Muʿtazilī thought. The prominent theologian ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025) defined a just act as an act performed by man not necessarily for his own advantage but for the advantage of another man for whom the act is intended. Thus just acts may, generally speaking, be defined as those acts which promote the welfare of other men, and the man who performs them would be called a just man.[77]

As for wisdom, it has always been seen as closely connected with justice. The modern Shīʿī scholar, Sayyid Mujtaba Musavi Lari (b. 1314/1935), says in this regard, "When we see that God is just, it means that His all-knowing and creative essence does nothing that is contrary to wisdom and benefit."[78] In this sense, all God's acts are both just and wise.[79] The Muʿtazilites unanimously declare that God does nothing without wisdom, and in all He does, He intends benefit.[80] The Muʿtazilites affirm that God acts for wise purposes (*ḥikam*), otherwise He would be aimless and foolish. However, they also tried to uphold God's complete lack of need by clarifying that the sole beneficiaries in purposive divine acts are His creatures. God created human beings to profit them. God does not act in self-interest because He has no need.[81]

The other side of God's character, mainly revealed in His omnipotence, occupied a subsidiary role in the thought of this approach. Attributes indicating God's omnipotence were seen by Muʿtazilī scholars as something implied in the fact that God exists and they do not represent a separate category of attributes. Abū al-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf (d. 226/840-1)[82] argued that the mere fact that God exists implies that He is knowledgeable and powerful. Other Muʿtazilities like Ḍirār b. ʿAmr (d. ca. 200/915) and al-Naẓẓām (d. ca. 231/845),[83] said that God's essence implies knowledge and power, as it is inconceivable that God is ignorant and powerless.[84]At any rate, this divine omnipotence cannot supersede or deviate from the divine justice and wisdom. Some of the Muʿtazilities such as al-Naẓẓām and al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868-9)[85] denied that God has the capacity to

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75 Fyzee, Asaf A. A. (1942), p. 70.
76 Lari, Sayyid Mujtaba Musavi (2003), pp. 134& 135.
77 Khadduri, Majid (1984), p. 48.
78 Lari, Sayyid Mujtaba Musavi (2003), p.134. See also Fyzee, Asaf A. A. (1942), p. 30.
79 ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. 6, p. 48; Khadduri, Majid (1984), p. 48.
80 Ashʿarī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al- (1), p. 251, Ormsby, Eric L. (1984), p. 244.
81 Hoover, Jon (2002), p. 83.
82 On him see Dhahabī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān al- (1413/1992), vol. 10, pp. 542 & 543; Nyberg, H.S. (2003), vol. I, pp. 127-129.
83 On him see Dhahabī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān al- (1413/1992), vol. 10, pp. 541 & 542; Ess, Josef van (2003), vol. VII, p. 1057-vol. VIII, p. 1.
84 Ashʿarī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al- (1),, vol. 1, p. 166 & 167; Khadduri, Majid (1984), p. 48.
85 On him, see Pellat, Ch. (3) (2003), vol. II, pp. 385-387.

do injustice. However, ʿAbd al-Jabbār and later Muʿtazilities pointed out that this would be inconsistent with God's omnipotence. However, it remains inconceivable that God will ever do injustice because it is contrary to His perfection to associate His name with injustice.[86] Thus in one way or another, God's omnipotence is allowed to work only within the realm of His justice and wisdom. For instance, divine wisdom as an essential attribute of God contradicts committing any bad act (*qabīḥ*), a premise which leads to the conclusion that such acts are impossible (*muḥāl*) to be done by a wise God. By the same token what is impossible in a specific case means that it is beyond the ability to be done (*ghayr maqdūr*). The Shīʿī perspective reiterates the same theme by opining that the Divine Might relates to things which are only possible. Things that are rationally impossible are entirely outside the sphere of His power. It is related that someone asked ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, "Is your Lord able to fit the whole world into a hen's egg?" He answered: "God Almighty is, indeed, able to do anything, but what you ask is something impossible." So, although God's sacred essence is utterly free of all impotence and inability, it is meaningless and irrational to ask whether God can do something inherently impossible.[87] Daud Rahbar (b. 1927, Pakistan) is a good example of modern figures supporting this tendency. He believes that God's justice is the dominant theme of the Qur'ān.[88] In Rahbar's theodicy, the world exists to demonstrate the justice of God. To him, the full display of justice requires good and evil both, the former for reward and the latter for punishment.[89] When criticized for limiting God's power by making room for human responsibility in evil, he countered, "God Himself exercises self-restraint from evil and thus limits His own power. To know Him as a moral Being in Qur'anic terms we must know Him as such, and not as a Force 'let loose.'"[90]

Finally God's justice and wisdom are to be measured by the same scale as the one applied to human actions. This is based on the analogy to be drawn between the Present world (*al-shāhid*) and the Absent (Divine) world (*al-ghā'ib*) because of which the justice, wisdom and goodness of God's acts can be recognized by human intellect.[91]

According to these doctrines, whether disability or afflictions in general occurred due to man's action, other people's action or due directly to God and beyond human control, there should be a specific wise purpose that can be discerned by the human intellect. The main question will thus be; what are the wise purposes of befalling people with afflictions? For a systematic presentation of answers provided to this question within this approach, a distinction will be made between persons with legal liability (*mukallafūn*)[92] who thus can be

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[86] Khadduri, Majid (1984), p. 45.
[87] Lari, Sayyid Mujtaba Musavi (2003), pp. 124 & 125.
[88] Rahbar, Daud (1960), p. 119, quoted by Otten, Henry J. (1985), p. 9.
[89] Rahbar, Daud (1960), pp. 79, 80 & 81,quoted by Otten, Henry J. (1985), p. 10.
[90] Rahbar, Daud (1960), p. xx, quoted by Otten, Henry J. (1985), p. 10.
[91] See Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 137.
[92] By "*mukallafūn*", we refer here to those who can be punished for violating the laws. In Islamic tradition, one falls under this category by being a human with sanity (*ʿaql*) who reached the age of

responsible for the evils they committed and those without legal liability (*ghayr mukallafūn*) such as children, insane people and animals.

2.3.1 Afflictions Befalling those with Legal Liability (*Mukallafūn*)

Basing the discussion here on Muʿtazilite doctrines, disabilities occuring in this life, as can be traced within the broad concept of afflictions, can be divided – on the basis of the liable agent of affliction – into three main categories, namely, a) self-inflicted, b) inflicted by humans or animals and c) inflicted by God. Each of the disabilities is to be judged as a) good (*ḥasan*) and just (*ʿadl*) or b) bad (*qabīḥ*), where bad can be further categorized 1) injust (*ẓulm*) or 2) a useless act (*ʿabath*).

To the Muʿtazilites, inflicting pain in general is bad (*sharr*) but it is still possible to inflict harm in such a way that the act in question is judged as good. This means that doing harm can be good only by exception. ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025) pointed this out by stating that doing harm is an injustice unless this harm:

- Involves a profit greater than the harm,
- Averts a harm greater than the inflicted harm,
- Is deserved, or
- Is done on the assumption that it is one of the three cases as mentioned above,[93]
- If the harm is done to someone else, the act must be done with the intention of providing a profit, and
- If the harmed person is an adult of sound mind, then he must give his consent to be harmed for this profit. [94] However, in the case of living beings that are not in the full possession of mental faculties and are put into one's care, it is deemed good if one harms them when one assuming that this will lead to a profit for them in the future or that it will avert an expected harm.[95]

Thus self-inflicted disability or disability inflicted by others is good as long as such conditions are fulfilled. However, disability inflicted to avert an equal harm suffered is deemed a useless act (*ʿabath*).[96] Basing our discussion on what has been stated here, the three sorts of afflictions can be analysed as following:

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majority (*bulūgh*). In this sense, animals and children and insane people fall under the category of non-*mukallafūn*. For further details on the term, legal liability (*taklīf*) and its derivatives, *mukallaf* and *ghayr mukallaf*, see Kamali, Muhammad Hashim (2003), pp. 425-450; Gimaret, D. (1) (2003), vol. X, pp. 138 & 139. For further information on the Muʿtazilite theory of *Taklīf*, see ʿUthmān, ʿAbd al-Karīm (1971).

93 ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 298 & 316; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 135.

94 ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 345 & 396; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 136.

95 See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 362; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 144.

96 See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 314 & 331; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 133.

The first type, namely, those self-inflicted afflictions, which do not involve gaining a profit or averting harm greater than the harm suffered, is deemed by the Muʿtazilites a bad act because it is a form of injustice (*ẓulm*) to oneself and thus not compensated by God or anyone else.[97] However such pain is to be compensated if it is done with the intention of a averting a harm, because the person in that case does not obtain a profit that can take the place of compensation. Also self-inflicted affliction is to be recompensed in case it is done on the assumption that it will yield a profit in the future but it did not do so. In these two cases pain is to be compensated by God.[98]

As for the second type int this regard, viz., afflictions inflicted by others, the main rule is that the initiative to inflict pain or cause disability determines who compensates. Thus both *mukallaf* and non-*mukallaf* must compensate for the pain they inflict on another living being even if he/she does not know that they are entitled to compensation equal to the quantity of pain.[99] However, humans cannot know precisely how much compensation they must make for pain. This means that they are unable to fulfil the obligation to compensate for pain.[100] Thus it is God who will mediate in executing the process of compensation. God is Omniscient and therefore knows exactly how much compensation must be given for each pain. ʿAbd al-Jabbār opined that this mediation is obligatory for God: after having enabled a wrongdoer (*ẓālim*) to wrong someone else and not having prevented him from doing so, God is obliged to pass a verdict on this wrongdoer and to administer justice between the wrongdoer and the wronged (*maẓlūm*).[101]

God is going to administer justice in this case by taking the required quantity of compensation from the person who inflicted the pain and transfer it to the person who suffered the pain.[102] It is to be noted that administering justice in this respect does not mean that God may take part of a wrongdoer's reward and transfer it to the person wronged by him. That is because reward can be earned only by fulfilling a difficult task.[103] Administering justice in this regard will be done by transferring the compensation from one account to another. ʿAbd al-Jabbār explained this by saying that every living being is entitled to Divine compensation for pain and harm that God made him suffer. From this

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97 See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 489, 522 & 558; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 174.

98 See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 490 & 491; Mānkdīm, Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Abū Hāshim al-Ḥusaynī Shashdīw (1965), p. 501 Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), pp. 174, 175 & 176.

99 ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 484, 492 & 493; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 167, 168 & 182.

100 ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 454; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 182.

101 ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 472; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 183.

102 ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 472; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 183.

103 ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 445; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 189.

theory, it can be concluded that God is a sort of bookkeeper, who keeps the accounts of the compensation that each creature is entitled to receive from Him and transfers amounts from one account to another.[104] However, in the light of this theory, what would be the case of the malicious person who inflicted so much pains and harms on other living beings that he does not have enough "credit, i.e. in the Hereafter" to be transferred to all those who have been wronged by him? For this question, three main answers are provided by Muʿtazilite theologians with a common stress on the fact that people who are wronged must be compensated anyhow:

The first: If these people who have been wronged cannot get compensation from that malicious person, God will ensure that they are compensated by Him as a donation (*tafaḍḍul*) from Him.[105]

The second: If a wrongdoer does not have enough compensation to compensate for crimes that are committed on his orders, he must compensate only for crimes he has committed with his own hands. In that case, those who acted on his command must themselves make compensation for these acts unless they acted under constraint.[106]

The third: It is a sort of exaggeration to think that some people even if they are tyrants could have insufficient divine compensation for all of their acts of injustice. ʿAbd al-Jabbār advocated this idea by saying that we cannot know how many sorrow, pain, misfortune and terrifying events have happened to this wrongdoer and how much compensation will be given by God for these sufferings.[107]

The only exception concerning the obligation of compensating for the pain inflicted is made for pain that is not inflicted on one's initiative.[108] Thus, if a judge wrongly decreed that someone's hand be amputated in a *ḥadd* punishment and the executor carried this decree out, then it is the judge who must compensate the wrongly condemned person and not the executor because amputation here is done on the initiative of the judge.[109] Also the pain that leads to a greater profit needs not be compensated because the profit acquired

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[104] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 530 & 482; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 183.

