# Bringing Things Back from Nothingness

## The Restoration of the Non-Existent before and after Avicenna*

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**Abstract:** This paper presents the evolution of the Islamic debates on *iʿādat al-maʿdūm* [restoration of the non-existent], examining the notion itself, the motives behind its adoption and rejection, and the arguments for and against its possibility. Restoration consists in an act of recreating a previously annihilated entity while preserving its identity. Most pre-Avicennian theologians accept the possibility of restoration, while disagreeing on one preliminary issue (the reality of the non-existent) and one derivative issue (the restorability of specific classes of entities). Adopting restoration enabled the *mutakallimūn* to reconcile a corporealist anthropology with the possibility of resurrection. Avicenna presented an influential case against the possibility of restoration consisting of three main arguments: from intuition (in light of the unreality of the non-existent), from the indiscernibility of a restored entity from its equivalent copy, and from the contradiction entailed by the restoration of time. Among the post-Avicennian schools, only the Ashʿarites defended the possibility of restoration. The debates of the post-Classical period built upon the basic argumentative core outlined by Avicenna and the early *Mutakallimūn*, considering more sophisticated formulations (the argument from modal invariance), objections, and answers, as well as designing some totally new arguments both for (from the possibility of the conceptual parts, from remembrance, from presumptive possibility) and against restoration (from intermittence, from the restoration of the causal factors).

**Keywords:** Avicenna, Ibn Sīnā, Eschatology, Ontology, Resurrection, Restoration

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## Introduction

It is common knowledge that the diffusion of Avicennian philosophy represented a watershed for Islamic thought, permeating and renovating multiple fields of intellectual inquiry. One peculiar example of the revolutionary effect of Avicenna's doctrines concerns the question of whether an entity can be annihilated and then recreated *ex nihilo* while remaining the same entity: the *iʿādat al-maʿdūm* [restoration of the non-existent].

The concept of restoration was elaborated in the early *kalām* as a conceptual tool for conceiving corporeal resurrection and defending its possibility. Prior to Avicenna, the major schools of Islamic theology agreed on the possibility of restoration, only diverging on certain derivative issues. Avicenna explicitly challenged the *mutakallimūn* and presented influential arguments against the possibility of restoration in a *locus classicus* from the metaphysics section of his *Shifāʾ*. Such arguments were then expanded upon in *al-Taʿlīqāt* and *al-Mubāḥathāt*. The diffusion of Avicennian doctrines in Islamic thought at large triggered a paradigm shift, challenging not only the intrinsic possibility of restoration, but also its necessity for matters of eschatology.[1] As a result, the majority of post-Avicennian schools rejected the restoration of the non-existent. That included Avicenna's own direct disciples as well as the Ishrāqis, the Imamis, and some late Muʿtazilites. The defense of restoration was undertaken almost exclusively by the Ashʿarites, even though some key figures from the school (i.e., al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī) showed ambiguities and inconsistencies in their attitude towards the issue.

This contribution presents the evolution of the Islamic discussions on the restoration of the non-existent from the 9th to the 17th century, highlighting their main turning points and results. The paper consists of six sections. Section 1 provides a set of preliminary clarifications concerning restoration and certain key concepts employed in the subsequent inquiry. Section 2 presents an account of the positions that arose in the early period of *kalām* (9th-11th C.), before the widespread diffusion of Avicenna's doctrines among the theologians. Section 3 tackles Avicenna's own stance towards restoration. Section 4 considers the positions held by post-Avicennian authors (12th-17th C.). Section 5 and 6 respectively analyze the arguments against and for the possibility of restoration.

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1   Avicenna's spiritualist anthropology made it possible to conceive the continuity of identity of the resurrected individual without appealing the restoration of the non-existent (on this see *infra*, Section 4).

## 1-Preliminary Clarifications

Before delving into the specifics of the Islamic doctrines and debates on restoration, a few prerequisite notions need to be explained in order to avoid confusion down the line. The explanations will strive for a balance between conciseness and accuracy, with the caveat that their purpose is not to provide an exhaustive treatment but rather to elicit a preliminary understanding of the concepts at stake.

First of all, I will consider the concept of restoration as such. The expression "restoration of the non-existent" is a tentative translation of the Arabic *iʿādat al-maʿdūm* [bringing the non-existent back]. Restoration can be defined as the act of giving existence to a previously annihilated entity while preserving its numerical identity.

I will clarify that with an example. A certain table exists at a certain moment of time: that is the original entity. Subsequently, the table is destroyed: the original entity has been annihilated (i.e., has become non-existent). Subsequently, an agent gives existence to the table once again: that is "the reinstated entity". If the original table is numerically identical to the reinstated table (i.e., if the two are the same individual), then the original can be said to have been restored. An equivalent copy of the original entity (e.g., a table that is perceptually indiscernible from the original, while not being the same individual) would not qualify.

Restoration is nothing but the recreation of an entity after its annihilation, regardless of the specific modality of annihilation and recreation at stake. In other words, we can say that the restoration of the table has occurred regardless of whether the table has been annihilated by separating its parts, by annihilating them, or in some other way (the same holds true for the modalities of its recreation).

In line with the above-mentioned definition, this paper generally employs the term "restoration" to designate the act of an agent that gives existence to a previously annihilated entity. In some cases, however, the term may also designate, by extension, the product of that act (i.e., the restored existence) by extension.

I will clarify some additional concepts that will be employed throughout the present inquiry. These are entity, quiddity, individuation, identity, existence, and reality.

Entity (*dhāt*, *shayʾ*) is anything distinct, knowable, and capable of being taken as the subject of which all other concepts listed below are said as predicates.

Quiddity (*māhiyya*) is the predicate that conveys an entity as being the kind of entity it is; namely quiddity is the predicate which describes an entity as belonging to the class of entities it belongs to (e.g., the tableness of the table).

Individuation (*shakhṣiyya*) is the predicate that conveys an entity as being this individual and not any other (e.g., the thisness of the table). A related notion is that of the marker of individuation. This paper employs the term as generically designating anything whose presence (or absence) is a sign that allows one to assess the presence (or absence) of a certain individuation, regardless of the exact ontological nature of the connection between sign and individuation.[2]

Identity (*huwiyya*) is the predicate that conveys an entity as being the same as itself (e.g., the sameness of the table with respect to itself). Identity is generally believed to possess a relation of necessary concomitance with individuation and unity in number.[3]

Existence (*wujūd*) is the predicate that conveys an entity as being factually and concretely realized or present (e.g., the fact that the table exists).

Reality (*thubūt*) is the predicate that conveys an entity as being an entity (e.g., the entitativeness of a table). Reality is generally believed to entail three properties: distinctiveness, knowability, and capacity of being subject of predication.

Islamic authors disagree on whether or not reality is more extensive than existence. For most pre-Avicennian Muʿtazilites, reality is more extensive than existence because at least some non-existents are real. The set of non-existents encompasses two heterogeneous subsets, i.e., impossibilities and possibilities. Impossibilities have no reality; properly speaking, they are non-entities. Possible non-existents do have reality; they are extra-mentally real entities that simply lack the attribute (or state) of existence as well as all existence-related attributes (e.g., non-existent atoms are just atoms, and they do not occupy space, bear accidents, or interact). This is the so-called doctrine of the reality (or thingness) of the non-existent,[4] which the majority of Islamic thinkers (the early Ashʿarites and almost all

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2    The marker of an individuation may be the cause of that individuation, its condition, its effect, one of its inseparable concomitants, etc.

3    Faḫr al-Dīn al-Rāzī challenges the necessary concomitance between identity and numerical unity, arguing that, at least in certain situations, identity (and individuation) can persist after the annihilation of unity – see *al-Mabāḥiṯ al-mashriqiyya fī ʿilm al-ilahiyyāt wa-l-ṭabīʿiyyāt* (Hyderabad, 1924), I, 81–83.

4    For additional information on this issue and its relation to the essence-existence distinction see R. Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context* (Cornell University Press: Itaca, NY, 2003), 145–160; F. Benevich, 'The Reality of the Non-Existent Object of Thought: The Possible, the Impossible, and

post-Avicennian authors) rejected, claiming reality and existence to be co-extensive: Possible non-existents are unreal non-entities, just like impossible non-existents.[5] The question of the reality (or unreality) of the non-existents is of great importance for appreciating the debates on restoration, because some of the arguments revolve around whether an annihilated entity needs to be real in order to be restorable.[6]

## 2-Restoration in Early Kalām

The notion of the restoration of the non-existent has its roots in Islamic eschatology, as conceptual tool explaining the continuity of identity of the resurrected individuals in face of two widespread doctrines, i.e., the corporeality of man's essence and the possibility of the total annihilation of corporeal entities.[7] In other words, the idea of restoration arose in light of the following question: How can the resurrected person be the same individual who died previously, given that man is a corporeal entity and that the total annihilation of corporeal entities is at least possible (total annihilation being the annihilation of the minimal parts of bodies)? Most early *mutakallimūn* answer that (at least some) annihilated entities can be restored.

One caveat is required at this point. The conjunction of the corporeality of man and the possibility of total annihilation is not the only set of assumptions requiring the conceptualization of resurrection as restoration. That is simply the minimal set of relevant assumptions most of the early *mutakallimūn* happened

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Mental Existence in Islamic Philosophy (11th–13th centuries)', in R. Pasnau (Ed.), *Oxford Studies in Medieval Philosophy*, vol. 6 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) 31–58; Id., 'The Essence-Existence Distinction: Four Elements of the Post-Avicennan Metaphysical Dispute (11–13th Centuries)', *Oriens* 45.3–4 (2017), 203–258.

5   See R.M. Frank, 'The Ashʿarite Ontology: I. Primary Entities', *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 9 (1999), 163–231; R. Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, 143–180.

6   See *infra*, Sections 2 & 3.

7   Not all early *mutakallimūn* held a corporealist anthropology, but most of them did – see Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt al-islamiyyīn wa-ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*, Ed. M.M. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍa al-Miṣriyya, 1954), II, 24–25. The claim that bodies will be totally annihilated (and then recreated *ex nihilo*) has its roots in some Quranic verses (28.88, 30.27, 55.26, 57.3), or rather in the interpretation of those passages defended by most Muʿtazilites – see Ibn Mattawayh, *Tadhkirat aḥkām al-jawāhir wa-al-aʿrāḍ*, Ed. S.N. Luṭf, F.B. ʿŪn (Cairo: Dār al-Thaqāfa li-al-Ṭibāʿ wa-al-Nashr, 1975), 208. The Ashʿarites challenged the Muʿtazilite interpretation, as did Ibn al-Malāḥimī (and probably Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī) – see Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *al-Fāʾiq fī uṣūl al-dīn*, Eds. W. Madelung, M. McDermott (Tehran: Moʾassase-ye Pažūhishī-e Ḥekmat va Falsafe-ye Īrān, 2007), 516–523; Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-Irshād ilā qawāṭiʿ al-adilla fī uṣūl al-iʿtiqād*, Eds. ʿA. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, M.Y. Mūsā (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānijī, 1950), 373–374; Rāzī, *al-Arbaʿīn fī uṣūl al-dīn*. Ed. A.Ḥ. al-Saqqā (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyya al-Azhariyya, 1986), II, 51–52.

to agree on. Other assumptions (or certain specifications of one of the above-mentioned assumptions) may also entail the need for restoration as well. A particularly noteworthy example is a specific form of corporealist anthropology which holds the essence of man to consist in a sum of material parts taken together with certain accidents[8] that are annihilated at the moment of death (or together with a substantial form that encounters the same fate). This is what the Bahshamites seemed to imply when stating that the attribute of life is predicated of the totality of man's material parts on condition that those parts are arranged in a specific organic structure (*binya*).[9] Because that organic structure consists of a bundle of accidents that are annihilated when man dies, the reasonable deduction is that resurrection would require the restoration of those annihilated accidents when the material parts themselves had not been annihilated. In summary, that specific corporealist anthropology would entail the restoration of the non-existent (the accidents of structure) even when considered on its own, regardless of the possibility of total annihilation. However, such an anthropology was not widely accepted among the early *mutakallimūn*, for the Ash'arites (and some Muʿtazilites) disagreed on the need for organic structure.[10]

The range of applicability of restoration includes accidents as well as substances. Indeed, the great majority of the early *mutakallimūn* believed accidents to be real entities that can be created and annihilated, just like the bodies and atoms in which they inhere.[11] Consequently, the possibility of the restoration of accidents needs to be taken into account.

