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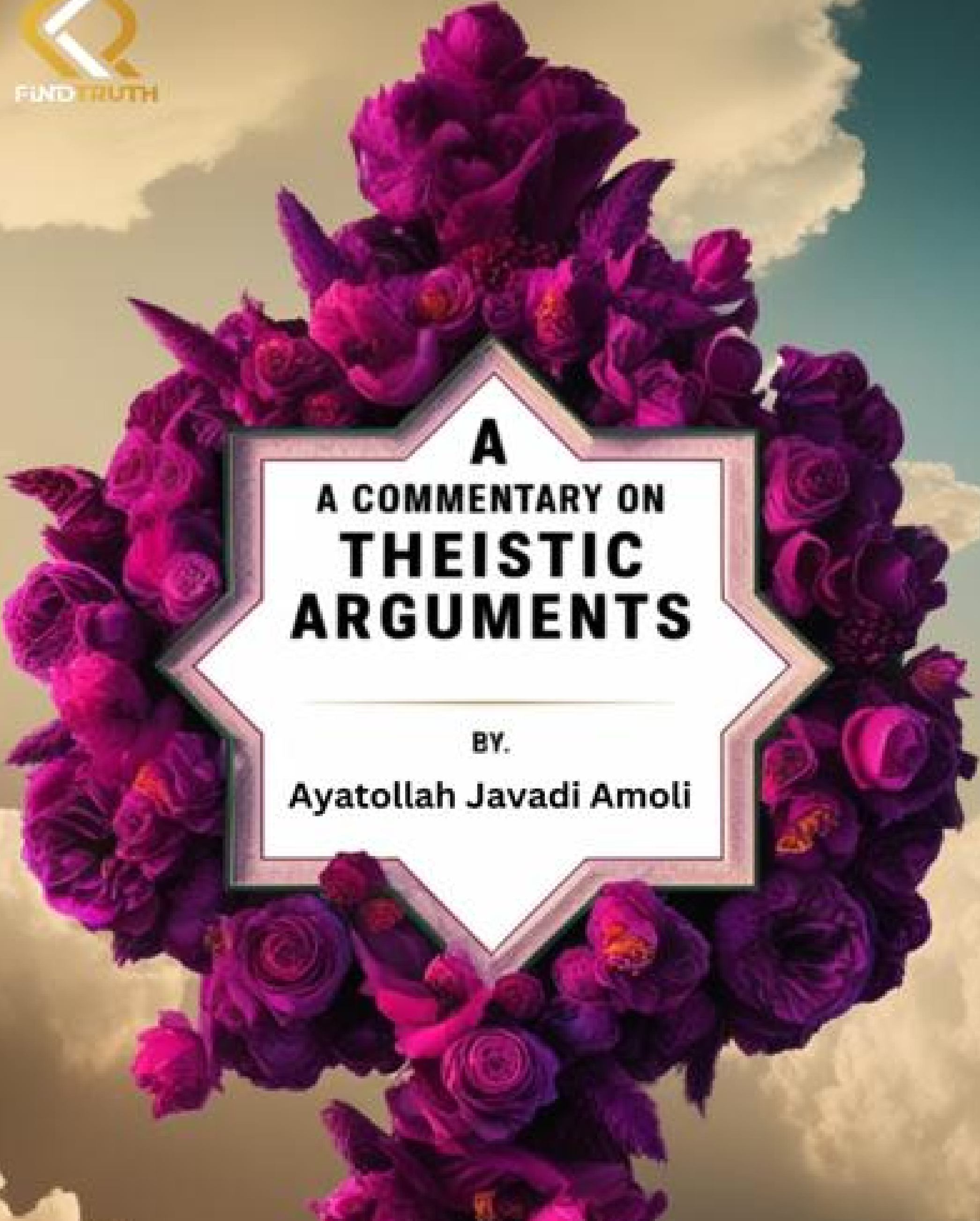

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A COMMENTARY ON THEISTIC ARGUMENTS

BY.

Ayatollah Javadi Amoli

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A Commentary on Theistic Arguments

Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli

Translated and Edited by

Hassan Allahyari

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate
Glory be to Him,
Who carried His servant by night
from the Holy Mosque to the farthest Mosque,
the precincts of which We have blessed,
that we might show him some of Our signs,
He is the Al-hearing, the Al-seeing.

The Noble Qur'an

About the Author

Āyatullah Abdullah Jawādī Āmulī was born in 1351 A.H. (1933 A.D.) into a religious family in Āmul, Iran. After completion of his rudimentary education under his father, a distinguished and pious scholar in Āmul, the author's yearning for knowledge drew him to the local Islamic seminary. He stayed there for five years and studied under renowned teachers some of whom had been students of the late Ākhūnd al-Khurāsānī, the author of *Kifāyat al-Usūl*.

In 1369 A.H. (1942 A.D.), he migrated to Tehran and, as counseled by his father, referred to Āyatullah Shaykh Muhammad Taqī al-Āmulī, who introduced him to the Marwī seminary in Tehran. There, the author studied advanced courses of *fiqh*, *usūl*, *hādith*, philosophy, and other customary disciplines of the seminary. His stay at Tehran continued until 1374 A.H. (1947 A.D.), and during that period, he studied *Sharh al-Mandhūma*, *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt*, and some parts of *Al-Asfār* under prominent scholars such as Āyatullah Shaʿrānī and Āyatullah Ilāhī Qumsha'ī. In the mean time, he continued to study advanced levels of *fiqh* under Āyatullah Shaykh Muhammad Taqī al-Āmulī.

In the year 1374 A.H. (1947 A.D.), he joined the holy seminary of Qum, which was rapidly gaining reputation as a major center for Shiite learning. For a while, he attended lectures of the late Grand Āyatullah Burūjerdī. He went to the *fiqh* classes of Āyatullah al-Muhaqqiq al-Dāmād for thirteen years, and attended the lectures of *usūl al-fiqh* of the late Imam Khomeini, may Allah sanctify his tomb, for seven years. He also benefited from the renowned teacher of Divine gnosis and *tafsīr*, ʿAllāmah Tabātabā'ī, under whom he completed *Al-Asfār*, *irfān*, and other advanced courses in *hadīth* and *tafsīr*.

Translator’s Word

The objective of this book is to analyze, from the perspective of Transcendent Wisdom (*al-Hikma al-Muta'āliyya)*, arguments that have been put forward for the existence of the Deity. Accordingly, familiarity with basic ontological perspectives of Transcendent Wisdom is imperative in order to fully benefit from these discussions.

Though I have tried to make this work as close to the academic parlance of the west as possible, a fastidious reader may still find many instances that can be further improved. I take responsibility for the mistakes that may have gone undetected, welcome suggestions, and request the reader to overlook my faults and show magnanimity and pardon with respect to my shortcomings.

Acknowledgements and Dedication

The efforts and encouragement of many people have contributed to the development of this translation. I appreciate the help and support provided by Syed Shiraz Agha, Jāved Akbarī, Kauthar Ali Khan, Syed Sulaymān Hasan, and many others.

I would like to thank in particular my mentor, the great ʿAllāmah and the possessor of *the Tranquil Soul*, Ghulām Redhā Fayyādhī, may Allah bless us with the length of his life, teacher of Divine gnosis at the holy seminary of Qum. His eminence graciously gave me the honor of being at his company and patiently responded to my queries. It has also been a pleasure to benefit from Dr. Muhammad Legenhausen, professor of philosophy at Imam Khomeini Research Institute of Qum, whose encouragement and vision have always been inspiring.

As a token of esteem, admiration, and deep affection, I would like to take the privilege to dedicate this humble work to those Shiʿa youth of the western world who are fond of Islamic intellectual disciplines. May the Imam of the Age, my soul and the souls of the world be the ransom of the dust of his steps, help us to be of service to Islamic doctrines. May God, the Glorified, accept this unworthy effort from me and may He make it of use to me and my brothers in faith.[1]

Hassan Allahyari

Qum, June, 1997

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[1] Note: I have also added a few explanatory footnotes at certain points as deemed necessary; these are distinguished by an asterisk (*).

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The Author's Preface

Man's life is founded on his beliefs and the central tenet of all religious beliefs is the existence of God. Failure to understand the conceptual and propositional foundations (*al-mabādī al-tasawuriyya wa al-tasdīqiyya*) of theism can evoke objections and doubts with respect to belief in the Deity.

The best way to reach God, Whose Being is more apparent and obvious than any other thing and Whose presence is nearer to everything than any other thing, is, verily, to dust the trail of knowledge off the blinders of ego and vanity. God's invisibility is due to the severity of His manifestation, and His remoteness is because of His extreme proximity. If an entity's manifestation were to be more evident than knowledge, notion, and knower, and it were to be so near that even nearer than a thing is to itself, such a keen manifestation necessarily creates invisibility, and such extreme proximity causes distance. This invisibility and distance is, however, prevalent with respect to the eyes which are veiled; because someone who sees himself, he cannot see God. However, by resisting the temptations of ego and liberation from the iniquities of conceit, man's and inability can be reversed, and then in proportion to his ontological capacity (*si'a al-wujūdiyya*), he may view God. And by admitting, "We know Thee not, the knowing Thou deserve",[1] he may refine His gnosis to perfection.

Given their denial of incorporeal existence and viewing the reality restricted to the physical world, the rejecters of monotheism and revelation question things that are not perceivable through sensation (*ehsās*). So eloquently does the Noble Qur'ān narrate this naturalist perspective of a group of Israelites who refused to believe in anything beyond their immediate sensation: "O' Moses, never will we believe in thee until we see God manifestly."[1] And about the idolaters of Hijāz, the Divine book says, "And say those who hope not of Our meeting, 'Why have not angels been sent down upon us, or see we not our Lord?' Indeed they think too high of themselves and have exceeded a great excess."[2]

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[1] Al-Majlisī, Muhammad Bāqir. *Bihār al-Anwār.* (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islamiyya), vol. 71, 23.

The Noble Qur'ān states that all along history, hearts of those who maintain naturalistic worldview have been alike. "And say those who know not: 'Why speaketh not God unto us or why cometh not unto us a sign'; Even so spoke those before them; their hearts are alike. We have indeed made clear the signs to people who are certainly sure."[3] In view of the fact that *their hearts are alike*, most of the interrogatories and objections of materialist skeptics are the same which have been projected time and again since the antiquity, and first, Divine Apostles have offered profound answers to them and after them, their followers, namely the religious theosophers and the *mutakellimūn*, have defined and expanded on these answers. However, the interrogatories of every age reflect that age's specific ideological trends and predilections; and accordingly, the answers are proffered in a manner that is prudent and proportionate to that time. History bears witness to individuals who were submissive to truth and in its path they did not confuse lunacy for lucidity. They managed to extract liberty from the confinements of ego and embrace and believe in the truth. It also testifies to individuals who succumbed to their ego and failed to reach the reality, and if they were able to discover it, their sordid disposition did not permit them to believe in it. Pharaoh and his courtiers realized the authenticity of Moses' miracles, but "denied them in inequity and arrogance while their hearts were convinced."[4] In response to their denial, says Moses,

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[1] 2: 55

[2] 25: 21

[3] 2: 118

[4] 27: 14

"Indeed, you know that none hath sent these down save the Lord of heavens and the earth."[1] Therefore, one has to be alert to certain indirect fallacies such as the accusations of being primitive, reiterating ancient dogmas and tales, and the futility of this answer and that answer; and given the similarity of hearts and identity of doubts, the very same profound and cogent answers of revelation and scripture that have been expanded on and clarified by theosophers, have to be proffered in a manner adorned with the expediencies of the time.

This book is a compendium of lectures that were delivered during 1413 A.H. (1992 A.D.) to an erudite audience in the holy seminary of Qum. We are most appreciative of Hujjat al-Islam Hamīd Pārsāniyā for his toils in rewriting and editing these lectures.

It ought to be stated that many of the book's analyses of thinkers outside the real of Islamic intellectual tradition are based on the translations in the field of philosophy of religion from European languages. The accuracy of these translations is solely the responsibility of the translators.

The arguments for the existence of the Almighty Necessary (*al-Wājib Ta'ālā*) can be divided into three categories:

1. Arguments that are defective, devoid of logical tenability, and cannot yield certitude.
2. Arguments that do not lack logical tenability; nevertheless, do not lead to the existence of the Necessary either. In fact, this category of arguments only indicates one of the Deity's attributes and names. In order to prove the existence of the Necessary, such arguments need be adduced by other arguments. For instance, even if the common flaws in some versions of the arguments of motion and *hudūth* are avoided, they remain incapable of proving the Necessary.

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[1] 17: 102

3. Arguments, which are cogent and conclusive, such as the demonstration of the veracious (*burhān al-siddīqīn*).

Most of theistic arguments which have been criticized are either devoid of a valid syllogistic form or the critic has chosen one of its weak versions. Some of them, like Anselm's ontological argument and the moral arguments, are corrupt and defective. Others, such as the arguments from motion and *hudūth*, even if stated in a manner avoiding the prevalent flaws in their common expositions, even so they fail to prove the objective.

Each chapter of this work is devoted to the analysis of a certain argument and given that great many criticisms leveled against theistic arguments are founded on some epistemological perspectives that question the reliability of knowledge, the first two chapters inquire into man's epistemic capacities.

Finally, it is appropriate to echo the prayer of the Sacred Messenger of Allah, bliss be for him and his kin, "O' God, show us things the way they truly are," and supplicate to Him not to deprive us of His most beautiful theophony (*tajallī*), so that in the light of His gnosis, we may know His Prophet, in the light of whose guidance, we may know His *Hujja*, and by knowing the *Hujja*, we may avoid religious misguidance.

Chapter One

KNOWLEDGE AND SOPHISTRY

Priority of Ontology over Epistemology

There is a sort of commensurability between epistemology and ontology; that is, every person's view about the reliability of knowledge has a rational relationship with his ontological perspectives. This is due to an exchange of some propositions between these two disciplines. That is, on one side of the spectrum, the epistemological inquiry presupposes some ontological propositions, while on the other side, certain epistemological propositions are taken as granted in ontological arguments. This mutual interdependence, however, can be presented in a way that avoids circularity (*daur*).

The ontological propositions that are presupposed at the beginning of the epistemological inquiry—and denial or doubt with respect to which make the study of knowledge irrelevant and acceptance thereof is an imperative condition of entering the epistemological inquiry—are,

- There is a reality.
- The human being is real.
- The human being's knowledge is real.

These are ontological propositions; nevertheless, skepticism (*shakkākiyya)* with regard to them makes the epistemological inquiry irrelevant. That is, the study of the reliability and origin of knowledge is reasonable only if the truth of these statements is acknowledged. To an epistemologist who doubts these premises, inquiry and non-inquiry as well as answer and non-answer cannot make any difference. If someone inquires about cognition, or expresses doubt or skepticism (*shakkākiyya)*, he does possess a number of concepts, such as the concept of reality and existence, and holds the truth of certain propositions, such as the propositions that reflect his own existence and the existence of his knowledge.

Similar to these ontological propositions that make the study of knowledge possible, certain other ontological premises—the rejection of which entails the denial of definite knowledge of reality—pave the way to affirm the reliability of knowledge and discredit skepticism (*shakkākiyya).*

Metaphysical Sources of Knowledge

One of the fundamental ontological questions that plays a pivotal role in the epistemological inquiry is the question of whether reality is entirely physical or there are incorporeal and metaphysical entities.

From the materialist view that considers the reality solely spatiotemporal, knowledge is a physical phenomenon that develops in the nervous system because of human interaction with the natural world. According to this view, events are caused by factors which theosophers and believers in metaphysical realities consider supplementary causes (*al-'ilal al-mu'idda*), that is, instrumentalities (*asbāb*) and conditions (*sharā'it*) of realization of events and in contrast with the Divine and metaphysical agency Who is the source of emanation (*ifādha*) of grace (*faidh*).

The materialist worldview portrays man and the world as two natural entities with mutual influence over each other, whereby some effects that the human being receives from the natural elements appear before him as his perceptions. And since the human being and the world cause the generation of knowledge, knowledge is a third reality that is other than the human being, "the knower," and the world, "the known." In other words, this analysis entails that since knowledge is generated because of the human being's interaction with the world, it is a new entity whose reality is always different from the realities of the knower and the known. By adding this premise to the fact that in the process of cognition, what man directly knows is his knowledge and he knows "the known" indirectly through his knowledge, this constant "otherness" of knowledge and the known makes the cognition of the external world impossible. Thus, in the materialist worldview, knowledge loses its epistemic worth of illustrating the reality, and the gulf of doubt and skepticism (*shakkākiyya)* between notion and the known is never bridged.

Open and Latent Skepticism

Skepticism (*shakkākiyya)* can be divided into two kinds: unequivocal or open, and complex or latent. Unequivocal or open skepticism is involved when during the discourse of conformity of knowledge to reality, the epistemologist denies the possibility of reaching reality and declares his unequivocal uncertainty about knowledge's disclosure of the reality. Complex and latent skepticism (*shakkākiyya)*, however, is dominant when although the epistemologist makes efforts to avoid admitting skepticism and makes claims of reliability of knowledge—or makes promises thereof in an unknown or never-coming future— his presuppositions and perspectives invite skepticism.

Incorporeality, Universality, Immutability, and Continuity of Knowledge

The above analysis makes it clear that materialist ontology inevitably leads to a skeptic epistemology and if someone studies knowledge from the position of a materialist, even if he does not admit it, he is prejudiced toward a latent form of skepticism.

Contrary to the materialist perspective, which restricts the process of cognition to its natural phases only dismissing its metaphysical dimensions, and holds premises that lead to a skeptical epistemology, the metaphysical worldview acknowledges the spiritual and incorporeal dimensions of knowledge and holds premises that invalidate skepticism. The study of knowledge's qualities from the position of a metaphysician establishes certain premises, which further strengthen the foundations of belief in metaphysical dimensions and incorporeal existence.

Knowledge is characterized by universality (*kulliyya)*, immutability (*thabāt*), and continuity (*dawām*); and these attributes—irrespective of whether knowledge is reliable—do not exist in physical and natural entities that are characterized by particularity (*juz'iyya*) and are the very flux (*taghayyur*) and motion (*haraka*).[1]

Through a hypothetical syllogism (*al-qiyās al-istithnā'ī*) or the second figure of the categorical syllogism (*al-qiyās al-iqtirānī*), any single of these three attributes can prove the incorporeality of knowledge. This, on its own right, is sufficient to disprove the assertion that the reality is solely material, and thus, to indicate the possibility of further incorporeal beings.

The hypothetical syllogism for the affirmation of incorporeality of knowledge can run as follows:

> If knowledge is physical, then it must have flux, motion, and particularity.
> Nevertheless, the consequent is false.
> Therefore, the antecedent—that is, the physicality of knowledge—is false as well.

The categorical syllogism for the affirmation of the above claim can be presented in this way:

> Knowledge is immutable, continual, and universal.
> Physical entities are always mutable, changing, and particular.
> Therefore, knowledge is not physical.

Since a syllogism is determined by its middle term, and the above demonstration (*burhān*)—which has been elucidated in two ways—has three middle terms (universality, immutability, and continuity), it can be translated into three syllogisms, each one capable of proving the objective.

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[1] On the firm foundations of the principality of existence, Transcendent Wisdom establishes the identity (*'aynīya*) of existence and its attributes. One of the corollaries proceeding from this position is that finite beings do not have an essence that is characterized by contingency (*imkān*), motion (*al-haraka*), flux and (*al-taghayyur*). It is argued that these qualities are not attributed to finite beings, rather they are identical to them. *

Proponents of materialistic epistemology have made tireless efforts to deny these attributes of knowledge or to explain them on physical and natural accounts. For instance, it has been asserted that universality is the vagueness and obscurity involved in the conformity of a given concept with respect to individuals, and that the presumption of immutability and continuity of knowledge owes to resemblance the preceding and following parts of cognition. We have expanded on falsity of these analyses in *Epistemology in Qur'ān*.[1]

Corollaries of Knowledge

Rational analysis of a mental concept (*al-mafhūm al-dhehnī*) reveals that knowledge (*ʿilm*) is a phenomenon, which is associated with a number of notions, and wherever there is knowledge, there are eight different notions that can be abstracted from its various aspects. However, these notions are not all predicated to knowledge in the same manner and only extensions (*masādīq*) of some of them have external unity (*wahda*). Understanding the difference between these notions can delineate the boundaries of discussion and define the axes of critique, which in turn can help avoid many fallacies. These eight items—six of which have been by our teacher Āyatullah al-Shaykh Muhammad Taqī al-Āmulī, sanctified be his soul, in his *Durar al-Fawā'id*[2]—are as follows:

1. The reality and existence (*wujūd*) of knowledge itself.

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[1] Āmulī, Abdullah Jawādī.. *Shinakht Shinasī dar Qur'ān*. (Qum: Rejā' Publications, 1993), 328.

[2] Al-Āmulī, al-Shaykh Muhammad Taqī. *Durar al-Fawā'id*. (Qum: Ismāʿiliyān Publications), 124.

2. The quiddity (*al-māhiyya)* of knowledge; as every finite being has an existence and a quiddity, being a finite entity, knowledge has these two things.
3. The mental quiddity (*al-māhiyya al-dhehniyya)* of the "known," that is, the quiddity of the object of knowledge that is in the mind.
4. The mental existence (*al-wujūd al-dhehnī*)[1] of the "known", that is, the existence of quiddity of the "known" (*al-ma'lūm*) that is in the mind and cannot produce any effect.
5. The external quiddity (*al-māhiyya al-khārijiyya)* of the known, that is, the quiddity of the object of knowledge that exists in the external world. When looking at this external quiddity or essence, regardless of its existence, the very same quiddity exists by the mental mode of existence. However, it is possible that a concept lacks any extension and not be instantiated in the external world.
6. The external existence (*al-wujūd al-khārijī*) of the known quiddity or essence.
7. The existence of the knower, that is, the agency who possesses knowledge.
8. The quiddity of the knower.

Four of these eight items are existential and the other four are quidditative. Out of the four existential items, three pertain to external existence and one to mental mode of existence. Therefore, three out of the four quidditative items have external existence; and one of them, the quiddity of the known entity in the mind, has mental existence.

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[1] Mental Existence (*al-wujūd al-dhehnī*) existence is divided into two kinds: external existence (*al-wujūd al-khārijī*), and mental existence. The presence of a quiddity before the mind is its mental existence In other words, just as quiddities exist in the external world, they also exist, upon their conception, in the mind. *

There are a number of relationships of unity (*wahda*) and otherness between these eight items. For instance, the quiddity and existence of knowledge, which have an obvious conceptual difference, have real unity (*wahda*) *qua* their external extension—that is, as explained in the discussions of the principality of existence (*asāla al-wujūd*) and respectivality of quiddity (*e'tebāriyya al-māhiyya)*[1], quiddity and existence are not two different things in the external world; rather, just one thing exists externally from which these two separate concepts are abstracted. Such a unity (*wahda*) also exists between the knower and his quiddity, and between the external existence of the known and its quiddity.

In the discussions of unity of the knower and the known (*wahdat al-'ālim wa al-ma'lūm*), a sort of unity (*wahda*) between the existence of the knower and knowledge (*wahda al-'ālim wa al-'ilm*) is proved. Such a unity does not exist between the quiddities of knowledge and the knower, nor between the external or mental quiddity of the known and the quiddity of the knower. Nor does it exist between the external existences of the known and the knower. The reason that some philosophers, such as Ibn Sīnā in some of his books[1], have rejected such unity, is their failure to notice the axis of unity and have presumed that the unity is suggested between quiddities of the knower and the known.

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[1] Principality and Respectivality: Principality (*al-asāla,*) describes something that has reality and external factuality and is real irrespective of our perceptions. Respectivality (*al-e'tibāriyya)*, in its ontological sense, is a reification or abstraction of the mind which however devoid of any external reality, nonetheless corresponds to factuality. An example in this regard would be to consider light and shadow. Light is an ontological reality, it has existence and factuality and is real even if we are not there to see it, whereas shadow is the nonexistence of light and not a factuality on its own right. The theory of principality of existence (*asālat al-wujūd*) and respectivality of quiddity (*e'tebāriat al-māhiyya)*, as interpreted by the author and the other students of the late 'Allāmah Tabātabā'ī, maintains that what has factuality in the external world is existence and quiddities are mere reifications and abstractions of the mind, which it attains from the limitations and boundaries (*hudūd*) of finite beings, similar to how our minds discern the "existence" of the hole by perceiving the limitations and boundaries of the existence of a doughnut.*

In the discussions of unity of the knower and the known, it also becomes clear that what is known directly and by virtue of its essence is the existence of knowledge, which is in unity with the existence of the knower; and the mental quiddity is known indirectly. Therefore, the indirect knowledge of the external entity is yet more indirect, since the external entity is known by means of something that is itself known indirectly.

Knowledge and Mental Existence

An important result of the analysis of knowledge is that it magnifies the difference between knowledge and mental existence and their attributes. Recognition of these differences leads to the creation of two new chapters in philosophy exclusively devoted to the inquiry of each one of them.

When a notion is entertained, though the external extension of this concept, if it has one, produces many effects, the concept is devoid of these effects in the realm of conception and knowledge. The concept, however, does produce certain other effects, which cannot be produced by the external existence to which it pertains. For instance, certain concepts bring forth gaiety and laughter, and others evoke sorrow, grief, and even death.

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[1] Ibn Sīnā, Abu Ali Husain. *Al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt.* Commentary by Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī. (Tehran: Daftar-i-Nashr-i-Kitāb, 1981), vol. 3, 292.

Imagine that a certain gathering learns that one of its member's possessions have been destroyed by fire. Although the concept of fire in the people's minds does not bear the effects of external fire like heat and burning, it does exert an external effect on everyone. For instance, the unfortunate individual whose capital has been destroyed, is disheartened, his jealous enemies rejoice, and other people become alarmed and take measures to protect their own properties against fire.

The agency that has exerted these effects on people and has made them sad or happy is certainly not the external existence of fire, because, first, it is possible that the news is not true, and second, if it were the external existence of fire that had influenced them, then other effects of external fire like heat and burning should also be visible. Hence, it is the existence of knowledge that has exerted these effects over the people. And to put it more accurately, knowledge is the quiddity that is coupled with that existence which has exerted these effects.

Knowledge, similar to bravery, fear, and distress, is among those notions whose external extensions (*masādīq*) come into existence in man's being as one of his attributes and are accidents that characterize their subjects by themselves. For instance, when someone bears the quality of bravery or knowledge, he is designated as brave or knowledgeable. Knowledge is, however, different from other attributes as it represents external things.

The existence that is real within the soul and produces numerous effects, like the ones just mentioned, is the existence of knowledge, not the existence of the quiddity that has become known and is present before the mind by predication as essence (*al-haml al-awwalī al-dhātī*).[1] This

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[1] Predication as Essence and Predication as Extension: When a predicate is ascribed to a certain subject—for instance, when St. Anselm says, "That than which nothing greater can be conceived is

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that than which nothing greater can be conceived," or it is stated, "Zaid is a student"—there has to be an aspect of unity and an aspect of difference between the subject and the predicate. The aspect of unity is necessary because predication means "it-is-itness" (*hū-hūwiyya)*; and the aspect of difference is necessary because if the subject and the predicate were exactly identical in *every* aspect, then the proposition would be meaningless. In predication as essence (*al-haml al-awwalī al-dhātī*, literally meaning primary essential predication) the need for the aspect of unity is satisfied by the unity of concepts, that is, the proposition conveys that the subject and predicate have the same meaning; and the aspect of difference is provided by our considerations. For instance, in the statement, "That than which nothing greater can be conceived is that than which nothing greater can be conceived," it is evident that the proposition states that the subject and the predicate have the same meaning, and this is their aspect of unity; as for their aspect of difference, we assume a sort of difference between the subject and the predicate. For instance, we may perceive the subject as not fully known and the predicate as something that is known fully. In this sort of predication, since the subject and the predicate have the same meaning, if there is an external extension for them, they will be instantiated in a single thing. This sort of predication is only used when an essence is attributed to itself, such as "Animal is animal."

In predication as extension (*al-haml al-shā’eʿ al-sināʿī*, litterally meaning common technical predication), the axis of unity between the subject and the predicate is their external extension; that is, if we say "Zaid is a student" it means in the external world the two concepts of "Zaid" and "student"—which are two different concepts, unlike "that than which nothing greater can be conceived" and "that than which nothing greater can be conceived" which are two the very same notions—are instantiated in a single reality. In this sort of predication, the subject and the predicate are two different concepts. The most distinguishable feature of predication as extension is that its subject is always an extension (*misdāq*) of its predicate.

is because it produces the effects of knowledge, not the effects of the known. The known is illustrated as well, though not by its external existence, but rather by an existence which is in the shadow (*dhill*) of the existence of knowledge.

The shadowy existence (*al-wujūd al-dhillī*) of the known, that is, its mental existence, is not the shadow of the external existence of the known, since if it were so, it would be impossible to entertain concepts or hold the truth of propositions relating to things that are nonexistent in the external world. The mental existence of concepts and propositions is in the shadow of existence of knowledge. Since mental existence is not independent of and horizontal to the existence of knowledge and other external beings, the quiddities or essences that exist by it do not produce the effects of their external extensions (*masādīq*). In this weak

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By introducing these two kinds of predication to philosophy, Sadr al-Muta'allihīn added another condition of contradiction, making them nine altogether. He proved that in order to contradict each other, two propositions must also have an identical fashion of predication.

Consider this example: Logicians say that a concept which refers to more than one entity, like the concept of animal, is a universal concept; and a comcept which does not apply to more than one entity, like the concept of the specific grocery around the corner, is a particular concept. On the other hand, because of the logical law of identity that everything is necessarily itself, we know that particular is particular; but at the same time we now that particular is applicable to all particular concepts in the world and therefore is universal. This invites a paradox, since how can particular be particular and universal at the same time, that is, applicable to not more than one and applicable to more than one. The answer to this, and many other similar paradoxes, becomes clear by making distinction between predication as essence and predication as extension. Particular is particular, that is, applicable to not more than one, by predication as essence. And particular is universal, that is, applicable to more than one, by predication as extension. *

presence under the auspices of its rapport with knowledge, the quiddity is predicable to itself only as a notion and by predication as essence, and should its relation with knowledge cease to exist, even the predication as essence will loose its veridicality.

Divisions of Knowledge

Dichotomy of knowledge into acquired knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-husūlī*) and intuitive/presential knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-hudhūrī*) is the result of certain secondary-order rational analyses. In a further division, acquired knowledge is divided into two kinds: concepts and judgments, both of which are further divided into primary (*al-ʿilm al--awwalī*), self-evident (*al-ʿilm al-badīhī*), and discursive (*al-ʿilm al-nadharī*) classes.

Primary knowledge, whether a concept (*tasawur*) or a judgment (*tasdīq*), is an epistemic unit that its comprehension and understanding is inevitable and necessary. That is, the human mind is compelled to know primary cognitions and has no choice but to be aware thereof. It should be noticed, however, that although the mind is compelled to know primary matters, one is not compelled to have faith and believe in them. Rather, as it will be discussed in detail, everyone has a free will with regard to having faith and believing in something he knows, hence the possibility that at certain levels, faith and knowledge separate from one another.