[105] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qādī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 540; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 184. This suggestion was rejected by ʿAbd al-Jabbār on the ground that giving the compensation as a donation to the person wronged is as if a donation is given to the wrongdoer and then transferred to the person wronged. It is, ʿAbd al-Jabbār declares, unthinkable that God would make donations to wrongdoers. For further details on this point, see ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 543 & 544.

[106] It is clear that this solution conflicts with the Muʿtazilite rule that someone who commands someone else to inflict pain on a third person, must compensate for this pain himself. See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 492 & 493; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 167, 182 & 185.

[107] For further details, see ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 449, 543 & 472; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 184.

[108] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 492 & 493; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 167.

[109] See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p 493.

replaces the compensation.[110] Thus, a surgeon by performing a surgery, in which he excised his patient's gangrenous hand, is not obliged to pay compensation. That is because the profit acquired; saving the patient's life by preventing the gangrene affecting other parts of the body, is greater than the harm caused by the disability inflicted.

As for the moment of providing compensation and its duration, this is to be discussed when we speak about compensation provided by God for harm and the pain He inflicted on living beings.

The purpose of setting the aforementioned conditions was to draw an analogy between the Present world (*al-shāhid*) and the Absent (Divine) world (*al-ghā'ib*) and finally to confirm that the third type of afflictions, those inflicted by God, are always good; the good that can be recognised by human intellect.[111] However, such analogy was not always exact or without problems. For instance, three prominent Muʿtazilite theologians, namely, ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025), Mānkdīm (d. 425/1034) and Ibn Mattawayh (d. ca 468/1075) put aside the aforementioned second and fourth conditions in the case of pain imposed by God. They crossed out the possibility that God's infliction of pain is good because it averts a greater harm. They pointed out that this would be in conflict with God's Omnipotence.[112] Also the possibility that God's infliction of pain is good because it is done *on the supposition that* that it involves a profit or averts harm is dropped. That is because Allah's Omniscience implies that supposition (*ẓann*) is impossible for Him.[113]

Also, by applying such an analogy between the Present world and the Absent World, the last condition placed the Muʿtazila in an awkward position. How could God's imposition of illnesses on adult people of sound mind be deemed good while they did not give Him the consent to be harmed? Muʿtazilite scholars provided three answers to this question:

The first answer was that the relation between God and humans is like the relation between the caretaker and children, madmen and animals under his custody. The caretaker is entitled to inflict pain on them without their consent if the pain would lead to a profit greater than the pain or avert harm greater than the pain, because they are put into his care and he knows what is best for them. Hence God does not have to ask for the humans' consent when He imposes pain on them. That is because it is God who created them and gave them life and is therefore in the best position to know what is good for them.[114]

This solution is rejected by other Muʿtazilite scholars. For instance, ʿAbd al-Jabbār saw that this solution was in conflict with the theory that God imposes

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[110] See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p 490; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 167.

[111] See Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 137.

[112] See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 369; Mānkdīm, Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Abū Hāshim al-Ḥusaynī Shashdīw (1965), pp. 485 & 486; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 167.

[113] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 369.

[114] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp.454 & 455; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 137.

obligations on humans. He argued that this presupposes that they are adults and of sound mind, otherwise it would be wrong to impose obligations on them. That they are adults of sound mind implies that they should give their consent.

The second answer is based on thinking out a situation in which it is good to harm an adult of sound mind, even if he has not given his consent beforehand. Such a situation is obtained, if the compensation for the harm is so great that it is indisputable that all adults of sound mind (*mukallaf*), different as they are, would choose to bear this harm to obtain the compensation awarded for it, and the person who would not, must be considered as not being of sound mind. [115]

The third answer was suggested by Ibn Mattawayh who believed that those who are *mukallaf* have given God some kind of silent permission to inflict pain on them. His opinion is that if they know God, they also know that God will certainly compensate them for the pain He inflicts on them, and that He will make compensation so great that each of them would choose to bear the pain for it. To him, this amounts to giving permission to God to inflict pain.[116]

Apart from such nuances, Muʿtazilite scholars agree that disability – or harm in general – inflicted by God on the *mukallafūn* is good because it is either 1) deserved punishment or 2) because it involves a profit or benefit (*maṣlaḥa*).[117]

2.3.1.1 Wise Purposes (Ḥikam)

2.3.1.1.1 Deserved Punishment

Inflicting pain as a deserved punishment is a point of disagreement among the Muʿtazilite theologians. There are two main opinions in this respect:

The first, articulated by Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī (d. 303/915),[118] is that pain can be a divine punishment that God inflicts in advance, like the prescribed punishments (*ḥudūd*). *Ḥadd* punishments are only given to Muslims, so it is also possible that illnesses which unbelievers suffer are punishments inflicted on them instead of *ḥadd* punishments.[119] However, he made an exception for illnesses suffered by living beings that according to his doctrine cannot have deserved punishment, such as prophets and animals. Prophets cannot have deserved punishment from God because they do not commit grave sins and animals are not legally responsible (non-*mukallafūn*).[120] Abū ʿAlī therefore

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[115] Ījī, ʿAḍud al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al- (1997), vol. 3, p. 290; ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p.322; Mānkdīm, Aḥmad b. al-Husayn b. Abū Hāshim al-Ḥusaynī Shashdīw (1965), p. 492; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), pp. 137 & 138.

[116] Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), pp. 138 & 166.

[117] See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 369 & 417; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), pp. 161, 166 & 167. Cf. Ibn al-Qayyim (1348/1929), Vol. 1, p. 324; Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid al- (1985), Vol. 1, p. 204.

[118] He is Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Jubbāʾī, on him see Ibn al-ʿImād (1), vol. 2, p. 97.

[119] This opinion has been articulated by Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī. See ʿʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 431; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 160.

[120] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XV, pp. 300-303; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 160.

believed that the prophets' illnesses are a trial (*miḥna*) imposed on them by God and not a *luṭf* (Divine Assistance).[121] The difference between *luṭf* and trial is that a *luṭf* can motivate not only the person who suffers but other persons as well, whereas a trial only concerns the person who suffers.[122]

The second was held by Abū Hāshim (d. 321/933)[123] and ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025). In this regard ʿAbd al-Jabbār was initially keen to reject the idea that illnesses and pains are deserved punishments as was believed by whom he called the adherents of the transmigration of souls (*aṣḥāb al-tanāsukh*).[124] By this, ʿAbd al-Jabbār refers to those who believed that living beings suffer in this life because of their bad acts in their previous lives. Consequently, those who had sinned less and obeyed more were given a body more beautifully formed and their sufferings were less. Those whose sins were more were given a body less beautiful in form and suffered more.[125]

The two main proponents of this opinion stated that illnesses in general can not be intended as punishment. They cited two arguments in support of this contention. First, it is wrong to punish someone unless he knows what he is being punished for. Someone who is ill does not know whether his illness is a punishment, and even if he did understand that it was a punishment, he would not know which offence he was being punished for.[126] Such a person may think that an injustice is being done to him and this may prompt him to do bad acts. This makes it clear, they add, that illnesses are not a punishment from God.[127] Even the illnesses of people who are aware that they have failed to fulfil the obligations of God's *taklīf* (charge) and know that they deserve punishment are not a punishment. Inflicting illnesses on them as a punishment conflicts with the theory of God's *taklīf.* According to this theory, God threatens those who fail to fulfil the obligations with a severe punishment. This means that their

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[121] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 431, 104 & 105. For further details on *luṭf*, see the following item.

[122] Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 160.

[123] He is Abū Hāshim ʿAbd al-Salām ibn Abī ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī, on him see Dhahabī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān al- (1413/1992), vol. 15, pp. 63 & 64.

[124] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 379 & 381; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 159.

[125] The most well-known Muʿtazilī theologians who accept the doctrine of metempsychosis is Aḥmad b. Khābiṭ [according to other readings Aḥmad ibn Ḥāʾiṭ, on the different readings of Aḥmad's father, see Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1920), p. 260 1f.; Friedlaender, Israel (1908), 10 f.] and his followers (al-Khābiṭiyya or al-Hāʾiṭiyya). See Shahrastānī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al- (1416/1996), vol. 1, pp. 74-77; Shahrastānī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al- (1984), pp. 53-56; Ījī, ʿAḍud al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al- (1997), vol. 3, pp. 666 & 667; Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1920), p. 93; Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1977), p. 255. Also among the Muʿtazilīs who advocated this doctrine are al-Faḍl al-Ḥadathī and his followers al-Ḥadathiyya, Aḥmad ibn Ayyūb ibn Yanūsh and Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qaḥṭabī, see Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1977), p. 255; Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1920), p.93. see also Ibn Yūsuf, Marʿī (1410/1989), vol. 1, p. 58.

[126] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 140, 105, 431 & 432; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 160.

[127] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 415 & 416; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 160.

punishment must be more than only suffering illnesses in this world. It implies that they will be punished in the Hereafter.[128] Secondly, prophets and pious people suffer from illnesses, although they cannot have deserved punishment from God. This is an indication that illnesses are not a punishment.[129]

However, ʿAbd al-Jabbār – one of the proponents of the second opinion – does not deny that there is pain in this world inflicted by God, or on His command, that is meant to be a deserved punishment. However, in these cases the punished persons know why they are punished. An example of such a deserved punishment from God is a *ḥadd* punishment, although it is carried out by humans, it is considered to come from God because it is done on His command.[130]

In this regard it was asked what God would do in the case of a believer whose hand had been cut off and who then apostatised, and conversely in the case of an infidel whose hand had been cut off and who then came to believe. The simplest response was that he would be compensated by God; another hand would be substituted. By other Muʿtazilites it was held that the hand of the apostatising believer would be attached to the repentant infidel, while the infidel's hand (which had been amputated while he still disbelieved) would be affixed to the apostate. Still others rejected this on the ground that the believer and disbeliever are not "the hand and the leg".[131]

2.3.1.1.2 Divine Assistance (Luṭf)[132]

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[128] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 417 & 418; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 160.

[129] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 407; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 160.

[130] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 417; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 161.

[131] Ashʿarī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al- (1), p. 252.

[132] It is difficult to find an adequate translation for this term. Abrahamov held that translating *luṭf* as "Divine Assistance" is preferable to "Grace". See Abrahamov, Binyamin (1993), p. 43, note 16. But it can be objected that this translation (Divine Assistance) suggests that *luṭf* is only produced by God. However in the Muʿtazilite theology, humans can also produce *alṭāf* (the plural of *luṭf*) by their acts such as performing the Prayer (*Ṣalāh*) in the sense that it motivates other people to be obedient as well. See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XV, p. 22. *Luṭf* therefore may be translated as "Actions that assist and motivate people to fulfilling the obligations of God's *taklīf*" but this translation is not feasible because it is too long. Here "Divine Assistance" has been chosen in this regard due to the fact that the term *luṭf* is used in a context referring mainly to acts produced by God only. For further details on this point, see Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 157. On the definitions of the term *luṭf* given by Muʿtazilī theologians, see Ashʿarī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al- (1), p. 246; Ashʿarī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al- (1), p. 246; Shahrastānī, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm, al- (1416/1996), vol. 1, p. 79 & 94; Shahrastānī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al- (1984), pp. 56 & 57; ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. VI/1, p. 188; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 156. It is to be noted also that as regards bestowing *luṭf* upon man, the necessity of this is disputed in the Muʿtazilite School. See Ashʿarī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al- (1), pp. 246 & 247; Shahrastānī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al- (1416/1996), p. 57. On the Shīʿī doctrine on this point, see ʿUkbarī, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Nuʿmān al- (Known as al-Shaykh al-

As for the nature of the benefit (*maṣlaḥa*) ensuing from God's infliction of pain, opinions in the Muʿtazilī School fluctuate between *luṭf* (Divine Assistance) and *ʿiwaḍ* (Compensation). Broadly speaking, several of God's actions towards humans have a relation to God's *taklīf* (charging).[133] God imposes obligations on all adults of sound mind (*mukallafūn*) with the purpose of giving them the opportunity to earn a reward.[134] This means that if God's purpose is to give people the opportunity to earn a reward, He must impose on them something difficult but not so difficult that it is impossible, because it is bad (*qabīḥ*) to impose an impossible task and of course God does not perform the bad.[135] Thus God is *obliged to do* certain things and acts to enable people to fulfil that which He has imposed on them.[136] These acts are performed with the purpose of a) informing people about which obligations are imposed on them or b) motivating them to fulfil these obligations. These acts of God are deemed *alṭāf* (the plural of *luṭf*). For instance God's sending of prophets to the people in order to inform them about obligations imposed on them is a *luṭf*.[137]

In this sense, pain from God is an important *luṭf* and a warning (*iʿtibār*) as well. Abū Hāshim argues that God's infliction of pain would be a useless act (*ʿabath*) if it was not a warning.[138] Mankdīm added that the warning is intended either for the person in pain or for others or for both.[139] By this, Muʿtazilite scholars could mean that pains in this life warn people for a painful punishment in Hell if they fail to fulfil the obligations imposed by God.[140] Although there is no direct refernce specifically to disability in the Muʿtazilite sources, one can still think of a relevant argument. For instance, disabilities could be deemed as warning people against those sorts of disabilities taking place in the Hereafter. For instance, the Qur'ān states that those who went astray from the Straight Path in this life will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection having blindness, dumbness and deafness, "It is he whom Allah guides, that is on true Guidance; but he whom He leaves astray – for such wilt thou find no protector

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Mufīd) (1371/1951), pp. 16 & 17; Ḥillī, Ḥasan b. Yūsuf b. ʿAlī b. al-Muṭahhar al- (1958), pp. 50-52. On critique of this doctrine, see Ibn Ḥazm, Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī (1), vol. 3, p. 92-105.