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8   In *kalām*, the term 'accident' (*ʿaraḍ*) points to a narrow subset of the things that would be considered accidents in the Peripatetic account. This subset includes perceptible qualities – e.g., colours, tastes, sounds – qualities related to life – e.g., volition, power, knowledge – junction (*taʾlīf*) – i.e., what makes it possible for atoms to unite and compose bodies – and the 'accidents of location' (*akwān*) – e.g., motion and rest, proximity and remoteness. Also, accidents are generally believed to inhere in atoms, not in composite bodies.

9   On Bahshāmite anthropology see M. Heemskerk, 'ʾAbd al-Jabbār al-Hamadānī on Body, Soul and Resurrection', in C. Adang & S. Schmidtke (Eds.), *A Common Rationality: Muʿtazilism in Islam and Judaism* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2007), 127–56; S. Vasalou, 'Subject and Body in Muʿtazilism, or: Muʿtazilite Kalām and the Fear of Triviality', *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 17 (2007), 267–98; M Fakhry, "The Muʿtazilite View of Man," in *Recherches d'islamologie: Recueil d'articles offert à Georges C. Anawati et Louis Gardet par leurs collègues et amis* (Leuven: Peeters, 1977), 107–21.

10  See A. Shihadeh, 'Classical Ashʿarī Anthropology: Body, Life and Spirit', *The Muslim World* 102 (July/October 2012), 433–477.

11  The *mutakallimūn* show particular commitment to establishing that accidents are real existent entities, for that constitutes one of the premises of their proof for God's existence – see Juwaynī, *Irshād*, 17–19, *al-Shāmil fī uṣūl al-dīn*, Eds. ʿA.S. al-Nashshār, F.B. ʿAwn, S.M. Mukhtār (Iskandariya: Manshaʾt al-Maʿārif, 1969), 180–189.

It is impossible to pinpoint who first conceived restoration or understood resurrection in terms of recreation *ex nihilo*. What is clear is that the concept originated at an early stage in the development of *kalām*, as ancient authors like Muḥammad ibn Shabīb (d. early 9th C.), Abū al-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf (d. c. 840 and 850), and Abū Jaʿfar al-Iskāfī (d. 854) are credited with specific opinions concerning ancillary issues (e.g., which entities can be restored).[12] Early theologians' opinions on restoration can be grouped into four basic positions.

The first holds that the restoration of the non-existent to be impossible: God can only create equivalent copies of annihilated entities. The sources ascribe this position to the Karrāmites, without explaining why they held such a view.[13] The most attractive hypothesis is that they simply had no use for the concept of restoration, as they believed that corporeal substances cannot be totally annihilated, and that resurrection must consist in the reassembly of the human body's the scattered parts.[14]

For the second position, everything that can be annihilated can also be restored, with no difference between substances and accidents, or between kinds of accidents.[15] The majority of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī's (d. 936) works reportedly defended this position, which became the standard view of the Ashʿarite school at large.[16] Some sources ascribe the unrestricted possibility of restoration also to Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī al-Kaʿbī (d. 931), or more generally to an unspecified Baghdādian Muʿtazilite.[17]

The third position asserts only substances, not accidents, to be restorable. The Muʿtazilites Hishām ibn ʿAmr al-Fuwaṭī (d. pre-845) and ʿAbbād ibn Sulaymān al-

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12   See Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt*, II, 56–58.

13   See ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn* (Istanbul: Dar al-Funun al-Turkiyya, 1928), 234; Rāzī, *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl fī dirāyat al-uṣūl*, Ed. S.A. Fūda (Beirut: Dār al-Dhakhāʾir, 2015), IV, 85–86; Āmidī, *Abkār al-afkār fī uṣūl al-dīn*, Ed. A.M. al-Mahdi (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Dār al-Kutub wa-al-Wathaʾiq al-Qawmiyya, 2004), IV, 249.

14   See Baghdādī, *Uṣūl*, 234. This position is also ascribed to Jāḥiẓ – see Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Fāʾiq*, 517, *Tuḥfat al-mutakallimīn fī al-radd ʿalà al-falāsifa*, Eds. H. Ansari, W. Madelung (Tehran: Iranian Institute of Philosophy-Institute of Islamic Studies Free University of Berlin, 2008), 175; Rāzī, *Nihāya*, IV, 86.

15   By 'substances' (*jawāhir*), *kalām* authors generally mean atoms. Bodies are considered bundles of atomic substances, while incorporeal self-subsistent entities are not described as substances. On accidents in *kalām*, see *supra*, note 8.

16   See Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad maqālāt Abī al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī*, Ed. A.ʿA. Sāyiḥ (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya), 252; Baghdādī, *Uṣūl*, 233–234; Juwaynī, *Irshād*, 371.

17   Ibn Mattawayh, *Tadhkira*, 240; Āmidī, *Abkār*, IV, 250. The reader needs to keep in mind that reports on Kaʿbī are conflicting, as other sources ascribe him with the view that no accident can be restored – see Nīshābūrī, *Masāʾil al-khilāf bayna al-Baghdādiyyīn wa-al-Baṣriyyīn*, Eds. M. Ziyada, R. Sayyid (Beirut: Maʿhad al-Inmaʿ al-ʿArabī, 1979), 240.

Ṣaymārī (d. c. 864) probably held this view, as did the Kullābite Abū ʿAbbās al-Qalānisī (9th C.).[18] Some sources ascribe the doctrine to Kaʿbī as well, contradicting the reports that credit him with the previous position.[19] Furthermore, one of Ashʿarī's works and an unnamed Ashʿarite (or group of Ashʿarites) reportedly defended the non-restorability of all accidents.[20]

The fourth position holds that substances as well as certain kinds of accidents are restorable. Several Muʿtazilites defended this general idea, while disagreeing on the specific criteria that distinguish between restorable and non-restorable accidents. Iskāfī believed the discriminating criterion to be persistence (i.e., the capacity to exist at two consecutive instants of time): Persistent accidents (e.g., colours) are restorable, and non-persistent accidents (e.g., sounds) are not. For Abū al-Hudhayl, the criterion concerned the agency capable of producing the accidents: Only what is under divine power (e.g., tastes, colours) is restorable; what is under both human and divine power (e.g., movement, rest) is not.[21] Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī (d. 915) combined the two conditions: Restorability is only predicated of those persistent accidents not producible by man's power.[22] Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī (d. 933) and the Bahshamites further modified Abū ʿAlī's account, individuating a third criterion in natural causation (i.e., accidents produced by natural causes cannot be restored) and weakening the criterion of agency by moving it from possibility to actuality (non-restorability only applies to the individual accidents that are *de facto* produced by some human being).[23]

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18    On Qalānisī see Baghdādī, *Uṣūl*, 234. On Ṣaymarī and Fuwaṭī see Ibn Mattawayh, *Tadhkira*, 240, 242 (he also mentions an obscure Muʿtazilite by the name of Abū Bakr al-Zabirī). Our ascription of this view to Ṣaymarī, Fuwaṭī, and Zabirī is speculative and comes from a comparison with a reasoning presented (and rejected) by several authors. According to them, the rejection of the restoration of accidents is implied by two claims: No accident can inhere in another accident, and restoration requires the inherence of a specific accident (called 'restoration') in the restored entity. As identical claims are ascribed to Ṣaymarī and the other two Muʿtazilites, assuming that they held the same view with respect to the possibility of restoration is reasonable.

19    See Nishabūrī, *Masāʾil*, 240. Also, Baghdādī, *Uṣūl*, 234.

20    See Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 252. Also, Juwaynī, *Irshād*, 371; Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 213; Āmidī, *Abkār*, IV, 249. It is possible that the unnamed Ashʿarite mentioned in some of these reports may actually be Qalānisī, as he is mentioned by Baghdādī (*Uṣūl*, 234), who may be the basis of subsequent accounts.

21    See Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt*, II, 56–57.

22    See Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt*, II, 57; ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-al-ʿadl*, Eds. Ṭ. Ḥusayn, I. Madkūr (Cairo: al-Dar al-Miṣriyya li-al-Taʾlif wa-al-Tarjama, 1965), XI, 459; Ibn Mattawayh, *Tadhkira*, 237.

23    See ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, XI, 459–463; Ibn Mattawayh, *Tadhkira*, 237–241. Abū Hāshim reportedly changed his mind on the criterion of natural causation, first denying that and then accepting it.

Post-Avicennian authors highlighted a concomitant issue of disagreement that had not been made explicit by earlier theologians: whether or not the reality of the non-existent is a necessary condition for restoration or not. Most Muʿtazilites held some non-existents to be real. They counted annihilated entities among the subset of real non-existents, thus conceiving restoration as the case where a real entity that had lost the attribute or state of existence regains it: Reality is required for restoration. The Ashʿarites challenged the Muʿtazilites on the reality of the non-existent, arguing the distinction between existence and reality to be merely verbal, and thus all non-existents to be unreal. Despite that, they held reality not to be a necessary condition for restorability: The restored entity is the same as the original even though it did not retain its reality upon annihilation.[24]

The early *kalām* arguments for restoration are based on the analogy from initial creation and the temporal indeterminacy of existence. These will be analytically discussed in Sub-Section 6.1 of the paper.

## 3-Restoration in Avicenna

Avicenna's treatment of restoration constituted a ground-breaking moment in Islamic thought for both doctrinal and systematic reasons. On the one hand, his refutation of the possibility of restoration exerted a decisive influence over the subsequent tradition. On the other hand, his discussion provided the topic of restoration with a specific position in the Peripatetic structure of science: Avicenna tackled restoration at the beginning of the *Ilāhiyyāt* of his *Shifāʾ*, thereby implying that restoration is essentially and primarily an issue of general ontology. Avicenna stressed this point in *al-Kawn wa-al-fasād*, while discussing whether sub-lunar individuals originate and pass away in eternal recurrence, as a consequence of the recurrence of the configurations of the heavenly spheres.

*Those who speculate are confused about the question of recurrence and whether it is necessary that, when the same configuration of the sphere recurs, the terrestrial things recur, being the likes of those that existed before. As for the recurrence of the same*

Information on the Bahshamite conception of restoration can be found in M. Heemskerk, ''Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī on Body, Soul and Resurrection', in C. Adang & S. Schmidtke (Eds.), *A Common Rationality: Muʿtazilism in Islam and Judaism*, (Würzburg: Ergon, 2007), 127–56; S. Vasalou, *Moral Agents and their Deserts. The Character of Muʿtazilite Ethics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 157–180.

24    See Rāzī, *Arbaʿīn*, II, 39; Āmidī, *Abkār*, IV, 249–250.

*individual that was annihilated, that does not happen: Neither the configuration nor the terrestrial things recur while being the same in number. Indeed, the same thing that vanishes does not recur. He who disagrees on this must be ashamed of himself until his disgrace in first philosophy is lifted.*[25]

The question that specifically concerns physics is whether the sub-lunar world has infinite cycles, such that each cycle of the world contains equivalent copies (the likes) of the individual entities that had existed in the previous cycle (e.g., the present Socrates is an equivalent copy of the previous Socrates, while being numerically different). As for the restoration of the same individual entity that had been annihilated, that is a question pertaining to metaphysics. Avicenna's final remark disqualifies the *mutakallimūn*: Anyone with an understanding of metaphysics would reject the restoration of the non-existent.[26]

The case against the possibility of restoration appeared in three works from the Avicennian *corpus*, i.e., the *Ilāhiyyāt* of *al-Shifāʾ*, *al-Taʿlīqāt*, and *al-Mubāḥathāt*. *Al-Shifāʾ* presented a concise formulation of the main arguments against restoration. *Al-Taʿlīqāt* added a remark explaining the assumption behind one of those arguments. *al-Mubāḥathāt* provided an overhaul of the whole discussion, by expanding upon and reformulating the original arguments.