Knowledge, Faith, and Theoretical and Practical Reasons

Faith (*īmān*) and knowledge are two distinct categories. The former pertains to practical reason (*al-ʿaql al-nadharī*) and the latter to theoretical reason (*al-ʿaql al-nadharī*).

Practical reason (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*) is the human being's decision-making dimension the object of which is his actions, such as sincerity, devotion, love, and so forth. Theoretical reason, with its various features of sensation (*al-ehsās*), imagination (*al-takhayul*), estimation (*al-wahm*), and ratiocination (*al-taʿaqul*), is concerned with comprehension. Practical wisdom (*al-hikma al-ʻamaliyya*) is the inquiry of things that owe their existence to the human being's will. Conversely, theoretical wisdom (*al-hikma al-nadhariyya*) studies things that exist regardless of man's conduct. It is worth mentioning that the scope of theoretical reason's inquiry is not restricted to the objects of theoretical wisdom, and as mentioned by al-Fārābī, practical wisdom is also its object of cognition.

Faith is a relation between a person and the object of his knowledge, which comes into being through an act of decision-making and thus, pertains to the practical reason (*al-ʻaql al-ʻamalī*). One has to be reminded that this relationship between soul and the object of its knowledge should not be confused with the judgmental relationship (*al-nisba al-hukmiyya*)[1] of propositions that are expressed by copulas. That is, if an epistemic unit is a proposition that comprises a subject and predicate and a judgmental relationship, the judgmental relationship pertains to the theoretical reason (*al-aql al-nadharī*) and the human will is not applicable to it.

Although in superior levels of existence—that is, in the levels where knowledge and power have external identity—practical and theoretical reasons are one as well, theoretical and practical reasons are different and separate from one another in the inferior levels of existence. By rational differentiation between faith and knowledge in these levels, there are four conceivable situations:

1. Knowledge with respect to a certain reality along with faith in it, as in the case of a learned faithful.
2. Knowledge with respect to a certain reality without having faith in it, as in the case of a learned infidel.

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[1] *Al-Nisba al-hukmiyya* is the relationship of a proposition's subject with its predicate and is commonly expressed in English by copulas like *is* and *are.* *

3. Faith in something that it is not known and a false concept or proposition is held about it, as in the case of an unreasoning pious—because he has faith in something that he does not positively know and merely has a conjecture about it.
4. Absence of both faith and knowledge with respect to a certain reality, as in the case of an unreasoning infidel.

Self-evident and Primary Cognitions

Given the fact that the ignorance of theoretical reason (*al-ʿaql al-nadharī*) with respect to objects of primary knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-awwalī*) is inconceivable, primary knowledge cannot be found in the last two of the above suppositions, where only it is the practical reason (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*) that may accept and have faith, or reject a certain idea.

A primary concept (*al-tasawwur al-badīhī*) has a number of qualities. It is clear and indubitable. It cannot be defined; and if one is inattentive to its meaning, his attention can be drawn towards it. It would be like a situation in which an individual has something in his hand or is standing before an ocean, yet is inattentive to it. In such a situation, his attention is drawn by pointing out to what he already knows.

Drawing one's attention (*tanbīh*) does not call forth new cognition that has been previously unknown. Rather, it causes something to be noticed that is already known but out of one's attention. The concepts of existence, reality, thing, nonexistence, and the like are primary concepts that are intuitively known by all; and if someone does not know them, in fact, he is inattentive towards the fact that he knows them.

A primary proposition (*al-qadhiyya al-badihiyya*) is necessarily true and the theoretical reason (*al-ʿaql al-nadharī*) cannot not know it. It is indubitable; and if it is supposed that someone doubts it—which is an inconceivable supposition—then its veracity would be indemonstrable.

The most prominent quality of primary knowledge can be illuminated by its comparison with self-evident knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-badihī*). Comprehension of self-evident facts does not require any definition or proof, nevertheless, if doubted, they can be defined and proved. Self-evidence (*badāha*) of these facts is indebted to the mind's affinity with their essential parts[1] and the premises that entail them. An example of such knowledge is "the propositions whose syllogisms are with them" (*al-qadhāyā allatī qiasātohā maʿahā*). That is, the middle terms of their syllogisms are self-evident and axiomatic properties of their major and minor terms and are discerned so swiftly that there is no need to put them in a syllogistic form.

Necessary Truth of Primary Propositions

Comprehension of necessity of truth or veridicality (*dharūra al-sidq*) of primary knowledge is the work of theoretical reason. This necessity of veridicality indicates the relationship of the subject and the predicate, which is expressed by a proposition's copula. It must be stressed that the difference of such necessity and certitude from psychological necessity and certitude, which are the attributes of the knower and are as opposed to doubt and conjecture, must not be overlooked.

The necessity, which the theoretical reason (*al-ʿaql al-nadharī*) discerns in primary propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-awwaliyya*), is cognitive necessity (*al-dharūra al-ʿilmiyya).* It reflects the necessity of a predicate's predication to its subject in a way that one cannot find a way not to know it. This necessity is not the necessity, which indicates the modality (*jiha*) of a proposition. Being in contrast to possibility (*imkān*) and impossibility (*imtenā'*), the latter necessity indicates the modality of a given proposition's copula, whereas the former only conveys definiteness of the verity of a proposition and reflects the connection of the subject with the predicate without any suggestion with respect to its modality of possibility, impossibility, or necessity.

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[1] Essential Part (*al-dhātī*) is something, which is included in an essence or quiddity as its part, like a genus or a differentia. For instance, if man's essence or quiddyt were "the rational animal", then rational (differentia) and animal (genus) are his essential parts that together constitute his essence or quiddity. *

In the case of primary propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-awwaliyya*), such as the necessarily veridical principle of non-contradiction (*mabda' 'adam al-tanāqudh*), the mind cannot find a way to reject or express their falsehood, and if so should be desired, every step taken for this objective will presuppose the veridicality of the proposition, which is intended to be invalidated. On the other hand, they are indemonstrable; that is, if someone were ignorant of them—which is an impossible supposition—it would be impossible to prove their validity.

Difference between Epistemic Certitude and Psychological Certitude

The above analysis and definition of primary knowledge—which in fact calls attention to its manifest and necessary truth—roots out many criticisms, which are perceivable in this regard. Since this analysis, as projected by Islamic philosophers, is not based on the psychological persuasion and certitude of an individual or group, which are commonly influenced by various social predilections and cultural biases. As on one hand, it cannot be criticized on the basis of absence of common grounds of rationality shared by every individual and nation, on the other. It also sidesteps the objection, which denies the rapport between certainty about something and the truth thereof; namely, the criticism, which questions whether universal consensus of all human beings or the psychological certitude of one person is adequate for the verity of a given proposition.

In social or individual convictions, conviction, as a psychological attribute of a society or individual, can evolve as a result of various psychological factors. But in the appraisal of theoretical reason, until a conviction or belief is not coupled with necessity of verity, which is the condition of every cognitive certitude, it is devoid of epistemic respectability and as something, which is not definitely known, can be at different levels of doubt and conjecture, depending on its acceptability.

One need be reminded that not all propositions that are necessarily true are considered primary propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-awwaliyya*). Primary propositions are axioms whose necessary truth becomes manifest by the mere conception of their subjects and predicates; invalidation thereof presupposes their validity; and if not known, are indemonstrable.

Other propositions the necessary truth (*dharūra al-sidq*) of which is acknowledged by the theoretical reason (*al-ʹaql al-nadharī*), yet their truth is inferential, are of two kinds. If its middle term is manifest that it does not need to be searched for, and arranged in a syllogism, the proposition is a self-evident proposition (*al-qadhiyya al-badīhiyya*); otherwise, it is a discursive proposition (*al-qadhiyya al-nadhariyya*).

In discursive propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-nadhariyya*), a cognitive journey has to be cruised from the conception of their subjects and predicates and the discernment to their necessity of veridicality. This journeyed distance is such that it cannot be bridged by psychological persuasions. In self-evident propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-badīhiyya*), although there is no such actual gap between the two, yet it can be conceived. In primary propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-awwaliyya*), however, because a proposition that would reflect the presence of such a distance cannot be thought of or expressed without presupposing their very truth, a distance as such is not even supposable. Therefore, the separation of conceptual knowledge of primary propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-awwaliyya*) and epistemic certitude about their truth is not conceivable, which if possible, it would have been justified to inquire how does their conceptual knowledge entail epistemic certitude about them.

Although with regard to self-evident propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-badīhiyya*) the named inquiry—how does their conceptual knowledge (*al-'ilm al-tasawwurī*) entail epistemic certitude (*al-yaqīn al-'ilmi*) about them—is useless, it can be conducted. Nevertheless, as far as discursive propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-nadhariyya*) are concerned, this is a serious inquiry and if not adequately answered, the theoretical reason (*al-'aql al-nadharī*) will consider the given belief and conviction a figment of fantasy and an artifact of illusion. Faith with respect to propositions about which this inquiry has not been rendered is solely the work of practical reason (*al-'aql al-'amalī*) and, like the faith of the unreasoning pious, does not proceed from rationally acceptable premises.

Often such practical and epistemic propensities—which are strengthened by daily habits and social preferences and changed into character traits—are confused with epistemic certitude. However, characteristics of the theoretical reason (*al-'aql al-nadharī*) and the many differences between psychological belief and epistemic certitude can avert this confusion.

Epistemic Certitude, Probability, and Social Conventions

Theoretical reason (*al-'aql al-nadharī*) credits cognitive worth to a knowledge that is marked by epistemic certitude and necessity of veridicality. A proposition's necessity of veridicality (*dharūra al-sidq*) is not clear, it is evidently not known. Other conceivable states such as doubt and conjecture are not attributes of the proposition, or its subject and predicate and the relationship between the two. Rather, these are the attributes of the mind that does not know the truth of the proposition. These states, as instanced by the Noble Qur'ān "And surmise availeth not the truth at all"[1] do not bear any epistemic worth with regard to knowing the reality. Rather, because a considerable portion of the human being's activities is undertaken in proportion to the likeliness or importance of certain events, their only benefit is their practical use. Likeliness or probability of an event does not, however, open a window to reality. It narrates the ratio of practicality of an idea entertained in the mind. Likewise, the importance of an event does not bring forth knowledge of the external world, since such importance is not caused by the external reality, and is influenced by the vitality of a certain event for an individual.

In the human being's day-to-day activities, the practical reason (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*) usually pays heed to things that have high probability and things that have great importance, even though they may not have high probability. Similarly, much of social conducts is based on socially popular conventions. However, high probability or importance of an event and social conventions do not disclose external reality.

Probability does not determine a proposition's truth or falsehood, that is, whether it corresponds with reality. A true proposition with regard to what it is true, and from the aspect of its truth, is always true; and a false statement with regard to what it is false, and from the aspect of its falsehood, is always false. Probability is involved when a given proposition's truthful reflection of an event is not known, and then with consideration to other instances where truths or falsehood of the propositions are known, the probability of the given proposition is computed. By this measure, the unknown instance, is, for practical purposes, assumed of the more likely instances.

An event's probability in the future is not really an attribute of the event or of its proposition, and in fact, it is a presumption made through consideration of similar situations and the truth of their propositions. By computation and analogy of these propositions, a new presumption based on the more occurring instances is ascribed to the event at hand; and it is in that realm of presumption that the event is characterized with probability. Notice this reification (*eʿtebār*), which is created by the practical reason (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*) and is paid heed to for its practical utility, is different from philosophical abstractions and secondary intelligibles (*al-maʿqūlāt al-thāniyya)* which are true and the theoretical reason (*al-ʿaql al-nadharī*) is constrained to to abstract.

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[1] 53: 28

The abstraction of first probabilities may pertain to mental concepts. Propositions have certain relations with one another that are formed in the mind by their comparison. For instance, when someone reports the presence of one white marble in a sack that has five marbles of which three are white, his statement is valid about the three white marbles and false about the other two. It follows that if this statements is made about every marble in the sack, the ratio of valid to false statements will be three to five, which is a veridical ratio inferred from the comparison of the three true to the total five statements. The practical reason (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*), however, attributes this ratio of truth to any proposition, which describes the color of one of the marbles and the truth or inaccuracy thereof is not known. It also relates this ratio to the whiteness of every marble in the sack. To the contrary, however, any proposition with respect to reality it is narrating is either true or false, and a third situation between the two is inconceivable. Likewise, external whiteness cannot be predicated to its subject but necessarily and likeliness so forth cannot justify ascription of an attribute to a subject.

In reality, the 3/5 ratio, which has been drawn from our bigger picture of the exemplary set has no real and external relationship with the color of a particular marble. It merely reflects the extent of justifiability of an individual's expectation and hope for the validity of a statement the truth of which he does not know and how should he conform his conduct with regard to his expectations.

Foundation of Discursive Propositions on Primary and Self-Evident Propositions

With regard to their representation of reality, primary propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-awwaliyya*) are marked with necessity of veridicality, which is not a hypostatization (*e'tebār*) of the practical reason (*al-'aql al-'amalī*). Rather, it is a factual necessity and in conformity with reality which the mind, after conceiving the subject and predicate of a given primary proposition, is compelled to acknowledge. Although the necessity of veridicality of self-evident propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-badīhiyya*) is manifest like that of primary propositions, as indicated earlier, it is possible to doubt or prove them.

The validity of discursive propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-nadhariyya*) is neither primary nor self-evident. These propositions are attained through syllogistic arrangement of self-evident premises and, more precisely speaking, primary premises. Similarly, when the validity of non-primary self-evident propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-badīhiyya*) is questioned, they can be reduced to primary propositions. The reduction of non-primary propositions to primary propositions requires two elements: formal (*sūrī*) and material (*māddī*).

Primariness of the First Figure

The formal element is the arrangement of premises into a syllogistic order, which represents the direction of deduction of discursive propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-nadhariyya*) from self-evident (*al-qadhāyā al-badīhiyya*) and primary propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-awwaliyya*). The material element is the content of the premises from which the conclusion is derived.

Argumentation (*istedlāl*) has three forms, since the relationship of an argument's conclusion with its premises—because of which it is possible to trace the unknown conclusion from premises that are known—is of three kinds:

- The conclusion comprises a particular subject that is included in a universal premise. Such an argument, where a particular is inferred from a universal, is called syllogism (*qiyās*).
- The conclusion comprises a universal subject and is inferred from particular premises. Such an argument, where particular examples lead to a general conclusion, is called induction (*istiqrā'*).
- The conclusion and the premises all have particular subjects; and since they have some sort of similarity, it is argued that they are identical in other aspects as well. Such an argument is called analogy (*tamthīl*).

Analogy and induction cannot provide grounds for a necessary conclusion, and thus, cannot yield to cognitive certitude. They can produce definite conclusions only when, with the assistance of some premises, are rearranged into a syllogism. In other words, those analogies and inductions lead to definite conclusions that the mind is aware of their syllogistic forms.

Syllogism (*qiyās*) is of two kinds: categorical (*iqtirāni*) and disjunctive (*istethnā'ī*). Disjunctive syllogisms are convertible into categorical syllogisms. There are four figures of categorical syllogisms, the conclusiveness of first of which is primary (*awwalī*) and the other three are convertible to the first figure.

The first figure is a form of argument conclusiveness of which is primary (*awwalī*) and the proposition, which recounts its conclusiveness, as it will be explained later, is an axiomatic proposition, which on its own right, if not primary (*awwalī*), is reducible to a primary proposition.

The Principle of Non-Contradiction

If the premises from which discursive conclusions are derived are not primary (*awwalī*), they can be reduced to primary propositions. The primary proposition, which all self-evident propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-badīhiyya*) and discursive propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-nadhariyya*) are eventually reduced to, is the principle of non-contradiction.

Primariness (*awwaliyya*) and self-evidence (*badāhya*) are attributes that can mark propositions as well as concepts. Concepts involved in a primary proposition can be primary (*awwalī*), self-evident (*badīhī*), or discursive (*nadharī*). Similarly, primary and self-evident notions may constitute primary, self-evident, or discursive propositions.

For instance, a contingent's need to external causal efficacy is a self-evident proposition (*al-qadhiyya al-badīhiyya*). Its complexity, however, owes to some concepts involved therein. If the meaning of contingency (*imkān*)—which is the negation of necessity of existence and nonexistence and equidistance (*tasāwī al-nisba*) towards both—and the notion of preponderance without a preponderant factor (*tarjīh bilā murajjeh*) is comprehended, the need of a contingent being (*mumkin al-wujūd*) to an external cause would take no time to be acknowledged.

The impossibility of conjunction and negation of contradictories (*istehāla ijtimāʿ wa irtefāʿ al-naqīdhain*) is a primary proposition. The Muʿtazilite *mutakellimūn* who have advanced the notion of "*hāl*"[1], have not questioned the impossibility of conjunction of contradictories (*ijtemāʿ al-naqīdhain*); rather they have questioned whether the notions of existence and nonexistence are contradictories (*naqīdhain*). However, being a discursive matter, this can be explained by referring to self-evident and primary concepts.

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[1] *Hāl* Some *mutakallimūn* believed that certain things could be in the state of *hāl,* a state of neutrality between existence and nonexistence. At that state, they maintained, something was neither existent, nor nonexistent. *

The principle of non-contradiction (*mabda' ʿadam al-tanāqudh*)[1] is not only self-evident but primary; and other propositions and cognitive principles—even the law of identity (*asl al-hū-hūwiyya)*—owe their necessity of truth to this principle.

The law of identity (*asl al-hū-hūwiyya)* asserts the necessity of an entity's being itself. If conjunction of contradictories were possible, a thing, while it is necessarily itself, would be subject to negation from itself and necessity and non-necessity will be suggested in a single instance.

The evidence that substantiates the primariness (*awwaliyya*) of the principle of non-contradiction is that it is indubitable, and every effort towards expression of doubt or denial with respect to it, presupposes its truth. If conjunction of contradictories were possible, the existence and nonexistence of skepticism (*shakkākiyya)* and the skeptic (*shakkāk*) would be equal. In this case, skepticism and the skeptic cannot be definitely said they exist, because it cannot be ruled out there may be a conjunction of doubt and non-doubt and skeptic and non-skeptic. Hence, what the skeptic is claiming about the falsity of principle of non-contradiction may coexist with its exact contradictory statement. Thus, it is impossible to utter the falsity of the principle of non-contradiction.

Just as when some one opens his eyes, the first thing he sees is light, and he sees other things in its illumination, primary and self-evident concepts and propositions are the first things that the human being discerns when he enters the realm of perception and knowledge. Among the propositions that the mind cannot not know and under whose auspices other self-evident and definite propositions are discerned, is the principle of non-contradiction.

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[1] *Naqīdhain,* translated as contradictories, are two notions each one of which is the negation of the other, like human and non-human, stone and non-stone, and so forth. *Ijtemāʿ al-naqīdhain* is the impossible suggestion where two contradictories are instantiated in one being, as one object be both human and non-human. *

In the eighth section of the first essay of *Al-Ilāhiyāt min Kitāb al-Shifā*', Ibn Sīnā, God have mercy on him, explains that the impossibility of negation of contradictories (*irtefāʿ al-naqīdhain*) is also reducible to the impossibility of conjunction of contradictories (*istehāla ijtimāʿ wa irtefāʿ al-naqīdhain*).[1] That is, the impossibility of negation of contradictories is self-evident, however, if doubted, it can be proved by reliance on the impossibility of conjunction of contradictories. Because, if A and non-A are contradictories, and both are negated; with the negation of A, non-A will be true, and due to negation of non-A, A will be true. Consequently, because of the negation of non-A and A the conjunction of A and non-A, which is the conjunction of contradictories, is implied.

As in the arguments for discursive or even non-primary self-evident propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-badīhiyya*), the eventual recourse is the first figure (*al-shakl al-awwal*), in the series of contents or materials of propositions (*mawwād al-qadhāyā*), the arguments which lead to discursive and non-primary self-evident propositions are finally reduced to the principle of non-contradiction.

The Principle of Non-Contradiction and the Validity of the First Figure

As far as their content (*mawādd*) is concerned, propositions are reducible to ones that are more axiomatic. Such transfers from discursive to more axiomatic propositions take place in figures that are convertible to the first figure. However, figures cannot be reduced to content; and therefore, the validity of the first figure is primary (*awwalī*). However, a statement, which recounts its validity, is a self-evident proposition (*al-qadhiyya al-badīhiyya*) that can be reduced to the principle of non-contradiction (*mabda' ʿadam al-tanāqudh*), which is primary (*awwalī*). Likewise, should the credibility of a proposition, which is the conclusion of a first-figure syllogism be questioned, it can be restored by taking recourse to the impossibility of conjunction of contradictories.

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[1] Ibn Sīnā, Abu Ali Husain. *Al-Ilāhiyāt min Kitāb al-Shifā'.* Introduction by Dr. Ibrahim Madhkur. (Qum: Āyatullah Marʿashī Library Publications, 1994), 53.

The first figure can be illustrated as follows:

A is B.
B is C.
Therefore, A is C.

The conclusiveness of this conclusion and the validity of the first figure can be proved as follows: If A is not C, then it must be non-C. And because according to the minor premise A is B, B is, therefore, non-C. But according to the major premise, B is C; and “B is C”, is contradictory to “B is non-C.”

This argument proves the validity of the first figure and the verity of a conclusion derived thereby. But if this argument is used to prove the validity of the first figure, in addition to the problem of impossibility of reduction of figure to material, it will also be open to the objection that the argument itself is a first-figure syllogism, or in a figure, which is reducible to it. Therefore, proving the validity of the first figure by an argument as such would amount to begging the question and serve no purpose other than drawing attention to what is already known (*tanbīh*).

The Principle of Non-Contradiction and Multiplicity of Definite Propositions

An interrogatory that has been addressed by our teacher, ʿAllamah Tabātabā’ī, is that if the chain of contents or materials is reducible to only one necessarily true proposition, namely the principle of non-contradiction, then the necessity of veridicality (*dharūra al-sidq*) of other self-evident and discursive propositions would be indemonstrable. This is because every deduction, in addition to self-evidence or primariness of the validity of its figure, requires two premises, upon which rests the truth of the conclusion. It follows that if one premise is definitely known to be true and the other is not, the conclusion will not be definitely known to be true. Therefore, in order to reach a definite conclusion, more than one definitely true premise is required.

The answer to this interrogatory is that the principle of non-contradiction is not a categorical proposition (*al-qadhiyya al-hamliyya*), but rather, an exclusive disjunctive proposition (*al-munfasila al-haqīqiyya*), and other propositions discerned through sensation or other means—which have self-evident forms but are not definitely known, because definiteness is certitude about the affirmation of a predicate for its subject and the impossibility of its negation from the subject—can be given necessity of veridicality by transference to this principle. For instance, a syllogism about knowledge, whose existence is intuitively known, can be outlined as follows:

> Knowledge exists.
>
> Anything either exists or it does not exist.
>
> Therefore, knowledge definitely exists.

By incorporation of principle of non-contradiction, other statements that are devoid of necessity of veridicality (*dharūra al-sidq*) and are not parallel to the principle of non-contradiction can be ascertained. For instance, if it is sensually proved that a leaf is green, or it is seen as green, it can be argued that because conjunction of two contradictories is impossible, the greenery of the leaf or its being seen as green is definitely true and its opposite is definitely false.

The principle of non-contradiction provides four things that are critically importance in the attainment of cognitive certitude:

1. Certitude about affirmation of the predicate for the subject.
2. Certitude about the impossibility of negation of the predicate from the subject.
3. Perpetuity of the fist certitude.
4. Perpetuity of the second certitude.

Thus, the principle of non-contradiction (*mabda' 'adam al-tanāqudh*) brings new cognitions—which are either sensually discerned or abstracted and predicated by the consideration of the essences of the various subjects—into the realm of definite cognitions, and enriches the treasure of man's knowledge. Thus, the paradox, which may be conceived about the proliferation of definite cognitions, is answered.

The Principle of Non-Contradiction in the Traditions

Al-Kulainī and al-Sadūq narrate from Imam Jaʿfar al-Sādiq, Divine blessings be with him, that after proving the existence of Almighty God, the Imam said, "There is no distance between affirmation and negation." This statement reflects the impossibility of negation of contradictories (*istehāla irtefā' al-naqīdhain*).[1]

In his *Al-Tawhīd*, Al-Shaykh al-Sadūq narrates a conversation between Imam al-Redhā, peace be with him, and Sulayman al-Marwazī, a *mutakellim* from Khurāsān regarding the *hudūth*[2] and eternity of the Divine Will

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[1] Al-Sadūq, Abu Jaʿfar Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Husain ibn Bābawaih. *Al-Tawhid.* (Tehran: Maktabat al-Sadūq, 1969), 246.

[2] Literally meaning generation, *hudūth* in philosphy means the generation of something, which is temporally preceded by nonexistence, that is, the generation of something which previously did not exist. Islamic philosophers deny that the natural world is marked by *hudūth*, and claim that it is eternal and the suggestion that there has been a time that the natural world did not exist is

(*al-Irāda*). In this tradition, the Imam explains the corollaries of both *hudūth* and eternity of the Divine Will and says, "Choose one of the two paths, surely if a thing is not eternal, it is *hādith*[1]; and if it is not *hādith*, it is eternal."[2]

The Imam, peace be with him, says further, "Don't you know that something that has always been cannot be *hādith* and eternal at the same time?"[3] That is, a *hādith* is temporally preceded by nonexistence, and an eternal entity is not preceded by nonexistence, and the instantiation of both amounts to conjunction of contradictories (*ijtemāʿ al-naqīdhain*).

Abu Saʿeed Abu al-Khayr's Criticism of the Use of Syllogism

A critic of Ibn Sīnā and one known for his disapproval of acquired knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-husūlī*), Abu Saʿeed Abu al-Khayr questions the validity of the syllogistic method. He considers the first figure, which substantiates all other figures of syllogism, incapable of conveying certitude. For instance, according to him, in the syllogism

> Socrates is a human being.
> Every human being is mortal.
> Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

the major premise of the syllogism is a universal proposition (*al-qadhiyya al-kulliyya*) that relates the mortality of all human beings including Socrates. Therefore, in order to know Socrates' mortality, it is sufficient to know the major and there is no need to constitute a syllogism. Because if

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self-contradictory, since the existence of time presupposes the existence of the natural world. *

[1] *Hādith* something that is marked by *hudūth,* that is, it did not exist, and then it was given existence. *

[2] i*bid.* 450.

[3] i*bid.* 455.

Socrates' mortality is not known, then the claim of knowing the major is not justified. Thus, according to him, the first figure, similar to "begging the question," is a fallacy.

The answer to this paradox is that the critic does not have a correct understanding of universal propositions, or he is inattentive towards them. Universal propositions are not acquired by inductive or empirical methods, so they would be ensembles of particular and individual (*juz'ie*) propositions.

Propositions such as "Every whole is bigger than its part" and "No nonexistent is existent," are not attained by experiment or induction, in which case their validity would be subject to correction through discovery of new wholes, new experiments, and instances of exception or falsification. If universal propositions were obtained by experiment and induction, they can be necessary only in instances where all of their particulars are observed and enumerated. In such a supposition, obviously, the universal proposition is known through its particulars, including the subject of its minor premise; and therefore, a syllogism comprising a universal proposition as such is evidently begging the question.

Universal propositions reflect the necessary relationships between their subjects and predicates. Necessary relationships between subjects and predicates are not restricted to instances where an essential part (*juz' al-dhāt*) of a subject is predicated thereto. If it were the case, cognitive necessity would be restricted to tautological propositions. Rather, necessity is found in other propositions as well, including propositions in which the predicate is an essential property (*al-'aradh al-dhātī*)[1] of the subject and is abstracted from, and predicated to, the essence of the subject. This fact has been pointed out by the Divine sage al-Sabzawārī:

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[1] Essential Property (*al-'aradh al-dhātī*) A quality which is not included in an essence, nevertheless, is not separable from it either. For instance, evenness is not included in the quiddity of the cardinal number four, yet it never separates from it. *

> *A predicate abstracted from the essence of the subject*
>
> *Differs from a predicate which is an external associate*[1]

The predication of a subject's essential property (*al-'aradh al-dhātī*) to that subject—such as the predication of contingency to quiddity (*al-māhiyya)* —as opposed to the predication of its essential part, bears new information. Since this new universal information, which is exclusive to its subject and predicate, has not been attained by inductive or experimental means, and rather is self-evident (*badīhī*), primary (*awwalī*), or reducible to self-evident and primary propositions, it is not incompatible with inattentiveness or ignorance with respect to its particulars. If the particular (*juz'ī*) of a certain universal is identified by sensory means (*ehsās*), or one of its subsets is discovered through deduction, by incorporating this new information along with that universal major premise, the cognition of a new fact regarding that particular or subset is attained.

For instance, when we attain the universal knowledge (*al-'ilm al-kullī*) that every human being is mortal, given the universality of this knowledge, is other than our knowledge of a particular individual's mortality. Therefore, if we identify a particular entity as a human being, by constructing a syllogism, we can infer his mortality.

In universal propositions, if the judgment is about the essence (*dhāt*) of a subject, like "A whole is bigger than its part," the proposition is described as a quantified universal proposition (*al-mahsūra al-kulliyya).* If the quantified universal proposition is procured by means of experiment and induction, it is similar to a reservoir, which is filled by pumping water into it. Nevertheless, if the predicate is an essential property (*al-ʿaradh al-dhātī*) of the subject, which is universally proved for it by demonstration, the proposition is similar to a spring that gushes from within and illustrates its truth to everyone who observes its deduction.

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[1] Al-Sabzawārī, Hāj Mulla Hādī. *Sharh al-Mandhūma.* (Qum: Maktabat al-Mustafawī), the section on logic, 30.

Intuitive Knowledge and its Categories

Acquired knowledge pertains to notions and quiddities that have mental existence. They begin at primary (*awwalī*) and self-evident (*badīhī*) concepts and propositions and eventuate at discursive (*nadharī*) cognitions. The mental existence (*al-wujūd al-dhehnī*) of quiddities and essences depends upon the existence of knowledge. The external existence of knowledge, which bears the essence or quiddity of knowledge, is in union with the knower's existence without the mediation of any concept. This unity of the knowledge and the knower (*wahda al-ʿālim wa al-maʿlūm*), which is prior to the generation of concepts, is associated with a sort of awareness called intuitive or presential knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-shuhūdī* or *al-ʿilm al-hudhūrī*).

Acquired knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-husūlī*) applies only to things that appear as notions and quiddities. It cannot reach realities that are beyond the horizon of notional manifestations and are sheer external reality. In these instances, only after such realities have been intuitively witnessed, is it that certain notions that reflect them emerge. The task of these notions is to reflect and indicate things that have been intuitively discerned, and for this reason, they are useless for someone who is not familiar with *shuhūd*.

Of the things the human being is intuitively aware of is the existence of the basic reality, the existence of himself, and the existence of his knowledge. Notions that represent these realities are primary notions.

Like acquired knowledge, which is divided into primary (*awwalī*), self-evident (*badihī*), and discursive (*nadharī*) knowledge, intuitive knowledge is also divided into three kinds: primary, self-evident, and complex.

An intuitive knowledge is primary (*awwalī*) if it cannot be denied or doubted and one cannot be inattentive towards it. Self-evident and complex intuitive knowledge are reducible to primary intuitive knowledge. Like discursive acquired knowledge, which is brought about by cogitation and demonstrative efforts, complex intuitive knowledge is acquired by purification of the soul and its emancipation from the vices of conceit.