[133] *Taklīf* is the verbal noun of *kallafa*. *Taklīf* is defined by the Muʿtazilite scholar Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbā'ī as "Willing an act [to be done] that involves discomfort (*kulfa*) and trouble (*mashaqqa*) to the person on whom it is imposed" or "Commanding and willing something that involves discomfort for the person who is commended to do it." See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 293; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 152.

[134] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 420; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 154.

[135] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. VI/1, p. 61; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 154.

[136] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XI, pp. 292 & 293; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 154.

[137] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XV, p. 22 & vol. XI 292; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), pp. 154 & 156.

[138] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 390; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 164.

[139] Mānkdīm, Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Abū Ḥāshim al-Ḥusaynī Shashdīw (1965), p. 14-17; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 165.

[140] Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 159.

besides Him. On the Day of Judgment We shall gather, them together, prone on their faces, blind, dumb, and deaf: their abode will be Hell: every time it shows abatement, We shall increase from them the fierceness of the Fire" (Qur'ān 17:97).

2.3.1.1.3 Compensation (*ʿIwaḍ*)[141]

As stated above the initiative to inflict pain or cause disability, whether done by a *mukallaf* or a non-*mukallaf* determines who compensates.[142] As usual, by drawing an analogy between the present and the transcendent (divine) world, Muʿtazilite theologians stated that pain inflicted by God or by His command or permission is compensated for by Him. God gives the compensation in order to ensure that His infliction of pain is not a bad act. Without such compensation God's act would be an injustice.[143]

As for the time of providing compensation, some Muʿtazilites such as al-ʿAllāf (d. between 227-235/841-849)[144] and Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī (d. 303/915),[145] stated that it must be in the Hereafter[146] whereas some others including ʿAbd al-Jabbār and Abū Hāsim opined that it can be provided by God in this life or in the Hereafter.[147] But anyhow God gives the compensation after the harm is done and not beforehand.[148] However there are some particular cases of pain for which compensation cannot be given in this world. For instance, those who suffer pain while dying can be compensated for this pain only after their death.[149] Broadly speaking, it is God who determines whether a person will be compensated in this world or in the Hereafter. Being Omniscient, God compensates each creature at the best moment for him.[150] However, compensation to be given by God in the Hereafter can not be remitted by the

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[141] For the Shīʿī opinions on, see Ḥillī, Ḥasan b. Yūsuf b. ʿAlī b. al-Muṭahhar al- (1958), pp. 52 & 53; Mutahhari, Murtada (2002), pp. 80-83.

[142] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 492 & 493; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 167 & 182.

[143] See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp 390 & 391; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), pp. 164 & 165. In this regard ʿAbbād al-Ḍamirī [or Ḍaymarī or Ḍamrī according to other readings, He is one of the Muʿtazila who lived in the days of al-Maʾmūn. On him see ʿAsqalānī, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥajar al- (1406/1986), vol. 3, p. 229] stated that it is possible to inflict pain for warning (*iʿtibār*) only without giving compensation.

[144] He is Abū al-Hudhayl Muḥammad b. al-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf, on him see Dhahabī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān al- (1413/1992), vol. 10, pp. 542 & 543.

[145] He is Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Jubbāʾī, on him see Ibn al-ʿImād (1), vol. 2, p. 97.

[146] Ījī, ʿAḍud al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al- (1997), vol. 3, p. 289.

[147] See Ibid, vol. 3, p. 289; ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp 494 & 520; Mānkdīm, Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Abū Hāshim al-Ḥusaynī Shashdīw (1965), p. 97; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), pp. 186 & 187.

[148] See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp 520 & 521; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 186.

[149] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 520; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 186.

[150] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 526 & 527; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 186.

person entitled to. That is because the possibility of remitting compensation is related to the possibility of claiming it and compensations to be given in the Hereafter cannot be claimed in this world.[151]

Concerning providing the compensation in the Hereafter, ʿAbd al-Jabbār stressed that God's giving of compensation in the Hereafter should not lead to a situation where someone who has not fulfilled the obligations of the *taklīf* would receive something that amounts to a reward from God.[152] But this does not negate the fact that even people in Hell will receive the compensation they are entitled to. That fact that these people deserve a punishment does not nullify their right to be compensated for the pain and illnesses they suffered. That is because compensation, unlike reward, is not given with honour or respect for the recipient. Hence, there is no reason to think that people in Hell will not be compensated.[153] However, compensation given to people in Hell cannot consist of the same things that are given to people in Paradise. Rationally, giving pleasure can be equated with taking away pain. It is therefore possible that God diminishes the punishment of people in Hell in proportion to the compensation they are entitled to receive.[154]

2.3.2. Afflictions Befalling those without Legal Liability (non-*Mukallafūn*)

Broadly speaking, the Muʿtazilites devoted much ingenuity to the problem of the seemingly unmerited suffering, particularly that of infants and animals.[155] As stated above, in the Muʿtazilite view God does nothing without purpose and in all that He does, He intends only benefit. How might this tenet be reconciled with the sufferings of the non-*mukallafūn* especially the innocent children. More than one answer was given to this question. Here opinions are to be categorised into two main groupings, namely, the *aṣḥāb al-tanāsukh* (those who believed in metempsychosis or the transmigration of souls) and the majority view maintained by the Muʿtazila:

2.3.2.1 Adherents of Metempsychosis (*Aṣḥāb al-Tanāsukh*)

That disabilities, illnesses and misfortunes inflicting the children, insane people and animals are sorts of deserved punishment is a contention advocated by

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[151] See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 532 & 533; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), pp. 187 & 188.

[152] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 545; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 189.

[153] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 524; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), pp. 191 & 192. In this respect, some Muʿtazilites negated the possibility that people in Hellfire would receive any compensation there. That is because in Hellfire, the pleasures ensuing from receiving compensation and pains proceeding from the fire of the Hell cannot coincide together. See Ījī, ʿAḍud al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al- (1997), vol. 3, pp. 288.

[154] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 486 & 523; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 192.

[155] Ormsby, Eric L. (1984), p. 27.

those Muʿtazilīs who believed in metempsychosis.[156] They said that one's pains and illnesses in this life are because of one's sins committed in a previous life.

They held that God created men healthy, sound in body and intelligent, in an adult state, and in a world other than this one in which they now live. He created in them the full knowledge of Himself and showered on them His blessings. God then placed them under an obligation to show gratitude to Him. Some of them obeyed him in all, that he had commanded and some disobeyed in all whereas the third group obeyed in some things and disobeyed in others. God allowed those who obeyed in all things to remain in Heaven where He had placed them from the beginning. Those who were disobedient in all things God cast them out of Heaven and put in a place of punishment, namely, Hell. Those who were partly obedient and partly disobedient God sent them to this world and clothed them in these gross bodies. He also subjected them to adversity, suffering, hardship and comfort, pain and pleasure. In this life, too, He gave them different forms, some having the form of men and some of animals according to the measure of their sins. Those who had sinned less and obeyed more were given a body more beautifully formed and their sufferings were less. Those whose sins were more were given a body less beautiful in form and suffered more. Henceforward these will not cease to be an animal over and over again, one form succeeding another, as long as their acts of obedience and disobedience remain.[157]

Furthermore, the adherents of this doctrine claimed that even all species of animals are charged with the duty of observance (*taklīf*) and upon all of them ordinances and prohibitions have been imposed in accordance with their diverse forms and methods of expression.[158] Moreover, a messenger from God to every kind of living being even the bugs, lice and fleas will never cease to appear, while God's charge to the living being will always continue.[159]

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[156] The most well-known Muʿtazilī theologians who accepted the doctrine of metempsychosis is Aḥmad b. Khābiṭ [according to other readings Aḥmad ibn Ḥāʾiṭ, on the different readings of Aḥmad's father, see Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1920), p. 260 ff.; Friedlaender, Israel (1908), p. 10 ff.] and his followers (al-Khābiṭiya or al-Hāʾiṭiyya). See Shahrastānī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al- (1416/1996), vol. 1, pp. 74-77; Shahrastānī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al- (1984), pp. 53-56; Ījī, ʿAḍud al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al- (1997), vol. 3, pp. 666 & 667; Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1920), p. 93; Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1977), p. 255. Also among the Muʿtazilīs who advocated this doctrine is al-Faḍl al-Ḥadathī and his followers al-Ḥadathiyya, Aḥmad ibn Ayyūb ibn Yanūsh and Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qaḥṭabī, see Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1977), p. 255; Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1920), p. 93. See also Ibn Yūsuf, Marʿī (1410/1989), vol. 1, p. 58.

[157] Shahrastānī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al- (1416/1996), vol. 1, p. 75; Shahrastānī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al- (1984), p. 54. See also Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1977), pp. 255-258; Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1920), pp. 93-98.

[158] Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1977), p. 256; Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1920), pp. 95 & 96. It is to be noted that such claim that animals are also *mukallafūn* is forcefully rejected in Islam. On this see Ibn Ḥazm, Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī (1), vol. 1, pp. 96-75.

[159] Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1977), p. 257; Baghdādī, Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir al- (1920), pp. 96 & 97; Ibn Ḥazm, Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī (1), vol. 1, p. 69. It is to be noted that this contention advocated by *aṣḥāb al-tanāsukh* is forcefully criticised and refuted by the other Muʿtazilī theologians. See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol.

2.3.2.2 The Majority View

The Muʿtazilites could not comfortably claim that children underwent pain as a means of *luṭf* for them. Nor could they claim that children's suffering was the requisite tribulation through which reward might be won. That is because children possess no juridical status for responsibility (*taklīf*) under Islamic law. Various solutions were offered to this seemingly insoluble problem.[160]

Some Muʿtazilites denied that God caused any undeserved pain.[161] Thus, they added, children only feel pain inflicted on them by humans and not pain inflicted by God.[162] ʿAbd al-Jabbār refuted this opinion by pointing out that every adult knows that during his childhood he suffered pain in the same way as in his adulthood.[163] Children become ill just as adults do. From this, ʿAbd al-Jabbār concluded that children suffer from illnesses produced by God.[164] Others, including al-Naẓẓām (d. ca. 231/845),[165] held that children's suffering is, indeed, God's doing but that it occurs through "the necessary course of events."[166] However, in the majority view, God inflicted pain on infants for two main purposes:

2.3.2.2.1 Divine Assistance (*Luṭf*)

Each illness is a *luṭf*. Adults of sound mind can profit from the motivation contained in illnesses and deserve a reward by fulfilling the obligations of God's *taklīf*. Thus, after having reached maturity, children become *mukallaf* so that they can also profit from the *luṭf* contained in their illnesses. However, children who die before reaching maturity cannot do this: they cannot deserve a reward, as they never become *mukallaf*. However, such children's suffering is not useless: adults living near to them can profit from the *luṭf* contained in their illnesses. Generally speaking pain suffered by a non-*mukallaf* can be a *luṭf* for a

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XIII, pp. 379 & 381; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 159. For a full account of the refutation of the doctrine of transmigration of souls, see Ibn Ḥazm, Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī (1), vol. 1, pp. 67-75 & vol. 4, p. 150.