Avicenna's rejection of restoration consists of an appeal to intuition and of two main deductive arguments (i.e., the argument from indiscernibility and the argument from the restoration of the original portion of time). A third, ancillary proof is represented by the argument from the restoration of existence. This section will only discuss Avicenna's appeal to intuition, leaving the analysis of the deductive arguments to the fifth section (§5).

In *al-Shifāʾ*, the appeal to intuition comes down to a concise remark: the intellect does not need a demonstration to reject the restoration of the non-existent.[27] *Al-Taʿlīqāt* and *al-Mubāḥathāt* offered some additional explanations: Non-existents

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25    Avicenna, *Kitāb al-shifāʾ – Ṭabīʿiyyāt: al-Kawn wa-fasād*, Eds. I. Madkūr, M. Qāsim (Cairo: Dār al-Kātib al-ʿArabī, 1969), 196.12–16.

26    As it has been pointed out to me, the passage could refer to the Stoic doctrine of eternal recurrence (and not to the *kalām* doctrine of restoration). I do not believe that to be the case, primarily because the Stoic position focuses on the infinity of recurrence and the modality of its happening (via cosmic conflagration and rebirth), not on whether recurrence is to be understood as recurrence of the same or recurrence of the like. The idea of recurrence of the same as something explicitly distinct from recurrence of the like is proper to *kalām*.

27    See Avicenna, *Kitāb al-shifāʾ – Ilāhiyyāt*, Eds. M.Y. Musà, S. Dunyā, and S. Zāyid (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-ʿāmma li-Shuʾūn al-Maṭābiʿ al-Amīriyya, 1960), I, 36.

are not real entities, and restoration is only applicable to real entities.[28] Indeed, the actual meaning of restoration is that a real existent entity acquires an accidental state that is equivalent to another state the entity previously possessed and then lost.[29] In summary, the restoration of the non-existent is absurd because the reality of the non-existent is absurd. This matches Avicenna's well-known attack against the Muʿtazilite doctrine that some non-existents are real entities. The connection between the unreality of the non-existent and the impossibility of its restoration is further corroborated by a remark mentioned in the *al-Shifāʾ*: Once one understands the fundamentals of general ontology (which include the unreality of the non-existent), he dismisses the possibility of restoration.[30] One intuitively knows the impossibility of restoration, but only on the condition of knowing that non-existents are unreal.

The appeal to intuition was mentioned and discussed in the post-Avicennian tradition. However, post-Avicennian authors tended not to highlight the connection – which had been clear to Avicenna – between the appeal to intuition and the unreality of the non-existent.[31]

The defenders of restoration contended that the appeal to intuition is unsound for two reasons. First, intuitive truths must be recognized as truths by anyone who conceives them, which entails that they must be accepted by general consensus: Because no general consensus exists on the impossibility of restoration (the Ashʿarites and most Muʿtazilites disagree), the impossibility of restoration is known to be non-intuitive. Secondly, sound arguments prove that restoration is possible: no piece of intuitive knowledge can be at odds with the conclusion of a sound argument.[32]

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28    See Avicenna, *Taʿlīqāt*, Ed. ʿA. Badawī (Beirut: al-Dār al-Islāmiyya), 149; Id., *Mubāḥathāt*, Ed. M. Bidārfar (Qom: Intisharat Bidar, 1992), 154–155.

29    See Avicenna, *Mubāḥathāt*, 154–155. Similar remarks on the correct meaning of restoration appears also in Avicenna, *al-Risāla al-aḍḥawiyya fī al-maʿād*, Ed. S. Dunyā (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1949), 36; Ghazālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, Ed. M.E. Marmura (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2000), 215–216.

30    See Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, I, 36.

31    See, among others, Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Tuḥfa*, 178; Rāzī, *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya fī ʿilm al-ilāhiyyāt wa-al-ṭabīʿiyyāt* (Hyderabad, 1924) I, 48; Id., *Mulakhkhaṣ fī al-ḥikma wa-al-manṭiq*, MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Or. Oct. 623, 80v; Id., *Nihāya*, IV, 108; Āmidī, *Abkār*, IV, 252; Kātibī, *Ḥikma*, 8; Shahrazūrī, *Shajara*, II, 48; Ḥillī, *Asrār*, 417; Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 371; Suyūrī, *Lawāmiʿ*, 368; Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Dashtakī, *Shifāʾ al-qulūb*, *Ḥawāshī al-Shifāʾ*, in Id., *Muṣannafāt,* vol.2, Ed. ʿA. Nūrānī (Tehran: Dāneshgāh-e Tehrān, Anjuman-e Āthār va Mafākher-e Farhangī, 2007), 445; Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliyya al-arbaʿa*, Ed. R. Luṭfī (Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyāʾ wa-al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1981), I, 356.

32    See Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Tuḥfa*, 178; Rāzī, *Nihāya*, IV, 111; Āmidī, *Abkār*, IV, 255; Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 371

A passage from Avicenna's *Mubāḥathāt* added a remark aimed at answering similar objections: Intuitive truths may not be universally accepted despite being intuitive because some people may be obfuscated by bad intellectual dispositions (bias, partisanship) or other contextual factors and thus fail to recognize the intuitiveness of those truths (e.g., the denier of the principle of excluded middle).[33] In his *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d.1210) commented that it is as if Avicenna held intuitive truths to be able to become non-intuitive, on account of factors external to the intrinsic content of those truths.[34]

## 4-Restoration After Avicenna

Post-Avicennian authors can be classified into three main groups regarding their attitude towards the possibility of restoration: those who unambiguously rejected it; those who unambiguously defended it; and those who were ambiguous, inconsistent, or non-committal.

The first group includes a variety of thinkers sortable into several subgroups. First come Avicenna's own direct or indirect disciples such as Bahmanyār ibn Marzubān (d. 1066) and ʾAbū al-ʿAbbās al-Lawkarī (d.1123), whose case against restoration was based on Avicenna's.[35] Second are the two late Muʿtazilites, Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d.1044) and Ibn al-Malāḥimī (d.1141), as well as the Imami Sadīd al-Dīn al-Ḥimmāṣī (d. early 13th C.) whom they influenced: Their case against restoration mainly targeted the Bahshamite conception of restoration.[36] Third is Shihab al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d.1191), whose rejection of restoration influences later authors affiliated with the Ishrāqī school – such as Ibn Kammūna (d.1284), Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī (d. late 13th C.), and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī (d.1311) – as well as Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d.1274). Ṭūsī in turn influenced the later Imami tradition, i.e., Kamāl al-Dīn al-Baḥrānī (d.1299-1300), al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d.1325), and al-Miqdād al-Suyūrī (d.1423).[37] Lastly, restoration was rejected by authors of

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33    See *Mubāḥathāt*, 154–155.

34    See *Mabāḥith*, I, 48. A similar remark is also present in Shahrazūrī, *Shajara*, II, 47. Taftazānī quotes the *Mabāḥith* but rejects this reasoning – *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, V, 85.

35    See Bahmanyār, *Taḥṣīl*, 290; Lawkarī, *Bayān al-ḥaqq*, 31.

36    See Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Fāʾiq*, 526–532; Id., *Tuḥfat al-mutakallimīn fī al-radd ʿalà al-falāsifa*, 175–179; Ḥimmaṣī, *al-Munqiḏ min al-taqlīd*, Ed. M.H. al-Yusufi al-Gharawi (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1991), II, 190–196.

37    See Suhrawardī, *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, Ed. H. Corbin (Tehran: Pizhūhishgāh-e ʿOlūm-e Insānī va Motāʿlaʿāt-e Farhangī, 1993), 238–239; Ibn Kammūna, *Kāshif*, Ed. Ḥ.N. Iṣfahānī (Tehran: Moʾassase-ye Pazhūheshī-ye Ḥikmat wa Falsafe-ye Irān, 2008), 86–88; Shahrazūrī, *Rasāʾil al-shajara al-ilāhiyya fī*

the late Persian tradition such as Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī (d.1498 or 1499), Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (d.1502), Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Dashtakī (d.1542), Mīr Damād (d.1631), and Mullā Ṣadrā (d.1640): Their approach to the issue stands out for their desire to rediscover the early sources (i.e., Avicenna's *Shifā ʾ* and *Mubāḥathāt*).[38]

The group of the defenders of restoration encompasses the majority of post-Avicennian Ashʿarites such as Abū al-Fatḥ al-Shahrastānī (d. 1153), Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī (d.1233), ʿAbd Allah al-Bayḍāwī (d. between 1286 and 1316), Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. c. 1310), Shams al-Dīn al-Isfahānī (d. 1348), ʿAḍuḍ al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 1355), Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftazānī (d.1390), possibly al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d.1414), Ibn ʿArafa (d.1401), ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Qushjī (d.1474), and Abū ʿAbdallah al-Sanusī (d. c. 1490).[39] Their defence of restoration drew on classic Ashʿarite sources such as

*ʿulūm al- ḥaqāʾiq al-rubbāniyya*, Ed. N. Ḥabībī (Tehran: Moʾassase-ye Pizhūhishī-ye Ḥikmat va Falsafeh, 2004), 44–48; Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī, *Sharḥ Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, Eds. ʿA. Nūrānī, M. Muḥaqqiq (Tehran: Moʾassase-ye Muṭālaʿāt-e Islāmī, Dānishgāh Tihrān, McGill University, 2001), 509; Ṭūsī, *Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*, Ed. M.J. al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī ([Tehran]: Maktab al-Iʿlām al-Islāmī,1986), 199; Id., *Talkhīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣal*, Ed. ʿA. Nūrānī (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwāʾ, 1985), 390–392; Id., *Qawāʾiq al-ʿaqāʾiq*, in *Talkhīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣal*, 463; Baḥrānī, *Qawāʾid al-marām fī ʿilm al-kalām*, Ed. A.M. al-Muẓaffar (Kerbala: al-ʿAtaba al-Ḥusayniyya al-Muqaddasa, 2014), 358–360; Ḥillī, *al-Asrār al-khafiya fī al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya* (Qom: Moʾassase-ye Bustān-e Ketāb, 2009), 417–418; Id., *Kashf al-murād fī sharḥ Tajrīd al-iʿtiqād*, Ed. Ḥ.Ḥ. al-Amolī (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1986), 73–75; Suyūrī, *al-Lawāmiʿ al-ilāhiyya fī al-mabāḥith al-kalāmiyya*, Ed. M. al-Ṭabāṭābāʾī (Tabriz: Maṭbaʿat Shafaq, 1976), 368–369. On Ḥilli's conception in particular the reader may also refer to S. Schmidke, *The Theology of al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d.726/1325)* (Klaus Schawarz Verlag: Berlin, 1991), 211–222.

38  See Dawānī, *Ḥāshiya ʿalà Sharḥ al-Qushjī*, in Qushjī, *Sharḥ Tajrīd al-ʿaqaʾid*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), Harvard College Library, Widener Library, OL 22800.10.5f, 66–68; Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Dashtakī, *Ḥawāshī al-Shifāʾ*, 438–457; Mīr Dāmād, *al-Ufq al-mubīn*, Ed. Ḥ.N. Iṣfahānī (Tehran: Markaz-e Pizhūheshī-e Mīrāth-e Maktūb, 2013) 153–171; Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya*, I, 353–362. In addition to the 'Avicennian' case against restoration, Mīr Dāmād presented a refutation based on his own Yemeni philosophy, and in particular on the claim that, at the level of 'eternity' (*dahr*), all temporal existents are immutably fixed and co-existent, and that each one of them has a pre-eternally determined position in the temporal order and cannot occupy any other position, for otherwise a single entity would have two instances of existence – see *Ufq*, 155–156.