If inspired by the verse, "Nay! Would that ye knew it with the knowledge of certitude, ye shall surely see the Hell,"[1] should it be desired to acquire *shuhūdi* knowledge respecting realities like Paradise and Hell, to reach at least the level of individuals like Hāritha ibn Mālik—who declared, "It is as if I am looking at the Throne (*ʿArsh*) of my Lord"[2]—becoming a speaking witness of the Throne of the Benevolent God, one must purify himself for long time.

Primary (*awwalī*) and self-evident (*badihī*) intuitive knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-hudhūrī*) reflect all-inclusive realities, so inclusive that the mind cannot but know them. The notions abstracted from these realities have universality (*kulliyya*), immutability (*thabāt*), and continuity (*dawām*), and are primary or self-evident. Complex intuitive knowledge pertains to finite (*mahdūd*) and particular (*juz'ī*) realities, and the notions prescinded from them are disclosed to the conceptual format by reliance on realities that encompass these finite and particular realities.

If by ascending up the rungs of sincerity, the wayfarer of the *shuhūdi* journey succeeds in acquiring vision of universal realities (*al-haqā'iq al-kulliyya)* and gaining companionship of the Absolute Real (*al-Haq al-Mutlaq*), he is protected against Satanic ambushes and interference.

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[1] 102: 5–6

[2] Al-Kulainī, Abu Jaʿfar Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb. *Al-Usūl min al-Kāfī.* (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islamiya, 1987), vol. 2, 54.

That is because Satan cannot fly beyond the heavens of imagination and estimation and is chased away when he makes the intention of entering and hearing what is above that ceiling. “But any listening now findeth a flaming dart in wait for him.”[1]

Individuals who succeed in reaching this zenith on the merit of their sincerity are safe from the mischief of doubt (*shak*) and skepticism (*shakkākiyya)* in their *shuhūd*; and in their journey, they are “the straight path (*al-sirāt al-mustaqīm*) ” and “the criteria of equity (*mawāzīn al-qist*).”

Such immunity to doubt and skepticism is indebted to the fact that doubt is involved when a certain thing is one among several items. For example, if a shelf has a number of books and one of them is intended from a distance, this situation is an instance where distinguishing the intended book from the rest of the books may involve doubt. Nonetheless, intellectual realities (*al-haqā’iq al-ʿaqliyya*), and chief among them the Absolute Real (*al-Haq al-Mutlaq*), are infinite realities that are beyond numerablity. If reached, they can never be subject to doubt and skepticism. Likewise, if someone is enjoying universal *shuhūd* in relation to the realities of the *mundus imaginalis*[2] under the auspices of universal *shuhūd*s, he is also secure and immune to doubt and skepticism.

However, individuals in the rudimentary stages of wayfaring are similar to people who, in the realm of acquired knowledge, are gazing at the heavens and are engrossed in the observation of the cosmos. Obviously, external celestial bodies are known to them indirectly, and should they suffer from weak vision, they will face doubt and skepticism in their observation. In order to ascertain the content of their observation, they will have to rely on someone who has good eyesight.

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[1] 72: 9

[2] The world of imagination (*ʿālam al-khiyāl*, or *al-ʿālam al-barzakh*, or *‘ālam al-mithāl*). *

Someone who experiences a deranged *shuhūd* in the course of wayfaring, first, his *shuhūd* lacks the certitude which is the hallmark of the vision of intellectual realities (*al-haqā'iq al-'aqliyya*), and second, he is compelled to evaluate his mystical experiences with "the criteria of equity." This evaluation sometimes takes place in a mystical experience as a *shuhūd*, and occasionally it is rendered by transferring the content of a certain *shuhūd* into the notional format and rational assessment thereof.

A statement is considered trustworthy in rational assessment, which has an unequivocal content and has been narrated by a reliable chain of narrators from the Infallible (*Ma'sūmīn*) sources of mystical cognition. However, if a tradition lacks anyone of these elements—that is, its content is not unequivocal and clear, or it lacks the reliable chain of narrators, or its source cannot be ascertained to be an Infallible entity—it cannot serve as a criterion of evaluation.

The *shuhūdi* evaluation of a deranged mystical discovery is like an instance where a question rises in an exemplification (*tamāthul*) in the *mundus imaginalis* (*'ālam al-khiyāl*), and in the same intermediate realm, in a state similar to dream and fantasia, the wayfarer hesitates and asks a guide who has attained that perception. The guide, during the same mystical experience, manifests and reveals the perplexing matter in such a way that there does not remain any chance for doubts. Notional evaluation is involved when the mystical experience has ended and some of its notions have stayed in the mind; and then those notions are evaluated by the criteria of reason, Qur'ānic verses, and traditions narrated from the most benevolent Prophet and the Infallible Imams—may the greetings of Allah be unto them.

Soul and the Intuitive Knowledge thereof

Everyone's awareness with respect to his soul is by intuitive knowledge (*al-'ilm al-hudhūrī*), because soul is not a notion or quiddity in which case it would exist through the mental mode of existence (*al-wujūd al-dhehnī*) and would be known through the conceptual framework of knowledge. What a notion can do is to indicate the soul; and as far as quiddity is concerned, it is something that finds reality subordinately to the existence of the individual and is placed before comprehension and acquired knowledge by the mediation of the mind. Like notions, it has a secondary and indirect indication of what it is associated or united with.

Individuals like René Descartes, who have failed this fine point, have presumed they trace their reality from their effects. After asserting skepticism (*shakkākiyya)* towards everything, Descartes locates his self as the first reality by using doubt as the middle term of his argument. To prove the existence of one's soul by using doubt and thoughts as middle terms, in addition to placing the soul among things that exist by mental existence and are found in the mind, undermines the primariness (*awwaliyya*) of its knowledge as well.

Ibn Sīnā, in the third chapter of *Al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt*, and in the *Psychology of Al-Shifā'*, and then Sadr al-Muta'allihīn[1] in the discussions psychology in *Al-Asfār*, stress the fact that regardless of his mental or external, cognitive or practical, effects, man cannot prove his soul through his own effects.

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[1] Al-Shirāzī, Muhammad ibn Ibrahīm Sadr al-Dīn; (980 AH/1572 CE–1050 AH/1640 CE) also known as Sadr al-Muta'Allihīn (Chief of the theist sages) and Mulla Sadrā. Among Islamic theosophers and *'urafā,* Sadr al-Muta'allihīn is unparalleled in many aspects. With authoritative familiarity with *kalām,* Peripatetic and Illuminationist *hikmas,* the works of gnostics, the Noble Qur'an, and the narrations of the holy Imams, he was able to found the philosophical school of Transcendent Wisdom (*al-Hikma al-Muta'āliyya*). His teachings subsume the tenets of all other philosophical schools as well as *'irfān.* Sadr al-Muta'allihīn believed that in order to reach the reality, rational principles must be accompanied by purification (*tadhkiyya)* of the soul and *shuhūdi* ecstasies. This has been comsidered as a final reconciliation between rationality, *shuhūd,* and the Book and *Sunnah.* *

Ibn Sīnā's argues in this regard that should someone doubt his self and desire to prove it through his effects, through his thoughts for instance, in the minor premise, he will either mention the thoughts absolutely or as his own. If thoughts are mentioned absolutely, that is, not mentioned as "my thoughts", the argument cannot prove the arguer's soul. At most, it will indicate that there is an agency, such as a thinker, who is responsible for producing the thoughts. However, if thoughts are mentioned as his—for instance, it is stated, "I think,"—in this case "I" and its reality have already been presupposed as the agency to whom the thoughts pertain. Therefore, the argument cannot demonstrate the existence of the soul as its conclusion.[1]

Ibn Sīnā's demonstration illustrates that man cannot recognize his self through rational arguments and middle terms such as his thoughts; rather, he intuitively knows his self before he knows any of his effects. This argument, first of all, denies the discursiveness and even self-evidence of the human being's knowledge of his self; and a closer examination can even reveal the impossibility of acquired knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-husūlī*) with respect to one's soul, because, acquired knowledge, whether discursive, self-evident, or primary, is acquired though thinking. And thinking being a human action and effect, as indicated by the demonstration, he must know his self before he knows his effects, including include his thoughts and concepts. Since everyone knows his self, therefore, everyone knows his self through a cognition, which precedes acquired knowledge, namely, through intuitive knowledge.

The soul's intuitive knowledge of itself is primary; and the notions that are derived from this knowledge and reflect the self, like the notion of "I," are primary as well.

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[1] Ibn Sīnā, Abu Ali Husain. *Al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt.* Commentary by Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī. (Tehran: Daftar-i-Nashr-i-Kitāb, 1981), vol. 2, 297.

In the horizon of acquired knowledge, the notion of "I"—like the notions of existence, reality, knowledge, and like the propositions that acknowledge the basic reality, one's own reality, or the existence of one's knowledge—is primary. Obviously, such definite primary propositions (*al-qadhāyā al-awwaliyya*), for their affinity with the principle of non-contradiction, which derives from the *shuhūd* of the Absolute Reality (*al-Haq al-Mutlaq*) as well, have necessity of veridicality (*dharūra al-sidq*) and doubt and skepticism are irrelevant with respect to them.

Aside from Ibn Sinā's above proof, in his *Al-Mutarehāt,* Shaykh al-Ishrāq (the Master of Illumination) has established two demonstrations to indicate that the only medium of knowing one's own self is intuitive knowledge and that it is impossible to know one's self through notional knowledge. Having two different middle terms, these two demonstrations, which he has received during a mystical discovery and *shuhūdi* conversation with Aristotle, are distinct and independent from one another. The middle term of one of them is the particularity (*juz'iyya*) of the soul and universality (*kulliyya*) of notions and quiddities and that of the second one is the presence of the soul before itself and the absence of concepts and quiddities from it.

His first demonstration can be outlined in a second-figure syllogism as follows:

> Everyone finds his reality as a specific and particular thing.
>
> All concepts, including the concept of "I", are universal.
>
> Therefore, everyone's reality is other than the concept of "I" or any other mental concept.

The second demonstration affirms that every individual's reality is present before himself, whereas the notion of "I," by predication as essence (*al-haml al-awwalī*), is "he," by predication as extension (*al-haml al-shāỷ*). Therefore, every person's reality is other than the notion that indicates him and everyone intuitively discerns his reality before he discerns the said notion. That is because in every condition, even when expressing skepticism or ignorance, the human being alludes to himself; and to be ignorant of one's own self is unawareness of the knowledge one has about himself.[1]

Man's knowledge of his own reality is one of his intuitive and primary assets. This knowledge does not reflect whether the soul is an accident (*'aradh*) or substance (*jauhar*). Therefore, it is not subject to the criticism that if soul is intuitively known and acquired knowledge is incapable of discerning its reality, then there is no way to prove that it is a substance.

The discussion whether soul is an accident or a substance is part of the inquiry regarding its quiddity; and as a secondary-order analysis, it is rendered after soul's existence has been intuitively known. This analysis belongs to the conceptual framework in which things exist by mental existence (*al-wujūd al-dhehnī*) and—like unity (*wahda*) of quiddity and existence and unity of concept (*mafhūm*) and extension (*misdāq*)—have a sort of unity with the soul. Evidently, this inquiry is open to extensive discussions that proceed from primary and self-evident premises towards discursive knowledge.

Abstraction and Universalization of Causation

Causation (*'illiyya)* means a necessary relationship between external events. The manner in which we discern it is similar to how we intuitively discern our own reality and abstract the concept of "I" or soul from it. That is, the primary and axiomatic concept of causation is discerned from the intuitive perception of soul's relationship with its faculties and actions. One ought to be reminded that since every argument relies upon its premises' necessary entailment of its conclusion—that is, the causality of the premises with respect with their conclusion—it is beyond the capacity of rational arguments to prove or deny the presence of causal relationships between external events. In other words, if causation is doubted, just as on the one hand it cannot be proved by relying upon itself, on the other, without using the very principle of causation, it would be impossible to construct an argument for its rejection. Sadr al-Muta'allihīn, may Allah sanctify his tomb, says, "If causation is accepted, argument is plausible; and if it is denied, reasoning would be irrelevant."[1] Therefore, an inquiry that is dedicated to the analysis of causation, in fact, has the role of its explanation, not that of its proving it.

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[1] Al-Suhrawardī, Abu al-Fath Shahāb al-Dīn Yahyā ibn Habash. *Al-Mutarehāt.* (Tehran: Anjoman-i-Falsafa-i-Iran, 1978), vol. 1, 484.

When soul gains an intuitive perception of its faculties, actions, and wills, and when it discerns the notion of causal relationship between things, it examines the corollaries and characteristics of this notion. In the next step, it universalizes causation in a syllogistic fashion—not analogically as suggested by those not acquainted with this principle—with respect to things that are outside its sphere of existence.

For instance, when the soul discerns quidditative concepts and compares them with existence and nonexistence, it acknowledges their equidistance (*tasāwi al-nisba*) towards existence and nonexistence, and equates the preponderance (*tarjīh*) of one of these two contradictories (*naqīdhain*) over the other with the validity of both equidistance and non-equidistance, evidently a conjunction of contradictories (*ijtemāʿ al-naqīdhain*). Therefore, it ascribes the preponderance of one of the two to an external causal efficacy and sees it as the result of a necessary relationship between the quiddity and that cause. Further analyses, however, transfer the causal nexus from quiddity to the reality and being which is in union with it, and indicate that quiddity has essential nihility (*al-halāka al-dhātiyyaa*) in every condition.

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[1] Al-Shirāzī, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Sadr al-Dīn. *Al-Hikma al-Mutaʿāliya fi al-Asfār al-Arbaʿa*. (Tehran: Dār al-Maʿārif al-Islamiya, 1959), vol. 3, 163.

The inquiry of existential causes (*al-ʿilal al-wujūdiyya*) of various quiddities comprises the analysis of four causes—material (*al-ʿilla al-mādiyya*), formal (*al-ʿilla al-sūriyya*), final (*al-ʿilla al-ghāyiyya*), and efficient (*al-ʿilla al-fāʿiliyya*). Although the celebrated explanation of the existence of contingents (*mumkināt*) is purely on the score of material causes; many proofs, such as the arguments of incorporeality of the soul and its various faculties, indicate that causality is not solely restricted to material causes and rather material causes are limited to a certain portion of the realm of existence. Moreover, analysis of the meaning of matter establishes the necessity of formal, final, and efficient causes; and with the affirmation of incorporeal entities, it is further ascertained that causality is free of need to material and formal causes. In the series of incorporeal entities, the precedence of final cause over efficient cause—that is, the efficacy (*fāʿiliyya)* of final cause in relation to the efficient cause—and the precedence and principality of efficient cause over the other causes is proved.

Knowledge and Epistemology

Knowledge always reflects a “known”—something that is its object. Considering the various categories of objects of cognition, it is marked by a number of divisions—such as philosophy, mathematics, and the many natural sciences.

Epistemology is a secondary-order discipline that studies knowledge. A discipline itself, it is subject to the same criteria and principles, which it proves for other disciplines. Epistemology, as the inquiry of general and comprehensive principles of knowledge, comprises certain principles, which are valid with regard to every discipline including itself. Some propositions that are of extreme importance in the epistemological inquiry are as follows:

- Knowledge exists.

> As explained earlier, skepticism with regard to this proposition makes inquiry and conversation irrelevant and its rejection invites nothing but sophism.
>
> - Knowledge's reflection of the reality is infallible.
>
> This is a direct corollary of the previous proposition; since, if it is denied that knowledge represents reality, the only thing left is ignorance.
>
> - If principles of knowledge are observed, reality can be reached.
>
> In other words, it is possible do reach arrive at the reality and occasionally, because of violating epistemic principles, one may remain ignorant and sustain fallacies.

Epistemology, however, does not determine the validity or falsity of the content of another discipline. Such an appraisal has to be conducted according to the fundamental criteria of each discipline itself. What epistemology can do is to describe and name a veridical cognition's attributes such as immutability, incorporeality, continuity, and so forth. It is an epistemologist's task to differ or concur with the view, which suggests that due to the intertwined and collective evolution of the various disciplines, the entirety of man's knowledge is subject to evolution and change. Likewise, to deny or affirm the immutability, or necessity of immutability, of certain cognitions is an epistemological inquiry. Nonetheless, which cognitions are definite and have been acquired through acceptable measures, and which ones are unscientific and nothing but ignorance under the veil of knowledge, has to be determined in each pertinent discipline.

It becomes clear from this explanation that the abundance of disagreements and errors, which is an obvious mark on every subject, does not undermine the reliability of the fundamental principles of cognition and it cannot justify the negation of possibility of knowledge or negation of its accuracy and reliability.

Not only the presence of discrepancies and contradictions in the statements of scholars of various fields does not put in question the validity of epistemological principles, rather, based on these contradictory remarks, an epistemologist can infer the overall presence of valid and false cognitions. Obviously, when two contradictory opinions are expressed about a single object, given the impossibility of conjunction of contradictories (*istehāla ijtemāʻ al-naqīdhain*), it can be stated that indubitably, one of them is true and the other one is false. However, it is not for epistemology to identify the valid assertion. Rather, it is the task of the expert of each science to render such judgments in accordance with the fundamentals of his particular science and formal standards of logic.

Noncompliance with the logical standards results in a myriad of flaws and errors, which further lead to incoherent and contradictory remarks. Should mere occurrence of mistakes or contradictory statements be a reason to negate knowledge or question its infallibility, then this, contrary to the popular opinion, is not exclusive to a specific discipline such as philosophy and applies to every empirical or discursive branch of knowledge.

Philosophy in its General and Specific Senses

Philosophy is sometimes used in a broader sense whereby it is coterminous with knowledge. Obviously, since knowledge encompasses every awareness that reflects reality and has cognitive worth, in its general sense, philosophy even comprises the empirical and natural sciences. Therefore, in a general division, knowledge or philosophy is divided into theoretical and practical branches.

Theoretical wisdom (*al-hikma al-nadhariyya*) or philosophy is the inquiry of things, which exist irrespective of the human will and conduct. This section of philosophy bears numerous divisions. Its chief sections are as follows:

- The higher wisdom (*al-hikma al-ʿulyā*), also called the first philosophy (*al-hikma al-ūlā*). It is this branch of knowledge to which the term philosophy is applied in its specific sense. Since higher philosophy is also concerned with the cognition of the Necessary (*al-Wājib*), it is called theology (*Ilāhiyāt*).
- The middle wisdom (*al-hikma al-wustā*), also called mathematics.
- The low wisdom (*al-hikma al-sufla*). This section of knowledge comprises the natural and experimental sciences.

Natural sciences are concerned with the inquiry of physical things. Mathematics studies things that have intermediate corporeality (*al-tajarrud al-barzakhī*), that is, although they lack physique, they do have quantity. The first philosophy, the discipline to which the current applications of philosophy and *hikma* is exclusive, is the inquiry of absolute reality. Its predicates are those accidents of absolute reality, which precede its division by the various mathematical, natural, moral, and logical delimitations.

Practical wisdom (*al-hikma al-ʿamaliyya)* analyzes things that exist because of the human will. It is further divided into three kinds: ethics, home economics, and public administration.

This division of knowledge that al-Fārābī and other Islamic philosophers have elucidated its details, illustrates that philosophy, in its general sense, has never been a single discipline. It has had a wide application by which it subsumed many diverse disciplines. As for the first philosophy, or philosophy in its specific sense, it is a particular branch of knowledge that has never encompassed other disciplines. Therefore, the much-celebrated opinion that philosophy used to encompass every branch of knowledge and the empirical sciences separated from philosophy as they gradually evolved, lacks foundation. If by philosophy its general meaning is meant, it has never been a single discipline with a specific subject of inquiry. And if it's specific meaning is in view, then it has never included other disciplines. However, if it is meant that with the empirical sciences' advance, rational and incorporeal methods of knowledge became obsolete and experiential perspectives replaced metaphysical views, it is a valid statement. Nevertheless, except for their intellectual universals (*al-kulliyāt al-'aqliyya*) that are not subject to experiment, natural sciences were founded on experiment from the beginning.

Philosophy and Particular Disciplines

Definition of philosophy as "a theomorphic process towards similarity to God," or "human transition into an epistemic world that is identical with the external world," as pronounced by al-Fārābī and philosophers after him, is respecting the first philosophy. The acknowledgement of philosophers, among them Ibn Sīnā in his treatise *Al–Hudūd*, that defining things and identifying their essential parts and properties is extremely difficult, pertains to natural and physical entities.[1]

Philosophy, mathematics, and a certain portion of ethics, use incorporeal and intellectual notions. The possibility of knowing these realities and identifying their essential properties (*al-'awāridh al-dhātiyya*), and thereby establishing definite demonstrations (*barāhīn*) about them, cannot be denied. Natural sciences that try to discern quiddities and essences by sensory and experiential methods hardly arrive at reality of things, and therefore, they are unable to establish demonstrations.

Absence of demonstrations (*barāhīn*) in experimental sciences has led these disciplines to suffice at conjectural premises and conclusions and use results generated from such conjectural syllogisms for practical purposes. The human expectation from the empirical sciences is their wider practical application for exploitation of natural resources. However, in the realm of propositions that are devoid of direct practical use, anything less than certitude is useless.

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[1] Ibn Sīnā, Abu Ali Husain. *Al-Hudūd*. (Tehran: Intesharat Surūsh, 1988), 1.

Chapter Two

FAITH AND REASON

As put by the Divine sage al-Sabzawārī, inquiry about God, the hereafter, and the path that guarantees man's eternal felicity and gives its elaborate details, that is, the revelation, brings forth questions that do not leave man, even if he should desire to ignore them, and pique his curiosity from inside. As the existence and non-existence of these phenomena are contradictory to each other, they are either true or false. The branch of knowledge that is concerned with this inquiry is the first philosophy. Though *shuhūdi* ecstasies in relation to these realities are sufficient to satisfy the fastidious curiosity of a Gnostic, until transferred into the conceptual framework and given the form of rational arguments, they will fail to pass cognitive judgments to persuade others. This is because if reason does not play any role in the cognition of central religious doctrines and mystical experiences are the sole criterion of truth in the field, rational defense of faith and enjoining others towards it will be out of question. Moreover, when the criterion of rationality, which is the common language of all humanity, is considered futile, everyone will be entitled to have his own favorite religious claim, and consequently, as one mystical experimenter may report the existence of many gods, the other might call others to monotheism. The result of such agnostic or fideistic mistrust of reason and unreliability of acquired knowledge—as put by Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq, Divine peace be with him, in a conversation with an atheist that has been narrated by Hishām ibn al-Hakam—is that the gateway to theism will be closed and the call to believe in one God will lack relevance.

Hishām narrates that an atheist inquired from Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq, Divine blessings be with him, about God, the Exalted. The Imam mentioned some of His positive and negative attributes and described Him as the Deity who deserves absolute human devotion and worship. He said, "My saying 'Allah' is not the affirmation of these letters, '*alif, lām, hā'*; rather I intend the extension (*misdāq*) Who is the Creator of things and is their Crafter. These letters indicate Him, and He is the agent Who is called Allah, the Benevolent, the Merciful, the Ever-Prevalent, and names similar to these; He is the Deity."

The atheist responded, "We find not a concept but it is a creature."

"Were it as you say," replied the Imam, "then it would have not been required from us to believe in one God. We have not been obliged to believe in something non-conceptualized, but rather, we say, everything that is perceived by the senses is physical, therefore, what is found and conceptualized by the senses is an artifact, and the Crafter must be proved."[1]

In the above conversation, first the Imam, peace be with him, explains that what is meant by these names and attributes is their real and external extension (*al-misdāq al-khārijī*). In response to the Imam, the atheist tries to block the medium of debate and dialogue and states that concepts do not represent reality and what appear in our minds and thoughts are our own artifacts. In response, the Imam, peace be with him, says if this were true, then necessity of belief in monotheism would be absurd, since monotheism obliges man to believe in an actual, external, and non-fantasized single God; whereas man's thoughts are figments of his imagination that been have created in specific conditions and will be destroyed in the other. Therefore, how could someone who lives in the confines of concepts and does not view the true unity (*tawhīd*) of God and His most beautiful names be obliged to believe in Him? After pointing out the corrupt corollary of the atheist's assertion, the Imam presents a rational argument to prove the existence of God and considers his rational argument, which traces the existence of sensible crafts to an insensible Crafter, sufficient for this purpose.

The question of God's existence, the answer to which is of utmost importance in the formation of human identity and how he views the world, is a question that is imprinted on man's heart and soul and cannot be satisfied with anything less than certitude. God and the hereafter are not things that "do not cause loss to him who knows them not; and do not benefit him who knows them."[1] Rather, they are realities whose knowledge is "the mighty tiding"[2] and ignorance towards them is enormously risky. Because even should the existence of the hereafter be improbable, the event that is at stake here is eternal heavenly bliss or everlasting torments. The practical reason (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*) obliges one to ensure the forestallment of an eternal condemnation even if it is not highly probable. This call of the practical reason (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*), as it has been used by Imam al-Sādiq, peace be with him, against ʿAbdul Karim ibn Abī al-ʿAwjā,[3] does not warrant one to dismiss these doctrines as meaningless and reject them ahead of any kind of cogitation.

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[1] Al-Sadūq, Abu Jaʿfar Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Husain ibn Bābawaih. *Al-Tawhid.* (Tehran: Maktabat al-Sadūq, 1969), 245.

Sophistic Impartations and the Denial of Commensurability of Faith with Reason

Thinkers, who are influenced by latent sophistic persuasions or biased by the openly skeptical contemporary thought, remain devoid of rational cognition of metaphysical realities and religious tenets. Moreover, in order to defend the illegitimate and corrupt ideological ramifications of their experiential perspectives, they hastily evince contempt towards the philosophic and civilized thought that is fostered in the orchard of reason and watered from the heavens of revelation.

Ironically, while such a person himself is fully engrossed in conceptual discussions and is dependent on things that are not external to the realm of notions, he tries to dismiss the conformity of concepts to external realities and religious doctrines.

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[1] Al-Kulainī, Abu Jaʿfar Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb. *Al-Usūl min al-Kāfī.* (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islamiya, 1987), vol. 1, 23.

[2] 78: 2

[3] Al-Kulainī, Abu Jaʿfar Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb. *Al-Usūl min al-Kāfī.* (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islamiya, 1987), vol. 1, 78.

The denial of commensurability of faith with reason, which is common in the western philosophy of religion, is an old paradox. It is based on the evidence that many people, who have scholarly and demonstrative cognition of religious doctrines, do not have any commitment to religious faith and exhibit atheistic and blasphemous behavior; and on the other side of the spectrum, many devout people are incapable of demonstrating their faith.

The implausibility of this discourse becomes clear from our previous discussion about theoretical (*al-ʻaql al-nadharī*) and practical reasons (*al-ʻaql al-ʻamalī*). Propositions are made as a result of a relationship formulated in the mind between their subjects and predicates, which is expressed their copulas, and it is the theoretical reason (*al-ʻaql al-nadharī*) that discerns these relationships. Faith is the nexus of the soul with the object of its perception; and practical reason (*al-ʻaql al-ʻamalī*) is the agency, which establishes this relationship.

The human being's theoretical knowledge pertains to sensation (*ehsās*), memory (*hāfidha*), imagination (*khiyāl*), estimation (*wahm*), and ratiocination (*taʻaqqul*); and his faith and practical inclinations, with all of their perceivable levels, are proportional to his theoretical perceptions. However, as explained earlier, by differentiating between faith and knowledge—that is, in the levels in which separation between faith and knowledge is perceivable—four classes, each one of which may include further subclasses, emerge. These four classes are: the learned faithful, the learned infidel, the ignorant faithful, and the ignorant infidel.

It can be inferred from this discourse that the separation of faith and knowledge that occurs in certain levels of man's religious journey does not indicate a separation that is due to incapacity of reason in knowing religious tenets and metaphysical realities. Rather, from this vantage point, it can be seen that for the people who are devoid of *shuhūdi* cognition of reality, reason is the only way of assessing the veridicality of the various religious faiths. Because if the practical reason (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*) embraces perceptions the veridicality of which has been ascertained, the religious belief, in this case, is a faith that has cognitive respectability. And if faith is proportioned to things the truth of which has not been authenticated, it is blind faith. For the same reason, if reality is well-known to an individual, yet he still does not have faith in it, his knowledge is associated with infidelity and corruption. And if reality is neither known nor believed in, this ignorance is mingled with infidelity and corruption.

Given that faith is the propensity of the human soul, it is true when it is proportioned towards a real object and false when directed to something unreal. Therefore, should rational assessment of metaphysical realities and religious doctrines be impossible, even if the perpetual dominance of faith over human civilization is accepted, there still will be no means of authenticating the many religious faiths the contradictory claims of which range from the insane lordships of diverse natural deities to the divinity of a Single Almighty God.

The Mutual Existential Necessitation between Faith and Reason in the Islamic Traditions

Although there is no mutual non-existential necessitation (*al-talāzum al-ʿadamī*) between faith and reason, because reason has the ability to authenticate religious creeds, and therefore, can play an instrumental role in fostering a veridical faith, there is a mutual existential necessitation (*al-talāzum al-wujūdī*) between faith and reason. Therefore, numerous traditions narrated from the Beneficent Prophet and his holy legatees, peace be with them all, measure the value of piety and religious devotion of individuals in proportion to their reasonability and knowledge.

"Verily fear God only those of His servants induced with knowledge."[1]

"One does not have faith until he makes use of reason."[2]

"The ignorant worshipper is like a mill-donkey, which circumambulates but cuts no distance."[3]

"A person's knowledge and reason denote his value."[4]

"One's religiosity is in proportion to one's reason."[5]

Likewise, in the traditions, a knowledge that is not coupled with faith and practice is the subject of scorn.

"The hearth of the Hell in the Day of Judgment is every wealthy who is avaricious of his wealth with respect to the destitute, and every scholar who sells his religion for worldly gains."[6]

"The most detested of the servants before Allah, is the corrupt scholar."[7]

"How abundant are evil scholars and ignorant pious! Fear the evil among the scholars and the ignorant among the pious."[8]

While differentiating between knowledge and faith, the last tradition is denouncing a knowledge, which is not coupled with faith; and condemning a faith, which is not accompanied by knowledge; and decreeing both of them be shunned.

In another set of traditions, knowledge has been called the best companion of faith: "How noble a companion is knowledge for faith."[1]

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[1] 35: 28

[2] Āmidī, 'Abd al-Wahīd ibn Muhammad al-Tamīmī. Translation and commentary by Jamal al-Dīn Muhammad Khwānsārī. *Sharh Ghorar al-Hikam wa Dorar al-Kalim.* (Tehran: Tehran University Publications, 1986), vol. 6, 70.

[3] *ibid.* vol. 2, 125.

[4] *ibid.* vol. 6, 476.

[5] *ibid.* vol. 4, 313.

[6] *ibid.* vol. 6, 240.

[7] *ibid.* vol. 2, 431.

[8] *ibid.* vol. 4, 556.

In some traditions, the noblest form of knowledge has been named a knowledge that is illustrated in actions and displayed by organs.