[160] Ormsby, Eric L. (1984), p. 245.

[161] Ibid; Al-Nāshiʾ al-Akbar (d. 293/905), in Ess, Josef van (1971), p. 98.

[162] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, pp. 382 & 383; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 162. Some of the Muʿtazilites claimed even that children and animals do not feel any sort of pain. See Ījī, ʿAḍud al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al- (1997), vol. 3, p. 290.

[163] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 382; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), p. 162.

[164] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 385; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), pp. 162.

[165] On him see Dhahabī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān al- (1413/1992), vol. 10, pp. 541 & 542; Ess, Josef van (2003).

[166] Ormsby, Eric L. (1984), p. 245; Al-Nāshiʾ al-Akbar (d. 293/905), in Ess, Josef van (1971), p. 98.

mukallaf. Illnesses and disabilities of children serve as a clear example here because they are a sort of *luṭf* for parents.[167]

2.3.2.2.2 Compensation (*ʿIwaḍ*)

Being a *luṭf* for the *mukallafūn* around them does not fully justify the disabilities and sufferings of children who die before reaching maturity. There must be a profit for the children as well. It would be bad, Muʿtazilites argued, if God inflicted illnesses on them from which only other people can profit and not they themselves.[168] The profit that children can get from their illnesses is a compensation (*ʿiwaḍ*) given to them by God.

As for compensation given to children, the majority of the Muʿtazila stated that those children who have not received all their compensation in this world, it is inevitable that God will revive them, together with the *mukallafūn,* on the Day of Resurrection so that they can receive their compensation in the Hereafter.[169]

2.4 Middle-Course Approach

The advocates of this approach pondered over the clashing arguments presented by the first two groups and contended that truth lies in a balance between these two. The pro-theodicy group was criticized because their understanding of the divine justice ultimately placed the sayings, actions and movements of Angels, human beings and jinns beyond God's power, will and creation. The anti-theodicy group was criticized for overemphasizing the divine omnipotence by which they negated the freedom of human beings to act in life according their own will.[170]

Combining between divine names and attributes expressing God's omnipotence and those indicating His justice and wisdom was seen as a Qur'anic phenomenon. For instance, the name indicating divine omnipotence, *Al-ʿAzīz* (the Powerful) occurs eleven times in the Qur'ān in combination with the name indicating God's mercy, *Al-Raḥīm* (the Merciful).[171] This combination occurs for instance in the context of afflicting previous nations and peoples with severe punishments for disobeying God's Messengers (Qur'ān 26:09, 86, 104, 122, 140, 159, 175 & 191). The same name, *Al-ʿAzīz*, occurs also in the Qur'ān twenty-nine times in combination with the name *Al-Ḥakīm* (the All-

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[167] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XV, p. 22; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), pp. 161 & 162; Ashʿarī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al- (1), p. 253; Ormsby, Eric L. (1984), p. 244.

[168] Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), pp. 162.

[169] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, al-Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan (1380-1389/1960-1969), vol. XIII, p. 486; Heemskerk, Margaretha T. (1995), pp. 193 & 195. Also some Muʿtazilite theologians stated that animals can be compensated in life, on the day of Resurrection or in Paradise. See Ashʿarī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Ismāʿīl al- (1), p. 254.

[170] Ibn al-Qayyim (1398/1977), pp. 3 & 4.

[171] Qur'ān 26:9, 68, 104, 122, 140, 159, 175 & 191; 30:5; 32:6; 44:42.

Wise).[172] A trawl through a number of these verses shows that some references are relevant to disability. For instance, the seventh instance of this combination (3:06) refers to the shaping of embryos in the wombs according to God's Will. Thus the wide range of differences among new-born babies; white, black, healthy, sick and those with disabilities is not an expression of one side of God's character. It is an indication of both His Omnipotence and His All-Wisdom. The fourteenth instance of this combination (5:38), conveys the divine order of amputating the hands as a punishment for committing the crime of robbery. The verse is concluded by these two names indicating that this order implying such punishment indicates, rather than contradicts, that God is both All-Powerful and All-Wise.[173] In this vein, when Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (1786-1818) wrote a commentary on *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* written by his grandfather Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (d. 1703-1792), he gave it the title, *Taysīr al-ʿAzīz al-Ḥamīd fī sharḥ kitāb al-tawḥīd* (The Facilitation of the Powerful the Worthy of Praise: A commentary on the Book of Unity).[174] This indicated that the phenomenon of combining names that would seem, at first contradictory, was common among the advocates of this approach.

As for the perfect and spotless character of God, advocates of this approach believed that the aforementioned two approaches portrayed ultimately an inadequate view of God. The retributive justice advocated by the Muʿtazilites and the voluntaristic divine justice promoted by the Ashʿarites were both criticized. Denying the wise purposiveness of God's acts done by the Ashʿarites and the wise purposiveness promoted by the Muʿtazilites to be measured by human standards are also both rejected.[175] The standpoint adopted in this third approach is epitomized in the following statement of Ibn Taymiyya, "Injustice is putting something in another than its proper place (*waḍʿ al-shayʾ fī ghayr mawḍiʿih*). Justice is putting [every] thing in its proper place. He-Glory be to Him- is a wise arbiter and just, putting things in their places. He puts everything in its place, which corresponds to it and which wise purpose and justice require. He does not differentiate between two identical things, and He does not equate two different things. He punishes only whomever deserves punishment and puts it in its place on account of the wise purpose and justice in that. As for the people of righteousness and God-fear, He does not punish them at all."[176]

Although they uphold in principle the Muʿtazilī view that God's acts have always a wise purpose (*ḥikma*), the advocates of this approach have their own reservations in this respect. Ibn Taymiyya accused them of ending up in contradictions when they said that God acts for a wise purpose that is disjoined

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[172] See the Qur'ān 2:129, 209, 220, 228, 240 & 260; 3:6, 18, 62 and 126; 4:56, 158 & 165; 5:38 & 118; 8:49, 63 & 67; 9:40 & 71; 14:4; 16:60; 27:9; 29:26 & 42; 30:27; 31:9 & 27; 34:27; 35:2; 39:1; 40:8; 42:3; 45:37; 46:2; 57:1; 59:1 & 24; 60:5; 61:1; 62:1 & 3 & 64:18.

[173] See Ibn Taymiyya (1404/1983), vol. 2, p. 54.

[174] See Wahhāb, Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al- (1).

[175] For an overview of the arguments advanced against both Muʿtazilites and Ashʿarites concerning divine justice, see Hoover, Jon (2002), pp. 270-284. For wise purposiveness, see Hoover, Jon (2002), pp. 86-113.

[176] Ibn Taymiyya (1389/1969), p. 123. Cf. Hoover, Jon (2002), p. 282.

from Him and that benefits creatures but not Himself.[177] For him, it is irrational that any agent should do good to others without some judgement (*ḥukm*), profit, or praise accruing to the agent himself. Someone to whom praise and beneficence is ultimately indifferent- as in the Muʿtazila view of God- is acting aimlessly, which, ironically in Ibn Taymiyya's view, is precisely what the Muʿtazila seek to avoid by attributing purpose to God's Will.[178]

According to the advocates of this approach, the theodicy of divine acts can be characterised by four main elements. **The first** element was the ongoing emphasis that no justification for the existence of evil and affliction should injure the perfect and spotless character of God. Contrary to the Ashʿarites who stressed on the divine power at the expense of divine justice and the Muʿtazilites who did the opposite, this approach strove for a middle ground by maintaining balance between all Attributes of God and the emphasis on one of them should not be at the expense of the other.[179] They found it necessary to extract what is useful and appealing from both sides and to cast a side what they deemed harmful.[180]

The second element was that attempts to search for the wise purposes behind the divine acts do not represent an eccentric phenomenon or an innovation in Islam. Recalling the prophetic tradition relating that Adam, having seen those with blindness, dumbness and the afflicted among his progeny, asked God, "Why did not you make all my progeny equal?",[181] they concluded that what is inadmissible in Islam is only to make such endeavours out of objection, casting doubts and the like.[182]

The third element was the firm belief that no aspect of this world, however insignificant it may seem, is without a redeeming reason.[183] This holds true to the extent that wise purposes (*ḥikam*) of pains befalling different creatures are too many to be fully enumerated.[184] However, this belief should never lead to think that all wise purposes (*ḥikam*) of divine acts are traceable by the human intellect. That is because the human intellect is finite and limited whereas God's wisdom is infinite and unlimited.[185] Thus, once there is a case or incidence

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[177] Ibn Taymiyya (1406/1985), 3, p. 195; Hoover, Jon (2002), p. 109.
[178] Hoover, Jon (2002), p. 110.
[179] Ibn al-Qayyim (1398/1977), vol. 1, pp. 51 & 52; Qaraḍāwī, Yūsuf al- (1421/2000), pp. 35 & 36.
[180] See Ibn al-Qayyim (1398/1977), vol. 1, pp. 51 & 52; Qaraḍāwī, Yūsuf al- (1421/2000), pp. 47 & 48.
[181] Mawṣilī, Abū Yaʿlā al- (1404/1984), vol. 11, p. 264; Qurṭubī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al- (1372/1952), vol. 7, p. 315; Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al- (1410/1989), vol. 4, p. 107; Ibn Kathīr (1), vol. 1, pp. 78 & 88; Saʿīd, Nadyā Muḥammad al- (1425/2004), p. 90.
[182] Ibn al-Wazīr, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm (1987), vol. 1, pp. 211-215; Ibn al-Qayyim (1418/1998), vol. 4, p. 1560.
[183] Ibn al-Qayyim (1398/1977), vol. 1, pp. 78, 184, 190-192 & 239; Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid (1334/1916), vol. 3, pp. 222 & 223; Ormsby, Eric L. (1984), p. 245.
[184] Ibn al-Wazīr, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm (1987), vol. 1, pp. 211; Ibn al-Qayyim (1348/1929), vol. 2, p. 430.
[185] See Ibn al-Qayyim (1398/1977), vol. 1, p. 187.

whose wisdom cannot be fathomed out, a charge should be directed to the incapable mind of the humans not to the All-Wise God.[186]

After mentioning the example of amputating a gangrenous hand and the possible goodness implied in it, al-Ghazālī elaborated on this point by saying, "Now, if a particular evil occurs to you without your seeing any good beneath it or you should think that it is possible that a particular good be achieved without being contained in evil, you should query whether your reasoning might not be deficient in each of these two trains of thought… So accuse you reasoning in both ways and never doubt that He is *the most merciful of the merciful* or that ʿHis mercy takes precedence over His anger"'. Concluding this discussion with a mystic touch, al-Ghazālī says, "Beneath all this lies a secret whose divulgence the revelation prohibits, so be content with prayer and do not expect that it be divulged."[187] The well-known mystic Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), in his *Al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* (Meccan Illuminations) shared al-Ghazālī's viewpoint stressing that there is a wise purpose for every mode of being which, if still hidden from our vision, will appear through deeper insight in the course of time.[188] In this vein, ʿAzīz al-Nasafī, a thirteenth century mystic, compared the person who does not realise that the world is perfect to a blind man who enters a house and complains that everything is in his way.[189]