39  See Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat al-aqdām fī ʿilm al-kalām*, Ed. A. Guillaume (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 468; Āmidī, *Abkār*, IV, 249–260; Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār min maṭāliʿ al-anẓār*, Ed. ʿA. Sulaymān (Cairo-Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya li-al-Turath, Dār al-Jil, 1991), 220–221; Samarqandī, *al-Ṣaḥāʾif al-ilāhiyya*, Ed. A.ʿA. Al-Sharīf (Kuwait, 1985), 91–93; Ījī, *al-Mawāqif fī ʿilm al-kalām* (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub), 371–372; Taftazānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, Ed. ʿA. ʿUmayra (Beirut: ʿAlam al-Kutub, 1998), V, 82–88; Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī ʿalà al-Mawāqif li-l-ʿAḍud al-Ījī* ([Istanbul]: Dār al-Ṭibāʿa al-ʿĀmira, 1894), II, 440–442; Ibn ʿArafa, *al-Mukhtaṣar al-kalāmī*, ed. A.ʿA. Sāyiḥ (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya), 976–980; Qushjī, *Sharḥ Tajrīd al-ʿaqāʾid*, MS Cambridge (Massachusetts), Harvard College Library, Widener Library, OL 22800.10.5f, 66–68; Sanūsī, *Sharḥ ʿaqīdat ahl al-tawḥīd al-kubrà*, in Ismāʿīl al-Ḥāmidī, *Ḥawāshī ʿalà Sharḥ al-kubrà li-l-Sanūsī*, Eds. M.A. ʿImrān and R.M. al-Ḥalbī (Cairo: Maktaba Muṣṭafā al-Babī al-Ḥalbī wa-Awlādi-hi, 1936), 493–494. Some information on the attitude of the late Ashʿarites towards restoration can be found also in A. Al-Ghouz, 'Recasting al-Bayḍāwī's Eschatological Concept of Bodily Resurrection: Shams al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī and Aḥmad al-Ījī in Comparative Perspective', *Mamluk Studies Review* 20 (2017), 39–54; T. Würtz, 'The Orthodox

Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d.936), Abū al-Maʿālī al-Juwaynī (d.1085), Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī (d.1111), and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d.1210). The Zaydi ʿAbd Allah al-Najrī (d.1472) also defended the possibility of restoration, although his position drew on Bahshamite authorities, instead of the Ashʿarites.[40]

The third group includes authors whose positions toward restoration is ambiguous, for a variety of reasons. Al-Ghazālī supported the possibility of restoration in his *Iqtiṣād*, but not in his *Tahāfut*, where he implicitly accepted the impossibility of restoration and conceded that the resurrected body may very well be an equivalent copy of the original.[41] While defending the possibility of restoration, al-Taftazānī also suggested an alternative deflationist position that is somewhat reminiscent of Ghazālī.[42] Al-Rāzī defended restoration in his main *kalām* works, while rejecting it in the philosophically oriented *Mabāḥith* and assuming a non-committal position in the *Mulakhkhaṣ*.[43] As a result, Rāzī exerted a decisive influence on both sides of the debate: Both deniers as well as defenders of restoration quoted his opinions to support their position. An ambiguous combination of rejection, acceptance, and non-commitment appears in two authors deeply influenced by al-Rāzī, namely Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (d.1265)[44] and Najm al-Dīn al-Qazwinī al-Kātibī (d.1276).[45] The late Muʿtazilite Taqī al-Dīn al-Najrānī (d. c. 13th C.) appeared non-committal.[46]

Conception of the Hereafter: Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftazānī's (d.793/1390) Examination of Some Muʿtazilī and Philosophical Objections', in S. Günter & T. Lawson (Eds.), *Roads to Paradise: Eschatology and Concepts of the Hereafter in Islam*, (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 469–486.

40 See Najrī, *Marqāt al-anẓār al-muntazaʿ min ghayāt al-afkār sharḥ al-qalāʾid fī taṣḥīḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, MS Privately-owned by Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Kibsī [contactable via the Imam Zayd ibn ʿAlī Cultural Foundation (Yemen), manuscript accessible at https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/9978494763506421#view], 189–190.

41 See *Iqtiṣād*, 213–215; *Tahāfut*, 214–219.

42 In this proposal, the resurrected body must be perceptually indiscernible from the original, regardless of whether the two are metaphysically identical or not – see Taftazānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, V, 88.

43 See *Arbaʿīn*, II, 39–44; *Mabāḥiṭ*, I, 47; *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa-al-mutaʾakhkhirīn min al-ʿulamāʾ wa-al-ḥukamāʾ wa-al-mutakallimīn*, Ed. Ṭ.A. Saʿd (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyya al-Azhariyya, 1978), 231, 234; *Mulakhkhaṣ*, 77a, 237a–237b; *Nihāya*, IV, 108–114.

44 See Abharī, *Maqāṣid al-marāṣid*, MS Istanbul, Ragib Pasa Kitapliği, 682, 36r–36v; Id., *Kashf al-ḥaqāʾiq*, MS Tehran, Ketābkhāne-ye Majles-e Shūrā-ye Millī, 9:2752, 111–113. Abharī is skeptical of most classic arguments for the impossibility of restoration.

45 See Kātibī, *Jāmiʿ al-daqāʾiq fī kashf al-ḥaqāʾiq*, MS Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Départment de Manuscrits, Arabe 2370, 149r–149v (rejects restoration); Id., *Hikmat al-ʿayn*, Ed. Ṣ. Āydīn (Cairo, 2002), 7–8 (non-committal); Id., *al-Mufaṣṣal fī sharḥ al-Muḥaṣṣal*, MS Istanbul, Ragib Pasa Kitapliği, 648, 234v–235v (accepts restoration).

46 Najrānī had a goal-oriented perspective on restoration: without being fully committed to the idea, he defended it as one of the possible ways to defend corporeal resurrection. Remarkably enough, he mentioned the Zaydis as defenders of his "whatever it takes" approach to resurrection – see Najrānī,

In summary, the majority of post-Avicennian schools rejected the possibility of restoration, and hesitations can be found among its defenders. This situation becomes particularly striking when compared to the doctrinal landscape before Avicenna, where the great majority of theologians accepted the possibility of restoration (at least in the case of certain classes of entities). The shift can be explained by the sum of three main contextual elements.

The first is that all the above-mentioned authors (with the exception of some Zaydis like Najrī) rejected the doctrine of the reality of the non-existent.[47] Avicenna drew an implication between the unreality of the non-existent and the impossibility of its restoration: Upon accepting the former, one must accept the latter. Most authors admitted the validity of the implication, even when they otherwise disagreed with Avicenna. A noteworthy example is Ibn al-Malāḥimī, who supported Avicenna's attack on restoration despite being hostile toward him on all matters concerning anthropology and eschatology.[48] Najrī himself accepted the implication counterfactually: Had the non-existent been unreal, it would have been impossible to restore. As noticed by al-Rāzī, the Ashʿarite school was a true exception in this regard, being the only group to defend the compatibility between the unreality of the non-existent and the possibility of its restoration.[49]

The second of the contextual elements is the diffusion of Avicenna's spiritualist anthropology among the *mutakallimūn*. The existence of an incorporeal, immortal soul was accepted by several key figures of post-Avicennian theology (e.g., al-Ghazālī, al-Rāzī, al-Ṭūsī), even though that position was far from unanimous.[50] The issue is relevant in this context because the existence of a soul that survives bodily death safeguards the identity of the resurrected individual without the need for restoration. If the principle of a person's identity is their soul, and if the soul persists after the dissolution of the body, restoration becomes unnecessary: The person is the same because the (persistent) soul is the same, not because something annihilated has been restored. From a spiritualist perspective, the restoration of the non-existent loses most of its eschatological importance, being only relevant for

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*al-Kāmil fī istiqṣāʾ fī-mā balagha-nā min kalām al-qudamāʾ*, Ed. M. al-Shāhid (Cairo: Jumhūriyya Miṣr al-ʿArabiyya, Wizārat al-Awqāf, al-Majlis al-Aʿlā li-al-Shuʾūn al-Islāmiyya, 1999), 417–421, 425–432.

47      Najrī followed the Bahshamite masters on the issue.

48      See Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Fāʾiq*, 530–532; Id., *Tuḥfa*, 177–178. See also *infra*, Section 4.

49      See *Arbaʿīn*, II, 39.

50      Agnostic positions are found in Āmidī (*Abkār*, IV, 302) and Najrānī (*Kāmil*, 427–430). Forms of corporealism are defended by Ibn al-Malāḥimī (*Tuḥfa*, 154–168), Ḥimmaṣī (*Munqiḍ*, I, 291–296), Baḥrānī (*Qawāʿid*, 365–367), Ḥillī (*Asrār*, 364–369), and Suyūrī (*Lawāmiʿ*, 369–370).

the secondary question of whether the body acquired at resurrection is numerically the same as the original. In short, spiritualism strips restoration of most of the eschatological function that had originally elicited its formulation.

The third contextual element is that, even among those who defended purely corporealist anthropologies, several authors employed models of resurrection that bypass the need for restoration, or at least attempt to do so. Thinkers such as Ibn al-Malāḥimī, Ḥimmāṣī, Baḥrānī, and Ḥillī hold the reassembly model (originally defended by the Karrāmites and possibly Abū ʿUthmān al-Jāḥiẓ): Resurrection consists in the re-composition of the material parts of the body after their separation.[51] Restoration *ex nihilo* is believed to be unnecessary as the individual is essentially the sum of their material parts (or at least some of them), that remain existent. The validity of this position is highly questionable.[52] What matters here, however, is that the adoption of the reassembly model contributes to explaining why several corporealist authors dismissed restoration.

## 5-Arguments Against Restoration

### 5.1- Arguments based on Unreality and its Implications

Avicenna's rejection of restoration exerted a decisive influence over the subsequent debates on the matter: Of the six main deductive arguments against the possibility of restoration discussed by post-Avicennian authors, three were already present in Avicenna's texts. This and the subsequent subsection will go through the arguments one by one, highlighting the most relevant developments they underwent in the tradition, as well as the challenges they faced.

This subsection will focus on three arguments that share the unreality of the non-existent as an implicit or explicit assumption: (1) the argument based on indiscernibility, (2) the argument based on the impossibility of predication, and (3) the argument based on the impossibility of intermittence.

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51    See Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Fāʾiq*, 517; Id., *Tuḥfa*, 175; Ḥimmaṣī, *Munqiḏ*, II, 180–189; Baḥrānī, *Qawāʿid*, 358–369; Ḥillī, *Asrār*, 573.

52    Al-Rāzī contended the individuation of a corporeal entity to depend on certain accidents that are annihilated at the moment of the dissolution of the entity: If restoration were impossible, the reassembled entity would not be the same as the original, since its individuating accidents would be absent (*Muḥaṣṣal*, 234; *Mulakhkhaṣ*, 237r–237v). Attempts at solving this problem without accepting the restoration of the non-existent can be found in Najrī (*Kāmil*, 430–431) and Baḥrānī (*Qawāʿid*, 351–352).

The (1) argument based on indiscernibility was already present in Avicenna's texts. *Al-Shifāʾ* presented a very concise version of the proof which was then significantly clarified and expanded upon in *al-Mubāḥathāt*.[53] The reasoning is as follows. Let *A* be the original annihilated entity, *B* the (supposedly) restored entity, and *C* a newly created equivalent copy of *B*. Avicenna claimed that *B* and *C* differ in nothing except number: They are numerically different entities, yet share all attributes. No way exists at this point to discriminate between *B* and *C* when it comes to determine which of the two deserves to be *A*, all their attributes being identical: It follows that none of the two can be said to be *A*. Avicenna was not crystal clear as to why that is the case, but the issue appears to revolve around the principle of sufficient reason: If none of the two 'deserves to be *A*' more than the other, then they are equivalent insofar as being *A* is concerned (i.e., one cannot say that one is *A* while saying that the other is not).