"The most beneficial knowledge is that which is practiced."[2]

"The best knowledge is that which is with practice"[3]

"The noblest knowledge is that which is manifested in the organs and body parts." [4]

Similarly, a knowledge, which has not been put into practice, has been regarded the worst.

"Knowledge without practice is heinousness."[5]

"The curse of knowledge is to abandon its practice."[6]

"The worst knowledge is the one that is not implemented."[7]

"Knowledge without practice is a warrant for God against the servant."[8]

These traditions illustrate that despite the absence of a mutual non-existential necessitation, there is a mutual existential necessitation between faith and knowledge. It follows that faith is veridical only when it pertains to a real entity and is coupled with definite cognition thereof and that faith without cognition invites nothing but mischief and vice.

The mutual existential necessitation between faith and reason indicates that transcendent levels of faith cannot be attained if one does not possess superior levels of cognition. Therefore, in the search of a veridical faith, there is no alternative to reason and knowledge and citing examples of the ignorant pious and blasphemous scholars are not adequate disproof of this assertion.

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[1] *ibid.* vol. 6, 159.

[2] *ibid.* vol. 2, 386.

[3] *ibid.* vol. 2, 420.

[4] *ibid.* vol. 2, 422.

[5] *ibid.* vol. 2, 8.

[6] *ibid.* vol. 3, 107.

[7] *ibid.* vol. 4, 170.

[8] *ibid.* vol. 4, 351.

The putative failure of philosophers in proving the existence of God does not justify the dismissal of rationality and the assertion that Divine Books have called for religious experience or mere sensation of Divine existence, or that religious language is either meaningless or transrational.

Although not every person who is wiser and more knowledgeable is necessarily more faithful and pious, and there are a good many erudite atheists, this does not indicate that reason is satanic, worldly, and misleading, because the examples of separation and mutual non-existential necessitation between faith and reason do not negate their mutual existential necessitation.

The Ignorant Devout and the Unlearned Pious

Lack of attention to the mutual existential necessitation between faith and reason has led some to consider reason and acquired knowledge as a defective or supplementary way for affirming religious doctrines. They have asserted that the use of reason—which as instanced by, "One's religiosity is in proportion to one's reason,"[1] is the criterion of the veridicality of one's faith—is inspired by fanatic and professional impulses.

This trend reflects the position of contemporary western theology. After submission to sensationalism bidding rationality farewell, and turning away from the religion that is in total commensurability with rational principles, this theology wants to defend religion as a dimension of human civilization.

The philosophic worth of sensory cognition of religious tenets and metaphysical realities is not more than sophism and skepticism (*shakkākiyya*). Theologians who depend on this medium justify religious tendencies as mere introspective propensities. Indeed, the sort of people who are raised in this agnostic or fidiestic tradition, which denies the nexus of faith with reason, are the ignorant devout and unlearned pious who *want* to have faith even if it flies in the face of every rational principle known to mankind. Such a person can hardly be participant of a rational dialogue.

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[1] *ibid.* vol. 4, 313.

When reason is considered an improper medium of reaching religious tenets, and metaphysical propositions are regarded as equivocal and meaningless, there is little that knowledge can do to differentiate between veridical religious doctrines and false claims. Rather, in this case, there is little difference between faith in God and belief in the devil; and consequently faith remains blind and perplexed about choosing its object of worship from among the favorite deities of diverse religions. In the light of this, it can be stated that the worst determent inflicted at faith is the denial of the possibility of its rational defense.

First Knowledge is the Cognition of the Almighty

If it is admitted that reason can yield knowledge to the Almighty God—as it has been echoed by the tradition, "The first knowledge is the cognition of the Almighty"[1]—it will follow that reason has the capacity to differentiate veridical religious doctrines from false ones; and therefore, the most essential discipline is the branch of knowledge, which applies to this inquiry. Imam Ali, peace be with him, says, "The most compulsory knowledge is the one which leads you to the good of your faith, and illuminates its wrong."[2]

If reason, which constitutes the humanness of the human being and of which everyone has a just share, has the capacity to render judgment on the validity and invalidity of religious tenets, then its application to faith is not irreverence.

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[1] Al-Sadūq, Abu Jaʿfar Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Husain ibn Bābawaih. *Al-Tawhid.* (Tehran: Maktabat al-Sadūq, 1969), 34.

[2] Āmidī, Abd al-Wahīd ibn Muhammad al-Tamīmī. Translation and commentary by Jamal al-Dīn Muhammad Khwānsārī. *Sharh Ghorar al-Hikam wa Dorar al-Kalim.* (Tehran: Tehran University Publications, 1986), vol. 1, 61.

Rather, it ought to be regarded as a reliable medium towards bliss, as indicated by these traditions:

"Reason is the apostle of truth."[1]

"Reason is a definite friend."[2]

"The friend of every individual is his reason, and his enemy is his ignorance."[3]

Reflecting on the excellences of reason, Imam Ali, peace be with him, says, "God, the Glorified, has not distributed among His servants anything better than reason."[4]

Disparagement of Acquired Knowledge and Mistrust of Theoretical Disciplines

An important point worth noticing here is that the disparagement of acquired knowledge (*al-'ilm al-husūlī*) and theoretical disciplines (*al-'ulūm al-'aqliyya*), which is ubiquitous in the works of the Gnostics (*'urafā'*) who witness the Deity and the hereafter by *shuhūd*, is not identical to the mistrust of rationality in contemporary sensationalism and western theology. The genuine Gnosticism (*'irfān*) decrees that although reason is not sufficient, it is necessary.

In the initial phases, acquired knowledge and rational cognition is the criterion of veridicality of religious doctrines; because "Nothing rectifies religiosity save reason."[5] However, in the higher phases—that is, after having faith and performing virtuous deeds—reason yields its place to *shuhūd*, where what was previously known by the medium of concepts is exposed to *shuhūdi* visualization without any mediates. This phase of cognition has some characteristics and corollaries, which though compatible with rational principles, are not within the radius of reason's reach. This fact is acknowledged by reason itself, since the truth of *shuhūdi* cognition as well as the exaltedness of God's Essence from being reached by the rational arguments of philosophers and mystical experiences of Gnostics are demonstratively proved. Thus if "Reason is the paramount human excellence,"[1] the paramount excellence of reason is not invalidating it, but knowing its limits and realization of meta-rational realities. "Admission of ignorance is the farthest limit of one's reason."[2]

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[1] *ibid.* vol. 1, 70.

[2] *ibid.* vol. 1, 85.

[3] Al-Kulainī, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb. *Al-Usūl min al-Kāfī.* (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islamiya, 1987), vol. 1, 11.

[4] Āmidī, Abd al-Wahīd ibn Muhammad al-Tamīmī. Translation and commentary by Jamal al-Dīn Muhammad Khwānsārī. *Sharh Ghorar al-Hikam wa Dorar al-Kalim.* (Tehran: Tehran University Publications, 1986), vol. 6, 80.

[5] *ibid.* vol. 1, 353.

The Commensurability of Religious Tenets with Philosophic Arguments

After pessimism with respect to the affirmation of religious tenets and metaphysical realities through the rational approach and considering it either futile or supplementary, the nexus of faith and reason is rejected in another way. It is argued that in religions generally, and in the scriptures of the monotheistic tradition of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam specially, the traditional rational and philosophic proofs of theism have not been used. It is further argued that many theologians and philosophers have demurred from presenting rational arguments for the existence of God, considering them useless and inconclusive, or even, as in the case of Paul Tillich, blasphemous and irreverent to the pious expediency.[3]

According to the verses of the Noble Qur'ān, the Divine visage is evident in every atom of existence. "And God's is the East and the West, therefore whithersoever ye turn ye find the face of God."[1] And the Divine existence as expressed by, "What! About God is there any doubt?"[2] has been considered axiomatic and indubitable. According to the verse, "Is it not sufficient for thy Lord that He is a witness over all things,"[3] His existence has been described as more manifest than and antecedent to everything else.

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[1] *ibid.* vol. 4, 374.

[2] *ibid.* vol. 4, 374.

[3] Tillich, Paul. *Systematic Theology I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press and Welwyn, Hertfordshire: James Nisbet & Company Ltd., 1951), 237.

In response to this opinion one cannot help but to say that, indeed, it is not surprising that rationality has failed to prove a Deity who is an anthropomorphic body of light hidden in the unseen, or is like a griffin in a fairyland.

Rational Arguments in the Islamic Scriptures

The above argument centers on the idea that in religions in general and in the Holy Qur'ān in particular, there has not been any serious effort to prove the existence of God through traditional philosophical proofs. This discourse, however, at least with respect to Qur'ān, is untenable for many reasons.

First, at the time when the Noble Qur'ān was revealed, it addressed the people of the Book and polytheists (*mushrikīn*). These people did not reject the Divine existence. The fundamental challenge to the Prophet of Islam, and rather to all of the ancient prophets, was idol-worship, dualism, and so forth. The Noble Qur'ān describes the people who were addressed by the Prophet and were antagonistic towards him as acknowledging God and the fact that He is the Creator.

"And if thou ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth and made subservient the sun and the moon?' Certainly will they say, 'God.'"[4]

"And if thou ask them, 'Who sendeth down from the heaven the water, and giveth life with unto the earth after its death?' Certainly will they say, 'God.'"[1]

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[1] 2: 115

[2] 14: 10

[3] 41: 53

[4] 29: 61

"And if thou askest them 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' Certainly will they say, 'God.'"[2]

"And if thou ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' Certainly will they say, 'Created them the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.'"[3]

"And if thou ask them, 'Who created them?' Certainly will they say, 'God.'"[4]

The fundamental obstacle for the idolaters of Hijāz in accepting the new Divine religion was not the existence of God or the fact that He is the Creator; rather their real difficulty was in *al-tawhīd al-rubūbī*[5]. They worshipped idols, which they believed decided their lives, gave their sustenance, and were the means of attaining proximity to God. The Noble Qur'ān relates their explanation of their idolatrous conduct as follows:

"We worship them not save [in order] that they may make us near to God."[6]

"And they worship besides God, that which can neither hurt them nor profit them and they say, 'These are our intercessors with God.'"[7]

It is obvious that when addressing such people, the Noble Qur'ān does not need to prove the existence of God. Rather, it calls their belief indemonstrable and presents rational proofs for *al-tawhīd al-rubūbī.*

Second, it was not just these people who were addressed by the Noble Qur'ān. On many other occasions, the Holy Qur'ān names the belief of those who reject God and the hereafter as indemonstrable and devoid of proof. It

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[1] 29: 63

[2] 31: 25

[3] 43: 9

[4] 43: 87

[5] *Al-Tawhīd al-Rubūbī* (monotheism in administration) indicates that the administrator of the world is the same deity that has created it. *

[6] 39: 3

[7] 10: 18

denounces them for relying on surmise and presents demonstrations (*barāhīn*) for the existence of the Deity.

When the Noble Qur'ān addresses atheists who consider their lives and deaths determined by the nature, it introduces profound demonstrations, (*barāhīn*) inquiry into which will add new chapters to philosophy.

In response to this last group—whose opinion about life and death has been outlined in this way: "And say they, 'It is not save our life in this world; we die and live, and destroys us not but time,'"[1]—the Qur'ān says, "For them there is no knowledge of that; they do but merely guess."[2] That is, they do not have certainty about their claim and they merely surmise. It can be inferred from this discourse that the Qur'ānic criterion for the assessment of truth of religious doctrines is nothing other than knowledge and rationality.

In the blessed chapter of The Mountain, as an indication to the existence of the Creator of the world, the Noble Qur'ān says, "Or were they created by nothing? Or are they themselves the creators? Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay! They have no certainty."[3]

The first verse is a demonstration (*burhān*) for the existence of man's creator, summing as, either he has a creator or he does not. Given that the latter is an evident impossibility, due to the impossibility of haphazardness, then he must have a creator. It follows that his creator is either he himself or someone else. The former—due to the obvious impossibility of circular causation (*al-ʿilliyya al-dauriyya*), which yields to conjunction of contradictories (*ijtemāʿ al-naqīdhain*)—is impossible. Therefore, his creator is an agency other than himself. One need not be reminded that the "other" that the Majestic Qur'ān introduces here is certainly not man's recipient cause (*al-ʿilla al-qābiliyya*). Since, first, the existence of the recipient cause does not undermine the atheist position, as they do not demur from acknowledging its existence, and second, it is not the Noble Qur'ān's objective here to prove the existence of the recipient cause.

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[1] 45: 24

[2] *ibid.*

[3] 52: 35–36

Just as the analysis of a single principle of the Principles of Jurisprudence (*usūl al-fiqh*), "Certitude is not infringed by doubt,"[1] brings forth the detailed discussions of *istishāb* and creates many long chapters in the named discipline, a profound and meticulous investigation of this brief verse can be the source of many new epistemic chapters about man's origin and his Creator. Each one of the above propositions is divided into two propositions based on the impossibility of conjunction of contradictories. In the first proposition, the reason for the impossibility of man's not having a creator is the fact that existence is not included in his essence, and attribution of existence to his essence without a cause invites preponderance without a preponderant (*tarjīh bilā murajjeh*). This is because an entity that existence and nonexistence are not included in its essence as its essential parts, is equidistant (*mutasāwī al-nisba*) in relation to existence and nonexistence; and the attribution of existence or nonexistence in this situation, without an external cause, amounts to conjunction of equidistance and non-equidistance. It follows that since equidistance and non-equidistance are contradictories, the attribution of existence to the human being without taking into consideration the causal efficacy of an external agency results in conjunction of contradictories, which is impossible. Therefore, it is impossible for the human being not to have a creator.

Furthermore, it can be proved that the suggestion of man being his own creator is untenable, since it translates into circularity (*daur*), which translates into conjunction of contradictories (*ijtemā' al-naqīdhain*), which is impossible. Therefore, man is not his own creator and his creator is someone other than himself.

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[1] Derived from the tradition, "It is not appropriate for you to infringe certitude with doubt." See: Al-ʿĀmilī, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Hurr. *Wasā'il al-Shiʿa ila Masā'il al-Shariʿah.* (Beirut: Ehia al-Turāth al-ʿArabī), vol. 3, 466.

Likewise, a similar argument *from* cosmic creation *to* the existence of God can be inferred from the second verse, which speaks about the creation of the heavens and the earth. Thus, inquiry into the existence of human being and the world can be pursued on the avenue of the many similar Qur'ānic verses.

Third, there is an abundant supply of explicit demonstrations (*barāhīn*) and detailed rational arguments in the traditions. In *Al-Tawhīd* of al-Shaykh al-Sadūq and *Usūl al-Kāfi*, a discourse similar to the above verses has been elaborated as follows: "You did not create yourself, nor were you created by someone similar to yourself."[1]

The Legacy of *Nahj al-Balāgha* to the History of Islamic Thought

The sermons of *Nahj al-Balāgha* are full of the riches of rational wisdom that all along the history of Islamic thought have inspired and enriched the works of the *mutakellimūn*, philosophers, and Gnostics alike. For instance, sermon 185 declares:

> Praise belongs to Allah, Who is such that senses cannot perceive Him, places cannot contain Him, eyes cannot see Him, and veils cannot cover Him. The One Who proves His eternity by the *hudūth* of His creation; and the *hudūth* of His creation indicates His existence, and their analogousness establishes that there is nothing similar to Him. The One Who is true in His promise, exalted

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[1] Al-Sadūq, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Husain ibn Bābawaih. *Al-Tawhid.* (Tehran: Maktabat al-Sadūq, 1969), 293.

> from oppressing His servants, upholds equity in His creation, and practices justice in His rule. The One Who attests by the *hudūth* of things to His eternity, by their marks of incapability to His power, and by their powerlessness against destruction to His everlastingness.

This sermon contains rational inference of God's existence, eternity, and everlastingness, from the *hudūth* of the world. It traces the weakness and neediness of creatures to the omnipotence of God. Along the history of Islamic thought, these arguments with their particular expressions have guided and given a sense of direction to *kalām*, philosophy, and Gnosticism. Later, this sermon clearly mentions the principle of causation, cause and effect, contingency (*imkān*) and necessity (*wujūb*), and the perfection of creation.

Imam Ali, may the benedictions of Allah be for him, after presenting numerous evidences for the existence of God says,

> Then woe unto them who deny the Ordainer and reject the Ruler! They have assumed that they are like grass having neither any cultivator nor any maker for the diversity of their forms. They have not relied on rationality for their assertion, nor on any research for what they have heard. Can there be any structure without a constructor? Or an offence without an offender?

This section of the sermon, by relying on the principle of causation and the effects' need to the cause, traces the existence of the various forms to the existence of the cause that bestows these forms.

Moreover, it mentions the rational theophony (*al-tajallī al-ʿaqlī*)—that is, the Divine manifestation in the reason—and that reason is incapable of reaching God's Essence and that it has the capacity to discern this shortcoming of hers.

In sermon 186, about which the compiler of *Nahj al-Balāgha,* al-Syed al-Radhī says, "[This sermon is] about monotheism, and this sermon encompasses such principles of gnosis that no other sermon contains", it is stated:

> Everything that is known through itself has been created, and everything that exists by virtue of another thing is an effect. He works but not with the help of instruments; He fixes measures but not with the activity of cogitation; He is rich but not through acquisition. Epochs do not keep company with Him and implements do not help Him. His Being precedes time. His Existence precedes nonexistence and His eternity precedes beginning.

It will not be an overstatement to say that philosophy has evolved along the lines of inquiry and analysis of the first two points of the above discourse. Inquiry of causation and usage of terms such as causation (*al-ʿilliyya),* causal efficacy (*al-fāʿiliyya), causedness* (*al-maʿlūliyya),* and scrutiny of existence and nonexistence and so forth are central philosophical themes that have been used in this and other sermons.

Some interpreters of *Nahj al-Balāgha* have considered it likely that what al-Syed al-Radhī has narrated here is part of sermon 179, which has been delivered in reply to the inquisition of Dhiʿleb al-Yamānī, and al-Radhī has separated them for literary considerations.

Dhiʿleb asks Imam Ali, peace be with him, "O' Commander of the Faithful, have you seen your Lord?"

"Do I worship someone I have not seen?" replies the Imam.

Dhiʿleb asks again, “How have you seen Him?”

“Eyes do not see Him through sensual perception,” responded the Imam, “but rather hearts find Him through serenity of faith. He is close to things but not [physically] contiguous. He is far from them but not [physically] separate.”

Statements similar to this sermon—such as “Every manifest thing other than Him is hidden, and every hidden thing other than Him is invisible,”[1] “Praises be to Allah, Who is Manifest before His creatures because of His creation,”[2] or “He, the Glorified, manifested before them in His Book,”[3] that have come in other sermons—and excerpts from the chapter of Sincerity (*sūra al-Ikhlās*) and verses like, “He is the Beginning and the End, and the Manifest and the Hidden,”[4] and “He is with you wherever ye may be,”[5] and words in the books of supplications, have enriched and inspired the philosophic and Gnostic tradition of Islam in the form poem and prose over the centuries.

In a worldview where the Divine Essence is behind the curtain of the all-unseen so much so that “The height of mental courage cannot appreciate Him and the profundities of reason cannot reach Him,”[6] reason and knowledge are His first Essential manifestation[7], and universal intellect (*al-ʿaql al-kullī*) is His first actual and factual theophony in the external world. That is, the “immutable entities” (*al-aʿyān al-thābita*) of things manifest in the Divine cognitive presence (*al-hadhra al-ʿilmiyya)* through His Essential knowledge (*al-ʿilm al-dhātī*) and their external beings (*al-a'yān al-khārijiyya)* appear in the external world through the emanation of grace (*ifādha*) by the Intellect. "The first thing that God created is the Intellect."[1] And if it is such that in the arc of descent (*qaus al-nuzūl*), the Divine grace passes through knowledge and Intellect and reaches the world of nature, likewise in the arc of ascent (*qaus al-su'ūd*) one can reach the Divine threshold only through assistance of the Intellect and knowledge, since "It is the Intellect through which the All-Merciful is worshiped and the Paradises attained."[2]

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[1] *Nahj al-Balāgha*, sermon 65.

[2] *Nahj al-Balāgha*, sermon 108.

[3] *Nahj al-Balāgha*, sermon 147.

[4] 57: 3

[5] 57: 4

[6] *Nahj al-Balāgha*, sermon 1.

[7] “The first thing that God created was the intellect.” See: Al-Majlisī, Muhammad Bāqir. *Bihār al-Anwār.* (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islamiyya), vol. 1, 97.

As explained earlier, in this consonant and harmonious tradition the tenets of which support each other, the disparagement of reason by those lost in "effacement" (*fanā'*) does not indicate total and absolute rejection of rationality. In this realm, whose dwellers have abandoned the pleasures of this world and the hereafter for the sake of annihilation in the Absolute Beauty, it is not only reason that is belittled, but even the angels, for not bearing the sin of love, are out of the circle of communion (*wisāl*).

Indeed, it is odd that despite expressions and texts like the ones quoted here, rationalistic approach towards religious tenets and Gnostic claims is denied on grounds of their incommensurability with the demands of piety.

The reason behind all of this is the dominance of sophism and skepticism (*shakkākiyya)* over the simplistic minds of people who, prematurely and ahead of adequate familiarity with philosophic insights, have been exposed to the paradoxes of theologians who, in order to justify their impure and polytheistic religiosity, have deviated from rationality and have compromised with sensualistic perspectives and whose corrupt and void faith cannot be maintained except by declaring rationality blasphemous and incompatible with faith. Obviously, the maintenance of the superficial faith in spite of its opposition to reason, has left no choice for trans-rationalist theologians but to reduce religious tenets to a minimum. Thus, as on one hand the acceptability of antireligious ethos was maximized; on the other, it was insured that the Excellent Religious State (*al-Madīna al-Fādhila al-Dīniyya)*, or the state of the people—that is, the democratic rule—as well as individual and social norms, be based to liberal interpretations of permissibility and freedom.

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[1] Al-Majlisī, Muhammad Baqir. *Bihār al-Anwār.* (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islamiyya), vol. 1, 97.

[2] *Nahj al-Balāgha*, sermon 107.

Non-questionability of Monotheism and Indemonstrability of Atheism

The verses of the Majestic Qur'ān, which declare the existence of God as axiomatic and indubitable,[1] and those verses, which describe polytheism as indemonstrable and without proof,[2] do not suggest that the gateway of reason to discern the Divine existence is closed and that it is impossible to discover the necessity of God's existence through the rational approach, and therefore, one has to accept His existence "as a matter of faith."

Perhaps the non-questionability of God's existence in these verses owes to the fact that the proofs of Divine existence and negation of polytheism are undeniable. For instance, it can be inferred from the verse, "What! in God is there any doubt, the Originator of the heavens and the earth?"[3] that since the entire cosmos bears the marks of its Creator, to doubt His existence is nonsensical and indefensible.

In *Nahj al-Balāgha,* Imam Ali, Divine benedictions be with him, expresses his astonishment at a person who observes the creation and still doubts its Creator: "I wonder at him who doubts God, yet he sees His creation."[4]

Moreover, even if these verses were not substantiated by these proofs, they have no indication on the epistemic worthlessness or futility of reason in knowing central religious tenets like God and the hereafter. Rather, they magnify the tenability and reliability of rational knowledge about them, because in this case, the verses indicate that God is a reality whose existence is not only self-evident (*badīhī*), but primary (*awwalī*).

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[1] Such as "What! In God is there any doubt?" (14: 10)

[2] For instance, "And whoever invokes another god with God, he has no proof of it," (23: 117)

[3] 14: 10

[4] *Nahj al-Balāgha*, sayings of wisdom 126.

Primary concepts and judgments are those concepts and judgments that the entirety of the human being's cognition is dependent upon them, while on the contrary their cognitive worth is not indebted to another knowledge. It is obvious that such independence does not indicate an imperfection or defect on their side, but it rather enhances their epistemic respectability. The primary knowledge of the human being comprises concepts and propositions that it is impossible for him not to understand and acknowledge and he relies on their conceptual comprehension and propositional acknowledgement in every situation—even when he is inattentive of them or denies their primariness (*awwaliyya*).

Although primary knowledge does not depend on any knowledge antecedent to itself—and therefore, its conception or acknowledgement is not rendered through other cognitions, and they rather manifest on their own—primariness (*awwaliyya*) is not part of their meaning and is discerned by scrutiny of their essences. Therefore, it is possible that their primariness be subject to inattention or denial, as it is possible that one would clarify or draw attention (*tanbīh*) towards it.

One example of such primary knowledge is the acknowledgement of basic reality. As mentioned earlier, the human being's knowledge respecting the basic reality, which is the boundary between sophistry and realism, is primary (*awwalī*), since every effort to establish reality through rational argument or to express doubt, ambiguity, or denial about it presupposes the existence of reality. Otherwise, the premises will not have any objective meaning.

Thus, the existence of reality is indemonstrable; and what can be done in this regard is to draw one's attention (*tanbīh*). However, drawing attention, on its own right, does not reveal a new proposition, and it merely calls attention to one of its attributes, that is, its primariness (*awwaliyya*). In other words, the course of drawing attention (*tanbīh*) to the acknowledgement of basic reality is not a route from not knowing to knowing; it is a route from inattentiveness to attentiveness.

Drawing attention toward the existence of reality is drawing attention towards an actuality that one has known from the beginning and has simply been inattentive towards it.

Similar to the primariness (*awwaliyya*) of man's knowledge of the existence of reality—which does not undermine its epistemic worth in the conceptual framework, but rather by lending credence to the acquired knowledge, places it at the zenith of this category of knowledge—the primariness (*awwaliyya*) and non-questionability of man's cognition with regard to God is a claim that does not rest on discrediting acquired knowledge.

The argument devoted to substantiate this claim is the Demonstration of the Veracious (*burhān al-siddiqīn*), which, as will come, is not an argument that intends to prove the Divine existence. Rather, it calls attention towards the fact that He is a reality Who is axiomatic in all conditions, and "therefore, wherever you turn there is the face of God,"[1] "and He is with you wherever you be."[2] It draws attention to the fact that although His essence is hidden from everything, He is more evident than any other thing in all stages and worlds, including the world of concepts; and this theophony (*tajallī*) is in such an extreme manifestation that the clarity and meaningfulness of all other concepts owes to Him.

The journey of inquiry towards God in the demonstration of the veracious is not a journey from ignorance towards knowledge; rather, it is a journey from inattentiveness to attentiveness. This demonstration (*burhān*) draws attention towards the necessity of veridicality of a proposition that relates the existence of God and acknowledges that the veridicality of other discursive, self-evident, or even primary necessities is indebted to this eternal necessity.

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[1] 2: 115

[2] 57: 4

In the light of this discourse, how is it possible to infer the futility of acquired knowledge and exaltedness and superiority of God from the horizon of concepts from the verses, which as attested by the brilliant insights of the Islamic philosophers, call toward the demonstration of the veracious and speak of an open and manifest theophony (*tajallī*) in the human being's reasonability?

Difference between the Arguments of Divine Existence and the Arguments of His Attributes

The difference between the notions of God's existence and the notions that indicate His attributes makes it possible for His existence to be proved with arguments other than the ones that prove His attributes such as unity (*tawhīd*), life (*hayāt*), knowledge (*'ilm*), power (*qudra*), wisdom (*hikma*), and so forth. Additionally, it also makes it possible for the arguments, which demonstrate the identity (*'ayniyya)* of His Essential attributes, to differ from the arguments, which indicate the identity of His attributes and Essence.

Lack of attention to this point has led many theologians to define God by some of His Essential and even practical attributes; and this has further checked them from discriminating between the arguments that prove the Divine Essence and the ones that prove His attributes.

For instance, in the definition of God, which is of course a lexical definition (*al-ta'rīf al-lafdhī*), attributes such as unity (*tawhīd*), knowledge (*'ilm*), autonomy (*ikhtiyār*), or even things such as good and evil that pertain to God's practical attributes, have been mentioned. Then without any consideration to the arguments that bear the responsibility of proving or negating these attributes, the demonstrations (*barāhīn*) that are solely concerned with the affirmation of God's existence and do not indicate His attributes have been criticized for proving a deity who does not fit their definition. This has led many to presume that the Deity, which is proved through philosophical and rational arguments, is not the same Deity that is the object of religious worship.

This lack of differentiation between the notion of God's existence and the notions, which denote His attributes further leads to a fresh complication: On the grounds of the differences of various societies and faiths regarding the attributes of the Deity, their consensus on the existence of the Deity is negated.

If the difference between the notion of Divine existence and notions of His Essential or practical attributes is acknowledged, first, the common tenets shared across diverse religious faiths can be traced; and secondly, the axis of dialogue and argument on the issues of disagreement can be identified. This is because it is possible that many people have a complete consensus and a common veridical opinion with regard to a phenomenon, while differing about its attributes and accidents, with some of them being right and some wrong.

Islamic philosophers demonstratively prove extensional identity (*al-'ainiyya al-misdāqiyya*) of Divine attributes and further hold that these attributes are identical with the Divine Essence; nevertheless, they have differentiated between the notion of Divine Essence and the notions of His attributes and have established specific demonstrations (*barāhīn*) for each instance. Therefore, they have not confused the differences of the various religious faiths regarding the attributes of the Necessary with their consensus regarding the existence of His Essence.

The philosophical and *kalāmi* terms, which are used to refer to the Divine existence, have primary (*awwalī*) and self-evident (*badīhī*) meanings. For instance, the term Necessary Existent (*al-Wājib al-Wujūd*) is derived from the words necessity and existence, which have primary concepts; that is, they cannot be defined by words that would have more clarity than themselves, and the human being abstracts them by the intuitive discernment (*al-idrāk al-hudhūrī*) of his own reality.

The meaning of necessity is "must" which like the meaning of existence is known to everyone, and is a comparable dyad of possibility, which corresponds to "perhaps".

Something for which existence is necessary is a necessary existent (*al-wājib al-wujūd*) and is in contrast to something for which existence is not necessary. Something for which existence is not necessary, either nonexistence (*'adam*) is necessary for it, or neither existence nor nonexistence is necessary for it. The former is an impossible existent (*al-mumtaniʿ al-wujūd*), and the later is a contingent existent (*al-mumkin al-wujūd*).

If the notion of the necessary existent has an external extension, it reflects a reality which, as put by Imam Ali, peace be with him, in *Nahj al-Balāgha*, is neither dependent upon another entity nor caused by it; and evidently, such an entity will possess numerous positive (*al-sifāt al-thubūtiyya*) and negative attributes (*al-sifāt al-salbiyya*), which have to be investigated in the discussions of His attributes.

Among the first attributes, which are proved for the Necessary (*al-Wājib*) after the affirmation of His existence, is His unity (*tawhīd*); and a monotheist is a person who, in addition to the acceptance of God's existence, acknowledges and believes in His unity.

The existence of the Necessary as an actual external entity is proved by demonstrations, which attest to His ontological reality; and unity (*tawhīd*), infinitude (*lā mahdūdiyya*), omnipotence (*qudra*), autonomy (*ikhtiyār*), will (*irāda*), life (*hayāt*), justice (*'adl*), and the like are His Essential and practical attributes which are proved through arguments other than the arguments of His existence.

Someone who witnesses the necessary and infinite existence of Allah through *shuhūd* can adjust his faith based on his *shuhūd.* However, if despite the comprehensive Divine presence, he is unable to view that expansive factuality, which realizes the reality of the world, including his own, then in order to believe in God, he has no option but to take recourse to the rational approach.