In modern time, Abū al-ʿAlā al-Mawdūdī (d. 1903-1978) condemned those who argue that the existence of widespread suffering is inconsistent with the image of a Wise, Merciful and All-Powerful God. In his article, *Kotah nazari* (Short Sightedness), al-Mawdūdī replied to this argument by drawing attention to two familiar cases. First, governments who take measures, which may involve some unavoidable suffering for a few, to promote the general welfare. Had they been aware of the real purpose of the government, those who suffer lodge complaint and abuse the governments would not have complained and condemned them. Another example al-Mawdūdī gives is that of a gardener. In order to maintain his garden properly and make it look more beautiful, the gardener must trim some plants, change their locations, even throw some out. Had the plants that are affected in the process had tongues, they would have certainly lodged their complaints. But if they could look at the whole garden and understand the entire planning of the gardener and his working, they would not raise an objection. Al-Mawdūdī argued that our position in this infinitely vast, immensely complex and extremely beautiful world is not at all better than a few sufferers among the masses of a country, or some plants in a garden. We are, he added, in no position to scan the entire universe and far less to comprehend its workings. If we pose the presence of evil in the world against the existence of God, our complaint will be in no way better than the complaint

[186] Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid al- (1407/1987), p. 65.
[187] Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid al- (1992), pp. 55-57.
[188] Diyāb, Adīb al-Nāyif (2000), p. 34
[189] Ridgeon, Lloyd (1998), p. 114.

of a few sufferers against the working of their government, or the complaints of some plants in the garden against the gardener.[190]

The same line was also adopted by the Syrian scholar Saʿīd Ḥawwā (1935-1989)[191] who accused such people not only of short-sightedness like al-Mawdūdī, but even of craziness.[192] Adopting a less harsh tone, Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī (b. 1926) speaks about a sacred or inviolable area (*manṭiqat ḥarām*) of God's predestination that should not be frequented and one of the inscrutable meanings (*asrār*) that should not be investigated. To him, fathoming out the wise purposes of pain and suffering in life is a thorny issue whose questions cannot be satisfactorily answered. What cannot be known in this regard is much more than what can be known.[193]

The fourth element which charcterised the middle-course approach in this regard was the priority of revelation over reason. The *ḥikma* propounded by revelation cannot be contradicted by rational arguments or thoughts.[194] That is because revelation is infallible whereas reason is prone to err.[195] By the same token the *ḥikma* proposed by the mind should not oppose any of the basic tenets of Islamic belief.[196]

As was the case with the pro-theodicy approach, wise purposes of the existence of disabilities, within the broad framework of pain or suffering, will be divided into those related to the *mukallafūn* and those related to the non-*mukallafūn*. Contrary to the pro-theodicy approach, categorisation here is highly subjective and not always based on the strict separation between the two categories by the advocates themselves. Thus the possibility of overlap between *ḥikam* classified in these two categories should be kept in view.

2.4.1 Afflictions Befalling those with Legal Liability (*Mukallafūn*)

2.4.1.1 Disabilities: Punishment for Sins Committed?

In the introduction of her recent study on *Disability in Islamic Law*, Vardit Rispler-Chaim (University of Haifa) said in this respect, "It is never proclaimed that the disease is predestined by Allah so that the ill Muslim has an

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[190] Ansari, M. Abdul Haq (2003), pp. 529 & 530.

[191] On him, see Weismann, Itzchak (1997), pp. 131-154.

[192] Ḥawwā, Saʿīd (1424/2004), pp. 89 & 90.

[193] Qaraḍāwī, Yūsuf al- (1421/2000), p. 82. In a personal discussion with him about that opinion, al-Qaraḍāwī told me that he did not mean that God's actions are unjustifiable. However, he added, stating that all God's actions can be justified and their wise purposes can be fathomed out could be misunderstood as conductive to endorsing the Muʿtazilī principle that God's actions are to be evaluated by the same criterion used for assessing human actions. This discussion took place in January 2003 in Dublin during the proceedings of 10th session of the European Council for Fatwa and Research.

[194] Ibn al-Wazīr, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm (1987), vol. 1, p. 210.

[195] Ibn al-Qayyim (1398/1977), vol. 1, p. 302.

[196] Ibn al-Qayyim (1973), vol. 2, p. 334 & 335. It is however believed that the straightforward reason (*ʿaql ṣarīḥ*) can never disagree with the authentic text of revelation (*naṣṣ ṣarīḥ*). Imam Ibn Taymiyya wrote a famous book on this topic see Ibn Taymiyya (1409/1988). See also Ibn al-Qayyim (1398/1977), vol. 1, p. 302.

opportunity to repent, or that disease is a way of punishment for certain sins. Nowhere in the Qur'ān, Sunna or fiqh is a clear causality established between Allah and the onset of a disease and/or disability in a believer."[197]

Such a statement might find support among a number of the Muʿtazilī scholars, as noted above, who refused a link between sins and inflicting pains. However, the statement remains blatantly contradictory to clear texts in the Qur'ān and Sunna not to mention the writings of scholars advocating the middle-course approach. The possibility of a cause-effect link between committing sins on one hand and disabilities or diseases in general on the other cannot be denied. For instance, among early scholars, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim regarded people's sins the main cause of misfortunes, pains and diseases in this worldly life.[198] This is also the case among many modern scholars such as the late Egyptian scholar Aḥmad al-Sharabāṣī (1918-1980),[199] the Syrian Muḥammad Saʿīd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī (b. 1929)[200] and the Iraqi ʿAbd al-Karīm Zaydān.[201] More than one Qur'anic verse were understood to support this viewpoint (e.g. 4:79 & 123, 8:53 30:41, 42:30). Take for instance, the Qur'anic verse, "Whatever misfortune happens to you, is because of the things your hands have wrought, but for many (of them) He grants forgiveness" (42:30). Some commentators interpreted "misfortune" (*muṣība*) as illness, punishment or any other form of affliction in this life[202] and "What your hands have wrought" as one's sins and misdeeds.[203] Upon the revelation of this verse, the Prophet is reported to have said, "No scratch of a stick, shudder of a vein or stumble of a foot befalls a man but because of a sin, but what Allah forgives is more."[204] The same purport is also encountered in the Qur'anic verse, "Whatever good [*ḥasana*], (O man!) happens to thee, is from Allah; but whatever evil [*sayyi'a*] happens to thee, is from thy (own) soul" (4:79). *Ḥasana* (good) and *sayyi'a* (bad) in this verse are interpreted respectively as favours, e.g., prosperity, health and wellness and misfortunes, e.g., infertility and calamity.[205] "From thy (own) soul" here means because of your sins.[206] It is to

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[197] Rispler-Chaim, Vardit (2007), p. 7.
[198] See Ibn Taymiyyah (1), vol. 1, p. 42 and Ibn al-Qayyim (1348/1929), vol. 1, pp. 324, 327 & 37.
[199] Sharabāṣī, Aḥmad al- (1375/1956), vol. 1, p. 264.
[200] Būṭī, al- (2001), pp. 199-204.
[201] Zaydān, ʿAbd al-Karīm (1414/1994), p. 212.
[202] Ṭabarī, Muḥammad b. Jarīr al- (1405/1984), vol. 25, p. 32; Shawkānī, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al- (1), vol. 4, p. 542; Ibn Kathīr (1401/1980), vol. 4, p. 117; Alūsī, Abū al-Faḍl Maḥmūd al-(1), vol. 25, p. 41.
[203] Bayḍāwī, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar al- (1416/1996), vol. 5, p. 131; Ibn Kathīr (1401/1980), vol. 1, p. 529; Shawkānī, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al- (1), vol. 4, p. 538; Jawzī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al- (1404 A.H.), vol. 7, p. 288.
[204] Ibn Kathīr (1401/1980), vol. 1, p. 529; Ṭabarī, Muḥammad b. Jarīr al- (1405/1984), vol. 5, p. 175 See also for other narrations of the same ḥadīth, Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al- (1410/1989), ḥadīths no. 9814 & 9815, vol. 7, p. 153; Qurṭubī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al- (1372/1952), vol. 16, p. 31.
[205] Qurṭubī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al- (1372/1952), vol. 5, p. 285; Ṭabarī, Muḥammad b. Jarīr al- (1405/1984), vol. 5, p. 175; Ibn Taymiyya (1404/1983), vol. 2, p. 108; Ṣanʿānī, ʿAbd al-Rāziq b. Hammām al- (1410/1989), vol. 1, p. 179; Jawzī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al- (1404 A.H.), vol. 2, p. 139.

be noted that "thee" and "thy" here refers originally to the Prophet Muḥammad but the purport of the verse is applicable to every Muslim and according to some scholars to all humans.[207] Finally, it is related that on the revelation of the Qur'anic verse "[…] Whoever works evil, will be requited accordingly" (4:123), Muslims found it too hard and conveyed their complaint to the Prophet. Asking him if it was true that the purport of the Qur'anic verse would be precisely applied, the Prophet replied in the affirmative. However, he pointed out that such requital is not inevitably to take place in the Hereafter. It could also, he added, take the form of calamities and afflictions visiting one's body or property in this life.[208]

The purport of these verses was also vivid in the minds of early Muslims as reflected in many reports about them. For instance, the Companion ʿImrān ibn Ḥusayn (d. 52/672)[209] was befallen by a physical disease. Some of his friends paid him a visit and said, "We feel sorry for what you suffer." He said, "Do not feel sorry. This all happens because of a sin but what Allah pardons is much more". Then he recited the previous verse (42:30).[210] Being afflicted with facial paralysis while performing the Ḥajj, the Companion Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān (d. 60/680)[211] conceded that this could be because of having committed a sin.[212] In the same vein, al-Qāḍī Shurayḥ (d. between 76/695-6 & 80/699-700)[213] was asked about an ulcer in the palm of his hand. He said that this was because of what "your hands have wrought, but for many He grants forgiveness."[214]

As for disabilities in particular, a number of these traditions were reported to take place during the lifetime of the Prophet in which disability appears as concomitant with committing grievous sins such as lying to the Prophet or disrespecting him out of arrogance and pompousness. Some of the perpetrators' names recorded in this context include a woman called Jamra bint al-Ḥārith b. ʿAwf who was afflicted with leprosy,[215] Yazīd b. Bahrām who was

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[206] Ṭabarī, Muḥammad b. Jarīr al- (1405/1984), vol. 5, p. 175.
[207] Qurṭubī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al- (1372/1952), vol. 5, p. 285; Naḥḥās, Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al- (1409/1988), vol. 2, p. 135; Thaʿālibī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Makhlūf al- (1), vol. 1, p. 393; Baghawī, Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn al- (1407/1987), vol. 1, p. 454.
[208] Qurṭubī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al- (1372/1952), vol. 5, p. 397; Mundhirī, Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm b. ʿAbd al-Qawī al- (1417/1996), vol. 4, pp. 149 & 150; Ibn Ḥibbān (1414/1993), ḥadīth no. 2910, vol. 7, p. 170, ḥadīth no. 2923, vol. 7, p. 186 & ḥadīth no. 2926, vol. 7, p. 189; Tirmidhī, Abū ʿĪsā Muḥammad b. Sawra al- (1), ḥadīth no. 2991, vol. 5, p. 221, ḥadīth no. 3038, vol. 5, p. 247 & ḥadīth no. 3039, vol. 5, p. 248. For further Qur'anic verses adding credit to this argument, see (23:76, 6: 42, 5:49, 8:51, 22:10).
[209] On him see Dhahabī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān al- (1413/1992), vol. 2, pp. 508-512
[210] Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn al- (1993), vol. 7, p. 355.
[211] On hims, see Hinds, M. (2003), vol. VII, pp. 263-268.
[212] Aṣbahānī, Abū Nuʿaym al- (1405/1984), vol. 9, p. 154; Dhahabī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān al- (1413/1992), vol. 3, p. 156.
[213] Ibn al-ʿImād (1), vol. 1, p. 86. On him, see Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn al- (1403/1982), vol. 1, p. 27; Kohlberg, E. (2003), vol. IX, pp. 508 & 509.
[214] Qurṭubī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al- (1372/1952), vol. 16, p. 31; Thaʿālibī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Makhlūf al- (1), vol. 4, p. 112.
[215] Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid, al- (1), vol. 2, p. 387.

afflicted with paralysis and therefore later on known as *al-muqʿad* (the seated) because he could not walk any more[216] and Busr (in another reading Bishr) al-Shujaʿī whose hand was paralysed.[217] These traditions also paved the way for other stories with the same purport said to have taken a place after the death of the Prophet and related by well-known Muslim scholars such as Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200),[218] Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (748/1348)[219] and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449).[220]

Although such traditions are extremely few compared with other traditions promoting forgiveness and tolerance with people committing sins, their purport of a possible link between disabilities, diseases or misfortunes in general on one hand and committing sins on the other cannot be ignored. However, a deep-sighted survey of Islamic sources on this issue shows clearly that a generalizing understanding of the disabilities-sins link is also a mistaken one. To provide a well-balanced presentation, two one points are in order.