A preliminary objection implicitly considered in *al-Shifāʾ* and explicitly expressed in *al-Mubāḥathāt* argued that the distinction between *B* and *C* comes down to their ontological history: *B* is the entity that existed previously and was annihilated, whereas *C* had no previous existence. In other words, *B* has a specific historical relation with *A* that is not shared by *C*.

Avicenna presented two answers to the objection. The first, questionable answer postulates that the objection is begging the conclusion: It presumes the very discernibility Avicenna's argument is putting into question. In other words, the objection employs the identity between B and A in order to ground the discernibility between B and C, but the two (i.e., the identity and the discernibility) are actually the same fact[54]. The second, more robust answer argues that the objection entails the reality of the non-existent, for it assumes the annihilated entity to retain a persistent identity after losing existence, that persistent identity being the grounding for the possibility of tracing the entity's ontological history. In other words, discrimination *via* ontological history would require persistence of identity after annihilation, which in turn requires the reality of the non-existent. However, the reality of the non-existent is absurd.

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53   See Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt.*, I, 36; Id., *Mubāḥathāt*, 154, 326–327.

54   This answer is questionable because the adversary could retort that Avicenna's own argument begs the conclusion (i.e., it assumes that the above-mentioned discrimination via ontological history does not obtain). The point at stake is precisely whether that form of discrimination is possible.

The argument based on indiscernibility remained popular in the post-Avicennian tradition, and its formulation saw comparatively little development,[55] a relevant exception being Ibn al-Malāḥimī's *ad hoc* refutation of the Bahshamites.[56]

The post-Avicennian critics of the argument based on indiscernibility appealed to the identity of the indiscernibles: if two entities share all attributes, they are numerically the same. In other words, Avicenna's argument rested on the unacceptable premise that numerically different but indiscernible entities (B and C in the example) can exist. The critics also pointed out that, were the identity of the indiscernibles rejected in the case of restoration, it would also be rejected in other cases as well: A newly created could have an indiscernible copy. In sum, the rejection of the identity of the indiscernibles is a crucial (and perhaps unintended) implication of the Avicennian argument.[57]

Al-Rāzī delved deeper in this question, drawing a distinction between epistemic indiscernibility (possible but inconsequential) and real indiscernibility (impossible): One may fail to distinguish an individual entity from another by not being able to grasp its discerning attribute(s); however, this does not mean that the two are really indiscernible (i.e., that they share all attributes). In sum, al-Rāzī implied the Avicennian argument to be based on the erroneous overlap between epistemic and real indiscernibility.[58]

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55    See Bahmanyār, *Taḥṣīl*, Ed. M. Moṭahharī (Tehran: Dāneshgāh-e Tehrān, 1996), 290; Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 214; Lawkarī, *Bayān al-ḥaqq bi-ḍaman al-ṣidq, al-Ilāhiyyāt*, Ed. I. Dibaji (Tehran: al-Maʿhad al-ʿĀlī al-ʿĀlamī li-al-Fikr wa-al-Ḥaḍāra al-Islāmiyya, 1994), 31; Ibn al-*Malāḥimī*, *Fāʾiq*, 529–532; Id., *Tuḥfa*, 177–178; Rāzī, *Arbaʿīn*, II, 42–44; Id., *Mabāḥith*, I, 48; Id., *Muḥaṣṣal*, 231–232; Id., *Mulakhkha~*, 80v; Id., *Nihāya*, 110, 113; Ḥimmaṣī, *Munqiḏ*, II, 193–195; Āmidī, *Abkār*, IV, 253, 256–257; Abharī, *Tanzīl*, 46v; Kātibī, *Ḥikma*, 8; Ṭūsī, *Tajrīd*, 119; Id., *Talkhī~ al-Muḥaṣṣal*, 392; Ibn Kammūna, *Kāshif*, 87; Shahrazūrī, *Shajara*, II, 45–47; Samarqandī, *Ṣaḥāʾif*, 92–93; Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāliʿ*, 220–221; Id., *Miṣbāḥ al-anwār*, 191; Ḥillī, *Asrār*, 417; Id., *Kashf*, 73; Iṣfahānī, *Tasdīd al-qawaʿid fī sharḥ Tajrīd al-ʿaqāʾid*, Ed. Kh. Al-ʿAdwānī (Kuwait: Dār al-Ḍiyāʾ, 2012), I, 339, 341; Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 372; Taftazānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqā~id*, V, 87; Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, II, 442; Qushjī, *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, 68; Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Dashtakī, *Ḥawashī al-Shifāʾ*, 438–445; Mīr Dāmād, *Ufq*, 157–159; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ḥikma*, I, 359–360.

56    He argued that the Bahshamites could not avoid indiscernibility even if the reality of the non-existent were conceded, since they believe that non-existent entities lose all their individuating attributes: A non-existent atom is just an atom, devoid of all attributes that make it distinguishable from another atom. Not even an omniscient being can discriminate a non-existent entity from any other non-existent entity of the same species.

57    See Rāzī, *Arbaʿīn*, II, 44; Āmidī, *Abkār*, IV, 256–257; Abharī, *Tanzīl*, 46v; Kātibī, *Ḥikma*, 8; Ṭūsī, *Talkhīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣal*, 392; Samarqandī, *Ṣaḥāʾif*, 92–93; Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāliʿ*, 220–221; Id., *Miṣbāḥ al-anwār*, 191; Iṣfahānī, *Tasdīd*, I, 341; Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 372; Taftazānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, V, 87; Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, II, 442; Qushjī, *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, 68.

58    Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal*, 232; Id., *Nihāya*, IV, 113–114. The same reasoning is mentioned by Taftazānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, V, 87; Qushjī, *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, 68.

The answer to this kind of objection maintains that rejecting the identity of the indiscernibles is indeed possible. Al-Ṭūsī's reasoning is noteworthy in that it puts Razi's perspective on its head: The restored entity *B* and its identical copy *C* would share all real attributes, the only discrimination between them being purely conceptual or imaginative.

The (2) argument based on the impossibility of predication was not explicitly present in Avicenna's texts, even though its historical roots are to be found in the argument based on indiscernibility, as it can be seen in Bahmanyār and Lawkarī's formulations of the latter.[59] Al-Rāzī elaborates the argument from impossibility of predication as a truly distinct proof, providing it with the standard formulation found in the subsequent tradition: the non-existent is an unreal non-entity, and a non-entity cannot possess attributes, including that specific attribute which is the possibility of restoration.[60] Al-Rāzī explained that the first premise (the unreality of the non-existent) is intuitive, whereas the second (the impossibility of ascribing attributes to the unreal) requires demonstration. He was referring to Avicenna's proof for the impossibility of ascribing attributes to what is non-existent (and unreal): If an attribute were true of a non-existent subject, that attribute would inhere in that subject, but nothing can inhere in what is non-existent.[61]

Objections against the argument follow two basic lines of reasoning. The first argues that unreals can indeed possess attributes despite being unreal, because the opposite claim is self-contradictory: To say that the unreal cannot be ascribed attributes entails the ascription of the attribute "cannot be ascribed attributes" to the unreal. It is true that the unreal cannot possess positive attributes; however, restorability is not a positive attribute.[62]

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59 Their version of the argument based on indiscernibility mentions that the non-existent cannot possess attributes, which is the basic idea behind the argument based on the impossibility of predication. Their reasoning goes as follows: Restoration requires the non-existent to be distinct from its like; distinction requires the subject of distinction to be ascribed a positive attribute which is the ground of the distinction; however, the non-existent cannot possess positive attributes – see Bahmanyār, *Taḥṣīl*, 290; Lawkarī, *Bayān*, 31.

60 See Rāzī, *Arbaʿīn*, II, 42; Id., *Mabāḥith*, I, 47; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 231; Id., *Mulakhkhaṣ*, 80v; Id., *Nihāya*, IV, 109; Āmidī, *Abkār*, IV, –252–253; Abharī, *Tanzīl*, 46r–46v; Kātibī, *Ḥikma*, 8; Id., *Mufaṣṣal*, 235r–235v; Ṭūsī, *Tajrīd*, 119; Id., *Talkhīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣal*, 392; Ibn Kammūna, *Kāshif*, 87; Shahrazūrī, *Shajara*, II, 45–47; Samarqandī, *Ṣaḥāʾif*, 92; Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāliʿ*, 220–221; Id., *Miṣbāḥ*, 191; Ḥillī, *Asrār*, 417; Id., *Kashf*, 73–74; Iṣfahānī, *Tasdīd*, I, 335–338; Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 372; Taftazānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, V, 87; Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, II, 442; Qushjī, *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, 66–68; Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Dashtakī, *Ḥawāshī al-Shifāʾ*, 438–445; Mīr Dāmād, *Ufq*, 157-159; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ḥikma*, I, 359–360.

61 See Avicenna, *Ilāhiyyāt*, I, 32–33.

62 See Rāzī, *Arbaʿīn*, II, 44; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 232; Id., *Nihāya*, IV, 111–112; Āmidī, *Abkār*, IV, 256; Abharī, *Tanzīl*, 46v; Kātibī, *Ḥikma*, 8; Id., *Mufaṣṣal*, 235r–235v; Samarqandī, *Ṣaḥāʾif*, 92; Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāliʿ*, 220–221; Id., *Miṣbāḥ*, 191; Ḥillī, *Kashf*, 74 Iṣfahānī, *Tasdīd*, I, 341; Qushjī, *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, 66.

The answer against this first objection begins by outlining a conceptualist understanding of predication concerning the unreal: The latter possesses attributes in the sense that its mental concept is the subject of those attributes, not in the sense that the unreal as such is their subject. The answer continues by pointing out that, despite conceptualist predication being possible with respect to the unreal, only certain specific attributes (e.g., impossibility of restoration) can be true of it: That is because unreality is the reason why those attributes are ascribable to the unreal. The opposite holds true when dealing with the possibility of restoration: Unreality is the reason why that attribute is negated of it.[63]

The second kind of objection against the argument based on unreality concedes that the unreal as such cannot possess attributes and adopts the above-mentioned conceptualist understanding of predication, while defending the possible truth of the judgement ascribing restoration to the unreal. The subject of the attribute "possibility of restoration" is the mental concept corresponding to the unreal, not the unreal as such; however, the presence of that mental concept is enough to ground the possibility of the judgement "This annihilated entity can be restored". In other words, mental intentionality grounds the possibility of ascribing restoration to unreal entities.[64]

The answer to this second objection contends that the judgement "This annihilated entity is restorable" cannot be possibly true, because the possibility of its truth rests on the sum of two conditions that are unsatisfiable as a whole: (a) its subject has a real referent, and (b) the referent is the same as the annihilated entity. None of the things the subject of the proposition may designate satisfies the sum of the two conditions.[65] In brief, the ascription of restorability to the annihilated cannot be true because the identity of the annihilated is not preservable, not even as an intentional referent of the mind.[66]

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63    See Samarqandī, *Ṣaḥāʾif*, 92; Iṣfahānī, *Tasdīd*, I, 337–338.

64    See Āmidī, *Abkār*, IV, 253; Ḥillī, *Kashf*, 73–74; Iṣfahānī, *Tasdīd*, I, 340; Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 372; Taftazānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, V, 87; Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, II, 442; Qushjī, *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, 67.

65    The subject may designate: (1) the annihilated itself, (2) the mental concept of the annihilated, (3) a real entity corresponding to the mental concept. (1) fails to satisfy (a) (the subject has a real referent), being an unreal non-entity. (2) does not satisfy (b) (the referent is the same as the annihilated), because it does not exist extra-mentally. (3) also fails to satisfy (b), for multiple entities are equally suited to correspond to a single concept, making it impossible to determine which of them is the restored.

66    See Ibn Kammūna, *Kāshif*, 87; Iṣfahānī, *Tasdīd*, I, 340–341; Taftazānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, V, 87; Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, II, 442.