First, such a person has to discern the concepts of existence (*wujūd*), nonexistence (*ʿadam*), necessity (*dharūra*), contingency (*imkān*), and so forth, and through them conceive the notion of the Necessary, and then rationally deduce the existence of His extension. Nevertheless, reason will eventually disclose to him that the acknowledgement of an entity, which has eternal necessity, has always been with him and he has been simply inattentive towards it. At this stage, it becomes clear to him that these arguments played little role other than mere elimination of inattention, and in reality, they have proved the primariness (*awwaliyya*) of his cognition with respect to a reality Whose Essence and the Essential knowledge is the *nafs al-amr*[1] of all knowledge, and all propositions including the principle of non-contradiction owe their necessity to His eternal necessity (*al-dharūra al-azaliyya*).[2]

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[1] *Nafs al-Amr* Literally meaning "the thing itself." In order to be veridical, a proposition has to correspond to reality; however, this reality is sometimes the external world and sometimes the mind. For instance, there are certain propositions—such as "The Almighty Necessary exists" or "Brazil is in South America", that the realm of their truth or falsehood is the external world; and there are other propositions that the only abode of their truth of falsehood is the mind, such as, "Universal concepts are either accidents or substances." Each of these propositions, if true, corresponds to its own specific realm of applicability, which is its *nafs al-amr*. *

[2] See Chapter Seven for the explanation of eternal necessity. *

Chapter Three

THE DEMONSTRATION OF CONTINGENCY AND NECESSITY

Notions of Contingency and Necessity and Signs of Contingency

When we observe things, which exist in the external world, including those in the nature, we notice that, by virtue of their essence, existence and nonexistence are not necessary for them. The truth of this claim is attested by their generation (*hudūth*) and corruption (*fasād*), that is, the fact that at a time, they did not exist, then they found existence; and at a certain time, they will perish. If existence was necessary for them, they would not have been preceded or followed by nonexistence; and by the same token, if nonexistence was necessary for them, they would have never existed.

As explained earlier, an entity for which existence and external reality is necessary is called the necessary existent (*al-wājib al-wujūd*); and if nonexistence is necessary for it, it is an impossible existent (*al-mumtaniʿ al-wujūd*); and if neither existence nor nonexistence is necessary for it, it is a contingent entity (*al-mumkin al-wujūd*).

Though the notions of *hudūth* and corruption are different from the notion of contingency (*imkān*), these two attributes are found only in contingent entities. However, this is not to say that every contingent (*mumkin*) is *hādith*, because it is possible to conceive of a contingent, which does not have temporal *hudūth* and is above temporal changes. For instance, the Divine favor and compassion—as instanced by, "ever-favoring to the creation,"[1]—is eternal and beyond temporal limitations; the incorporeal human soul, that even if *hādith*, will remain in Paradise or Hell forever; and the Divine Face which according to the verse, "But will remain forever the Face of thy Lord, the Glorious and Gracious,"[2] has eternal Glory and Grace.

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[1] Al-Qummī, Shaykh ʿAbbās. *Mafātīh al-Jinān.* Friday Eve Supplications.

[2] 55: 27

Making a note of this point makes it easy to differentiate between the demonstration of contingency and necessity (*burān al-imkān wa al-wujūb*) and the demonstration of *hudūth* (*burhān al-hudūth*). The demonstration of contingency and necessity centers on the middle term of contingency (*imkān*), outlined by the generation and corruption of finite beings; and the demonstration of *hudūth* proceeds from the *hudūth* of various things.

Contingency is also provable without taking *hudūth* and corruption into consideration. When the essence of a particular (*juz'ī*) entity, such as a tree or a human being, is conceived, and none of the two contradictory sides of existence and nonexistence is integral to it, it can be inferred that although in the external world the particular thing is either existent or nonexistent, however, by virtue of its essence, it is without and equidistant to both sides of contradiction. This characteristic—the vacancy of the essence from existence and nonexistence, which is followed by its equidistance to existence and nonexistence—is the source of derivation of the quality of contingency (*imkān*).

Further contemplation in this regard would illustrate that any external entity the essence (*dhāt*) and essential parts (*dhātiyyāt*) of which are conceivable by the mind and can assume mental existence (*al-wujūd al-dhehnī*) is contingent, because if the essence or essential parts of a certain thing can exist by mental existence, given the impossibility of the transfer of external existence (*al-wujūd al-khārijī*) to the mind, existence and external reality are not its essence, and are rather outside the boundaries of its essence.

The essence of something to which external reality and existence are necessary and inseparable from cannot transfer to the mind, because real existence projects effects, and mental existence does not produce effects; and a single object, while being the source of many effects, cannot be devoid of producing any effects. Therefore, the mind cannot apprehend the essence and reality of something, which does not come into it; the only thing it can do after its intuitive discernment, is to derive a notion from it and through that notion, which may be at an extreme state of self-evidence, reflect the external reality, which is in extreme occultation. An example is the reality of existence, the essence of which is in extreme disguise from the mind, but the notion of which is self-evident and primary. The Divine sage al-Sabzawārī, with regard to the reality of existence, says,

> *Its notion is among things most self-evident*
>
> *While its essence is in extreme concealment*[1]

Even if not *hādith*, and rather eternal and everlasting, something whose quiddity (*māhiyya)* can transfer to the mind, and the mind can fathom the profundities of its essence, given that it can shift from the external mode of existence (*al-wujūd al-khārijī*) to its mental mode while maintaining its essence, has to be separable from external existence. Existence and nonexistence cannot be included in the essence of such a thing, or say, such an essence or quiddity is equidistant towards existence and nonexistence, and therefore, contingent.

Argument from Contingents to the Necessary

Something that existence and nonexistence are not parts of its essence, and has equidistance towards the two, cannot become existent or nonexistent by virtue of its essence. That is, if not for an external causal efficacy (*al-ʿilliyya al-fāʿiliyya*), which would necessitate either existence or nonexistence for it and characterize it with one of the two qualities, its essence can be neither existent nor nonexistent. Otherwise, it will mean that while a thing is equidistant towards existence and nonexistence, it has existence or nonexistence, and therefore, it is devoid of equidistance towards the two. The concurrence of equidistance and non-equidistance is conjunction of contradictories (*ijtemāʿ al-naqīdhain*), which is impossible.

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[1] Al-Sabzawārī, Hāj Mulla Hādī. *Sharh al-Mandhūma.* (Qum: Maktabat al-Mustafawī), the section on *Hikmah*, *9*.

Therefore, in order to exist or not to exist, every contingent entity (*mumkin*) needs the causal efficacy of an external agency. The agency that necessitates its existence is its existential cause; and the agency that necessitates its nonexistence is the cause of its nonexistence. In the discussions of causation, however, it is proved that the cause of something's nonexistence is the absence of its existential cause, and not a real and factual entity on its own.

It follows that every contingent needs a being other than itself and until that "other" (*ghair*) does not remove its need, it does not come into existence. Therefore, wherever there is a contingent in the external world, the other, which has removed its need and has provided it with existence, also exists.

As indicated earlier, this argument can be derived from sermon 186 of *Nahj al-Balāgha*. At one section of the sermon it is stated, "Everything, which is known by virtue of its essence, is crafted; and everything, which stands in something other than itself, is caused." That is, something the essence of which can come into the mind, as explained earlier, cannot have existence as its essence; and therefore, its existence is caused by some agency other than itself.

It should be noted that the "other" upon which the contingent entity is dependent and which satisfies its need cannot be another contingent. Since a contingent entity has equidistance towards existence and nonexistence, and something that itself has equidistance towards existence and nonexistence, cannot impel another entity that has equidistance towards existence and nonexistence out of the state of equidistance. Rather, in order to depart from the state of equidistance, every equidistant entity needs a non-equidistant entity.

Just as existence and nonexistence are not the essential parts of contingents, and therefore, they have equidistance towards existence and nonexistence, likewise, creation (*ījād*) and annihilation (*in'edām*) are not inherent in them, and they have equidistance towards the two. Therefore, the creation or annihilation of a contingent cannot be attributed to another contingent. Were this possible, it would mean that a contingent entity, which is equidistant towards creation and annihilation, is not equidistant towards them, which is an obvious conjunction of contradictories.

In order to enter the domain of existence, contingents require the causal efficacy of an external agency, or say, an "other," which causes their existence; and the other, which causes their existence, cannot be a contingent phenomenon.

With regard to the negation of causality of a contingent with respect to another contingent, ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Lāhijī, the author of *Shawāriq al-Ilhām*, narrates these two principles from Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī: "A thing is not existent until it exists. And until it is existent, it cannot create." That is, since the contingent is devoid of existence, it is not existent. And since it is not existent, it cannot bestow existence either.

A contingent can only create when it depends on an external "other," which cannot be a contingent. Therefore, existence and creation of a contingent is only conceivable when it is established by and dependent upon "another", which does not have an equal relation towards existence and nonexistence, and in other words, for which existence is necessary.

The articulation of the demonstration (*burhān*) in this fashion, without any reliance on impossibility of circular or regressive causality, first, proves the Necessary, and then proves the finitude of the series of contingent entities that are mediates (*wasā'it*) in the act of creation. And if, as is the case, in some of its versions, the argument proceeds from invaldiation of circularity (*daur*) and regress (*tasalsul*), it is not because these two are critical in the cogency of the demonstration. Rather, it is meant to facilitate the comprehension and indoctrination of the demonstration. Therefore, even if circularity (*daur*) and regress (*tasalsul*) were not considered void, the demonstration of contingency and necessity would still maintain its tenability.

The need of contingents for the “other” is in the form of a universal affirmative proposition (*al-qadhiyya al-mūjiba al-kulliyya*). It does not pertain to the totality of the world, so the fact that totality exists only in the mind could undermine its cogency. Rather, it pertains to every entity that has equidistance towards existence and nonexistence. Given the universality of this need, the existence of these entities, which by virtue of their essences are equidistant to existence and nonexistence, cannot be explained on the score of a specific contingent, since every contingent that may be used in the answer is already included in the universal affirmative proposition. If the existence of a particular contingent entity were to be explained, it would be imaginable to suggest another contingent thing as the reason of its existence. Nevertheless, since the question pertains to the entirety of contingent entities, it is only answerable with an entity that is not included in the aggregate, that is, an entity to which the quality of contingency does not apply and existence for which is necessary.

Instrumentality of the Mediates and the Efficacy of the Necessary

Quidditative contingency (*al-imkān al-māhuwī*), which is the middle term of the demonstration of contingency and necessity, is a necessary and inseparable property of the quiddity (*māhiyya).* That is, equidistance towards existence and nonexistence is an essential property (*al-ʿaradh al-dhātī*) of quiddity, so much so that even when due to an external causal efficacy it finds existence and is rearranged from the position of equidistance, its essence remains devoid of existence and nonexistence and continues to be characterized by contingency. This is because even after creation (*ījād*), existence does not become the essence (*dhāt*) or an essential part (*juz' al-dhāt*) of the quiddity; and therefore, its need for external causal efficacy continues. Al-Shabistarī, in *Gulshan Raz* says in this regard:

> *God, the Exalted, is Witness to the truth of my words*
> *Disgrace leaves not the contingent in the two worlds*[1]

If a quiddity which comes into existence through the creation of an external agency should be an instrument (*āla*) for the existence of another quiddity, this mediation (*wasāta*) in creation cannot pertain to its contingent essence. It is brought by that agency, which is needless and independent in His existence and creation. From this vantage point, it is clear that the instrumentality (*sababiyya*) and mediation (*wasāta*) of contingents in relation to one another is not such that would place God, the Free-of-Need Origin, at the top of the causal series and the contingent intermediates one after the other in a successive manner. Thus, no contingent is a mediate in the transfer of grace (*faidh*) by virtue of its essence; and given that they are sustained by the Necessary (*al-Wājib*) and recipient of His grace, the Origin is present within the context of their instrumentality and mediation.

The mediation of instruments in the transfer of Divine grace is not like the mediation of pipes in transfer of water. A tap takes water from pipelines that are instruments between the tap and the reservoir. No contingent in the series of contingents possesses the existence that has to be transferred to the next contingent; rather, the Divine grace is present within the series and nearer to each one of its units than any other unit. "Nowhere taketh place any secret counsel between three [persons] but He is the fourth of them, nor between five, but He is the sixth, nor [between] less than that, nor [between] more but He is with them wherever they may be.”[1]

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[1] Shabistarī, Shaykh Mahmūd. *Gulshan Rāz*. (Tehran: Mahmudī Books, 1981), 7.

If efficacy and creation of the Being, which is free of need and dependence, that is, the Necessary Existent (*al-Wājib al-wujūd*), were limited to the creation of the first contingent entity—which would, in turn, create the second contingent, which would, in turn, create the third, and so on—and the series of contingents existed in a successive fashion without any temporal distance between its units, it would suggest that the Necessary grants existence and creation to the essence of the contingent. It would further follow that the contingent, by receiving the grace (*faidh*), loses its state of equidistance and essential contingency. Moreover, it would imply that the Free-of-Need Origin is at the top of the series and is one of its many units; and His grace is the source of the grace, which descends from the first contingent to the second and then to other creatures. This would translate to the view that His essence and grace are limited to the top of the successive series. Nonetheless, both corollaries are corrupt, since quidditative contingency (*al-imkān al-māhuwī*), as explained earlier, contrary to potentiality (*al-isteʿdād*), is an attribute that does not separate from the contingent. Additionally, infinitude of the Necessary and boundlessness of His grace, which are proved in the discussions of His attributes, do not reconcile with Him being confined to the first member of the putative series.

To call the instrumentality (*sababiyya*) and mediation (*wasāta*) of instruments (*asbāb*) and mediates (*wasā’it*) between the first efficient cause and its effect causality is for the sake of facilitating teaching and learning. In fact, these mediates resemble mirrors that merely exhibit the emanation of Divine grace and His exclusive rule, and by virtue of their essences, none of them have any role in creation; and thus, no mediate is a true efficient cause. In other words, ascription of causal efficacy to mediates—similar to ascription of existence to contingents—is in view of the association of Divine grace with them, and more accurately, in view of the manifestation of Divine grace in them. Therefore, such ascription is figurative.

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[1] 58: 7

Hudūth of the Mediates and Eternity of the Divine Grace

The demonstration of contingency and necessity (*burān al-imkān wa al-wujūb*) illustrates that the need and dependence of an effect on its cause owes to its contingency (*imkān*). And since contingency is inseparable from the contingent quiddity, as long as a contingent is graced with existence, its intense dependence and need to its existential cause continues. For this reason, the efficient cause has presence and authority over all conditions of its effect, and the effect's need is not limited to a specific condition, such as the moment of its *hudūth*.

The Sustentative Authority (*al-ihāta al-qayūmiyya)* of the efficient cause over its effect negates the existence of a horizontal relationship between the two. Causal efficacy is not perceivable between entities that come into being one after another in the course of time in a successive series, because during the entire period of its existence, the effect is needful to its existential cause. However, the temporally successive entities follow one another, and the existence of the following entity coincides with the nonexistence of the preceding entity. How can something that exists now be the effect of an efficient cause that does not exist any more? The causality, which the non-philosophic minds assign to temporally successive series, is not, in fact, something to which the effect owes its existence. In philosophical parlance, things that come into existence and events that happen in a temporal sequence—such as parents who are conditions of the inception of their and their children's children—are considered conditions and supplementary causes (*al-ʿilal al-muʿidda*); and the efficient cause of every entity is the Necessary Being Who is with the effect all its life long. "And He is with you wherever you be."[1]

It can be inferred from this discussion that the supplementary causality (*al-'illiyya al-e'dādiyya*) of things, which are horizontal to contingents, unlike the causality of something that may be vertical to them, is not by virtue of their essence. Rather, it pertains to that very infinite and expansive Divine grace and "One Command"[2], which has manifested in the image of mediates and conditions. The Majestic Qur'ān, in view of this reality, denies the causality and mediation of conditions and instruments such as parents and farmers in the generation of children and crops, and reserves this role for the Almighty Allah: "Have ye seen what ye emit [the life germ]? Is it ye that create or are We the Creators? … Have ye seen what ye sow? What! Is it ye that grow it or are We the Growers?"[3]

After proving the Necessary through the demonstration of contingency and necessity (*burān al-imkān wa al-wujūb*), the finitude of the vertical succession of instruments and conditions can be established. Al-Fārābī has argued for the finitude of vertical causes on the same grounds.[4] However, the finitude of conditions and supplementary causes that are horizontal to each other cannot be justified on the same account. For this reason, the infinite succession of dependent entities along the course of eons is compatible with the demonstration of contingency and necessity. Because if there is an infinite succession of dependent entities, not only it cannot suggest finitude for the Divine grace, rather it will indicate the boundlessness and eternity of God's grace. "And every favor of Yours is eternal."[1]

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[1] 57: 4

[2] Derived from the holy verse, "Our command is but one." 54:50

[3] 56: 58–63

[4] Al-Fārābī, Abu Nasr Muhammad ibn Muhammad. *Zainūn al-Kabīr*. (Hyderabad Dakhan: The Uthmanī Encyclopedia Council Press, 1926), 4.

Such eternity, like the everlasting life of the Paradise-dwellers, does not pertain to the essence of contingents. It owes to the Divine grace and benevolence and its attribution to the world and creatures is figurative (*majāzī*). Because if eternity is ascribed to the essence of the contingent entities, contingency—which is an essential property (*al-ʿaradh al-dhātī*) of quiddity—gives place to necessity. This follows that an essential property (*al-ʿaradh al-dhātī*), that is, contingency, is not an essential property, which is a conjunction of contradictories.

This argument would have indicated the impossibility of the eternity of the world, if the Divine grace were solely availed to a single contingent entity. However, in the infinite series of supplementary causes (*al-ʿilal al-muʿidda*), such an entity does not exist, as in the successive series, every entity is subject to change and mutability and every unit generates and corrupts. As far as the putative series or whole is concerned, it is a mental concept which, as a result of perception of multiplicities, is brought about in the mind and does not have any external reality over and above the units of the series. Therefore, in the course of temporally successive *hādiths*, an entity the eternity of which alone may reflect the infinite grace does not exist. For this reason, the Divine grace and favor is eternal, but their recipients, by virtue of their essences, are in absolute nihility and nonexistenc; and it is by Divine grace that the natural world, which is the world of change and flux, generates and corrupts at every moment. With regard to this, says al-Sabzawārī his *Al-Mandhūma,*

> *His Benevolence is eternal and perpetual*

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[1] Al-Qummī, Shaykh ʿAbbās. *Mafātīh al-Jinān.* The Supplication for the Dawns of the Holy Month of Ramadhan.

While the recipient is ever-perishing
and nihil[1]

Criticisms and Evaluations

The demonstration of contingency and necessity revolves around the essential contingency of quiddities. The main characteristic of this demonstration is the fact that it does not depend on a specific phenomenon such as motion, design, *hudūth*, and so forth. Its focal point is the relation of essence of entities with existence and being real.

This demonstration has entered western philosophical thought in the Middle Ages through the works of Ibn Rushd (Averroës) and the Christian theologian Thomas Aquinas. Later in the modern western philosophy, it became subject to scrutiny and criticism. In addition to its western critiques, the demonstration of contingency and necessity has also been evaluated by Islamic philosophers.

The criticisms of the demonstration of contingency and necessity in Islamic philosophy apply to some of its versions, not to the exposition we presented. In some versions of the demonstration, the impossibility of circular and regressive causation has not been relied upon and the series of contingent entities has been considered as a totality. Such versions have been subject to criticism that the series is a mental concept, and in the external world, it does not have a reality over and above its units; in other words, in the external world, an entity such as the series or aggregate, the contingency of which would lead to its existential cause, does not exist.

Some versions of the demonstration rely upon the impossibility of circular and regressive causation. This has encouraged the proponents of the possibility of causal regress (*al-tasalsul al-'illī*) to criticize the demonstration. However, first, the impossibility of regressive causation is not deniable, because although not every causal series is impossible, a series that is characterized by the three qualities of infinity, causal relationship between its members, and coexistence of its members at the same time, is impossible for the reasons given at its appropriate place. Second, the demonstration's cogency does not really depend on the impossibility of circular or regressive causation, and its usage has a mere educational purpose.

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[1] Al-Sabzawārī, Hāj Mulla Hādī. *Sharh al-Mandhūma.* (Qum: Maktabat al-Mustafawī), the section on *Hikmah*, 322.

As on the one hand criticisms of the demonstration of contingency and necessity in contemporary western philosophy indicate their lack of understanding of the argument, on the other, it stands for the defective and faulty translations of intimations that are grounds of common consensus amongst the luminaries of Divine wisdom.

In some translations, other arguments, such as the demonstrations (*barāhīn*) of motion and *hudūth* have been mentioned under the title of demonstration of contingency and necessity; and then criticisms, which may apply to them, have been presumed to be valid with respect to the demonstration of contingency and necessity. At other instances, the demonstration of contingency and necessity has been differentiated from another argument, which has been named 'the argument of causality'. While causation (*ʿilliyya*) is a common principle that is used in every argument, including the demonstration of contingency and necessity, and it does not constitute an independent argument horizontal to the demonstration of contingency and necessity and other arguments.

In addition to the fact that the tenability of most theistic arguments, such as the demonstrations of *hudūth*, motion, design, and so forth, presupposes the validity of the principle of causation, should the very principle of causation be disputed, the necessary relationship between an argument's premises and the conclusion thereof will be subject to doubt. This would jar the path of reason and rationality on the one hand, and make critique irrelevant as well. This is because every argument is based on the causal rapport between its premises and the conclusion thereof, and every criticism must have a demonstrative form. If the principle of causation is not accepted, there will be no way, as explained fully before, to prove or negate anything.

In order to prevent confusion between the demonstrations of Divine Essence and those of His attributes and disallow the expectations of proving Divine attributes from the arguments of His essence, it is important to differentiate between the notion of Divine Essence and notions, which reflect His attributes. Moreover, in order to critique or defend an argument in its own context and ensure that different arguments are not confused with one another, the content of every argument's premises must be preserved.

The middle terms of the demonstrations of *hudūth*, motion, and contingency and necessity are different from one another; and, as it will come, their conclusions are not identical either. The tenability of the demonstrations of *hudūth* and motion is indebted to the demonstration of contingency and necessity, so much so that without this adduction they fail to prove the Necessary.

Evaluation of Hume's Criticism

The version of the demonstration of contingency and necessity, which has come in this work, illustrates the corruption and invalidity of the criticism advanced by some a western theologian and philosophizer. The criticism asserts that if the world's parts are equidistant towards existence and nonexistence, and therefore are characterized by contingency and need to an external causality, the same does not necessarily have to be true about their ensemble, since there is no evidence to suggest that the parts and the ensemble are governed by the same rules. For instance, it cannot be generalized from the fact that every human being has a mother that the entire human race has also a mother.

The critic has presumed that the argument is based on quidditative contingency of the totality of world's parts, whereas the demonstration (*burhān*) proceeds from the premise that without the efficacy of an external agency, a contingent entity cannot come into existence. This proposition speaks of all contingent beings, not their whole, because the whole does not even exist. And since it does not exist, it is neither necessary nor contingent, and therefore, it does not have a need of another. This lack of need is a negative proposition the subject of which does not exist, what we call a negative proposition by the nonexistence of its subject (*al-sāliba bi intifāʿ al-maudhūʿ*). Obviously, although the ensemble of the contingent entities, which is a mental concept, does not exist in the external world, it does have a mental existence under the auspices of the existence of knowledge. In this shadowy existence (*al-wujūd al-dhillī*), the title of aggregate is predicated to it by predication as essence (*al-haml al-awwalī al-dhātī*), not by predication as extension (*al-haml al-shā'eʿ al-sināʿī*). Therefore, on its own right, being contingent entity, it is a member of the series of contingent entities and an extension for the mentioned proposition. As explained during the exposition of the demonstration (*burhān*), every contingent entity the quiddity of which is entertained, since the said proposition is applicable to it, it is characterized by need and dependence and can be realized only through the causal efficacy of a reality, which is not characterized by this quality and is, by virtue of its essence, needless and independent.

Even if the aggregate of contingents were not a mere mental existence and were real and external, the said proposition will still be applicable to it. This further strengthens the demonstration (*burhān*), since in this case, the aggregate of the world is a real and a non-reified quiddity, the existence or nonexistence of which is conceivable without any contradiction, and therefore, is equidistant towards existence and nonexistence. It follows that the preponderance of either existence or nonexistence over the other requires a preponderant that will justify the preponderance.

This illustrates that the criticism, which is related from Hume, is not applicable to the demonstration of contingency and necessity. Hume contends that we have never experimented the totality of the world so the claim of its need to an external causal efficacy could be justifiable. This criticism can be considered valid only if the argument were based on the contingency of the aggregate of the contingent entities; whereas first, the aggregate lacks external existence; and second, the aggregate of the contingent entities has not been used in this demonstration (*burhān*) as a premise; and third, even if the aggregate existed and were used in the argument, contingency and need would be its essential properties, and apprehension of these properties does not require experiment.

The Denial of Philosophic Meaning of Necessity and its Answer

Another criticism directed at the demonstration of contingency and necessity asserts that necessity is a logical category, and an existential proposition cannot be narrated with logical necessity. It claims that if existence was necessary for God, the proposition "God is nonexistent" would be self-contradictory, and "God exists" will be logically necessary and true, whereas we can doubt God's existence.

In other words, necessity is a logical concept that describes the modality of tautological propositions, and it cannot be used to reflect external existence of things. There is nothing, Hume argues, the existence of which is demonstrable and whatever we conceive of as existent, we can conceive of as nonexistent. For instance, we can conceive, without any contradiction, of God's nonexistence even if this may imply the nonexistence of the world. Whereas, if existence had logical necessity for God, the conception of His nonexistence would certainly entail contradiction.

In order to answer this criticism, it has to be established that necessity has a common meaning in logic and philosophy. Necessity is used in philosophy with the same meaning that describes modality of propositions in logic. Furthermore, necessity is an axiomatic concept, which philosophy first proves its existence, and then logic presupposes its truth as a lemma borrowed from philosophical discussions, and explains its various types.

It was elucidated earlier that necessity, possibility, and impossibility are axiomatic concepts and do not have real definitions. However, because philosophy is the study of existence, the division of existent things into necessary, contingent, and impossible is a philosophical inquiry. Appraisal of things in relation to existence in the form of two exclusive disjunctive propositions (*al-munfasila al-haqīqiyya*) results in the division of things into necessary, contingent, and impossible; and the same appraisal in the form of one exclusive disjunctive proposition results in the dichotomy of things into necessary and contingent entities.

These entire divisions center on the principle of non-contradiction; that is, the impossibility of conjunction and negation of contradictories (*istehāla ijtimā' wa irtefā' al-naqīdhain*). Since either existence is necessary for a thing, or it is not; if it is not, then either nonexistence is necessary for it or it is not. On the other hand, either existence is necessary for an existent thing, or it is not. However, if existence is not necessary for it, nonexistence cannot be necessary for it, as it exists. Therefore, if an existent entity is not necessary, since it cannot have necessity of nonexistence, it is a contingent entity.

After philosophy depicts these divisions in a demonstrative format and narrates the external existence of the last two kinds, logic, in the province of its inquiry—which is the mental concepts—identifies their extensions (*masādīq*) and puts forth thirteen kinds of necessary propositions.

Some *mutakellimūn*, such as al-Qādhī Adhud al-Ijī in his *Al-Mawāqif,* have presumed that there is a difference between philosophical and logical necessity.[1] Al-Ijī holds that if necessity had an identical meaning in philosophy as well as in logic, then in instances where essential parts

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[1] Al-Jurjānī, al-Syed al-Sharīf Ali ibn Muhammad. *Sharh al-Mawāqif.* (Qum: Sharif Radhī Publications, 1992), vol. 3, 121.

(*dhātiyyāt*) or essential properties (*lawāzaim al-dhat* or *al-ʿawāridh al-dhātiyya*) of a thing are predicated to it, it would mean that the thing is a necessary being. For example, the proposition "Four is necessarily even" would indicate that four has necessity of existence.

Sadr al-Din al-Shirāzī, in the discussions of modality of the noble book of *Al-Asfār*, has rejected al-Iji's presumption as false and has made it clear that necessity has one meaning; however, in every case it corresponds to its predicate and subject.[1] If it is stated that, for instance, four is necessarily even, it does not imply that four is necessarily existent. Rather it means that four is necessarily even. Therefore, what has been implied is tenable, and what is untenable has not been implied.

Logic's (*al-mantiq*) dependence on philosophy in the subject of necessity resembles its dependence on philosophy in the subject of predication (*haml*). In the discussions of unity (*wahda*) and multiplicity (*kathra*), existence is divided into one and multiple. Then unity and multiplicity are divided into various kinds. Among the types of unity (*wahda*), there is individual unity (*al-wahda al-shakhsiyya*), specie unity (*al-wahda al-nauʿiyya*), genus unity (*al-wahda alj-jinsiyya*), sheer unity (*al-wahda al-mahdha*), and the unity that encompasses multiplicity. This last kind of unity is called "it-is-itness" (*hū-hūwiyya*). "It-is-itness" is predication, which is either as essence (*al-haml al-awwalī*) or as extension (*al-haml al-shā'yė*). Logic takes predication as granted and formulates its discussions on its basis; nonetheless, the affirmation of predication itself is not a logical inquiry.

Not only in many of its discussions, but also in the subject of its study, that is, acquired knowledge or concepts and judgments, logic is indebted to philosophy, because the existence of knowledge as well as its division into acquired and intuitive the division of acquired knowledge into concepts and judgments are philosophical inquiries. The fact that some of these phenomena are primary or self-evident does not eclipse their philosophical identity, since the criterion for including a proposition in a discipline is the analysis of its subject; if its subject is existence, and the predicate is assigned to it *qua* existence, then the proposition pertains to philosophy.

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[1] Al-Shirāzī, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Sadr al-Dīn. *Al-Hikma al-Mutaʿāliya fi al-Asfār al-Arbaʿa.* (Tehran: Dār al-Maʿārif al-Islamiya, 1959), vol. 1, 91.

In short, necessity is a self-evident concept, and the study of its reality is a philosophic inquiry. Logic uses this secondary philosophical intelligible (*al-maʿqūl al-thānī al-falsafī*) in the context of predications and copulas of propositions that are secondary logical intelligibles (*al-maʿqūl al-thānī al-mantiqī*).

Although necessity has a single meaning, as indicated earlier, it has different rules in different instances. The said criticism originates from the assumption that first, necessity has a mere logical meaning and does not have a philosophical usage that would describe external things and realities, and second, logical necessity is restricted to analytical propositions where the predicate is included in the essence of the subject. The critic has presumed that necessity exists only when a subject is predicated to itself or to its essential parts, such as "Human is human" or "Human is an animal."

According to this presumption, necessity is inevitably restricted to mental concepts and it cannot reflect the external reality of things. The reply to this presumption is that necessity is not exclusive to analytical and tautological propositions and it can be literally used in the predication of essential properties (*al-aʿrādh al-dhātiyya*) of a thing, a category the scope of which is wider than essential parts.

The essential parts (*al-dhātiyyāt*) of an essence are things that are included in its definition (*hadd*), and their predication is considered tautology or identity-claim. On the other hand, essential properties of things—for instance, contingency (*imkān*) with respect to finite entities—are concepts that are not included in their definitions.