In the first place, the abovementioned traditions indicate that disabilities *can be* but *must not necessarily be* the result of committing sins. For instance, when Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān was afflicted with facial paralysis, he mentioned three possible reasons, i.e., gaining reward, receiving punishment and finally receiving a disciplinary reproach.[221] According to this view, the normal course of events was that disobedient people receive more than one warning before being punished. Disabilities or misfortunes, as punishments, befall those who insist on paying no attention to such warnings and exert no efforts to return to the straight path and declare no repentance to God and continue delving into disobedience.[222]

But even as a form of punishment, disabilities must yet have their beneficiary functions. They may have a cathartic function by purging the sinner from his sins and bringing him relief from greater torment in the Hereafter. A great number of prophetic traditions stress the expiatory role of suffering and its purgative effect on the life of the faithful.[223] To give just a few examples, one

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[216] Ibn Ḥibbān (1395/1975), vol.3, p. 446; ʿAsqalānī, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥajar al- (1412/1992), vol. 6, p. 649.

[217] Muslim, Abū al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥajjāj (1), ḥadīth no. 2021, vol. 3, p. 1599; Ibn Ḥibbān (1414/1993), ḥadīth no. 6512, vol. 14, p. 442; Ibn Bashkuwāl (1407/1986), vol. 1, pp. 146 & 147; ʿAsqalānī, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥajar al- (1412/1992), vol. 1, p. 291.

[218] Ibn al-Jawzī (3), p. 310.

[219] Dhahabī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān al- (1), pp. 113 & 144.

[220] ʿAsqalānī, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥajar al- (1379/1959), vol. 2, pp. 240 & 241, vol. 5, pp. 104 & 105.

[221] Aṣbahānī, Abū Nuʿaym al- (1405/1984), vol. 9, p. 154; Dhahabī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān al- (1413/1992), vol. 3, p. 156.

[222] See for instance Ibn al-Jawzī (1987), pp. 21, 30, 31, 197-199, 203, 204, 290, 291, 310, 311, 390, 391, Ibn al-Qayyim (3), pp. 39-86, 80 & 81.

[223] Imam al-Bukhārī (194-256 A.H.) mentioned in his *Al-Adab al-mufrad* a number of Prophetic traditions under a distinct section entitled, "*Bāb kaffārat al-marīḍ*" or "Section of the Expiation of the Sick". See Bukhārī (1409/1989), vol. 1, p. 173. Imam Ḍiyā al-Dīn al-Maqdisī did the same in his *Kitāb al-amrāḍ wa al-kaffārāt wa al-ṭibb wa al-ruqiyyāt*. See Maqdisī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn al- (1420/1999), pp. 40 & 41.

of these traditions said, "No calamity befalls a Muslim but God expiates some of his sins even if it were a thorn being pricked with."[224] Another tradition stated, "The calamity continues to afflict the believing man and woman in body, property and progeny until he/she meets God [on the day of Resurrection] without any sins cleaving to him/her."[225] Based on the aforementioned traditions, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449)[226] characterised misfortunes as divine medicines by which man gets cured from the diseases of fatal sins.[227] In the same vein, another authority said, "Had there been no worldly afflictions, we would have come insolvent [with bad deeds outnumbering the good ones] on the Day of Resurrection."[228]

Understanding disability as a punishment in this context was seen as a sign of God's mercy and benevolence rather than of His anger and wrath. As a comment on the aforementioned Qur'anic verse (4:123), the Prophet is reported to have said, "Whatever befalls you of illness, punishment or misfortune in the worldly life is because of what your hands have wrought, but God is more tolerant than doubling the punishment [by inflicting it again] in the Hereafter. As for what God has pardoned in [the worldly] life, [one should know that] God is more bountiful than reverting [to punishing] after His pardon."[229] No matter how extreme they could be, the Qur'ān recurrently confirms (13:34, 20:127, 39:26, 41:16, 68:33) that the punishments in this life are much more lenient than those in the Hereafter. Commenting on such traditions, Zuhayr Muḥammad al-Zamīlī wondered what grace can be greater than this![230]

Another sign of God's mercy mentioned in the Tradition in this regard concerns the rewards of good deeds that the afflicted person used to do before the affliction hindered him/her from continuing to do them. In Ḥadīth collections, one finds separate chapters on the reward of the sick (*ajr al-marīḍ*). These chapters comprise a number of prophetic traditions purporting that the rewards of such deeds continue to be recorded as if the person is still doing

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[224] Muslim, Abū al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥajjāj (1), Ḥadīth No. 2572, vol. 4, p. 1992.

[225] Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad (1), ḥadīth no. 7846, vol. 2, p. 287 and also ḥadīth no.9810, vol. 2, p. 450. See also Ibn Ḥibbān (1414/1993), ḥadīth no. 2931, vol. 7, p. 176; Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al- (1414/1994), ḥadīth no. 6335, vol. 3, p. 374; Ibn Māja, Muḥammad b. Yazīd (1), ḥadīth no. 4023, vol. 2, p. 1334; Ṭayālisī, Sulaymān b. Dāwūd Abū Dawūd al-Fārisī al-Baṣrī al- (1), ḥadīth no. 215, vol. 1, p. 29; Daylamī, Shīrawayh al- (1986), ḥadīth no. 7600, vol. 5, p., 102. See also other traditions adding credit to the same fact in Zurqānī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Bāqī b. Yūsuf al- (1411/1990), vol. 4, p. 415; Ibn Abī Shayba (1409/1988), vol. 2, p. 440 & 442; Mundhirī, Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm b. ʿAbd al-Qawī al- (1417/1996), vol. 4, p. 139 & 155.

[226] On him, see Abū al-Maḥāsin, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥamza al-Ḥusaynī al-Dimashqī (1), vol. 1, pp. 326-342.

[227] ʿAsqalānī, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥajar al- (1379/1959), vol. 10, p. 112.

[228] Ibn al-Qayyim (1407/1986), vol. 4, p. 192.

[229] Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad (1), ḥadīth no. 649, vol. 1, p. 85; Mawṣilī, Abū Yaʿlā al- (1404/1984), ḥadīth no. 435, vol. 1, pp. 351-353 & 453; Haythamī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Abī Bakr al- (1407/1986), vol. 7, pp. 104 & 105; ḥadīth no. 1694, vol. 8, pp. 161-163.

[230] Zamīlī, Zuhayr Muḥammad al- (1409/1988), p. 56.

them.[231] One of these traditions said, "No Muslim would be visited with an affliction in his body save God would order the Guardians [Angels] who guard him by saying, 'Write down for My servant every day and night the equal [reward] of the good [*khayr*] he was doing as long as he is confined in My fetter [i.e., sickness].'"[232] By extension to disability, we may conclude that one who used to listen to a specific portion of the Qur'ān every day and later on was hindered by deafness serves as example in this regard. The divine rewards accorded to this pious act would remain to be counted for him as if he is still doing his habit of listening to the Qur'ān every day.

In the second place, people cannot be afflicted with disabilities as a punishment for sins committed by others. This thesis is advocated by the Qur'ān that recurrently states that every one is responsible for his/her own acts and cannot be burdened by the consequences of others' sins (e.g. 6:164, 17:15, 35:18, 39:07, 53:38). Commentaries on these Qur'anic verses show that this point is not only a point of agreement among the advocates of the middle-course approach but among Muslims scholars at large.[233] On the Qur'anic verse (6:164), the well-known Qur'ān exegete, Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272) said that the occasion of revelation was to rectify the pre-Islamic (*jāhilī*) custom of punishing people for offences committed by their parents, children or their allies.[234] According to Ibn al-Qayyim, one of the main tenets of Islamic belief is that no one is punished without committing a sin.[235] Hence, punishing someone for someone else's sins is injustice and it is impossible for God to be unjust (*ẓālim*).[236] Strikingly enough, a number of noted scholars such as Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064) and the Ḥanbalī theologian Marʿī b. Yūsuf al-Karmī (d. 1033/1624)[237] ridiculed those who would maintain that children might be afflicted with disabilities so that their parents could gain more rewards from God. They said that it is impossible for God to do so because it is injustice (*jawr*) and futility (*ʿabath*).[238] Consequently, the belief among some Muslim parents that their disabled child is a punishment for sins committed by one or both of them is contrary to the clear text of the Qur'ān. One still wonders; where does this common belief come from?

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[231] See for instance Dārimī, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al- (1407/1986), Vol. 2, p. 408; Zurqānī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Bāqī b. Yūsuf al- (1411/1990), vol. 4, p. 412; Tirmidhī, Abū ʿĪsā Muḥammad b. Sawra al- (1), vol. 3, p., 297; Ibn Abī Usāma, al-Ḥārith (1412/1992), vol. 1, p. 250.

[232] Maqdisī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn al- (1420/1999), ḥadīth no. 26, pp. 63 & 64; Naysabūrī, al-Ḥākim Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al- (1411/1990), ḥadīth no. 1287, vol. 1, p. 499; Dārimī, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al- (1407/1986), ḥadīth no. 2770, vol. 2, p. 407; Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad (1), ḥadīth no. 6482, vol. 2, p. 159; Haythamī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Abī Bakr al- (1407/1986), vol. 2, p. 303.

[233] For just exmaples, see Ṭabarī, Muḥammad b. Jarīr al- (1405/1984), vol. 8, p. 113, vol. 15, p. 54; Qurṭubī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al- (1372/1952), vol. 3, p. 430, vol. 7, pp. 156-158.

[234] Qurṭubī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al- (1372/1952), vol. 7, p. 157.

[235] Ibn al-Qayyim (1395/1975), vol. 1, p. 88; Ibn Taymiyya (1386/1966), vol. 1, p. 406.

[236] See Ibn Yūsuf, Marʿī (1410/1989), vol. 1, p. 57.

[237] On him, see Bell, Joseph Norment (1979), pp. 185 & 186.

[238] Ibn Yūsuf, Marʿī (1410/1989), p. 57.

A possible source could be the references in a number of Islamic sources, although very few, to this possibility. Vardit Rispler-Chaim was right when she described the viewpoint expressed in a publication from Iran as "exception" in modern Islamic literature. The author of this book, a certain Qudsiyah Hijazi (a psychologist or sociologist, according to Rispler-Chaim), claimed causality between the parents' misconduct and their offspring's disability and regarded this outcome as a punishment from God.[239] Ignoring the divine laws, the author elaborated, concerning proper sexual conduct leads to the birth of retarded children. To her, the parents' genes are influenced by their emotions, thoughts, moods and actions and thus immoral behaviour is bound to affect the fetus.[240] The viewpoint, as recorded by Rispler-Chaim, is really an "exception" in the sense that it contradicts the abovementioned quotations from the Qur'ān and the contentions of Muslim scholars. However, it is not "exception" in the sense that Qudsiyah Hijazi is the only one to hold this viewpoint. The late Egyptian scholar, Aḥmad al-Sharabāṣī (1918-1980) stated also explicitly that sinful parents can be punished by having blind children. To him, such punishment is a disciplinary warning by which parents should always avoid disobeying God because His punishment can strike the children who are most beloved to the parents.[241] Strikingly enough, the same author rejected a historical report purporting that someone was afflicted with blindness because his grandfather made a pious man angry who thus supplicated God that he and his offspring will be blind. Al-Sharabāṣī cast doubts on the authenticity of this report and commented by saying, "Then what is the guilt of the children as long as the sinner is the father himself?!"[242] This question raised by al-Sharabāṣī remained to be posed to himself and to all those who claim that children's disability can be a punishment for the sinful parents.