The (3) argument based on the impossibility of intermittence is not present in Avicenna's texts. Its first formulation is probably ascribable to al-Ṭūsī, and its discussion became commonplace in the late 13th and early 14th century.[67] Al-Ṭūsī's version of the proof argued that, due to the non-existent being unreal, and the restored needing to be the same as the original, restoration would entail that a single, unitary entity has a gap: Absolute unreality would be inserted between an entity and itself, which is absurd. Some later authors presented a distinct formulation that spotted an absurdity not in the presence of a gap *per se*, but rather in the fact that the gap would entail the temporal priority of a thing over itself. Noteworthily, the epistemic status of the argument based on the impossibility of intermittence is a matter of dispute in the tradition: Authors debated whether the argument is an appeal to intuition or an actual deductive demonstration.[68]

Both formulations of the argument were challenged. As for the first (the gap in itself being absurd), the critics contended that the gap is actually nothing more than the temporal succession of existential states: existence, followed by non-existence, followed by existence. In other words, the gap concerns something accidental for the entity in question (the time of its existence), not something essential to it (its existence as such).[69] I am unaware of any specific answers to this objection.

The second formulation of the argument (temporal priority being absurd) was criticized in two ways. First, there is no absurdity in stating that a single entity, when considered with certain accidental attributes (e.g., being young), is temporally prior to itself, when considered with other accidental attributes (being old). Second, the idea that temporal priority is impossible has unacceptable implications, for

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67    On the argument see Ṭūsī, *Tajrīd*, 119; Id., *Talkhīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣal*, 392; Id., *Qawāʾid al-ʿaqāʾid*, 463; Ibn Kammūna, *Kāshif*, 87–88; Ḥillī, *Kashf*, 73; Shams al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, *Tasdīd*, I, 341; Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 371; Taftazānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, V, 85–86; Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, II, 441; Qushjī, *Sharḥ Tajrīd*, 67; Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Dashtakī, *Ḥawashī al-Shifāʾ*, 446, 448; Mīr Dāmād, *Ufq*, 159–160; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ḥikma*, I, 356.

68    Ijī and Jurjānī believed the argument to come down to an appeal to intuition. Taftazānī argued that it must be considered a proper demonstrative syllogism with intuitive premises. Kātip Çelebī (d.1657) presented three possible interpretations: (a) the argument is not a demonstration but rather an 'admonition' (*tanbīh*) devised to make the mind focus on an intuitive truth; (b) the argument is not an actual proof, as the premise is only verbally different from the conclusion; (c) the argument is a properly syllogistic demonstration, but its syllogism follows *necessarily and intuitively from the very conceptualization of the terms in question* – see Kātip Çelebī, *Ḥāshiya ʿalā Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, in Jurjānī, *Sharḥ* al-Mawāqif, II, 499.

69    See Iṣfahānī, *Tasdīd*, I, 341; Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, II, 441; Qushjī, *Sharḥ Tajrīd*, 67; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ḥikma*, I, 356.

this could be applied to persistence as well, with the consequence that no entity could persist, because a persistent entity at the beginning of its existence would be temporally prior to itself at the end of its existence.[70]

The defenders of the second formulation draw a distinction between real priority and merely conceptual priority. In the case of restoration, the same entity has two temporally separate instantiations: That is real temporal priority, which is absurd. In the case of persistence, the persistent entity is a single continuous instantiation whose temporal parts are only conceptually distinguishable from one another: That is conceptual or imaginative temporal priority, which is not absurd.[71]

## 5.2- Arguments based on the Markers of Individuation

This subsection focuses on a group of three arguments against restoration that share a common idea: The restoration of entities is impossible because the restoration of one of their markers of individuation is impossible. To be more specific, the arguments consider the following markers of individuation (1) the original portion of time, (2) existence, and (3) the causes.

The (1) argument based on the restoration of time appears in Avicenna's *al-Shifāʾ* and *al-Mubāḥathāt*.[72]

The restoration of an entity requires the restoration of the portion of time when the entity existed, because time is one of its markers of individuation (i.e., this entity is "this" only if it exists during this portion of time).[73] However, the restoration of an entity is incompatible with that of its original portion of time, because the entity can be qualified as being restored as opposed to being original only in the case when it exists at a moment following that of its annihilation: What exists at the original moment is the initial entity, not the restored entity. However, the need to restore the original portion of time as well has been demonstrated, which entails that the entity exists at the original moment, not at a following

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70    See Qushjī, *Sharḥ Tajrīd*, 67; Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Dashtakī, *Ḥawashī al-Shifāʾ*, 448; Mīr Dāmād, *Ufq*, 160–161; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ḥikma*, I, 356.

71    See al-Dīn al-Dashtakī, *Ḥawashī al-Shifāʾ*, 448; Mīr Dāmād, *Ufq*, 160–161; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ḥkma*, I, 356.

72    See *Ilāhiyyāt*, I, 36; *Mubāḥathāt*, 154.

73    Avicenna's claim is actually even stronger than this, for he says that time is one of the "specific characteristics on account of which [an entity] is what it is" (*al-khawāṣṣ allatī kānat bi-hā huwa mā huwa*). This seems to entail that time is not simply a sign of individuation, but rather one of its causes or conditions.

moment. So, the restored entity is not the restored entity, but rather the original: That is self-contradictory.[74]

Suhrawardī presented a simpler formulation of the argument. The restoration of an entity requires the restoration of time, but the restoration of time is intrinsically impossible. That is because the essence of a portion of time is necessarily connected to its position in the temporal succession: The same portion of time cannot exist after itself.[75] The post-Avicennian tradition is receptive to both formulations (i.e., Avicenna's and al-Suhrawardi's).[76]

Objections against the argument follow one of two lines of argumentation. The first contends that time is not to be counted among the markers of a thing's individuation: Pure temporal differentiation is known to have no effect on the individuation of an entity (e.g., Zayd today is the same as Zayd yesterday).[77]

The defenders of the argument answer that the marker of individuation is not time as such, or any random portion of time, but rather the temporal continuum an entity exists in, the extension of time that stretches from its creation to its annihilation.[78] This answer draws near to the proof based on the impossibility of intermittence.[79]

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74  Avicenna adds a dialectical corroboration aimed at proving that the *mutakallimūn* must accept that time is restorable. For the *mutakallimūn*, the time of an entity is either an existent in its own right, or the coincidence of that entity with a certain accident (on time as coincidence see Juwaynī, *Irshād*, 372). Consequently, they must accept either that time as such is restorable or that the coincident things are restorable.

75  See Suhrawardī, *Ḥikma*, 238–239

76  See Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Fāʾiq*, 537; Id., *Tuḥfa*, 177–178; Rāzī, *Arbaʿīn*, II, 42–44; Id., *Mabāḥith*, I, 48; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 231–232; Id., *Mulakhkhaṣ*, 80v; Id., *Nihāya*, IV, 109–110; Āmidī, *Abkār*, IV, 253; Abharī, *Tanzīl*, 46r–46v; Id., *Kashf*, 112–113; Kātibī, *Ḥikma*, 8; Id., *Kashf*, 149r; Id., *Mufaṣṣal*, 234v–235r; Ṭūsī, *Tajrīd*, 119; Id., *Talkhīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣal*, 392; Ibn Kammūna, *Kāshif*, 87; Shahrazūrī, *Shajara*, II, 45–46; Samarqandī, *Ṣaḥāʾif*, 92; Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāliʿ*, 220–221; Id., *Miṣbāḥ al-anwār*, 191–192; Ḥillī, *Asrār*, 417; Id., *Kashf*, 74–75; Iṣfahānī, *Tasdīd*, I, 340–341; Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 371–373; Taftazānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, V, 86-87; Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, II, 441–442; Suyūrī, *Lawāmiʿ*, 368–369; Qushjī, *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, 67–68; Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Dashtakī, *Ḥawāshī al-Shifāʾ*, 446–447, 448–451; Mīr Dāmād, *Ufq*, 161–163; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ḥikma*, I, 357–359.

77  See Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Fāʾiq*, 537; Id., *Tuḥfa*, 177–178; Rāzī, *Arbaʿīn*, II, 44; Id., *Nihāya*, IV, 112–113; Āmidī, *Abkār*, IV, 256; Abharī, *Tanzīl*, 46v; Id., *Kashf*, 112–113; Kātibī, *Ḥikma*, 8; Id., *Kashf*, 149r; Id., *Mufaṣṣal*, 235v; Samarqandī, *Ṣaḥāʾif*, 92–93; Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāliʿ*, 220–221; Id., *Miṣbāḥ al-anwār*, 191–192; Ḥillī, *Asrār*, 417; Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 371–373; Taftazānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, V, 86; Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, II, 441; Qushjī, *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, 68; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ḥikma*, I, 357.

78  See Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Dashtakī, *Ḥawāshī al-Shifāʾ*, 449–451; Mīr Dāmād, *Ufq*, 161–163; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ḥikma*, I, 357–358.

79  See *supra*, Section 5.1.

The second kind of objection concedes that time is among the markers of individuation, while arguing that its restoration is both possible in itself (in opposition to al-Suhrawardī) and compatible with the restored entity being an actual restoration (in opposition to Avicenna). The critics contend that the distinction between the initial entity and its restoration rests on the distinction between the initial moment of time and its restoration: The initial entity is what exists at the initial moment, the restored entity is what exists at the restored moment (i.e., at the same moment, but inasmuch as that moment is restored, not inasmuch as it is initial). In sum, as the defenders of restoration argue, the restored entity is what exists after the existence of the initial entity, not what exists at another moment. They conceive the moments of time as things whose essence can be abstracted from their position in the temporal succession, such that the same portion of time can exist after itself.[80]

This second objection was rejected in two ways. Firstly, a specific position in the temporal succession is something essential to any given portion of time, not something accidental to it (as the adversaries assume). As a result, no portion of time can be restored (i.e., no portion of time can exist after itself). Secondly, even if a portion of time could be restored and exist after itself, an impossibility would follow, because the posteriority of the restored portion of time would be a temporal posteriority, thus requiring the existence of an additional portion of time: That portion of time would need to be restored as well, which would entail an infinite regress.[81]

The second proof we need to consider is (2) the argument based on the restoration of existence, which played only a minor role for Avicenna.[82] However, its

80    See Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal*, 232; Āmidī, *Abkār*, IV, 256; Abharī, *Tanzīl*, 46v; Id., *Kashf*, 112; Kātibī, *Ḥikma*, 8; Id., *Kashf*, 149r; Id., *Mufaṣṣal*, 235v; Samarqandī, *Ṣaḥāʾif*, 92–93; Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāliʿ*, 220–221; Id., *Miṣbāḥ al-anwār*, 191–192; Ḥillī, *Asrār*, 417; Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 373; Taftazānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, V, 86; Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, II, 441; Qushjī, *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, 68; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ḥikma*, I, 358.

81    See Ibn Kammūna, *Kāshif*, 87; Taftazānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, V, 86–87; Qushjī, *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, 67–68; Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Dashtakī, *Ḥawāshī al-Shifāʾ*, 447; Mīr Dāmād, *Ufq*, 163; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ḥikma*, I, 358–359.

82    The argument based on the restoration of existence is mentioned in the *Mubāḥathāt*, together with the argument from the restoration of time (see *Mubāḥathāt*, 326–327). If a non-existent entity were restored, its existence would need to be restored as well. Therefore, the restored entity would not possess a second instance of existence, but rather the original instance of existence, and so the thing would not be restored, for the restored is what acquires a second instance of existence after having lost the first. This is self-contradictory. The *Mubāḥathāt* also mention a possible objection on behalf of the Bahshamites: The restoration of an entity does not necessitate the restoration of existence simply because existence cannot be restored. Indeed, for the Bahshamites existence is a 'state' (*ḥāl*), and states cannot be qualified as being existent, let alone being restored (i.e., existent a second time). On the theory of states see R. Frank, *Beings and their Attributes. The Teaching of the Basrian School of the Muʿtazila in the Classical Period*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1978), 8–28; Id., 'Abū Hāshim's Theory of 'States': Its Structure and Function', in D. Gutas

reformulations gained relevance in al-Abharī, al-Ṭūsī and the Ishrāqis.[83] Al-Abharī, Ibn Kammūna and al-Shahrazūrī present the most detailed version of the argument, which begins with a disjunction: the existence of the restored entity is either the same as that of the original, or something different from it. In the former case, the restored would not be restored: it would be the original, since it would possess the existence of the original. In the latter case, the quiddity of the restored would acquire the preparation (i.e., the complete potentiality) to receive that new existence, and that preparation would be due to the presence of some attribute that the original did not possess, the consequence being that the restored would not be the same as the original (consisting in the original together with that additional attribute).