Contingency is a concept, which is not an essential part of finite entities. It is abstracted and predicated to them only after they are assessed with existence and nonexistence. In the light of this, it becomes clear that need and dependence on the external causal efficacy are not concepts that are the essence or essential parts of contingents, and therefore, they are their essential properties.

The demonstration of contingency and necessity does not depend on the rational analysis of conceived notions and quiddities; rather, it is based on the rational analysis of realities that exist in the external world. It proceeds from the assessment of the essences of existent things with relation to existence and nonexistence. In this demonstration, even the notion of existence *qua* notion of existence is not used, and rather, the notion of existence *qua* its external reality is examined.

The arguments that are dedicated to the analysis of Divine attributes elucidate that the Necessary does not have a quiddity in addition to His reality and existence; in other words, His quiddity is His external factuality (*al-Wājib mahiyyatuhu inniyyatuh*). Similarly, His necessity does not have an extension separate from His reality and is nothing but the severity and extremity of His existence. Therefore, the usage of necessity in relation to God does not reflect the modality of predication; it reflects severity, emphasis, and extremity of a phenomenon that has no reality but factuality.

Since the critic considers necessity as a mere logical concept, the usage of which is exclusive to tautological propositions, he presumes that should God have necessity of existence, then external existence must be an essential part of His concept, and its negation, like any other proposition that takes away the essence or essential part of a subject, would be self-contradictory.

External existence is not included in the notion of the Necessary. The necessity, which is involved in the notion of the Necessary, is not a necessity, which describes the modality of propositions; it is a necessity, which is sheer external existence and factuality.[1] The notion of the necessary being, which reflects this sort of necessity, on its own right, is devoid of such necessity, since although, by predication as essence it is the Necessary; by predication as extension, it is a mental phenomenon, which exists in the sphere of human knowledge, and is a contingent and perishable.

The demonstration of contingency and necessity does not proceed from the premise that existence is an essential part of the notion of the Necessary Being. Since if it were the case, comprehension of this notion would be simultaneous to discernment of God's existence and negation of His existence would be self-contradictory, and there would not be any need to prove His existence.

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[1] Since the author acknowledges that necessity has only one meaning, and it is used in philosophy and logic with that same meaning, and it is well established that the logical usage of necessity is exclusive to the description of modality of propositions, it seems that the criticism ought to be answered in the following way: It is acknowledged that necessity can only describe the modality of predication, however, the notion of the necessary being comprises, in fact, a proposition, the modality of which is described by necessity. The necessary being, therefore, stands for "that thing, which necessarily exists."

However, it is obvious that this predication is predication as essence, not predication as extension; and when the critic says that he can conceive God's nonexistence without any sort of contradiction, and therefore, existence cannot be necessary for Him, he means that he can conceive God's nonexistence by predication as extension, not by predication as essence. Therefore, he cannot conclude that since God's nonexistence, by predication as extension, is conceivable without any sort of contradiction, existence cannot be necessary for Him by predication as essence. This is because the existence of something, which by predication as essence is necessarily existent, cannot be denied by predication as essence except through self-contradiction; and if such a thing's existence is denied by predication as extension, it does not undermine the conceptual and propositional premises of the demonstration. *

Evaluation of the Epistemological Criticism

Another criticism raised against the demonstration of contingency and necessity stems from certain epistemological perspectives. It states that the demonstration would be tenable if it were the case that the external reality was rationally discernable, and additionally, rational discernments were representative of external reality. Nonetheless, if reality is a brute phenomenon with a complete irrational identity, the argument is not conclusive.

For instance, the demonstration relies on an exclusive disjunctive proposition, which divides existent things into necessary and contingent things. This disjunctive proposition is contingent upon the principle of non-contradiction, which relates the impossibility of conjunction of contradictories. However, the conjunction of contradictories is a rational judgment about the external world; should the external world have a brute and irrational identity, the applicability of this judgment to the external world, and consequently, the validity of the conclusion of the demonstration will be subject to doubt.

The answer to this criticism becomes clear by what was elucidated with regard to epistemic worth of knowledge. The critic in this criticism has made the entirety of human knowledge subject to criticism. This distrust, which proclaims skepticism (*shakkākiyya)* and devaluates knowledge, entails nothing but sophism and negation of reality.

Although this and other similar skeptical and sophist perspectives dominate the contemporary western thought, it cannot so much as justify or explain itself. Like the basic reality, knowledge is a primary phenomenon, such that there is no way to deny or express skepticism with regard to it. Though every kind of doubt and skepticism about knowledge is, by predication as essence, doubt and skepticism about it, by predication as extension, it is the undeniable acknowledgement of the reality of knowledge; and therefore, the basic reality of knowledge cannot be denied or doubted in any situation.

Chapter Four

THE ARGUMENTS FROM MOTION AND *HUDUTH*

Premises of the Arguments from Motion and *Hudūth*

Due to lack of familiarity with the central elements of the demonstration (*burhān*), which proceeds from the world's contingency, the Judeo-Christian theologians have considered another set of arguments—such as the argument from motion (*burhān al-haraka*), which has no relationship with the argument based on contingency—of the category of the demonstration of contingency and necessity.

The argument from motion has been used in the works of Plato and Socrates, and subsequently, it has been analyzed in the books of Islamic philosophers. The argument from *hudūth* has been advanced in major *kalāmi* works.

Motion (*haraka*) is an entity's gradual transfer from potentiality (*qūwwa*) to actuality (*fe'liyya).* Transfer from potentiality to actuality requires an external causal efficacy, because actuality is an existential perfection (*al-kamāl al-wujūdī*) for the mobile entity (*al-mutaharrek*); and a mobile entity, which lacks an existential perfection, cannot come to possess it without an external cause. Therefore, in order to attain actuality, everything that is marked with motion is in need of an agency other than itself. If the agency that is giving motion, that is, the mover (*muharrek*), to the mobile is something that itself is characterized by being in motion, then it will need an external causal efficacy as well. And since it has been proved that infinite causal regress (*tasalsul*) is impossible, the series of efficient causes ends at an agency, which is not itself in motion and gives motion to others.

The proponents of the argument from *hudūth* argue that if something is *hādith*, it requires an external efficient cause. They consider *hudūth* as the criterion of need for an external causal efficacy. They maintain that every *hādith*, that is, everything that has a temporal origin, must come into existence through an external cause, and since regressive (*tasalsul*) and circular causality (*daur*) are impossible, therefore, the succession of *hādith* entities concludes at a non-*hādith* entity.

The argument from *hudūth* revolves around the notion that *hudūth* is a sufficient reason for an effect's "causedness" (*ma'lūliyya)* or need (*ehtiyāj*) to external causal efficacy. That is, the *mutakellimūn* not only assert that everything that is *hādith* and has a temporal origin is an effect, since this assertion is a matter of consensus by all, rather they also contend that everything, which is an effect (*ma'lūl*) is *hādith* and that no effect can be eternal (*azalī*).

Evaluation of the Argument from Causality

Along the other arguments for the existence of the Deity, which St. Thomas Aquinas mentions in his *Summa Theologica*, he articulates an independent argument, which proceeds from the principle of causation and the impossibility of causal regress.[1] However, as indicated earlier, the principle of causation is relied upon in every argument that is meant to prove God's existence, and without presupposing its truth, no argument can yield any conclusion, because if the principle of causation is doubted, the gateway of rationality, namely the certainty of attaining a conclusion from certain premises, is closed.

Therefore, regardless of concepts such as contingency, *hudūth*, and motion, which provide the grounds whereby causation is used; causation is not an independent philosophical argument. In addition to the reliance of every argument on the principle of causation, most of the named arguments further depend on another general rule of causality, which is the impossibility of regressive and circular causation. In certain instances in Islamic philosophy that causation has been the axis of argumentation, it is either in view of the fact that the notions of contingency of impoverishment (*al-imkān al-faqrī*) and "causedness" apply to an entity from the same sense, or it is in consideration to the essential independence or absoluteness of the Necessary. Such arguments are, in fact, reducible to the demonstration of contingency of impoverishment (*burhān al-imkān al-faqrī*), which will be discussed later.

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[1] Taken from *Summa Theologica*, trans. Laurance Shapcote. (London: O. P. Benziger Brothers, 1911).

Limitations of the Arguments from Motion and *Hudūth*

The arguments from motion and *hudūth* do not have the cogency of the demonstration of contingency and necessity. First, because these two arguments rely on the impossibility of regressive and circular causation, whereas the demonstration of contingency and necessity, as we articulated, is above such reliance. Second, they do not prove the Almighty Necessary, and in order to do so, they have to be adduced by the demonstration of contingency and necessity.

After the dismissal of causal regress, the argument from motion entails the existence of a non-moving mover. Likewise, the argument from *hudūth* indicates an eternal creator. Nevertheless, neither of the two indicates whether the non-moving mover or the eternal creator has necessity of existence.

The non-moving mover, as proved in Peripatetic philosophy, or the eternal creator, as discussed in *kalāmi* books, can be a body (*jism*) or a physical form (*al-sūra al-jismiyya),* since motion according to Peripatetic philosophy, and *hudūth* according to the *mutakellimūn* are found in certain accidents (*ʿawāridh*) of physical entities. Therefore, the arguments from motion and *hudūth* prove the need for a mover or creator in accordance with these accidents.

Hudūth is in the context of change, and if change is restricted to some accidents of the physique, a creator is needed only with respect to those accidents. For this reason, rational analysis of the celebrated argument of the *mutakellimūn*,

> The world is changing.
> Everything is changing is *hādith*.
> Therefore, the world is *hādith*.

would indicate, in effect, that the argument should run as follows:

> The world's accidents are changing.
>
> Anything the accidents of which are changing, is *hādith* in its accidents.
>
> Therefore, the world is *hādith* in its accidents.

Thus, the second syllogism of the *mutakellimūn*,

> The world is *hādith*.
>
> Every *hādith* has a creator.
>
> Therefore, the world has a creator.

would indicate that since the essence of the physical world is not subject to change and *hudūth*, it does not require a creator.

> The world is *hādith* in its accidents.
>
> Anything that is *hādith* in its accidents has a creator for its accidents.
>
> Therefore, the world has a creator for its accidents.

Thus, the proponents of the arguments from motion and *hudūth* cannot respond to the paradox of eternity of matter or physical form. Given the physical body, which is made up of form and matter, undergoes change in things that are outside its essence, such as accidents and kind forms (*al-suwwar al-naw'iyya),* it follows that it only needs a creator or mover with regard to them.

Kind forms can change infinitely one after another by generation and corruption (*al-kaun wa al-fasād*); and accidents, which according to the *mutakellimūn* are changing, can be in motion in a successive regress (*al-tasalsul al-taʿāqubī*)[1]. In both instances, motion and *hudūth* are outside the essence of body (*jism*), and therefore, the body's need to a mover or creator is proportionate to the area of its need.

To extend *hudūth* from accidents and kind forms to the essence of physiques, the *mutakellimūn* argue that anything that bears a *hādith* accident is *hādith*. However, they have failed to notice that if an entity bears a *hādith* accident, it is only *hādith* with respect to that accident. And if *hudūth* is ascribed to the essence of the physique, such an ascription is figurative.

The need of a creator or mover can be proved for matter and kind forms only from the position of substantial motion (*al-haraka al-jawhariyya)*, where change and *hudūth* are extended from accidents and kind forms to the essence of physiques.

Ibn Sīnā argues that if everything that bears a *hādith* is *hādith*, as asserted by the *mutakellimūn*, then God, the Exalted, must be *hādith* as well. That is because on the one hand, the *mutakellimūn* believe that the world is *hādith*—that is, there was God and nothing else and then He desired and began creating the world—and on the other, they maintain that the Divine will is a practical attribute, and therefore, like the world, it is *hādith*. From this perspective, God bears *hādith* accidents, since before creating the world, He was not the Purposer (*al-Murid*), and then He willed to create the world. Though the *hādith* will is not an Essential attribute, since they maintain that it is established by the Divine Essence and the Essence is its recipient (*mahal*), the will is born by the Essence. According to their principle that everything that bears a *hādith* is *hādith*, the Divine Essence must be *hādith*, as it bears a *hādith* phenomenon. Should the *mutakellimūn* recourse to deny a mutual necessity between *hudūth* of the Essence and *hudūth* of its will, their argument for the *hudūth* of the physical world will fall apart, as they will lose their rational grounds for tracing the *hudūth* of the world to its Creator.

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[1] Successive Regress (*al-tasalsul al-taʿāqubī*) It is a sort of regress in which the units of the series do not exist at the same time, but rather the existence of the coming unit coincides with the nonexistence of the former unit. Therefore, such regress is not impossible. *

Therefore, the principle “Something which bears a *hādith* is *hādith*” fails to lead to the *hudūth* of the essence of the physical world.

Hudūth of the physique’s essence can only be established through substantial motion (*al-haraka al-jawhariyya*). Since according to substantial motion, motion, and *hudūth* are extended from accidents and kind forms to the essence of the physique.

With the establishment of substantial motion, Sadr al-Muta’allihīn al-Shirāzī ascribes motion and *hudūth* to the essence of the natural world. From this vantage point, the natural world is characterized by a universal and continuous *hudūth*; and thus, motion and *hudūth* are reflected in the essence, as well as the accidents, of natural entities; and this yields to the existence of a metaphysical Mover and Creator.

Expanding the grounds these arguments proceed from, though substantial motion enhances the tenability of the arguments from motion and *hudūth*, it still does not alleviate the main defect of these arguments on the score of their incapacity to indicate the necessity of existence of the First Mover or the Creator. Substantial motion emancipates these arguments from the narrow boundaries of the natural world and elevates them to incorporeal and metaphysical realities; although an incorporeal origin—that bestows existence on the natural entities or gives them motion—is definitely an incorporeal and eternal entity, yet in the mean time, it has not been proved that is not contingent. Therefore, in order to indicate such mover or the creator’s necessity of existence, one will have to resort to further arguments such as the demonstration of contingency and necessity.

Therefore, the arguments form motion and *hudūth*, in addition to the fact that their conclusiveness is indebted to inclusion of the impossibility of regressive and circular causality in their articulations, are associated with having two additional defects. Substantial motion removes the first defect, but its major defect still cannot be abolished without assistance from the demonstration of contingency and necessity.

Evaluation of Criticisms of the Arguments from Motion and *Hudūth*

The arguments from motion and *hudūth* have been subject to criticisms that either pertain to both arguments, or are exclusively directed at one of the two. Many of these criticisms are due to unfamiliarity with the central notions these arguments revolve around. For instance, owing to misunderstanding of the difference between receptive (*al-ʿilla al-qābiliyya)* and supplementary causes (*al-ʿilla al-muʿidda*) and the efficient cause (*al-ʿilla al-fāʿiliyya)*, some critics have questioned the impossibility of regressive causation; and for the same reasons, some writers have considered it possible that an inferior and weak cause produce a higher and superior effect.

Another criticism that stems from inattentiveness to the meanings of motion and inaction/rest (*sukūn*) and overlooks the existentiality of motion and non-existentiality of inaction, states that the argument from motion does not treat motion and inaction/rest on equal merits and only considers motion as dependent and needful of a cause.

The reason that the *mutakellimūn* have employed the argument from *hudūth* is that they think if Divine grace were eternal, then it will invite two contradictions. First, God would be a constrained cause (*al-fāʿil al-mūjab*)[1], whilst His autonomy (*ikhtiyār*) is not deniable. Second, Divine grace will not need an origin. These false presumptions, however, are due to the *mutakellimūn's* lack of understanding of why an effect needs a cause, and what do power and autonomy mean.

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[1] Autonomous Cause and Constrained Cause: If an agency is such that it does have a choice to produce its effect, such as the human being, it is an autonomous cause (*al-fāʿil al-mukhtār*). And if it does not have a choice to produce its effect, like fire that does not have

Mutakellimūn hold that an autonomous cause is an agency that has temporal precedence over its effect. In other words, the effect of an autonomous cause does not exist in the past, and after the cause weighs the different options before him, he decides that the effect should exist. They maintain that a constrained cause, like fire that produces heat, is an agency that has no temporal separation from its effect. An autonomous cause in the view of philosophers and philosophy-oriented *mutakellimūn* is an agency, which acts if he desires to act and does not act if he does not desire to. From this position, should an agency, because of his eternal knowledge and wisdom, desire the perpetual and eternal performance of an action, this will not violate his autonomy and would not mean that he is constrained.

Since *hudūth* is not the reason, which determines why an effect is needful of its cause, the eternity of grace, contrary to the *mutakellimūn's* assumption, does not amount to the effect's independence and lack of need to its cause. For instance, the everlastingness of human beings in the hereafter, which is a matter of consensus among many faiths, does not imply their lack of need to their existential cause.

Since *hudūth* is an attribute of existence, in rational analysis its degree is posterior to existence. Moreover, rational analysis indicates that existence is after creation and creation after necessitation (*ijāb*) and necessitation after needfulness. In the light of this, should *hudūth* be the reason of needfulness and dependence of an effect on its cause, it must exist a few degrees antecedent to itself. Although this indirect circularity (*daur*) is not as obviously

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any choice in burning and producing heat, it is a constrained cause (*al-fāʿil al-mūjab*). *

void as direct circularity, the corruption of its corollaries is greater than in direct circularity. This is because supposing that *hudūth* is the reason for need, after an effect comes into existence it is not marked by *hudūth*, which follows that the reason for its need to a cause does not exist. It further follows that an entity that has become *hādith* has no need to its cause in order to continue to exist.

From the Peripatetic and Illuminationist (*Ishrāqiyyūn*) philosophers' perspective, the reason and criterion of an effect's need to its cause is its contingency (*imkān*); and since contingency never separates from the essence of the effect, its need to its cause is inseparable from it. The eternity and everlastingness of an effect does not imply that it is not needy and dependent on its efficient cause; rather, an effect's eternity and everlastingness indicates the continuity and everlastingness of its need to its cause.

Due to these deficiencies of the arguments from motion and *hudūth*, the Peripatetic and Illuminationist philosophers have not sufficed on them and have established the demonstration of contingency and necessity (*burhān al-imkān wa al-wujūb*), which enjoys an exceeding strength and tenability.

Chapter Five

THE DEMONSTRATION OF CONTINGENCY OF IMPOVERISHMENT

Transition from Quidditative Contingency to Contingency of Impoverishment

A closer examination of quidditative contingency (*al-imkān al-māhūwī*) guides the course of inquiry to a new sort of contingency, namely the contingency of impoverishment (*al-imkān al-faqrī*). The perception of this sort of contingency entails the construction of a superior argument for the existence of the Necessary.

The entertainment of a quiddity's equidistance towards existence and nonexistence, which is an immediate inference from its quality of lack of necessitation with respect to existence and nonexistence, brings forth quidditative contingency. Clearly, in order to exist, such a finite entity requires an external causal efficacy. The external agency that endows it with existence and extricates it from the position of equidistance is its existential cause. In other words, quiddity finds existence with the blessings of creation from its existential cause.

Therefore, should it be asked, "How does quiddity lose its equidistance?" the response is, "By the existence it receives from its efficient cause." However, the question can be transferred from quiddity to existence, stating, how did an existence, which is not self-subsistent, come to be and what is the reason of its need for its efficient cause. Before responding to this question, it must be borne in mind that such an existence cannot be equidistant towards existence and nonexistence, since according to the law of identity, everything is necessarily itself. Therefore, existence is necessarily existence, and is impossible to be nonexistence. Hence, the existence of contingents does not have the attribute of quidditative contingency, namely, equidistance towards existence and nonexistence. On the other hand, because of their finitude, contingents (*al-mumkināt*) lack eternal necessity (*al-dharūra al-azaliyya*), and their existence is restricted to specific conditions that are present only in certain levels of the gradational reality of existence (*al-haqīqa al-mushakkika lil-wujūd).*[1]

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[1] Gradation of Existence (*tashkīk al-wujūd*): After acknowledging that there is a reality and that the world is not a mere fantasy, we come to know that reality encompasses myriads of ostensibly different objects, such as trees, oceans, galaxies and so forth. If we examine whether this multiplicity, which the mind perceives in the external world, is real or fantasized, this would be the inquiry of multiplicity and unity of reality. If two things are different from one another, their difference can be in one of the following four ways:

- They differ from one another by their entire essences (*thamām al-dhawāt*) and have nothing in common, such as the difference between the Aristotelian categories.
- They differ from one another by their differentiae (*fusūl*). Such difference is exclusive to quiddities that comprise a genus and differentia and are categorized under the same genus, like a horse and a sheep.
- They differ from one another by their individual accidents, but both pertain to the same specie or kind—such as two human individuals.
- They differ from one another by that which they have in common (*mā bihi al-ishterāk*).

The last sort of difference was introduced to philosophy by Sheikh al-Ishrāq al-Suhrawardī. He held that the difference of the different sorts of light in the world is not by anything external to light's essence, since as he believed, light is sheer and "uncombined." Rather, they are different from one another by the same thing that they have in common, and their difference is in the severity and weakness of their realities. He argued that since darkness is a non-existential phenomenon, one cannot argue that weak lights are different from strong lights because the former have darkness in them.

From the position of principality of quiddity, the answer to the inquiry of multiplicity and unity of reality is evident; that is, The fact that contingents (*mumkināt*) are finite and conditional means they are not absolute and have a need and dependence, which is satisfied only in specific conditions. Unlike evenness with respect to four, such need and dependence is not an attribute or accident that would be additional to the finite existence, since if it were additional, the finite existence, which is the contingent's very reality, would be devoid of need in virtue of its essence. Because reality always conforms to one of the two sides of contradiction, the absence of need in the finite existence, translates to its complement (*naqīdh*), namely, its lack of need and independence, which contradicts the fact that the finite and conditional existence is needful and contingent.

Quiddity is a mental phenomenon the essence of which and essential parts thereof are entertained by the mind, and any other thing, even if it is on one of the two sides of contradiction, is outside its boundaries. For instance, existence and nonexistence are on the two sides of contradiction, yet the concept of human being does not include any of the two. However, existence is not a mental phenomenon; it is the very reality and factuality of things; and the external world is never vacant of the two sides of contradiction. For this reason, the need and dependence, which is proved for contingents, is their very existence, not their necessary accident (*lāzim*).

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reality is nothing but multiple quiddities. However, from the perspective of Transcendent Wisdom, principality of existence, as interpreted by the author, reality is nothing but existence, and quiddities are reifications of the mind from the boundaries of various existences. It follows that what makes two beings different is not something external to the reality of existence, since there is nothing but existence; and since existence is sheer, that is, it is not a compound, if two existences are different, their difference is by severity and weakness of the reality of existence. This sort of difference is called *al-ikhtelāf al-tashkīkī lil wujūd*, which has been rendered in this work as "gradational difference of existence". *

Although quidditative need and contingency is an essential property (*al-ʿaradh al-dhātī*) of the quiddity's essence, it is, outside its essence and essential parts. That is, contingency is not a genus or differentia for quiddities. The needfulness that is proved for finite things is their external existence. This sort of needfulness proves another type of contingency, which is not additional to the existence of the effect. Like its proportionate needfulness, such contingency is the very reality and existence of the contingent and needful beings, and is called the contingency of impoverishment (*al-imkān al-faqrī*).

Contingency of impoverishment is the very needfulness and destitution that brims the effect's existence; and when the existence of the effect is perceived, it is nothing but existence. When this premise is added to the axiom that existence is necessarily existence, it follows that contingency of impoverishment, contrary to quidditative contingency, does not require the negation of necessities of existence and nonexistence, and in effect, is based on the very necessity of existence.

Thus, a deeper analysis of quiddity and quidditative contingency proves an existence and necessity that are sheer needfulness, dependence, and the very penury to causal efficacy. Its contrast with the assertion that there is an essence that bears need as its accident, and therefore, need is posterior to it, need not explanation.

In the rational analysis of external realities, first we discern their quiddity and then their existence and reality. Then through the assessment of quiddity with existence, we discern the quiddity's needfulness and contingency and discover it is characterized by need and contingency. However, when we observe the existence under the auspices of which the quiddity has found reality, from that existence's finitude and conditionality we discern a needfulness and contingency, which are not additional to the essence of the needful and contingent existence, and rather are its very reality. For this reason, this type of contingency, which is sheer impoverishment and needfulness, is called contingency of impoverishment (*al-imkān al-faqrī*).

The principality of existence (*asāla al-wujūd)* and respectivality of quiddity (*e'tebāriyya al-māhiyya)* is the principle, which facilitates the transition from quiddity and quidditative contingency to existence and contingency of impoverishment. This is because from the position of principality of existence quiddity does not have the capacity to be subject to creation (*ja'l*), emanation (*ifādha*), causation (*'illiyya),* and so forth; and is not realized except under the auspices of existence. Existence, nonexistence, independence, impoverishment, and the like, are not its essence or essential parts. Rather, needfulness and impoverishment pertain to the existence from the limitations (*hudūd*) of which the quiddity is abstracted. This impoverished existence is needful by virtue of its essence and does not require a reason or cause external to itself for its needfulness. However, in the case of quiddity, just as its essence is devoid of existence and it is only under the auspices of existence that it finds an auxiliary manifestation (*al-burūz al-taba'ī*), likewise, it is vacant of impoverishment and independence. The attribution of impoverishment or independence to quiddity is through their literal attribution to the existence, which realizes the quiddity. Therefore, what was stated regarding the reason of a quiddity's need for a cause does not have total accuracy and is open to criticism.

Peripatetic philosophers believe that in order to exist, a quiddity is in need of an external causal efficacy. They further assert that this need is due to the quiddity's contingency. This view, however, is subject to the criticism that was also forwarded against the postulation of the *mutakellimūn* who maintain that *hudūth* is the reason for an effect's need for its cause. In rational analysis, as explained earlier, *hudūth*, as an attribute of the effect's existence, is posterior (*muta'akhir*) to the effect's need for its cause by several degrees. Similarly, from the perspective of principality of existence and as a result of antecedence of existence over quiddity, quidditative contingency—which is a corollary of quiddity and posterior to it—is posterior to existence; and because existence follows creation, and creation is after necessitation, and necessitation follows needfulness, quidditative contingency is posterior to needfulness by several degrees. Should the posterior contingency be the cause of needfulness, it will be posterior to itself and antecedent to itself by several degrees. Thus, in the view of principality of existence, though quidditative contingency, similar to *hudūth*, can indicate the effect's need for a cause, it cannot be the reason and criterion of the effect's need for the cause.[1]

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[1] The demonstration of contingency of impoverishment (*burhān al-imkān al-faqrī*) is one of the ingenious innovations of the founder of Transcendent Wisdom, Sadr al-Muta'allihīn al-Shirāzī. On the foundations of principality of existence, Sadr al-Muta'allihīn transfers contingency from quiddity to existence, and this leads to the construction of this new argument for the existence of the Necessary. The logical format of the this demonstration can be elucidated as follows:

1. There is a reality.
2. There is at least one finite, contingent, entity.
3. Existence is principal.
4. The attributes of existence are identical (*ʿain*) to the reality of existence, because if they were other than existence and additional to it, then it would mean that something other than existence has factuality and would contradict the previous premise that asserts the principality of existence.
5. The finite and contingent entity that was mentioned in the second premise is the very finitude and the very dependence and need to external causal, which produces it, as opposed to being an essence that is characterized by finitude and contingency.
6. The presence of something that is the very contingency and need to external causal efficacy is impossible without

Contingency of Impoverishment and the Essential Independence of the Necessary

With the elucidation of contingency of impoverishment, it becomes evident that existence, creation, necessity, necessitation, and needfulness are not different things, which mutually require each other. Rather, the existence of the effect is the single entity, which is the very impoverishment and need, the very emanation, creation, and necessitation. Since finite existence *is* impoverishment, and its entire reality is nothing but relation and dependence on the "other," its necessity is also by virtue of the other. For such a thing, it is inconceivable to have an essence vacant of destitution and contingency, so in addition to contingency of impoverishment it may be characterized by the quality of quidditative contingency.

The prevalence of impoverishment in the bounds of beings, which are conjoined with quiddities—or to be more specific, beings the limitations of which narrate their quiddities—negates every kind of independence from them and illustrates their realities as prepositional notions (*al-ma'ānī al-harfiyya)*, which are nothing but relation and contingence to the other.

A prepositional notion is a notion that by virtue of itself is devoid of any meaning. If any meaning can be discerned from a prepositional notion, it is under the auspices of dependence and relation to the other, and from the other that the preposition has dependence upon. The other that bestows a preposition with meaning must be a nounal meaning (*al-ma'na al-ismī*).

The analysis of existence of quiddities, that is, the elucidation of contingency of impoverishment, speedily paves the way for the foundation of a demonstration, which has a higher tenability, more brevity, and a broader range of usage than all of the previous arguments have. This is because the reality of a finite existence—that is, the

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the existence of a reality that is free of contingency and dependence. *

existence, which is devoid of any independence and is sheer relation and dependence on the other, and is rather something the reality of which is nothing but relation and contingence to the other—cannot exist without the other side of such relation and dependence. Certainly, the other side of the relation and dependence, that is, the agency that furnishes the needful existence of contingents, cannot be another impoverished being, since with respect to any other finite existence that may be suggested for this causal efficiency, it is also true that it does not have anything from itself and there is no perceivable essence or self for it which would satisfy the first contingent's need.

From this perspective, all contingent beings are signs of a reality, which is exalted from destitution and need and has independence. Although at a cursory glance a contingent may seem to be the cause of another contingent, however, even this mediation indicates the causality of an independent source that has manifested in this sign. Because all aspects of an entity, which is sheer need and contingence, are the need and contingence that evoke the other, and what it reflects is similar to a light that from a mirror.

A light that appears in a mirror can be traced to a luminary source, which has manifested in it, without requiring invalidation of regress. If another mirror is a mediate in the manifestation of the light therein, it can only reflect the light of the luminary agency; and it cannot be suggested it has a light of its own which it gives to the next mirror.

Signs (*ʿalamāt*) are of two kinds: conventional signs (*al-ʿalamāt al-eʿtebāriyya*) and factual signs (*al-ʿalamāt al-haqīqiyya*). The former is like words, scripts, traffic signals, national flags of various countries, and so forth. Factual signs are like the image of a person who is in front of a mirror. Factual signs are further divided into three kinds:

- Finite Signs: Like indication of smoke respecting fire, or prairie or wetland respecting water. The indication of such signs does not depend on the conventions of a specific group of people, nonetheless, as the smoke or prairie changes, their “signness” and indication about fire and water changes as well.

- Permanent Signs: This kind of sign pertains to instances in which indication is not restricted to a particular time, and like evenness of four, is always with reality that is marked with the sign.
- Essential Signs: In this case, being the sign of a reality, which is indicated by the sign, is not a necessary property of the sign’s essence; rather it is its very essence and reality. In the previous kind, indication is a necessary property of the essence of the sign, and by virtue of its essence, it does not bear any indication with respect to the reality, which it is reflecting. However, in this kind, the sign’s entire reality is the reflection of the entity, which it is representing.

An image, which appears in a mirror is a mirror by virtue of its essence. According to simple mindsets, glass and other physical parts constitute the mirror; however, in the *ʿirfān* (Gnosticism) of the wayfarer to the unseen, mirror is nothing but the illustrated visage. The visage, which is illustrated in a mirror is other than the glass, frame, their length, width, depth, light, color, angle, and the like. Rather, it is the very narration, indication, and relation, which it renders with respect to the real image.