2.4.1.2 Gaining Reward (*Taḥṣīl al-Thawāb*) and Elevating the Ranks (*Rafʿ al-Darajāt*)

Besides expiating sins, two other closely interrelated *ḥikam* were mentioned, viz., gaining reward and upgrading one's level of faith and enabling the person who suffered to attain lofty ranks in Paradise.[243]

As for gaining reward (*taḥsīl al-thawāb*), a number of prophetic traditions clearly indicated that afflictions can be a source of bountiful reward from God. For instance, the Prophet is reported to have said, "The magnitude of reward is contingent upon the magnitude of affliction."[244] In another tradition, the Prophet said, "Nothing befalls the believer even if it were a thorn being pricked

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[239] Rispler-Chaim, Vardit (2007), p. 11, quoting from Hijazi, Qudsiyah (1), p. 422.
[240] Rispler-Chaim, Vardit (2007), p. 10, quoting from Hijazi, Qudsiyah (1), pp. 398 & 403.
[241] Sharabāṣī, Aḥmad al- (1375/1956), vol. 1, p. 265.
[242] Ibid, p. 237.
[243] See Zaydān, ʿAbd al-Karīm (1414/1994), pp. 212 & 213. Cf. Munāwī, Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al- (1410 A.H.), vol. 1, p. 246.
[244] Mundhirī, Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm b. ʿAbd al-Qawī al- (1417/1996), ḥadīth no. 5163, vol. 4, p. 142; Tirmidhī, Abū ʿĪsā Muḥammad b. Sawra al- (1), ḥadīth no. 2396, vol. 4, p. 601; Ibn Māja, Muḥammad b. Yazīd (1), ḥadīth no. 4031, vol. 2, p. 1338.

with but Allah records thereby [the reward of] a good deed (*ḥasana*) for him or expiates a sin for him."[245]

As for "elevating the ranks", disability as a form of affliction with its inherent suffering was seen as a possible instrument of attaining lofty degrees and ranks in Paradise that would have been unattainable by one's good deeds only. A large number of prophetic traditions were also related to purport this fact and some traditionists collected these traditions in a discrete chapter entitled, *Bāb bulūgh al-darajāt bi al-ibtilā'* (Chapter on Attaining the [honourable] Ranks by Affliction)[246] or *Dhikr anna Allāh yarfaʿ darajāt al-mu'min bimā yuṣībuh min al-balā'* (Mentioning that Allah Elevates the Status of the Believers by the Afflictions that Befall them).[247]

In his commentary on the aforementioned Qur'anic verse (42:30), al-Bayḍāwī (d. ca 685/1286)[248] said, "The purport of this verse is restricted to people indulged in guilt and misdeed. As for the others, misfortunes befall them for other reasons such as gaining the great reward."[249] Al-Suyūṭī (1445-1505)[250] added the elevating of the ranks.[251] In the same line with al-Bayḍāwī another authority said, "Allah visits people He loves with affliction so that He will give them reward in return."[252]

However, al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (d. 544/1149)[253] reported that some scholars maintained that sickness only expiates the sins, excluding the possibility of gaining reward or elevating the religious ranks because of being sick. According to al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277) such scholars reached this conclusion because of being unaware of the aforementioned prophetic traditions which explicitly indicated that sickness can be also a cause of gaining rewards and elevating the religious ranks.[254] In a bid to compromise these two contradictory contentions, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī said that it is possible that sickness and pains are means of atoning sins for the sinful and means of gaining rewards and elevating religious ranks for those who have no sins. Because the overwhelming majority

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[245] Muslim, Abū al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥajjāj (1), ḥadīth no. 2572, vol. 4, p. 1992. See also Haythamī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Abī Bakr al- (1407/1986), vol. 2, p. 301; Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad (1), vol. 4, p. 56; Nawawī, Abu Zakariyya Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al- (1392 A.H.), vol. 16, p. 128; ʿAsqalānī, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥajar al- (1379/1959), vol. 10, p. 105.

[246] See Haythamī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Abī Bakr al- (1407/1986), vol. 2, p. 292.

[247] See Maqdisī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Ḍiyā' al-Dīn al- (1420/1999), pp. 42 & 43.

[248] Robson, J. (2003), vol. I, p. 1129.

[249] Bayḍāwī, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar al- (1416/1996), vol. 5, p. 131.

[250] On him, see Geoffroy, E., (2003), vol., IX, pp. 913-916.

[251] Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn al- & Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī (1), p. 643.

[252] ʿAsqalānī, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥajar al- (1379/1959), vol. 10, p. 108. See also the same opinion expressed by imam al-Zurqānī in Zurqānī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Bāqī b. Yūsuf al- (1411/1990), vol. 4, p. 414.

[253] On him see Ibn al-ʿImād (1), vol. 1, p. 470.

[254] Nawawī, Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al- (1392/1972), vol. 16, pp. 128 & 129. For further discussions on this point see also ʿAsqalānī, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥajar al- (1379/1959), vol.10, pp. 109 & 110; Zurqānī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Bāqī b. Yūsuf al- (1411/1990), vol. 4, p. 413.

of humans are erroneous, Ibn Ḥajar added, some scholars said that sickness can be conceived as a means of expiating sins only.[255]

The most well-known example of those people whose afflictions let them gain more rewards and loftier ranks in Paradise rather than expiating the sins, are the Prophets.[256] They are sent by God to epitomize the model example of obedience and piety among humans and thus committing sins are restricted to the minimum.[257] That is why some scholars excluded the possibility that the painful sufferings of Prophet Job (*Ayyūb*) can be interpreted as expiatory tools for sins he had committed.[258] It is noteworthy in this regard that Muslim scholars do not agree on whether prophets can be afflicted with disabilities.[259] Beyond their disagreements on different details, Islamic sources spoke about a number of Prophets who were visited with afflictions some of which can be classified as disabilities.[260] For instance, in their commentary on the Qur'anic verse (12:84), a number of Muslim scholars said that the prophet Jacob (*Yaʿqūb*) suffered a sever feebleness in his eyesight and according to some of them, even suffered blindness for six years after which his eyesight was miraculously restored.[261] According to some scholars, the prophet Shuaʿyb was also afflicted with blindness.[262] Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī related that the Prophet

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[255] ʿAsqalānī, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥajar al- (1379/1959), vol.10, p. 110.

[256] Zaydān, ʿAbd al-Karīm (1414/1994), p. 213.

[257] According to some scholars, prophets are infalliable and thus expempted from committing both major and minor sins. For further details and discussions on the inflaliability of prophets, see Ibn Ḥazm, Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī (1), vol.4, p. 136; Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn al- (1990); Ījī, ʿAḍud al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al- (1997), vol. 3, p. 415 & 423; Sabtī, Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-Umawī al- (1990), vol.1, pp. 32 & 138.

[258] See Maqdisī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn al- (1420/1999), pp. 35-37; Ibn Yūsuf, Marʿī (1410/1989), vol. 1, p. 57.

[259] See for instance, their disagreements on whether a prophet can be blind, Shawkānī, Muhammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muhammad al- (1), vol. 2, p. 522; Alūsī, Abū al-Fadl Mahmūd al-(1), vol. 12, p. 123 & 124; Ṣafadī, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak al- (1329/1911), pp. 43 & 44; Sharabāṣī, Aḥmad al- (1375/1956), vol. 1, p. 193.

[260] Kanʿān, Aḥmad Muḥammad (1420/2000), p. 81.

[261] Bayḍāwī, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar al- (1416/1996), vol. 3, p. 305; Qurṭubī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al- (1372/1952), vol. 9, p. 248; Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-ʿImādī (1), vol. 4, p. 310; Baghawī, Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn al- (1407/1987), vol. 2, p. 444; Shawkānī, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al- (1), vol. 3, p. 48; Jawzī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al- (1404 A.H.), vol. 4, p. 270; Alūsī, Abū al-Faḍl Maḥmūd al-(1), vol. 13, p. 40.

[262] Shawkānī, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al- (1), vol. 2, p. 522; Alūsī, Abū al-Faḍl Maḥmūd al-(1), vol. 12, p. 123.

It is to be noted that the possibility of having a blind Prophet is a point of disagreement. The weighty opinion among the Sunni Orthodox is that none of the Prophets was a blind. Also the Muʿtazilī scholars maintained that the blind cannot be a Prophet because blindness breaches the conditions of Judgeship and testifying. Thus blindness is more breaching for the qualifications of prophethood. Moreover the blind person usually cannot preserve himself from dirtiness.

In response it is said that testifying and judgeship necessitates distinguishing between the plaintiff and the accused whereas the Prophet does not need to identify the one who calls to belief and prophet is also infallible. As for safeguarding against dirtiness, real life proves that it is not a rule that blindness is always a barrier preventing from taking a stand from filthiness. On the contrary, some people with blindness are more cautious than the others in this regard. See Alūsī, Abū al-Faḍl Maḥmūd al-(1), vol. 12, pp. 123 & 124.

Job (*Ayyūb*) was the first to suffer smallpox.[263] In their commentary on the Qur'anic verses (20:25-28), a number of Qur'ān exegetes opined that the prophet Moses had a speech-disability; lisping according to some traditions. Being commanded by God to go to the Pharaoh and convey the message of the faith to him, Moses asked God to cure this disability.[264]

2.4.1.3 A Faith-Test

Testing people's faith to show whose faith is truthful and firm is one of the central themes in the Qur'ān (2:214, 3:141 & 154, 9:126, 21:35, 29:02, 49:03, 76:02, 89:15 & 16) and thus in Islamic sources as well.[265] Words such as *fitna*, *miḥna, tamḥīṣ*, *ibtilāʾ* and *imtiḥān* and their derivatives are used interchangeably to convey this concept. The primary meaning of these terms revolves around "putting to the proof, a discriminatory test as gold is tested by the fire."[266] A sagacious statement said, "O my son! Gold and silver are to be examined by fire but the believer is to be examined by affliction."[267]

In this vein, interpreting disabilities, as a one out of many afflictions that may befall people, as a test from God to His servants' faith is the most obvious answer provided by early and late Muslim scholars.

The Prophet is reported to have said, "Truly God may examine you with an affliction (*balāʾ*) the same you may examine your gold with fire. As a result, some people will come out of it [i.e., affliction] as pure gold. These are the persons whom God has guarded against doubts (*shubuhāt*). [Others] will come out [with a result] less than this. These are the ones who had some doubts. The last will come out like black gold. These are the ones who failed the test."[268]

According to Ibn al-Qayyim, one of the main functions of creating this life was to serve as the transient abode of *taklīf* (charging) where people are tested by going through different difficulties, ups and downs, pains and pleasures, etc. to prove to what extent they are obedient to the commandments of their Creator in different situations. On the basis of such tests, people are admitted to Paradise (the abode of pure pleasures) or Hellfire (the abode of pure pains) in the Hereafter.[269]

Anyhow, the reports cited above is not to state that one of the Prophets was blind but to say that some of them, according to authentic traditions, was inflicted with blindness and this does not cross out the possibility that their eyesight was restored thereafter as indicated in other traditions about Jacob and Shuʿayb.

[263] ʿAsqalānī, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥajar al- (1379/1959), vol. 6, p. 421.

[264] Ṭabarī, Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-, vol. 16, p. 159; Mujāhid, Abū al-Hajjāb b. Jabr (1), vol. 1, p. 396; Ibn Kathīr (1), vol. 3, p. 389; Bayḍāwī, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar al- (1416/1996), vol. 4, p. 47; Munāwī, Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al- (1410 A.H.), vol. 1, p. 619.

[265] Ayoub, Mahmoud M. (1977), p. 277.

[266] See Jurjānī, ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al- (1405/1984), p. 212; Rāzī, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. ʿAbd al-Qādir al- (1415/1995) p. 257; Ibn Manẓūr, Muḥammad b. Makram (1), p. 275; vol. 13, p. 317; Patton, W.M. (1879), p. 1; Hinds, M. (2003); Gardet, L. (3) (2003), vol. II, p. 930.