The critics of the argument posit that the restored may possess the same existence as the original, without ceasing to be restored. The existence of the two is the same despite differing in accidental and relational attributes (e.g., the fact of existing at different times and together with different things).[84]

Finally, the third argument is based on (3) the restoration of the causes, which is not explicitly mentioned in Avicenna's texts. To the best of my knowledge, Ibn al-Malāḥimī was the first *mutakallim* to present a clear formulation of the argument, ascribing it to the philosophers in general (not to Avicenna in particular). Ibn al-Malāḥimī's formulation asserts that the origination of a certain entity is necessarily connected to certain set of individual causes: the entity cannot be restored because those causes cannot recur.[85] This version of the argument does not explain why the recurrence of the causes is impossible: It appears to rely on the pure implausibility

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(Ed.), *Early Islamic Theology: The Muʿtazilīs and al-Ashʿarī. Texts and Studies in the Development of the History of Kalām*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 85–100; J. Tiele, 'Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾi's (d.321/933) Theory of 'States' (aḥwāl) and its Adaption by Ashʿarite Theologians', in S. Schmidke (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 364–383.

83    See Abharī, *Kashf*, 111–112; Ṭūsī, *Tajrīd*, 119; Ibn Kammūna, *Kāshif*, 88; Shahrazūrī, *Shajara*, II, 46; Ḥillī, *Kashf*, 74; Iṣfahānī, *Tasdīd*, I, 339–341; Mīr Dāmād, *Ufq*, 153.

84    See Iṣfahānī, *Tasdīd*, I, 341.

85    See Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Fāʾiq*, 532; Id., *Tuḥfa*, 177. It has been pointed out to me that the argument bears some resemblance to a critique of corporeal resurrection mentioned in Ghazālī, *Tahāfut*, 220–221. While that is undoubtedly true, notable differences exist making Ibn al-Malāḥimī's elaboration a distinct argument specifically related to restoration. Al-Ghazālī's formulation basically argues corporeal resurrection to be implausible because it would violate a universal rule of natural causation (e.g., a human being cannot be human if not born from a father). On the other hand, Ibn al-Malāḥimī's formulation argues that an individual entity cannot be restored because its specific causes are among its markers of individuation, and those causes do not recur (e.g., this human being cannot be this human being if not born from this father).

of the hypothesis. The argument based on the restoration of the causes is generally ignored throughout most of the post-Avicennian tradition, reappearing among later authors such as Mīr Dāmād and Mullā Ṣadrā.[86] They presented a more detailed formulation, explaining why the set of causes of an individual entity cannot recur. The restoration of an entity would require the restoration of all its causal factors (i.e., the efficient cause, the material cause, and the conditions that actualize the causal efficiency of the former and prepare the receptivity of the latter) which, in turn, would require the restoration of their own causal factors, and so forth. This would go on until all causal factors that existed at the initial moment are restored. As a result, the original configuration of the world as a whole would need to be restored in order for a single entity to be restored: That is deemed intuitively absurd.

While I did not come across objections against this argument (probably due to its relative obscurity), at least two rebuttals are conceivable. The first is to deny that causes are markers of individuation: What is initially created by a certain set of causal factors can be restored by another set of factors. The second way is to accept that the whole world can be restored, in a recurring cycle of events.

## 6-Arguments for Restoration

### 6.1- Arguments Based on Initial Creation, Temporal Indeterminacy, and Modal Invariance

This subsection will go through the main arguments for the possibility of restoration. In pre-Avicennian *kalām*, the case for the possibility of restoration rests on two proofs.[87] The first is (1) the argument based on the comparison with the initial creation, which builds upon a defense of resurrection presented in the Quran: Because God was able to create the human body the first time, He is also able to revive it.[88] The argument based on initial creation is a generalization of this idea. Restoration comes down to an act of giving existence, just like the initial creation: they share the same essential nature, their difference being merely extrinsic and relational (one of the two happens before the other). If initial creation is possible,

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86    *See* Mīr Dāmād, *Ufq*, 153; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ḥikma*, I, 361.

87    *See* ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, XI, 451–456; Ibn Mattawayh, *Tadhkira*, 237; Juwaynī, *Irshād*, 372–373; Ghazālī, *al-Iqtiṣād fī al-iʿtiqād*, Eds. I.A. Cubukcu, Ḥ. Ātāy (Ankara: Nur Matbaasi, 1962), 213.

88    *See* *Quran*, 17.49, 17.98; 23.14; 23.35; 23.82; 36.78; 37.16; 37.53; 56.47; 75.3; 79.11.

then restoration is also possible, since things that share the same essential nature do not differ in their modal status. Initial creation is possible, since it happened, and so restoration is also possible.

The second proof for restoration (which might be considered a corroboration or reformulation of the first) is (2) the argument based on the temporal indeterminacy of creation, found in both Ashʿarite and Bahshamite works, albeit in two different forms. The Bahshamite version specifically concerns persistent entities, not all entities. God's capacity for creation is not temporally determinate (it does not hold true at a determinate moment as opposed to another), and the possibility of the existence of persistent things is not temporally determinate (they can exist at any moment, otherwise they would not persist): it follows that God can create any persistent entity at any moment in time.[89] The Ashʿarite version of the proof is structurally similar but differs in a crucial aspect, for it dismisses persistence as a requisite for temporal indeterminacy: Indeterminacy is true of all entities, including non-persistent entities.

The post-Avicennian case for the possibility of restoration draws on these early arguments and elements present in the Avicennian texts (conceptual tools, doubts, statements of principle). In this sense, to speak of an Avicennianized case for the possibility of restoration would be not too far-fetched. The post-Avicennian defense of restoration consists of a main widespread proof, namely (3) the argument based on modal invariance, and three ancillary proofs (the argument based on the possibility of the conceptual parts, the argument based on remembrance, and the argument based on presumptive possibility).[90] These three will be analysed in the Sub-Section 6.2.

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89    A variation of the argument from temporal indeterminacy is mentioned by Ibn Mattawayh in the form of an analogy with the postponement of creation. Restoration is essentially identical to postponement: both consist in creation at a later moment in time. Since postponement is possible, restoration is also possible – see Ibn Mattawayh, *Tadhkira*, 237.

90    A fourth minor proof appears in Mīr Dāmād, even though its original formulation is probably ascribable to a previous author I have not identified: the argument based on the analogy with annihilation. Both annihilation and restoration consist in the repetition of an ontological state that held true at a previous moment. Annihilation is the repetition of non-existence after an initial non-existence. Analogously, restoration is the repetition of existence after an initial existence. Restoration is possible because annihilation is possible and the two are equivalent, both being repetitions of an ontological state. Mīr Dāmād rejected the analogy by appealing to the unreality of the non-existent. Annihilation is not to be understood as the repetition of a state over a persistent entity: non-existence is pure unreality. Initial non-existence and annihilation are rather like the extremes of the extended, continuous existence of an object. See Mīr Dāmād, *Ufq*, 164.

Most post-Avicennian *summae* only mention the (3) argument based on modal invariance[91]. The proof consists in an overhaul of the (1) argument based on initial creation in light of elements of Avicennian ontology, and its formulation (or reformulation) is ascribable to al-Rāzī.[92] In brief, the argument deduces the possibility of restoration by combining three premises accepted in Avicennian ontology: The quiddities of annihilated entities were possibly existent before their annihilation, possibility of existence is a necessary concomitant of those quiddities, necessary concomitants are invariant. The reasoning goes as follows. The quiddity of an annihilated entity is qualified by possibility of existence, for otherwise it would not have been existent in the first place. Possibility of existence is a necessary concomitant for the quiddity in question.[93] Since the necessary concomitants of quiddities are invariant, possibility of existence cannot cease after annihilation. Consequently, an annihilated entity has the possibility of acquiring acquire existence a second time: The possibility of existence (being invariant) is true of its quiddity regardless of any circumstantial condition (e.g., having existed before). Al-Rāzī added that one who rejects the invariance of the concomitants is forced to accept the subversion (*inqilāb*) of the modal status of quiddities: A contingent quiddity may become impossible, or necessary, which is absurd.

The three main arguments being (1) based on initial creation, (2) based on temporal indeterminacy, and (3) based on modal invariance, they can be seen to be very similar to one another: They express the same basic idea. Therefore, an objection against one of them may be used against the others, or can be tweaked to do so. Here I will only consider an objection against (3) the argument from modal invariance, for the latter is by far the most influential proof in the post-Avicennian period.

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91    See Rāzī, *Arbaʿīn*, II, 40–42; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 231; Id., *Mulakhkhaṣ*, 80v; Āmidī, *Abkār*, IV, 251–252; Kātibī, *Ḥikma*, 8; Mufaṣṣal, 234v; Ṭūsī, *Tajrīd*, 119; Id., *Talkhīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣal*, 390–391; Samarqandī, *Ṣaḥāʾif*, 91–92; Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāliʿ*, 220–221; Id., *Miṣbāḥ*, 191; Ḥillī, *Asrār*, 417–418; Id., *Kashf*, 75; Iṣfahānī, *Tasdīd*, I, 341–343; Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 371; Taftazānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, V, 83–84; Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, II, 440–441; Suyūrī, *Lawāmiʿ*, 369; Qushjī, *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, 68–71; Mīr Dāmād, *Ufq*, 164–166; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ḥikma*, I, 356.

92    Most post-Rāzian authors only present the argument based on modal invariance, not the argument based on initial creation. Āmidī is an exception, mentioning two as distinct proofs– see Āmidī, *Abkār*, IV, 251–252.

93    Even if the possibility of existence were a contingent accident for the quiddity in question, it would at least be true the quiddity possibly possess possibility of existence: This would require another instance of possibility (i.e., the possibility of the possibility of existence), which in turn would be either a necessary concomitant or a contingent accident. Since an infinite regress is impossible, there must be an instance of possibility which is a necessary concomitant of the quiddity. In sum, regardless of whether the first instantiation of possibility is contingent or necessary, at least an instantiation of possibility down the line is a necessary concomitant.

The objection was probably originally formulated by al-Abharī and is based on the non-transferability of the modal status. A distinction exists between the possibility of existence *simpliciter* and the possibility of restoration, for existence *simpliciter* is more general than restoration (i.e., existence followed by non-existence followed by existence), and the possibility of what is more general does not entail the possibility of what is more specific (e.g., the possibility of walking *simpliciter* does not entail the possibility of walking on air). Therefore, the modal status of existence *simpliciter* is not transferable to restoration. The impossibility of restoration does not contradict modal invariance because the possibility of existence and the impossibility of restoration are two distinct concomitants of quiddities. No modal subversion occurs because none the two concomitants changes over time: Existence *simpliciter* is invariably possible, whereas restoration is invariantly impossible.[94]

Ījī presented an answer that is reminiscent of the early argument based on initial creation. Restored existence is essentially identical to initial existence, the two only differing in accidental and relative respects (their temporal locations). Because initial existence is possible and essentially identical things have identical concomitants, restored existence must be possible.[95]

Later authors criticized this answer as ineffective. Restored existence and initial existence may very well differ only in terms of relation, but that difference is enough to ground the possibility of a difference in their modal status.[96]

## 6.2-Ancillary Arguments

As mentioned before, the post-Avicennian case for restoration encompasses three ancillary arguments. I call these 'ancillary' because they are not particularly influential or widespread.