Contingency of impoverishment elucidates the “mirror-like” realities of beings, which manifest and appear in the image of various quiddities. This method of analysis of “causedness” (*maʿlūliyya)* exhibits the world as perceived by *ʿirfān*: as the various Divine splendors, which bring about the different things and ages and eras. This fashion of perception is inspired by the Qur’ānic teachings, which identify the heavens and the earth and whatever is within them as a beggar and needful and recognize God as a reality that every degree of existence is a splendor of His infinite magnificence. "Beseech Him all those in the heavens and the earth; everyday He is in a new splendorous manifestation."[1]

In the parlance of Qur'ānic verses, various existential splendors are the diverse facets and dimensions of the visage of the Lord (*Wajhullah*) of Glory and Grace. "Hallowed is the name of thy Lord, the Lord of Glory and Grace."[2] *Wajhullah* is the infinite Divine manifestation, which has presence in every entity; "He is with you wherever you be"[3]; and is evident in every facet, "Therefore, wherever you turn you find the face of God."[4]

Rational analysis illustrates the world like a mirror in which different beings appear as various splendors of God. Although someone, who is inattentive to its "mirror-like" reality and its figurative existence, perceives it independent; nevertheless, when the mirror is broken and reality unfolds, the Divine visage of every entity manifests. Then when it is asked, "Whose is the kingdom today?"[5] the response, which echoes in reality of every age and time, is heard, "God's, the One, the Subduer."[6]

God, the One, the Subduer, is that very needless reality Who satisfies and dispenses with the perpetual supplication of the needful. His act of satisfying the needs is not in a fashion, which would eliminate the need and the begging of the impoverished, because need and dependence are present in the response that is received from Him, and needfulness does not vacate any dimension of contingents. For this reason, the late Āghā Ali Hakīm, in *Badā'i' al-Hikam*, points out that the opposition (*taqābul*) of need of contingents to the independence of the Necessary is an opposition of affirmation and negation (*al-salb wa al-eijāb*) and not an opposition of privation and possession (*al-ʿadam wa al-malaka*).[1]

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[1] 55: 39

[2] 55: 27

[3] 57: 4

[4] 2: 115

[5] 40: 16

[6] *ibid.*

In the opposition of privation and possession, the nonexistent is devoid of the being and reality of the opposite side, nonetheless, its individual, class, kind, or genus, can have the opposite side. However, the finite existence is an impoverished reality; and this impoverishment is such that the more the benedictions from the Necessary, the more desperate the impoverishment. It follows that in no condition can the contingent attain the capacity to have independence, an attribute exclusive to the Necessary.

In other words, God is independent and everything except Him is needful, and the opposition between His independence and this need is not privation and possession, since by consideration of individual, class, kind, or genus, no finite existence can have necessary or absolute independence. Therefore, the affirmation of the opposite side is impossible for the finite existences; and the opposition between the two is the opposition of affirmation and negation, not the opposition of privation and possession.

The presence of impoverishment in every dimension of contingents entails that the indication and narration they have with regard to the All-Sufficient and Independent Essence, and also the human being's cognition and awareness with respect to Him, are splendors and manifestations of that very Essence. This is the meaning of the exalted statement, "The One who proves His essence by His essence."[2]

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[1] Hakīm, Āghā Ali. *Badāʾiʿ al-Hikam.* (Tehran: lithographed print), 39.

[2] Al-Qummī, Shaykh ʿAbbās. *Mafātīh al-Jinān.* The Supplication of al-Sahar.

Unique Qualities of the Demonstration of Contingency of Impoverishment

The demonstration of contingency of impoverishment, by the version expounded in this book, in addition to its purity from the shortcomings of the previous arguments, is unique by having a number of distinctive features. This is so because the sole applicability of the arguments, which proceed from motion and *hudūth*, even after their adduction with substantial motion, is in the corporeal world; and the only conclusion they lead to is an incorporeal origin for the physical world. The argument from design—even if the tenability of its conclusiveness is left unchallenged—is beyond this reproach, since design or orderliness (*nadhm*) is not exclusive to the physical and mobile entities and is also perceivable among incorporeal beings; nevertheless, the argument is based on a concatenated totality, which functions towards a common objective. On the contrary, the demonstration of contingency of impoverishment can be substantiated on the basis of corporeal as well as incorporeal entities; and its cogency does not require a totality of things and can easily proceed from the existence of one finite being. In addition to this, the objective of the demonstration of contingency of impoverishment is not to prove a mover, a *muhdith*, or a cosmic designer, attributes shared by the Necessary and other subjects; rather, it is set to prove a necessary origin.

The demonstration of contingency of impoverishment surpasses the demonstration of contingency and necessity in not having some of the latter’s deficiencies. Its lack of need to the impossibility of circular and regressive causality is more evident than that of the latter demonstration. With the construction of the demonstration of contingency of impoverishment, first, the Necessary is proved, and then the finitude of the series of mediates, which exhibit the absolute causality of the Necessary is illustrated.

The demonstration of contingency and necessity—however, without some of its meticulous rational premises and corollaries—found its way through the works of Peripatetic philosophers into scholastic philosophy and then through inaccurate translations, entered the academia, which receive their philosophical learning through such channels; nevertheless, the demonstration of contingency of impoverishment, which is the result of cognitive profundities of the Imamite theosophers and has been in the curriculum of Shiite philosophical learning for the last four centuries, retains its novelty and bloom in its original abode. The distraught mentality of western philosophizers and philosophy historians—who under sway of sensationalism have abandoned rationality and have been subdued by apparent and latent skepticism (*shakkākiyya)*—ever remains unfamiliar of this demonstration.

Chapter Six

THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT OF ANSELM

Argument in the Form of *Reductio ad Absurdum*

The ontological argument devised by St. Anselm, an eleventh-century Christian theologian and the Archbishop of Canterbury, has excited extensive criticism and rebuttals along the history of western philosophy. The argument proceeds from the concept of God, which Anselm propounds as “something than which nothing greater can be conceived” (*aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari possit*).

God as the maximally exalted and superior perfection can also be discerned from the statement of *Allah Akbar,* that is, God is exalted from being described or comprehended, and therefore, He is more perfect than any phenomenon imaginable. Such a contour of God, the bequest of Divine apostles, has also been disseminated in Judeo-Christian theology through the inculcations of the Torah and the Evangel.

Anselm’s argument proceeds from the above concept of God in the form of *reductio ad absurdum*. In this sort of argument, it is proved that holding the complement (*naqīdh*) of the desired conclusion entails absurdity; and thus, the desired conclusion is reached in an indirect manner.

Anselm’s argument can be summed up this way: If “that than which nothing greater can be conceived” does not exist, things, which do exist, would be greater than Him. It is clear, however, that this is self-contradictory and absurd. Therefore, with the negation of God’s nonexistence, given that the negation of contradictories is impossible, the existence of God is proved.

The proof of mutual necessity between nonexistence and not being the maximal perfection is that nonexistence is a defect, and existent things are more perfect than nonexistent things. Therefore, if God is nonexistent, existent entities would be more perfect than Him; and consequently, He is not, as conceived, the maximal perfection.[1]

Gaunilo's Criticism and its Adduction

This argument was quickly critiqued by Gaunilo of Marmoutier, a monk contemporary to Anselm. He asserted that if Anselm's argument were cogent, it could indicate things, which surely don't exist. Using the principles of Anselm's argument, Gaunilo sets a proof to establish the existence of a maximally perfect island:

> For example: it is said that somewhere in the ocean is an island, which, because of the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of discovering what does not exist, is called the lost island. And they say that this island is blessed with an inestimable wealth of all manner of riches and delicacies in greater abundance than is told of the Islands of the Blest; and that having no owner or inhabitant, it is more excellent than all other countries, which are inhabited by mankind, in the abundance with which it is stored.
>
> If some one should tell me that there is such an island, I should easily understand his words, in which there is no difficulty. But suppose if he went on to say, as if by a logical inference: "You can no longer doubt that this island exists somewhere, since you have no doubt that it is in your understanding. And since it is more

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[1] See: *Anselm's Basic Writings*, translated by S. W. Deane, 2d ed. (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court Publising Company, 1962).

> excellent not to be in the understanding alone, but to exist both in the understanding and in reality, for this reason it must exist. For if it does not exist, any land which really exists will be more excellent than it; and so the island already understood by you to be more excellent will not be more excellent."
>
> If a man should try to prove to me by such reasoning that this island truly exists, and that its existence should no longer be doubted, either I should believe that he was jesting, or I know not which I ought to regard the greater fool: myself, supposing that I should allow this proof; or him, if he should suppose that he had established with any certainty the existence of this island. For he ought to show first that the hypothetical excellence of this island exists as a real and indubitable fact, and in no wise as any unreal object, or one whose existence is uncertain, in my understanding.[1]

In his *Responsio*, Anselm refuted this criticism on the grounds that the notion of God, that is, that than which nothing greater can be conceived, includes every perfection (*kamāl*) including existence and its necessity. Whereas the maximally perfect island is a finite and contingent phenomenon, the conception of whose nonexistence arises no contradiction.

It is possible, however, to augment the tenability of Gaunilo's criticism. If we add the concept of existence to the contour of his lost island, that is, conceive a maximally perfect island which exists, the spoof proof will withstand Anselm’s response. Since, although the quiddity of the maximally perfect island is characterized by quidditative contingency, its existence does not have quidditative contingency and is not equidistant towards existence and nonexistence.

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[1] *ibid.*

An example better than Gaunilo’s lost island is the partner of the Creator (*sharīk al-Bārī*). Sharing all of the Necessary’s attributes, the notion of its nonexistence is contradictory to the notions which are integral his essence. If one applies Anselm’s principles here, the existence of the partner of the Creator would be indubitable, notwithstanding numerous demonstrations (*barāhīn*) indicate the impossibility of his existence.

The Fundamental Flaw of Anselm’s Argument

Although Gaunilo’s criticism along with what was put forward in its adduction, establish that Anselm’s argument lacks cogency; they do not illustrate its fallacy. The many western and Muslim scholars who have rejected Anselm’s argument have set forth a variety of criticisms; however, none of them seems to be devoid of questionability.

The critical fallacy of Anselm’s argument arises from his failure to differentiate between the notion (*mafhūm*) of existence and its extension (*misdāq*).

The notions of maximal perfection, existence, and necessity, which are included in the notion of God, regardless of having or lacking external extensions (*masādīq*), have their meanings. In other words, the notions of maximal perfection, existence, and necessity—regardless of being true by predication as extension (*al-haml al-shā’e‛ al-sināʿī*) and being instantiated, or being invalid by the same predication and not being instantiated—do carry their essences and essential parts by predication as essence (*al-haml al-awwalī al-dhātī*), because predication as essence is concerned with concepts, and predication as extension reflects whether a concept has any external extension.[1]

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[1] When a predicate is ascribed to a certain subject—for instance, someone says, "That than which nothing greater can be conceived is that than which nothing greater can be conceived," or "Zaid is a student"—there has to be an aspect of unity and an aspect of difference between the subject and the predicate. The aspect of unity is necessary because predication means "it-is-itness" (*hū-hūwiyya)*; and the aspect of difference is necessary because if the subject and predicate were exactly identical in *every* aspect, then the proposition would be meaningless. In predication as essence (*al-haml al-awwalī al-dhātī*, literally meaning primary essential predication) the need for the aspect of unity is satisfied by the unity of concepts, that is, the proposition conveys that the subject and predicate have the same meaning; and the aspect of difference is provided by our considerations. For instance, in the example, "That than which nothing greater can be conceived is that than which nothing greater can be conceived," it is evident that the proposition states that the subject and the predicate have the same meaning, and this is their aspect of unity; as for their aspect of difference, we assume a sort of difference between the subject and the predicate, for instance, we may perceive the subject as not fully known and the predicate as something that is known fully. In this sort of predication, since the subject and the predicate have the same meaning, if they two have an external extension, they will be instantiated in a single thing. This sort of predication is only used when an essence is attributed to itself, like "Animal is animal," or an essential part is ascribed to the essence that comprises it, like "Animal is man."

In predication as extension (*al-haml al-shāʾeʿ al-siṇāʿī*, litterally meaning common technical predication), the axis of unity between the subject and the predicate is their external extension; that is, if we say "Zaid is a student" it means in the external world the two concepts of "Zaid" and "student" are instantiated in a single reality. In this sort of predication, however, the subject and the predicate are two different concepts. The most distinguishable feature of predication as extension is that its subject is always an extension of its predicate. Sometimes the subject of a proposition

By paying attention to the difference between the notion of existence and its extension, that is, existence by predication as essence and existence by predication as extension, Anselm's fallacy becomes evident. The concept of "that than which nothing greater can be conceived," is contradicted, and therefore, absurdity is invited, only if existence is negated from this concept by predication as essence. However, God's nonexistence in the external world, that is, His lack of existence by predication as extension, does not entail negation of perfection from Him by predication as essence.

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that includes predication as extension is a concept, like, "Animal is a genus."

> Sadr al-Muta'allihīn, by introducing these two kinds of predication to philosophy, added another condition of contradiction, making them nine altogether. He proved that in order to contradict each other, two propositions must also have an identical fashion of predication. Consider this example: Logicians say that if a concept is applicable to more than one entity, like the concept of animal, it is a universal concept; and if it does not apply to more than one entity, like the concept of the specific grocery store that you do your shopping at, it is a particular concept. On the other hand, because of the logical law of identity that everything is necessarily itself, we know that particular is particular; but at the same time we now that particular is applicable to all particular concepts in the world and therefore is universal. This invites a paradox, since how can particular be particular and universal at the same time, that is, applicable to not more than one and applicable to more than one. The answer to this, and many other similar paradoxes, becomes clear by making distinction between predication as essence and predication as extension. Particular is particular, that is, applicable to not more than one, by predication as essence. And particular is universal, that is, applicable to more than one, by predication as extension. *

Therefore, it has to be established what Anselm means by existence when he says, "If that than which nothing greater can be conceived, can be conceived not to exist, it is not that than which nothing greater can be conceived." If he means existence by predication as essence, it is a valid assertion. Since, the negation of existence from the concept of God, the most superlative perceivable perfection, is self-contradictory. This, however, does not prove such a concept is instantiated in reality. Nonetheless, if Anselm means existence by predication as extension, that is, existence in reality, then there is no mutual necessity between the negation of existence from God by predication as extension and negation of existence from His concept by predication as essence. Thus, while the concept of the most superlative perceivable perfection carries all of the concepts, which are included in it, and therefore, no contradiction is implied, it may not have any external extension. On this basis, the ontological argument does not indicate that to hold the complement (*naqīdh*) of its desired conclusion is reducible to absurdity.

If the concept of the most adequate perfection lacks a real extension, it is not contradictory, since contradictory propositions must have an identical manner of predication. The concept of the most adequate perfection is a concept, which by predication as essence is the most adequate perfection, and by predication as extension, is a mental concept, which exists by the mental mode of existence. Therefore, the absence of its external extension does not make its conception an impossibility. This assertion is supported by the fact that the partner of the Necessary is the partner of the Necessary by predication as essence, and possesses every sanctity and perfection that is proved or assumed for the Necessary. Notwithstanding, he is not instantiated in reality; and as far as reality is concerned, he is the partner of the impossible (*mumtane'*). If mere conception sufficed to prove the Necessary, His partner, because he is conceivable too, would be provable by another *reductio ad absurdum*.

In the said argument, absurdity is entailed if the premises had an identical fashion of predication, in other words, if a concept, which, by predication as essence, includes perfection, loses its perfection by the same predication; and a concept, which by predication as extension possesses a perfection (*kamāl*), is devoid of it by the same predication. However, if a concept includes some perfection by predication as essence and is devoid of it by predication as extension, it is not contradictory or absurd.

The difference of predication as essence and predication as extension has gone unnoticed in western philosophy; but Islamic theosophers have outlined it. Making distinction between concept and extension and the two kinds of predication, in addition to illustrating the fallacy of Anselm's argument, solves many paradoxes that are considered unsolvable. It also helps identify similar fallacies that have occurred in the works of Gnostics.

Failure to Make Distinction between Concept and Extension in the Demonstrations of Gnostics

Throughout the history of Islamic thought, some Gnostics (*'urafā*) who have failed to differentiate between concept and extension have presented a variety of rational arguments for the existence of the Necessary. These arguments are far more expressive and succinct than the argument expounded by Anselm. For example, one of these demonstrations asserts:

> Existence *qua* existence (*al-wujūd bi mā hūwa al-wujūd)* does not accept nonexistence.
>
> Something, which does not accept nonexistence, is necessary.

> Therefore, existence *qua* existence is necessary.[1]

The minor premise of this first-figure syllogism is based on the impossibility of conjunction of contradictories; that is, existence's acceptance of nonexistence equates with conjunction of contradictories. Although this argument proceeds from direct view at reality and existence and therefore proves the Necessary through a shorter route than what Anselm has cruised, because it also fails to make distinction between concept and extension, is untenable.

Since the concept of existence *qua* existence, does not reconcile with nonexistence by predication as essence, and the Necessary is a reality whose impossibility of nonexistence is by predication as extension, the minor and major premises do not have an identical method of predication and the middle term does not repeat, hence the inconclusiveness of the syllogism.

The affirmation of the absolute existence's instantiation is dependent on a number of steps that must first be secured. In the first step, the respectivality (*al-e'tebāriyya)* of quiddity and principality (*al-asāla*) of existence must be proved, because, the proponents of principality of quiddity do not consider reality to be anything except diverse and multiple quiddities. The abstract notion of existence, according to them, is prescinded from quiddities and has developed into an absolute notion through the mental activities.

In the second step, the heterogeneous multiplicity (*al-kathra al-tabāyunī*) of existence must be rejected, because if one should maintain principality of existence and adhere to heterogeneous multiplicity of beings, then for him, external entities are diverse realities, which are heterogeneous from one another. From such perspective, each entity is peculiar to its own conditions and limitations and exists only within these boundaries. Therefore, their existence is marked by essential necessity (*al-dharūra al-dhātiyya),* that is, they are existent as long as their essences exist. From this perspective as well, the absolute and infinite existence, which is existence *qua* existence, is not instantiated in reality, since according to the heterogeneity (*tabāyun*) of the beings, existence *qua* existence is the very heterogeneous multiplicity, which does not have any unity (*wahda*) except for the mere notional unity (*al-wahda al-mafhūmiyya*)—that even if the dispute of the possibility of such notional unity with the given extensional heterogeneity were laid aside—which only exists in the mind.

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[1] Āmulī, Ayatullah Abdullah Jawādī. *Tahrīr Tamhīd al-Qawā'id.* (Tehran: Al-Zahrā Publications, 1993), 261.

In the third step the opinion of homonymy (*al-ishterāk al-lafdhī*) of existence, which suggests the respectivality of existence in the contingents and its principality in the Necessary, must be evaluated.

In the fourth step, gradational multiplicity (*al-kathra al-tashkīkī*) of existence must be analyzed and its meticulous details elaborated. Since from the perspective of gradational multiplicity of existence, though proved, the Necessary, as the cause of other beings, is at the top of the gradational series of existence. It is not the extension of the unconditional existence, which is the infinite and most supreme conceivable perfection. Since, existence *qua* existence, according to gradational multiplicity of existence, is a real multiplicity, which is associated with real unity (*wahda*). Obviously, such a reality cannot be the Necessary, since it includes the Necessary as well as the contingents.

In the light of this, on the sole grounds that the notion of absolute existence is absolute existence by predication as essence, and not nonexistence, its real instantiation (*al-misdāq al-wāqiʿī*) cannot be established. The affirmation of its external extension is contingent on establishing other proofs and invalidating views which challenge the Gnostics’ claims.

A demonstration, which proves the extension of absolute existence, can be organized by meticulous analysis of the meanings of dependence and impoverishment; and its explication can be rendered in the context of the splendors of the Origin. Another way is the analysis of causality of the Origin and the comprehension of His absoluteness (*itlāq*) and expanse (*siʿa*). In the discussions of causation, Sadr al-Muta'allihīn, after traversing these phases, says that this amounts to the conclusion of philosophy and its consolidation into *ʿirfan*—and he thanks the Exalted God in gratitude of this profound cognitive revolution.[1]

The Evaluation of Kant's Tripartite Criticism of Anselm's Argument

Though Anselm's argument has excited extensive criticisms by many western and Muslim thinkers, however, not all such criticisms are cogent. Kant, in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, delivers three criticisms against Anselm's ontological argument, which are considered noteworthy.

His first criticism claims the unintelligibility of the necessary existence.[2] This criticism is, nevertheless, unjustified. Because despite the fact that the extension of the Necessary is in extreme *incognito*, its pertinent concepts are axiomatic and unambiguous. Although an entity, whose existence is necessary and not conditional, does not have a categorical or quidditative essence, the notion of necessary existence is comprised of some general concepts, comprehension of which—regardless of the fashion of abstracting and discerning them—abundantly clear.

Kant's second criticism suggests that though because of the logical law of identity, a subject's essence or essential parts cannot be negated from it, this impossibility of negation holds truth when the subject is existent. However, should the very existence of the subject be rejected, then negation of the essential parts from the subject does not invite contradiction. He says,

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[1] Al-Shirāzī, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Sadr al-Dīn. *Al-Hikma al-Mutaʿāliya fi al-Asfār al-Arbaʿa.* (Tehran: Dār al-Maʿārif al-Islamiya, 1959), vol. 2, 291.

[2] Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith. (New York: St Martin's Press, 1965), 501.

> If, in an identical proposition, I reject the predicate while retaining the subject, contradiction results; and I therefore say that the former belongs necessarily to the latter. But if we reject subject and predicate alike, there is no contradiction; for nothing is then left that can be contradicted. To posit a triangle, and yet to reject its three angles, is self-contradictory; but there is no contradiction in rejecting the triangle together with its three angles. The same holds true of the concept of an absolutely necessary being [a notion purported by Anselm]. If its existence is rejected, we reject the thing itself with all its predicates; and no question of contradiction can then arise. There is nothing outside it that would then be contradicted, since the necessity of the thing is not supposed to be derived from anything external; nor is there anything internal that would be contradicted, since in rejecting the thing itself we have at the same time rejected all its internal properties. "God is omnipotent" is a necessary judgment. The omnipotence cannot be rejected if we posit a Deity, that is, an infinite being; for the two concepts are identical. But if we say, "There is no God", neither the om-

> nipotence nor any other of its predicates is given; they are one and all rejected together with the subject, and there is therefore not the least contradiction in such a judgment.[1]

This criticism is defective as well, because when a given triangle is in the abode of existence, its essence, essential parts, and essential properties are predicated to it by necessity and their negation entails contradiction. However, when the existence of the triangle is denied, the negation of predicates does not indicate contradiction. Rather, in this supposition, the predicates are inevitably negated and such a negative proposition is negative because of the nonexistence of its subject.

Contrary to a triangle or any other quidditative concept, the negation of existence from something in the notion of which existence is included, or existence is its very notion, is self-contradictory. For this reason, it is impossible to constitute a negative proposition that asserts the nonexistence of the subject as such.

Existence can only be negated from such an entity without evoking contradiction if the notion of existence (existence by predication as essence) and the extension of existence (existence by predication as extension) were differentiated from one another; and until it is done, Anselm's argument maintains its tenability. It is by this differentiation that existence by predication as extension can be negated—either because of the nonexistence of the predicate or the nonexistence of the subject—from a subject, which, by predication as essence, includes existence as its integral part. However, existence can never be negated by predication as essence from a subject, which includes existence as its integral part.

Therefore, if the two kinds of predication are not differentiated, the cogency of Anselm's argument remains intact; and when the differentiation is made, his fallacy, stemming from his failure to make a distinction between concept and extension, becomes evident.

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[1] *ibid.* 502.

Some other authors have tried to undermine Kant's second criticism on the grounds of difference between eternal and essential necessities (*al-dharūra al-azaliyya wa al-dharūra al-dhātiyya).* They have argued that the Necessary has eternal necessity; therefore, it is impossible to negate Him in any condition and circumstance; and finite entities have essential necessity—hence, their negation is permissible in certain conditions.[1]

Though essential and eternal necessities are different from one another, recognition of their difference does not efface Kant's reservation. These two necessities, in fact, pertain to two kinds of extension, which are perceivable for the notion of existence. If the external reality of existence, that is, the instantiation of the notion of existence, is finite, it has essential necessity; and if it is infinite, it has eternal necessity. Concepts are characterized with essential or eternal necessity *qua* their narration of their extensions (*masādīq*), that is, their predication as extensions.

The absurdity which Anselm intends to derive from the nonexistence of the most adequate perceivable perfection, and from which he concludes the existence of the Deity, proceeds from the impossibility of negation of existence from the notion of God. This impossibility, however, which is on the basis of predication as essence, can be presumed to be the case only if predication as essence is confused with predication as extension. And if confusion between the two sorts of predication is avoided, and existence and its necessity is negated from God by predication as extension, no contradiction will be involved, as it cannot be ruled out that the notion of existence, and even the notion of absolute existence—the extension of which, if existent, would have eternal necessity, and from which the notion of existence would be abstracted irrespective of any aspect of conditionality or causation (*al-haithiyya al-taqyīdiyya wa al-haithiyya al-ʿilliyya)*, but rather by mere entertainment of its absoluteness (*al-haithiyya al-itlāqiyya)*—are not instantiated.

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[1] Yazdī, Mahdī Hā'irī. *Kawishhai 'Aql-i-Naẓarī.* (Tehran: Shirkat Sahāmī Inteshar, 1995), 222.

The mere mental existence (*al-wujūd al-dhehnī*) of the notion of absolute and infinite existence does not indicate that it has an external extension also. Since it can also be attained through the observation of particular and finite beings and their combination (*tarkīb*) with other concepts. For instance, existence can be derived through the observation of particular beings, infinitude through the entertainment of their finitude, and negation by consideration of examples where negation is apparent. Finally, by combining these concepts, the concept of infinite existence can be entertained. Another way of abstracting it is to first derive, by observation of particular entities, the concept of a conditional and finite being, and then to abstract from it the concept of absolute and infinite existence. Thus, the mere conception of the notion of absolute existence is not a proof of its abstraction from an extension, which has eternal necessity.

Kant's third criticism with relation to Anselm's argument stems from his philosophical perspective on the question of predication. His second criticism is posed without challenging the possibility of predicative meaning of existence. However, in this criticism, he questions whether existence can be a real predicate.[1]

Kant divides propositions into two types: analytic and synthetic. The predicates of analytic propositions, he maintains, are included in the essences of their subjects; and synthetic propositions are propositions whose predicates are concepts that are not included in their subjects.

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[1] Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith. (New York: St Martin's Press, 1965), 504.

Islamic philosophers, however, have a different division of propositions, which must not be confused with the above division. They divide propositions on the basis of their predicates into a variety of categories. One of their divisions is the division of propositions into analytic (*al-tahlīlī*) and incorporative (*al-indhimāmī*) propositions. The Divine sage al-Sabzawārī points out the difference of the predicates of the two types of propositions in this way:

> *A predicate abstracted from the essence of a subject*
>
> *Differs from a predicate which is an external associate*[1]

The predicates of analytic propositions are called *al-khārij al-mahmūl*, that is, the predicates which are extracted from the essence of a subject. They are also called *al-mahmūl min samīmihi*, that is, predicates abstracted from the context of a subject. This category of predicates is in contrast with *al-mahmūl bi al-dhamīma*, that is, the predicate by incorporation, a predicate whose abstraction from the subject requires the attachment of an external reality to the reality of its subject.

Al-khārij al-mahmūl, in the above meaning, is broader than Kant's analytic predicates. In addition to the essence and essential parts of a given subject, it also encompasses notions that are abstracted through the entertainment of the subject's essence. The main characteristic of such predicates, like the notions of unity, particularity, existence, and causality, is that they do not have any extension other than the extension of their subject.

For instance, it is obvious that unity (*wahda*), particularity, existence, causality, and the like, are notions whose meanings are different from the quiddities to which they are predicated. However, for an entity to be characterized by these concepts, it does not need an extension and reality other than its own extension and reality. For example, although the concept of causality (*al-'illiyya)* is other than quiddity of the agency, which is the cause, nonetheless, causality does not have an extension other than the extension of that essence.

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[1] Al-Sabzawārī, Hāj Mulla Hādī. *Sharh al-Mandhūma.* (Qum: Maktabat al-Mustafawī), section on *Hikmah*, 30.

Although a thing may not exist, lack particularity, and not be characterized with causality—and to determine these things, to say, whether a thing has existence, particularity, and causality requires proof—nevertheless, even before these are affirmed, the mind is aware that their affirmation does not require the existence of three distinct entities that are incorporated into one another. If the extension and reality of a notion such as unity, existence, particularity, or causality, were other than the extension and reality of the entity which is characterized by it, it would invite infinite repetition and regress; and according to the principle delivered by Shaykh al-Ishrāq in this context, its existence would be impossible.[1]

Al-mahmūl bi al-dhamīma, in contrast, is a predicate whose validity of predication to its subject is contingent on the existence of an extension exclusive to the predicate and at the mean time in unity, or one may say attached or associated, with the subject. For instance, when a particular physique has a certain color or size—since color is of the category of quality and size is of the category of quantity, and the real extensions (*masādīq*) of quality and quantity cannot be identical with the real extension of a substance—the extensions of these accidents are inevitably incorporated and united with that physique.

If, though it is not the case, Kant's division of propositions into analytic and synthetic were on the grounds of unity and oneness of predicate and subject in terms of extension and reality, then indeed, existence does not qualify to be the predicate of a synthetic proposition and can only be a predicate of an analytic proposition. Kant's division, however, revolves around the axis of notional unity and oneness of predicates and subjects. Although the notion of existence has extensional unity (*al-wahda al-misdāqiyya)* with the notions of various quiddities and secondary intelligibles (*al-ma'qūlāt al-thāniyya)* such as unity, multiplicity, and causality, nonetheless, their notions are not identical. Therefore, whenever existence is predicated to anyone of these notions, the proposition is a synthetic proposition; that is, the predicate is not included in the subject. But if the subject that existence is predicated to were not a quidditative concept and were instead a concept that is not different from the concept of existence—and therefore, it were the very concept of existence, or a compound concept that includes the concept of existence—the predication of the concept of existence to the subject would be analytic; that is, the predicate would be included in the essence of the subject.

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[1] Al-Suhrawardī, Abu al-Fath Shahāb al-Dīn Yahyā ibn Habash. *Al-Mutarehāt*. (Tehran: Anjoman-i-Falsafa-i-Iran, 1978), vol. 1, 26.

It was imperative to present this prologue so the many confusions and shortcomings of Kant's analysis of predication that have continued in the works of his heirs, such as Russell, can be illustrated.

In his third criticism, Kant holds that existence is a copulative being (*al-wūjud al-rābit*), that is, it bears the meaning of a "transitive is" (*kāna al-nāqisa*), and its usage is exclusive to connecting predicates and subjects. He maintains that by placing the predicate on the side of the subject, the mind expresses "is," which is the relationship between subject and the predicate, as "existent" (*al-maujūd*). Therefore, the concept of existence does not add anything to the subject and predicate of the previous proposition in which it conjoins the two.