[267] Munāwī, ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al- (1356/1937), vol. 2, p. 459.

[268] Mundhirī, Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm b. ʿAbd al-Qawī al- (1417), ḥadīth no. 5169, vol. 4, p. 143.

[269] See Būṭī, Muḥammed Saʿīd Ramaḍān al- (2001), pp. 193-196.

Ibn al-Jawzī divided the afflicted people, on the basis of their response to affliction (*al-balā'*), into four main categories arranged in an ascending order. First are those who consider *al-balā'* an easy test compared with its ensuing reward. Secondly, there are those who see afflicting people with *al-balā'* as if an owner is discharging his own possession to which they have to submit without objection. Third, there are those whose are overwhelmed by the love of God to the extent that they will not even ask for lifting *al-balā'*. Finally, the highest group are those who savour *al-balā'* because it has taken place out of the Will of God.[270]

Concerning disability in particular, the magicians of the Pharaoh who believed in Moses and His Lord declaring publicly their disbelief in the Pharaoh as god are central in this respect. The Pharaoh, according to the Qur'ān (e.g. 7:124, 10:83, 20:71), tried to test the firmness of their faith by his threat to cut off their hands and feet on opposite sides. According to some Qur'ān exegetes, Pharaoh was the first in history to apply such a punishment. However, the magicians stood fast and the pharaoh's threats did not make them change their faith. These people, the exegetes added, started their day as magicians and finished it as martyrs.[271]

The faith-test argument is also very common among modern Muslim scholars.[272] In his study on the wise purposes of creating diseases, Zuhayr Muḥammad al-Zamīlī mentioned *tamḥīs al-mu'minīn* (testing the believers) as the first possible wise purpose (*ḥikma*).[273] In al-Būṭī's presentation, it was classified as the second *ḥikma*. Had life been created free from calamities and misfortunes, al-Būtī explained, man's *taklīf* (legal liability) would be meaningless. That is because the sincere and the hypocrite in this case can claim sincerity and love for God in the absence of serious instruments to check their claimed sincerity and love. The calamities and misfortunes are the main instruments by which one's endurance for the sake of God and submission to His will can be measured.[274] However, al-Zamīlī broadened the scope of faith-test (*ibtilā'* or *tamḥīs*) to include not only those afflicted with calamites but those living with them including their direct families and societies at large as well. A sick person is a test for his own family and society to show who is going to take up his responsibility of taking care of such a dependent person and who is going to give him the helping hand. The presence of sick people in a society is a criterion by which goodness in such a society can be measured.[275]

2.4.2 Afflictions Befalling those without Legal Liability (non-*Mukallafūn*)

Searching for the *ḥikam* of disabilities and other afflictions befalling the non-*mukallafūn* such as children and animals, advocates of the middle-course

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[270] ʿAqalānī, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥajar al- (1379 A.H.), Vol. 10, p. 112.
[271] Ibn Kathīr (1401/1980), vol. 2, p. 239.
[272] Sharabāṣī, Aḥmad al- (1375/1956), vol. 1, pp. 261 & 262.
[273] Zamīlī, Zuhayr Muḥammad al- (1409/1988), pp. 52-70.
[274] Būṭī, Muḥammed Saʿīd Ramaḍān al- (2001), pp. 193-196.
[275] Zamīlī, Zuhayr Muḥammad al- (1409/1988), pp. 70-72.

approach were sometimes very timid. Some of them said that providing discursive reasoning and justifications is possible only for what befalls the *mukallafūn*. As for pain and illnesses befalling the non-*mukallafūn*, it is sufficient to state that there is an inscrutable wisdom and unknown wise purposes behind these inflictions but they cannot be discerned by the human intellect. That is because delving into this knotty issue, they added, could entail big misunderstandings, aberrations, deviations and perversities.[276] However, such arguments did not halt other advocates of this approach to fathom out this subtle issue searching for possible wise purposes.

2.4.2.1 A Proof of God's Existence and Oneness

The existence of evils and abnormalities in life is a proof that God exists and that He alone has created this life and all creatures therein. This argument is peculiarly Maturidian and, according to some researchers, no earlier philosophers or theologians are known to have advanced such an argument.[277]

In his book, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* (Book of Oneness), Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. ca. 333/944)[278] elaborated this argument in a chapter entitled, *Al-Dalīl ʿalā anna li al-ʿālam Muḥdith* (The Evidence that the Cosmos has One Who Gave It Temporal Existence). We quote here what is of particular interest to our topic:

> "And the second proof that the world has one who gave it temporal existence is that, if the world existed by its own essence, no instant in it would be truer *(aḥaqq)* than any other, no state *(ḥāl)* more appropriate *(awlā)* than any other, no characteristic *(ṣifa)* more seemly *(alyaq)* than any other. But, since it exists with instants, states and characteristics which differ from one another, it is proven that it does not exist by its own essence. Furthermore, if it did, it would be possible that each thing would create for itself such states and characteristics as are the best and most beautiful, and, so, by doing this, it would be false to say that moral and physical evils exist. But, the fact of their existence shows that the existence of the world came about by something other than itself *(bi-ghayrih)*."[279]

Thus, what proves to al-Māturīdī that the cosmos is not self-existent is the presence of "more" and "less" degrees therein. The forms of imperfection in the universe show that the universe is not self-existent, i.e., eternal, but rather it exists temporally. In being self-existent, everything would simply be perfect in regard to points of time, states of being and qualifications of being. But, in the world as it is, al-Māturīdī noted that this is not the case.[280] No being which had complete control of its own existence would want for itself anything other than the best in all respects. Now, if it were true that each thing were in control of its own existence, it would follow that no one would choose for painful disabilities, sufferings or evils in general to take place in life. Since they do, it

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[276] See Ibn Yūsuf, Marʿī (1410/1989), vol. 1, pp. 57 & 58; Ibn al-Humām (1317/1899), p. 185; Madkhalī, Muḥammad Rabīʿ Hadī al- (1409/1988), p. 210.
[277] Māturīdī, Abū Manṣūr al- (1), p. XXXV.
[278] On him, see Madelung, Wilfred (1) (2003), vol. VI, pp. 846 & 847.
[279] Māturīdī, Abū Manṣūr al- (1), p. 17; Pessagno, J. Meric (1984), pp. 72 & 73.
[280] See Pessagno, J. Meric (1984), pp. 73 & 74.

must be that beings are not in control of their own existence. Thus the existence of evil, moral and physical, is made the explicit basis for coming to know that there is a God and that He is a Creator.[281]

As for the oneness of God in particular, al-Māturīdī found an evidence for this oneness in the fact that there is no single substance whose existence can be related to one quality only such as harmfulness or benefit, evil or goodness, or blessing or trial. Rather, each thing is characterized by evil which then can be judged as good from another perspective. Created beings are neither beneficial nor harmful in every state. Thus, al-Māturīdī added, it is proven that the one who directs all that must be one because he can combine aspects of the harmful and the beneficial in the created beings, "You also see that all substances fall under the category of material and are an assemblage of mutually opposed natural elements whose real nature should lead to mutual aversion and estrangement because mutual hostility exists among them. Were it conceivable that their nature abandon their being together, that would cause the destruction of the whole. Thus, it is proven that the one who directs the union among them must be one, joining them together because of his benevolence toward the world and keeping the potential harm of each one from the other by an act of remarkable wisdom which human imagination cannot comprehend."[282] In another place, he added, "Thus, in that creation of things which combine the beneficial and the harmful, there is the wondrous manifestation of His wisdom, that He combines the harmful and the beneficial in one being, as well as good and evil, in spite of the mutually contradictory natures of both, as the indication for His oneness and the testimony that His Lordship is one."[283]

By extension to disability, one may reformulate al-Māturīdī's argument as follows. Man did not create himself, otherwise he would have chosen the best and most perfect form of being which would naturally have been free from any form of physical or moral defect. Keeping in mind that this is not the case, it is proved that man is a created as a being rather than a creator. Additionally, mankind in general comprises able-bodied as well as disabled people and each human being can have some parts of his body which are working properly whereas others are not because of a disability. These seemingly contradictions which can exist simultaneously in one single being indicate there must be a higher power that can combine these contradictories in a coherent form which does not lead eventually to the destruction of this being. According to al-Māturīdī, this higher power is God who is the Creator of this world.

In his article published in 1984, Jerome Meric Pessagno said that the extent of his own research has not revealed any thinker after al-Māturīdī who picked up the thread and the style of this argument.[284] However, statements closely related to the purport of this argument can still be traced. Al-ʿIzz b. ʿAbd al-Salām (d. 660/1066) opined that knowing the glory and omnipotence of God is

[281] See Pessagno, J. Meric (1984), p. 74.
[282] Māturīdī, Abū Manṣūr al- (1), p. 22; Pessagno, J. Meric (1984), pp. 74 & 75.
[283] Māturīdī, Abū Manṣūr al- (1), p. 109; Pessagno, J. Meric (1984), p. 75.
[284] Pessagno, J. Meric (1984), pp. 72, 73, 80 & 81.

the first benefit of being visited by calamities and afflictions.[285] The same purport is also clearly traceable in the recent writings of more than one Muslim scholar such as Aḥmad al-Sharabāṣī (1918-1980).[286] Speaking about the wise purposes of having disabilities in life, Muḥammad Mutwallī al-Shaʿrāwī (1911-1988) said, "The second purpose is for us to recognise that no organ of our bodies acts by its own abilities but only because God has subjected it to us to act as it does. We say 'I see with my eyes.' So God Almighty brought into existence someone who has two eyes but cannot see so that you know that you only see by the power of God, who has given the eye the property of sight. The same applies to walking. God brings into existence people who have two feet but cannot walk, so that we will know that we only walk by the power of God."[287] The same point is also stressed by al-Būṭī[288] and al-Zamīlī.[289]

2.4.2.2 Realizing God's Threats and Promises in the World to Come

One of the general beliefs in Islam is that God created three abodes; one composed of pure goodness and pleasures and this is Paradise, the second is composed of pure evils and pains and this is Hellfire whereas the third, that of worldly life, is composed of contraries and opposites such as good and evil, pain and pleasure, illness and health and so forth.[290]

The advocates of this approach state that one of the aims of creating this worldly life is to give people an idea about pains prepared for the disobedient and infidels in the Hell and pleasures awaiting the obedient in Paradise.[291]

Speaking about children in particular, Ibn al-Qayyim argued that going through pains and sufferings in this life would deepen those children's feeling of the pleasures of Paradise in the Hereafter. He said, "Testing pleasures, joys and delights in Paradise after undergoing pains and illnesses in this life is much more pleasant and enjoyable than getting such pleasures without prior experience of pains in this life. For instance, the enjoyment of eating and drinking after extreme hunger and thirst is much greater than the enjoyment of eating and drinking without prior hunger and thirst."[292]

The same argument has been reiterated by modern scholars. For instance, al-Būṭī opined that sufferings and pains in this life serve as a recurrent warning for those living in this life that it is not eternal and that there must be another sort of life which is free from such contraries of health and sickness, richness and poverty, etc.[293]

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[285] Qāsimī, Jamāl al-Dīn al- (1424/2003), vol. 1, p. 490.
[286] Sharabāṣī, Aḥmad al- (1375/1956), vol. 1, p. 274.
[287] Shaʿrawi, Muḥammad M. al- (1995), p. 59.
[288] Būṭī, Muḥammed Saʿīd Ramaḍān al- (2001), pp. 190-193.
[289] Zamīlī, Zuhayr Muḥammad al- (1409/1988), pp. 83 & 84.
[290] Ibn al-Qayyim (1348/1929), p. 326; Ibn al-Qayyim (1407/1986), vol. 1, p. 67.
[291] Ibn al-Qayyim (1348/1929), p. 326; Ibn al-Qayyim (2), vol. 1, p. 275.
[292] See Ibn al-Qayyim (1348/1929), pp. 364.
[293] Būṭī, Muḥammad Saʿīd Ramaḍān al- (2001), pp. 196-199. See also Zamīlī, Zuhayr Muḥammad al- (1409/1988), pp. 83 & 84.