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94   See Abharī, *Tanzīl*, 46v; Kātibī, *Ḥikma*, 8; Ṭūsī, *Tajrīd*, 119; Id., *Talkhīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣal*, 390–391; Samarqandī, *Ṣaḥāʾif*, 91; Ḥillī, *Asrār*, 417–418; Id., *Kashf*, 75; Iṣfahānī, *Tasdīd*, I, 341–342; Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 371; Taftazānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqā~id*, V, 84; Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, II, 440; Suyūrī, *Lawāmiʿ*, 369; Qushjī, *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, 68–69; Mīr Dāmād, *Ufq*, 164–166.

95   See Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 371. Cf. Juwaynī, *Irshād*, 372–373.

96   For example, supervenient and eternal existence only differ in terms of relation – the latter relates to a previous non-existence, the former does not – but the former is impossible for God while the latter is not – see Qushjī, *Sharḥ Tajrīd*, 73–75.

The first ancillary proof as explicitly formulated by Qushjī (while arguably reminiscent of remarks by earlier authors on the easiness of restoration as opposed to initial creation) is (1) the argument from the possibility of the conceptual parts of restoration[97]. Restoration can be understood as existence followed by non-existence followed by existence. Its conceptual parts are *a* (existence), *b* (after non-existence), *c* (after existence), and *d* (the ordered succession of the previous two, i.e., *b* and *c*). Part *a* is evidently possible: existence *simpliciter* is possible. Parts *b* and *c* are also patently possible, for entities are seen to come into existence after having been non-existent and to persist after having been existent. Part *d* is possible because it is the ordered succession of possible elements. In short, restoration is possible because all the parts of its concept are possible.

The second ancillary proof for restoration is (2) the argument based on remembrance. It was mentioned by al-Ṭūsī, who ascribes it to Sadīd al-Dīn al-Ḥimmaṣī, and then by Mīr Dāmād, who implicitly quoted al-Ṭūsī.[98] The argument draws an equation between restoration and remembrance: when we remember something forgotten, the remembered is the same as the forgotten (presumably because otherwise we would not have remembered precisely the forgotten, but something else). The same goes for restoration: The restored is the same as the annihilated. Interestingly, the basic idea behind this reasoning appears in a passage from *al-Mubāḥathāt*.

*Once I heard our master [Avicenna] contradict the Muʿtazilites and their doctrine on the course of custom (*ijrāʾ al-ʿāda*)[99], but I forgot [what he said]. I want to write down everything that can be said on that. I don't know what I was saying. How can what I heard from him affect me (*yajʿalu-nī*), considering his assertion that every individual is substituted and his assertion that what I heard from him two years ago has been annihilated and something else has obtained?*[100]

The writer of the passage finds difficulty in reconciling the possibility of remembering something forgotten with the Avicennian rejection of restoration ("what I heard from him two years ago has been annihilated and something else has obtained"). Not enough elements are present to conclude that al-Ḥimmaṣī had

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97    See Qushjī, *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, 75. Cf. Samarqandī, *Ṣaḥāʾif*, 91–92; Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 371.

98    See Ṭūsī, *Qawāʿid*, 463; Id., *Talkhīṣ*, 392; Mīr Dāmād, *Ufq*, 167 (quotes the *Talkhīṣ*).

99    Meaning customary events, events that follow the usual course decreed by God. One manuscript reads "the replacement of custom" (*ijzāʾ al-ʿāda*).

100   *Mubāḥathāt*, 152.15–153.3.

been influenced by *al-Mubāḥathāt*, or by some other author who had read the *al-Mubāḥathāt*, but the similarity is noteworthy.

The objection against the argument based on remembrance as formulated by al-Ṭūsī and expanded by Mīr Dāmād, simply rejects the identification between the remembered and the forgotten. Indeed, the impossibility of restoration is precisely what requires the remembered and the forgotten to be numerically different. Remembrance requires forgetfulness, and forgetfulness is the annihilation of a certain mental content: Therefore, the remembered cannot be the same as the forgotten. This does little in terms of addressing the intuition that one remembers the same content one has forgotten, for otherwise this would not really remember. Mīr Dāmād goes a step further in that direction, reasoning that what is numerically different is the act of knowledge (*al-ʿilm*), not the object of knowledge (*al-maʿlūm*): Multiple acts of knowledge may correspond to a single object of knowledge so that, from the point of view of the object, the remembered is the same as the forgotten, despite there being no numerical identity between the acts of knowledge.

The third ancillary proof in defense of restoration is based on (3) presumptive possibility. Qushjī first formulates it, calling it persuasive (*iqnāʿī*, i.e., not properly demonstrative).[101] The argument works on the assumption that the proofs for the impossibility of restoration are unsound: Restoration must be possible precisely because no proof exists for its impossibility. As Qushjī puts it, that is the basic condition (*aṣl*) in such matters: Possibility is the presumptive or default modal status of things that have not proven impossible. A dialectical corroboration of this claim comes as a reference to a passage from Avicenna's *Ishārāt*.

*The stupidity in declaring false something whose obviousness has not yet appeared clear to you is not less than the stupidity in declaring true something whose clarity is not established in front of you. Rather, you need to suspend judgement – even though you are excited by rejecting what you heard – until its impossibility has been demonstrated to you. It is correct of you to leave similar things in the domain of possibility until a solid demonstration drives you away from them.*[102]

Avicenna is referring to the existence of 'supernatural' powers in particular, but his assertions are statements of principle with a broad range of applicability: That makes Qushjī's argument at least superficially efficacious in dialectical terms.

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101  See Qushjī, *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd*, 71.
102  Avicenna, *al-Ishārāt wa-al-tanbīhāt*, Ed. M. Zareʿī (Qom: Būstān-e Ketāb, 2002), 391.

Some later authors criticised the argument.[103] Mīr Dāmād (followed by Mullā Ṣadrā) explained that the argument fails to consider the distinction between pure *jawāz ʿaqlī* [rational admissibility], namely the incapacity of the intellect to determine the modal status of a thing, and *imkān dhātī* [essential possibility], namely the actual modal status of that thing in itself: The absence of proofs for the impossibility of something entails its rational admissibility, not its essential possibility. Additionally, Mīr Dāmād contemplated and dismisses the possible meanings of Qushjī's assertion that possibility is the *aṣl* [basic condition] of those things whose impossibility is unproven. The assertion may mean one of two things: Either (a) the things whose impossibility is unproven are more frequently possible rather than impossible, or (b) one must assume the possibility of all things until a demonstration proves otherwise. No reason exists to believe in (a), and one needs to reject (b) as well because it does not meet the methodological standards of philosophy.

## Concluding Remarks

I would like to summarize the debate on restoration in very broad strokes. The deniers of restoration claimed that the restored entity cannot be identical to the original. This impossibility is deduced in one of two ways. The first appeals either to the unreality of the non-existent or to one of its implications (indiscernibility, impossibility of predication, intermittence). The second way appeals to the idea that the restoration of one of the markers of individuation (time, existence, the causes) is either essentially impossible or incompatible with the restoration of the entity itself.

The defenders of restoration can answer the first line of argumentation by rejecting the unreality of the non-existent, or by rejecting the entailment between unreality and the above-mentioned implications, or by arguing that neither unreality nor its implications prevent the identity between the restored and the original (this is by far the most widespread approach). The second line of argumentation from the deniers can be answered by rejecting that the mentioned factors are markers of individuation or by arguing that their restoration is both possible and compatible with the restoration of the entity.

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103   See Mīr Dāmād, *Ufq*, 169–171; Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ḥikma*, I, 362.

As for the positive arguments for the possibility of restoration, the majority of them identify a feature of existence (its sameness in initial and restored creation, its temporal indeterminacy, its modal invariance, its possibility after both existence and non-existence) and deduce that possibility of existence is independent from temporal collocation and ontological history (i.e., the existential states of an entity at previous moments of time) and therefore that an entity can exist at multiple, separate portions of time.

The deniers can object by arguing either that existence does not entail the above-mentioned features or that independence from temporal collocation and ontological history cannot be deduced from those features (this is by far the most widespread approach).

The arguments I have summarized touch upon a number of broad metaphysical issues about existence, reality, identity, and individuation. Three of these appear to be of particular interest. The first is the principle of the identity of the indiscernibles (i.e., two numerically distinct entities must differ at least in one attribute). Avicenna's argument based on indiscernibility appears set to deny the principle, even though whether or not Avicenna himself had been aware of the entailment is unclear. Be that as it may, subsequent interpreters take the argument to entail the rejection of the identity of the indiscernibles, and so the answer to it comes down to defending the principle by appealing to the presence of the attribute of individuation: Two numerically different entities must differ at least in their individuations. Al-Rāzī's distinction between epistemic and real indiscernibility goes in this direction: It may very well be that one fails to know the attributes that distinguish two entities, but those attributes are there.

The second issue concerns the implications of unreality. The majority position, even among the defenders of restoration, is that unreality entails indistinction, unknowability, and impossibility of predication. As it was seen, the deniers of restoration made use of these implications to corroborate their case, arguing that the restored cannot be the same as the original precisely because the annihilation of the latter entails its unreality, and its unreality entails the impossibility of taking it as subject of predication and tracing its ontological history. One needs to notice, however, that a minority position championed by al-Rāzī holds that unreality does not entail the above-mentioned implications: Unreal non-entities can be known and can be a subject of predication. This take constitutes a possible way of avoiding some arguments against restoration, despite being problematic in its own right as it blurs the distinction between real and unreal.

The third issue is related to the previous one and concerns the preservation of individuation and identity as intentional referents of the mind after their extra-mental annihilation. As I said, the deniers and (most of) the defenders of restoration agree on the above-mentioned implications of unreality. They also share a conceptualist understanding of knowledge and predication when it comes to the unreal. The unreal as such is indistinguishable, unknowable, and unsuitable for being subject of predication. That being said, all these features can be applied to the mental concept that refers to the unreal: The mental concept of an unreal non-entity (e.g., an impossibility) is distinct, knowable, and capable of being subject of predication, even though the unreal non-entity as such is not. This position is in itself very problematic.[104] That aside, one sees that deniers and defenders of restoration disagree on whether individuation and identity are preservable as intentional referents of mental concepts after their extra-mental annihilation. The deniers argue that individuation and identity are not preservable.[105] The defenders rebut that the mental concept preserves individuation and identity because it is capable of adequately referring to them. This position acquires some dialectical plausibility when one considers that both sides of the debate accept that it is possible for a mental concept to adequately refer to the unreal.[106]

The question of the preservation of individuation and identity has an importance that exceeds the topic of restoration, impacting the ontology of remembrance. Indeed, intuition suggests that, when one correctly remembers an annihilated entity, one remembers exactly that entity: Our intentionality correctly refers to the individuation and the identity of the annihilated entity. However, this intuition seems to be undermined by the claims made by the deniers of restoration (that non-existents are unreal, that unreals cannot be known, and that the identities of unreals cannot be preserved as intentional referents), implying that the remembrance of annihilated entities systematically fails.

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104  This form of conceptualism falls short of explaining how it is possible that a mental concept adequately stands for (or 'refers to', or 'designates') a non-entity: In other words, it does not substantiate the claim that there can be mental intentionality directed towards a non-entity.

105  The mental concept cannot possess the individuation or the identity of the annihilated entity, nor it can refer to anything existent that does, nor it can refer to the annihilated individuation and identity themselves (these being unreal).

106  Given that mental concepts can adequately refer to unreal quiddities (e.g., impossible quiddities), why is it absurd to claim that mental concepts can adequately refer to unreal individuations and identities?

In summary, the discussion on a rather abstruse notion such as restoration reveals a problem placed at the core of an apparently uncontroversial element of everyday experience such as remembrance. The connection between restoration and the remembrance of annihilated identities runs even deeper than that, because the latter appears to be a necessary condition of the former. God seemingly needs to remember the exact identity of annihilated entities in order to restore them. It is as if restoration were a form of productive remembrance, i.e., as if God remembered things into existence.

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