Kant substantiates his claim by the fact that there is no difference between a real one hundred dollars the existence of which is related and an imaginary one hundred dollars the existence of which is not related. Since if there were any difference between the real and imaginary hundred dollars—that is, if the addition of the concept of existence to the concept of one hundred dollars added something to its value—then the concept of hundred dollars would not have any indication with regard to the real one hundred dollars and the real one hundred dollars would not be the extension of one hundred dollars. The conclusion he derives from this analogy is that existence is not a predicate, which can be used to constitute a synthetic proposition.[1]

This argument, however, fails to indicate more than the fact that when existence is predicated to a subject, existence does not constitute a reality other than reality of the subjects to which it is predicated. In other words, Kant's argument only indicates that when existence is predicated to a certain subject, it cannot be *al-mahmūl bi al-dhamīma*, since it cannot have an extension other than the extension of the subject to which it is predicated. For this reason, the said argument fails to demonstrate that existence does not add meaning to the proposition and that a proposition, which includes the predication of existence to a subject is not synthetic. Therefore, it does not follow that predication of existence is meaningless.

Existence is one of the common and axiomatic notions. The arguments of synonymy of existence (*al-eshterāk al-maʿnawī lil-wujūd*)[2] prove that, regardless of its usage as "transitive is" (*kāna al-nāqisa*) or "intransitive is" (*kāna al-thāmma*), existence always has a single meaning. As far as Kant's argument for the negation of its predicative meaning is concerned, it only indicates that existence does not have any external factuality other than the factuality of the quiddity, which is instantiated through it.

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[1] Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith. (New York: St Martin's Press, 1965), 505.

[2] Synonymy of Existence (*al-ishterāk al-maʿnawi lil -wujūd*) In the initial ontological inquiries of Transcendent Wisdom, it is enunciated that the axiomatic notion of existence is always used in the same meaning. This view refutes the position of the *mutakallimūn's*, some of whom hold that existence is used in every instance in a different sense. Other scholars of *kalām* argue that existence is used in the same meaning when referring to contingents, but with a different meaning when used for the Necessary. *

Existence, regardless of the discussions of principality of existence, has a specific notion; and this notion, regardless of whether it has an extension and how its extension or extensions are recognized, by predication as essence, is necessarily itself. For this reason, predication of existence to itself or a subject, which comprises it, constitutes a proposition which, by predication as essence, is necessarily veridical. Therefore, Kant's third criticism, contrary to what some Muslim thinkers have presumed,[1] does not undermine the validity of Anselm's predication of existence to a notion which comprises existence. Rather, Anselm's fallacy lies in his failure to discriminate between predication as essence and predication as extension, because of which he ascribes the necessity, which is valid with respect to the notion of the most adequate conceivable perfection to its extension.

Addendum

The tenability of the so-called ontological argument of Anselm cannot be restored by the unity of mind and reality by saying that since mind and reality are one, hence, what is conceived in the mind is nothing but factual reality. That is because first of all, the unity of mind and reality has no rational foundation, for there are numerous examples—such as the concept of the Deity's partner or the concept of multiplicity of deities—that are sufficient to indicate its incoherence. Second, Anselm does not hold such a position and a theistic argument cannot be established on such shaky grounds.

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[1] Tabātabā'ī, Syed Muhammad Husain. *Usūl-i-Falsafa wa Rawish-i-Rializim*. Introduction and footnotes by Murtadha Mutaharī. (Qum: Sadra Publications), vol. 5, 125.

Another point, which should be established, is that the existence of Platonic archetypes (*arbāb al-anwāʿ*) cannot adduce the putative ontological argument, either. For instance, it could possibly be suggested that mental exemplification (*al-tamāthul al-dhehnī*) emanates from the external world and if there were not a factual reality for every mental image, there would no mental image. Since the mental image of “that than which nothing greater can be conceived” is in our minds, it indicates that there is an external reality, which conforms to this concept.

This is unjustified because although Platonic archetypes are real—that is, though external things, in addition their physical existence in the natural world and intermediate existence in *mundus imaginalis* (*ʿālam al-khiyāl*), have another existence in the world of intellects such that when the soul finds the ability to discern intellectual universals (*al-kulliyyāt al-ʿaqliyya),* it ascends to the transcendent stage of their company—mere conception of a few related concepts does not positively indicate that they have been derived from a single and sheer (*basīt*) incorporeal reality. It cannot be ruled out that due to the influence of certain faculties of the soul with the capacity to analyze and connect mental notions and images, numerous concepts that have been abstracted from various beings or have been attained by their observation, have been connected to one another and put as “that than which nothing greater can be conceived.” Therefore, in order to make sure that the faculties of estimation and imagination are not interfering with ones comprehension, it is imperative to assess the truth of one’s understandings with the demonstrative reason, which relies only on primary and self-evident concepts and notions.

Chapter Seven

THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE VERACIOUS

The Demonstration of the Veracious in Ibn Sīnā's Works

Derived from the Noble Qur'ān, the title of "the demonstration of the veracious" (*burhān al-siddīqīn*) was used for the first time by Ibn Sīnā in the appellation of a theistic argument he had originated. Ibn Sīnā's argument did not trace effects, such as motion or *hudūth*, as inferential mediates to the Necessary; rather, after refutation of sophism and acknowledging that there is a reality, it reached the optimal conclusion of the Necessary's existence from the mere consideration of existence. In the view of the argument's unique features—that it does not need a mediate and proceeds from the mere entertainment of external existence through a rational division that existence is either necessary or contingent, and if contingent, it requires the Necessary—it was given the elaborate title of the demonstration of the veracious.

Ibn Sīnā constructs this brilliant demonstration (*burhān*) in the fourth of chapter of *Al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt.* Says he with respect to his argument's features and appellation,

> Consider how our proof of the First and His unity and His exaltedness from all ills did not need the conception of anything but the essence of existence and how it did not need to regard His creation and His deeds. Notwithstanding, they are His proofs, but this gateway is nobler and more trustworthy. That is, when we consider existence, existence *qua* existence attests to the Necessary, and then His existence attests to His attributes. With regard to the other path, it has been indicated in the Divine Book, "Soon will we show them Our signs in the horizons and in their souls until it becomes manifest unto

> them that He is the Real."[1] Indeed, such a method of knowledge of the Almighty God belongs to a certain group of people. The Qur'ān then says, "Is not sufficient for thy Lord that He is a witness over all things."[2] This rule is exclusive for the veracious, who, argue *from* Him *to* Him, not from others to Him.[3]

The last fragment of the verse, that is, "He is a witness over all things," on the account of which Ibn Sīnā quotes the verse, means that God is manifest in everything so much so that even if you want to know yourself, you first witness God and then yourself. The tradition narrated from Imam Jaʿfar al-Sādiq, peace be with him, which says "A creature does not discern anything but through Allah, and cognition of Allah cannot be attained but through Allah,"[4] has the very same meaning.

The Demonstration of the Veracious in Transcendent Wisdom

Although in many respects Ibn Sīnā's argument—which is the main argument of the majority of philosophers and *mutakellimūn* after him—is superior to other traditional arguments, it relies upon a number of premises that lengthen the course of deduction. For this reason Sadr al-Muta'allihīn (Mullā Sadrā) tried to shorten its premises, and articulated another version of the demonstration of the veracious. In the prologue of his argument, with words similar to that of Ibn Sīnā in *Al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt,* Sadr al-Muta'allihīn says, "People other than the veracious, in order to attain the cognition of God and His attributes, elicit things other than Him. For instance, the majority of philosophers evoke contingency, physicists use motion, and the *mutakellimūn* employ *hudūth* of the world."[1] And in *Al-Asfār* he says,

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[1] 41: 53

[2] *ibid.*

[3] Ibn Sīnā, Abu Ali Husain. *Al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt.* Commentary by Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī. (Tehran: Daftar-i-Nashr-i-Kitāb, 1981), vol. 3, 66.

[4] Al-Sadūq, Abu Jaʿfar Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Husain ibn Bābawaih. *Al-Tawhid.* (Tehran: Maktabat al-Sadūq, 1969), 143.

> The ways towards God are many, for He is the Possessor of multiple excellences and aspects. "And for every one is a direction to which he turneth."[2] Nonetheless, some paths are more reliable, nobler, and have more illumination than the other ones; and the strongest and noblest of these demonstrations is the one in which the middle term is not, in fact, something other than Him. Therefore, a path as such to the destination is the destination itself; and this is the path of the veracious, who attest to the Almighty by witnessing Him, and then they attest to His attributes by witnessing His Essence, and attest to His actions by witnessing His attributes, attribute after attribute and action after action. People other than them, for instance, the *mutakallemūn*, the physicists, and so forth, prove the Almighty and His attributes by the entertainment of things other than Him—such as con-

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[1] Al-Shirāzī, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Sadr al-Dīn. *Al-Masha'ir*. Commentary by Mirza Imad al-Dawla. (Isfahan: Mahdawī Publications), 68.

[2] 2: 148

> tingency of quiddities, *hudūth* of the world, motion of physical bodies, and so forth. Although these are also proofs of His Essence and evidence of His attributes, the articulated path is stronger and nobler, and in the Divine book the former path has been indicated by the Almighty's saying: "Soon will We show them Our signs in the horizons and in their souls until it becomes manifest unto them that He is the Real," and to the latter path by His saying: "Is not sufficient for thy Lord that He is a Witness over all things.[1]

Sadr al-Muta'allihīn then presents a new demonstration, which he regards an instance of the path of the veracious. In this argument, Sadr al-Muta'allihīn does not make use of quiddity, quidditative contingency, motion, or *hudūth*. This demonstration considers reality of existence and its exclusive rules and is founded on a few philosophical principles such as principality (*asāla*), simplicity (*basāta*), and gradation (*tashkīk*) of existence.

After him, other theosophers tried to shorten some of its premises. For instance, by making use of contingency of impoverishment (*al-imkān al-faqrī*), the Divine sage al-Sabzawārī omitted some of its premises.[2] Nevertheless, despite all these efforts, the impoverishment and need of finite beings of inferior levels of gradational reality of existence (*al-haqīqa al-mushakkeka lil-wujūd)* were relied upon, which disallowed a direct and intermediary-free discernment of the Almighty Necessary.

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[1] Al-Shirāzī, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Sadr al-Dīn. *Al-Hikma al-Muta'āliya fi al-Asfār al-Arba'a*. (Tehran: Dār al-Ma'ārif al-Islamiya, 1959), vol. 6, 12.

[2] Al-Sabzawārī, Hāj Mulla Hādī. *Sharh al-Mandhūma*. (Qum: Maktabat al-Mustafawī), section on *Hikmah*, 146.

The demonstration of the veracious, as attested by the verse, is an argument the inference of which is not based on any non-necessary mediate (*al-hadd al-wasat*); and therefore, without proceeding from any premise, it presents the existence of the Necessary as the first ontological proposition. Many luminaries of Gnosticism (*ʿirfān*) throughout the history of Islamic thought have tried to conduct an argument as such. The Divine sage Mirzā Mahdī al-Āshtiyānī, in his commentary on *Sharh al-Mandhūma,* mentions nineteen arguments organized for this purpose, some of which formulated by the Gnostics[1]. The demonstrations set by the Gnostics are greatly different from one another, but they are not devoid of inconsistency. These arguments—regardless of the criticisms applicable to each one in particular—are open to one common criticism, namely, the failure to make distinction between notion (*mafhūm*) and extension (*misdāq*).

The Demonstration of the Veracious in ʿAllāmah Tabātabā'i's Works

In his commentary on *Al-Asfār,* and in the fifth volume of *Usūl-i-Falsafa wa Rawish-i-Ri'alizm*, ʿAllāmah Tabātabā'ī, may Allah sanctify his tomb, constructs a demonstration for the affirmation of the Necessary. This demonstration does not depend on any philosophic principles and proceeds *from* the mere entertainment of eternal necessity of absolute existence *to* the Necessary's existence as the first proposition of human knowledge.[2] In view of having these unique features, the late ʿAllāmah's proof is well worthy to be adorned with the elegant title of the demonstration of the veracious.

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[1] Al-Āshtiyānī, Mirza Mahdī. *Ta'līqa Rashīqa 'ala Sharh al-Mandhūma.* (Qum: Maktab al-A'alam al-Islamī, 1986), 489.

[2] Tabātabā'ī, Syed Muhammad Husain. Commentary on *Al-Hikma al-Muta'āliya fi al-Asfār al-Arba'a.* (Tehran: Dār al-Maʿārif al-Islamiya, 1959), vol. 6, 14.

In order to be the first proposition of human knowledge, it is imperative to have independence from all propositional premises (*al-mabādī al-tasdīqiyya)*. However, such independence is not inconsistent with reliance upon certain conceptual fundamentals (*al-mabādī al-tasawuriyya)*.

The chief conceptual fundamentals relied upon in the demonstration of the veracious are the notions of existence, essential necessity (*al-dharūra al-dhātiyya)*, and eternal necessity (*al-dharūra al-azaliyya)*. These are common and axiomatic notions and the definitions, which have been suggested to describe them, are lexical definitions (*al-ta'ārīf al-lafdhiyya)*, which merely draw attention towards their purported meanings.

Another point worth mentioning before expounding the demonstration is that the objective of the demonstration of the veracious is to prove the Divine Essence. It is not concerned with proving His attributes and actions.

The Almighty God is a reality Who has eternal necessity. Eternal necessity is other than essential necessity (*al-dharūra al-dhātiyya)*, attributive necessity (*al-dharūra al-wasfiyya)*, conditional necessity (*al-dharūra al-shartiyya)*, and other similar sorts of necessities. In attributive and conditional necessities, the affirmation of a predicate for its subject is necessary provided the pertinent attribute or condition is secured. Likewise, in essential necessity, affirmation of a predicate for its subject is restricted to the continuance of the existence of the subject; in other words, the predicate is affirmed for the subject as long as the subject is existent.

Eternal necessity is instantiated when the affirmation of the predicate for its subject is not restricted by any condition or attribute, and not even by the continuance of subject's existence. Therefore, in eternal necessity, the predicate is affirmed for the subject in every state.

God's eternal necessity means that His reality is not stipulated by any condition and His Essence has reality in every state, and therefore, His reality is beyond the restrictions of attributes, conditions, and time. This is what is meant when it is stated that the notion of reality is abstracted from the Divine Essence *qua* His absoluteness (*al-haithiyya al-itlāqiyya),* not *qua* delimitation (*al-haithiyya al-taqyīdiyya)* or *qua* causation (*al-haithiyya al-taʿlīliyya).*

The demonstration of the veracious, in fact, does not intend to prove a reality, which is unknown and must be proved in a discursive fashion. It proves the primariness (*al-awwaliyya)* of human knowledge with respect to a proposition, which narrates the eternal necessity of God, the Glorified. If the demonstration were designed to prove a reality who has eternal necessity, its conclusion would not be the first ontological proposition, because every demonstration proceeds from certain premises to a conclusion, and given that the premises are antecedent (*muqaddam*) to the conclusion, the premises—the truth of which substantiate the existence of the Deity—would be propositional premises for the conclusion.

As necessary attributes of primary and self-evident propositions, primariness (*awwaliyya*) and self-evidence (*badāha*) are not included in them as their integral parts. For this reason, though such propositions are never subject to doubt—because doubt as such entails skepticism (*shakkākiyya)* about every branch of knowledge and takes away the epistemic relevance of proving or denying anything—nevertheless, it is possible to have doubt or to be inattentive towards their primariness and self-evidence. In such a case, the proof of a given proposition's primariness or self-evidence draws attention to the proposition's foremost position in human knowledge and establishes the impossibility of unawareness and ignorance with regard to it.

The demonstration of the veracious claims that the existence of a reality that has eternal necessity is primary (*awwalī*) and it is impossible not to know Him; and that the boundary of philosophy and sophistry is the acceptance of that reality.

Sophism is the negation of reality, and philosophy is its acceptance. Just as the invalidity of sophistry is primary, so is the truth of reality beyond doubt. A sophist is a person who negates reality, and a philosopher acknowledges reality and investigates how does reality manifest itself and how is it represented in concepts.

According to the proponents of principality of existence, it is the notion of existence that represents reality. The proponents of principality of quiddity, however, view reality as the actual extension of quiddities. In other sections of philosophy, unity (*wahda*), multiplicity (*kathra*), life (*hayāt*), power (*qudra*), and other qualities of the Real are discussed. Therefore, the very first philosophical proposition is the acknowledgement of reality, and one who negates this proposition has abandoned the method of reason and dialogue, and practical admonishment is the only way of healing him.

The point towards which ʿAllāmah Tabātabā'ī draws attention is that the proposition "There is a reality," and the proposition "Sophistry is void," have eternal necessity. That is, the modality of these propositions is not attributive, conditional, or essential necessity. Acceptance of this claim, like acceptance of reality, needs mere drawing of one's attention (*tanbīh*). In other words, just as the entertainment of the concept of reality is sufficient to acknowledge its truth, the conception of the notion of eternal necessity of reality is sufficient for accepting its validity.

A human being cannot accept sophistry in any situation or condition, since situations and conditions are realities, which attest to the invalidity of sophistry, which is the negation of reality.

Should reality be annihilated in a specific condition—in a beginning, or an end, or in any particular supposition—then only two situations are conceivable. The first is that its annihilation is not real, and an equivocal or false claim has been made that reality is annihilated. In this case, reality is preserved and it has not been annihilated. The second is that its annihilation is true; that is, reality has *really* been annihilated. In this supposition, again, the affirmation of the basic reality is acknowledged, since the supposition asserts that reality has *really* been destroyed; therefore, as a real phenomenon, the destruction of reality reflects the real presence of reality. Therefore, the falsehood of sophistry and veridicality of reality is well secured in every perceivable supposition; and a single instance of reality's destruction is inconceivable.

A proposition, which negates reality, is a proposition, that neither its veridicality can be related in any supposition, nor its falsehood could ever be doubted. That is, its utterance always presupposes its own falsity. On the other side of the spectrum, it is impossible to doubt the meaning of the proposition, which affirms reality, because dismissing it as meaningless or doubting its meaning entails the affirmation of reality.

If, like a finite being, reality lacked eternal necessity and its necessity were conditional, say, with the continuance of its existence (*al-dharūra al-dhātiyya),* sophism would have had veridicality in the realm of reality's destruction. Nevertheless, the veridicality of sophistry is a reality, which has its own specific *nafs al-amr*.

The realm of sophistry's veridicality is not the abode of the narrator's existence, in which case its veridicality would pertain to the reality of the narrator. Rather, its realm of truth is that very supposition, which the proposition reflects. When, in a given supposition, reality is negated, real negation of philosophy and real affirmation of sophistry is a reality that has been narrated. Thus, reality is still manifested in the context of its very negation. For this reason, reality cannot be denied in any supposition; and the primary and self-evident proposition (*al-qadhiyya al-awwaliyya al-badīhiyya*), which holds its truth, has eternal necessity.

Since the truth of the propositions, which relate reality of finite and conditional beings, is subject to certain conditions, and it is only within certain boundaries that they are true, beyond which they are false, finite and conditional beings cannot be the extension (*misdāq*) of the reality that has eternal necessity.

Given that the aggregate of finite beings is not another entity, which has something additional to its parts, it does not have any reality at all. Similarly, their universals (*jāmi'*) do not have any external reality either, and they are notions that exist in the mind by the mental mode of existence (*al-wujūd al-dhehnī*) in such a way that if the mind did not to exist, the universals would not even have found the mental existence. Therefore, reality, the eternally necessary existence of which is axiomatic and primary, is other than the finite beings, their totality, and their universals, as the first have finite realities, the second has no reality, and the third has a limited mental reality.

Therefore, the first ontological proposition, which the human being cannot *not* know, is the affirmation of the basic reality, and its modality is eternal necessity. And since, as just explained, finite entities, such as the heavens, the earth, the cosmos, and so forth, cannot be the extension of this proposition, its extension is only an Absolute Reality—Who is above the restrictions of conditions, is present with all of the finite realities, and no absence or termination is perceivable with respect to Him.

The demonstration of the veracious, with this exposition, sidesteps the criticism of failure of differentiation between notion and extension. This argument is not based on the notion of reality and its necessity of predication to itself by predication as essence. The argument, in fact, proceeds from the first ontological proposition, which encompasses affirmation of the basic reality and rejection of sophistry. The affirmation of reality is not based on its notion, which is held in the mind; it is with respect to external factuality. If it were on the basis of its notion and by predication as essence (*al-haml al-awwalī*), then just as reality is reality, sophism is sophism. Therefore, the invalidation of sophism, and consequently, the truth of the basic reality, is with respect to the external world and predication as extension (*al-haml al-shā'ye'*).

Allamah Tabātabā'i's Exposition of the Demonstration

In succinct and expressive words, and through perception of reality, not its notion, ʿAllāmah Tabātabā'ī, Divine grace be with him, expounds the demonstration in the fourteenth essay of *Usūl-I-Falsafa wa Rawish-i- Ri'ālizm* as follows:

> The reality of existence, the truth of which is indubitable, never accepts negation and is indestructible. In other words, the reality of existence is the reality of existence without any condition or provision; and under no condition or provision, does it become non-reality. However, the world is transient and every part thereof accepts nonexistence. Therefore, the world is not the undeniable reality.[1]

The martyred commentator of *Usūl-i-Falsafa wa Rawish-i-Ri'alizm*, sanctified be his soul, conducts the exposition of the demonstration in the light of some ontological principles such as the principality and unity of existence and portrays a sketch of the argument similar to other demonstrations, which proceed from gradation of existence or contingency of impoverishment. However, the proof, as exposed by its author, revolves around the axis of reality and does not require any of these principles. It entails the existence of the Necessary as the first ontological proposition. Perhaps the fragment "reality of existence"

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[1] Tabātabā'ī, Syed Muhammad Husain. *Usūl-i-Falsafa wa Rawish-i-Rializim.* Introduction and footnotes by Murtadha Mutaharī. 5 vols. (Qum: Sadra Publications), vol. 5, 116.

(*haqīqat al-wujūd*) in the ʿAllāmah's work has led the commentator to conduct his exposition as such. However, ʿAllāmah's statement in his commentary on *Al-Asfār* is such that it disallows any such misconception.

> The reality with which we reject sophistry and which every sensible person is constrained to accept, by virtue of its essence, does not accede to nullity or nonexistence, so much so that even the supposition of its nullity and nonexistence presupposes its truth and existence. If, either absolutely or in a specific period, we suppose the nullity of every reality, then every reality will *really* be null, which affirms the reality. Similarly, if the sophist sees things as illusions, or doubts their reality, they are *really* illusions to him, and their reality is *really* dubious for him. This amounts to affirmation of reality *qua* its negation.
>
> Therefore, if reality does not accept nonexistence and nullity by virtue of its essence, then it is necessary by virtue of its essence. Therefore, there is a reality, which is necessary by virtue of its essence; and everything, which has reality, is needful to it for its reality and is subsistent by it.
>
> Here, it occurs to the reasonable that the existence of the Necessary is primary; and the arguments for Him,

in effect, draw attention to His existence.[1]

The Qualities of the Demonstration of the Veracious

Although the sole indication of the demonstration of the veracious is with respect to the Necessary's Essence and it does not prove His attributes or actions, it still has a number of unique qualities. In addition to its lack of need of ontological premises, its accomplishments far exceed the other arguments. In fact, it arrives at the infinite reality of God in the first step, an objective the other arguments accomplish only after going through many steps.

The arguments, which do not prove God's attributes, do not indicate His absoluteness (*itlāq*) either. In fact, due to their dependence on premises such as gradation or multiplicity of existence, they fail to prove the Origin's absoluteness. After some steps, when the imperativeness of the Necessary's absoluteness is established, inevitably, certain philosophical positions are reassessed. However, the demonstration of the veracious, as expounded by the late ʿAllāmah, may Allah bless his soul, first illustrates the absoluteness of the Essence and then proves His necessity.

In the light of absoluteness and infinity of the Real, His other attributes such as unity, knowledge, and the like, are traced one after the other; and after the essential attributes, the grades and details of God's practical manifestations and illuminations become evident.

In the light of Divine absoluteness and encompassment (*ihāta*), multiplicity is translated into His manifestations and splendors, and the impoverished existence attributed to finite entities in the demonstration of contingency of impoverishment, is effaced (*fānī*) and annihilated (*mostahlek*) into the passion of generous Divine benedictions. Thus, everything from Adam to the atom, with all the characteristics they contain, are signs of that Infinite Who ever remains hidden in the unseen (*ghaib*) of His Essence.[1]

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[1] Tabātabāʾī, Syed Muhammad Husain. Commentary on *Al-Hikma al-Mutaʿāliya fi al-Asfār al-Arbaʿa.* (Tehran: Dār al-Maʿārif al-Islamiya, 1959), vol. 6, 14.

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[1] Note: Eternal necessity of reality is solely applicable to the Almighty Necessary, since for instance, although philosophical *prima matter* is particular, nonetheless it does not exist in incorporeal beings. If it were the basic reality, then the incorporeal beings should not be real. Physical matter, however, is not even an individual being, since it is always changing into a new condition, such as motion and energy. The entity, which is immutable in every condition, is the *prima matter*; but it is limited to the physical world. Therefore, neither philosophical nor physical matter can have eternal necessity, as the greatest extent of necessity, which can be proved for them, is essential-logical necessity, which is restricted to the continuance of the essence.

Chapter Eight

THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN

A thorough assessment of the much-celebrated argument that proceeds from the world's orderly concatenation requires that three questions be carefully analyzed:

- What is order?
- Does order exist?
- Why does order exist?

The inquiry of these key questions, in addition to ensuring that the argument's conclusions do not trespass beyond what is contained in its premises, should also shed light on some other secondary issues so their independent analysis will not be needed.

What is Order?

Order (*nadhm*) is not a quiddity (*māhiyya)* so it could be defined through its genus (*jins*) and differentia (*fasl*). However, in order to insure that our inquiry proceeds from logically solid grounds, it is prudent to clarify the meaning of order, since if an inquiry is devoted to examining whether a certain notion is instantiated in the external world, then before acceptance or dismissal, it is imperative to elucidate what does that notion stand for.

Although order is not a quiddity, in terms of being a secondary philosophic intelligible (*al-maʿqūl al-thānī al-falsafī*), it is similar to quiddities. Order is reflected in the regularity of things, and the meaning of regularity, which is opposite to entropy, is evident. As will be reiterated at the end of the chapter, it is important to retain in mind that orderliness is opposite to entropy, not evil. Hence, even if there is evil in the world, its operation is orderly and it is bound by specific rules.

Regularity or orderliness can be conventional (*eʿtebārī*), artificial (*senāʿī*), or factual (*wāqeʿī*). An example of conventional regularity would be the regularity of words of a sentence. The orderly arrangement of books of a library and the splendid complexities of a watch are instances of artificial regularity. Factual order is like the configuration of the animal body.

Although used in the analogical exposition (*al-taqrīr al-tamthīlī*) of the argument from design, artificial design is not, however, central to its inquiry and in fact analogy (*tamthīl*) has little significance in demonstrative discussions. The argument's analogical exposition could run, for instance, as follows: As it is justified to infer from the labyrinth complexities of a watch that it has a designer, likewise, it is not irrational to trace the orderliness of the world to a cosmic orderer (*al-nādhim*). In brief, in these versions the similarity of artificial design and cosmic orderliness is extended to their similarity in being the work of an intelligent designer.

Factual order, the grounds whereby foundations of the argument from design is laid, is neither indebted to conventions of the society nor to the imagination of inventors. Its abode is the external reality and it is apprehended from the comparison of external things. Factual order has three kinds:

1. Causal order (*al-nadhm al-ʿillī*)
2. Teleological order (*al-nadhm al-ghā'ī*)
3. Immanent order (*al-nadhm al-dākhilī*)

Causal order reflects the cognation (*musānikha*) of a cause with its effect. As instanced by the verse, "Everyone acteth after his own mold"[1] causes only produce certain effects, and certain effects are produced only by certain causes. Teleological order represents the relationship of an effect with its final cause. It means that events advance towards specific goals and not every event can produce every outcome. The denial of the former and this kind of order amounts to the denial of the principle of causation, which would indicate the rule of entropy and chaos over the world and that anything could be produced by anything.

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[1] 17: 84

Immanent order reflects the regularity of internal parts of a configuration. It is exclusive to things, which have *prima matter* (*al-mādda al-ūlā*) and form (*sūra*), genus and differentia, or are totalities of subordinate parts. Immanent order is inconceivable for something that is externally sheer, that is, is not made of extraneous parts.

On numerous occasions, the Noble Qur'ān alludes to these tripartite regularities of things; and in some verses, like the verse "Our Lord is He Who gave unto everything its form, and then guided it,"[1] the Divine Book mentions all three together. This verse speaks of God as the efficient cause of all things Who has furnished them with an impeccable "form" or regularity and guided them towards their goals.

In the light of this, it is fair to state that the regularity of members of a concatenation—on which the argument from design is based—is only conceivable between a series of things, which function towards a common objective. Therefore, the argument from design, contrary to other arguments such as the arguments from *hudūth*, motion, and contingency, cannot be organized with consideration to just one entity. Rather, it requires an ensemble, which is perceived in the context of its members and in relation to a common objective.

Does Order Exist?

At the threshold of inquiry into the existence of factual order, it should be kept in mind that the presence of factual order is perceivable in three spheres: the natural world (*'ālam al-mādda*), the *mundus imaginalis* (*'ālam al-khiyāl*), and the world of intellects (*'ālam al-'uqūl*). The first category of order is discerned by the empirical sciences; the second is studied by the mathematical sciences, logic, and philosophy; and Gnosticism inquires into the orderliness of intellectual realities. However, the sole field of critique and apology in the context of the argument from design is the orderliness of the natural world.

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[1] 20: 50

The minor premise of the argument from design is not a purely empirical premise. Design and orderliness is not a sensible quality, which can be apprehended by sensation. It is similar to the principle of causation, which is not sensually discerned, since the maximum sensory perception with respect to causation is the observation of constant succession and concurrence of changes in physical beings. In the case of natural order, however, we do not perceive something as palpably sensible as succession and concurrence of events. Order is an elaborate regularity and concatenation between two or more things; and sensation (*ehsās*) cannot detect such regularity and concatenation. In fact, it is our reason that discerns the presence of orderliness and design in natural entities from our experiential and sensual perceptions. Occasionally, if natural order is mentioned as a sensory object, it is because reason detects it with the assistance of the senses, as it is held that reason apprehends motion with the help of sensation. Therefore, individuals, who deny the epistemic worth of the rational approach and consider sensation (*ehsās*) the sole means of knowledge, can never have definite knowledge with respect to the presence of order.

One need be reminded that if the argument's minor premise is conjectural, the conclusion of the argument will be conjectural as well, because a syllogism's conclusion is always defined by its weakest premise. Furthermore, if the argument's minor premise relates the presence of order and design at a cosmic scale, given that the argument is valid, a cosmic orderer (*al-nādhim*) and designer will be proved. But if the argument is founded on an order of a rather limited scope, the argument's conclusion will be in proportion to the limited order included in its premise.

The presence of order in the world can be affirmed by two different approaches: the purely rational approach and the rational-sensual approach, which was just indicated. Difference between the two is important to notice. In brief, through syllogism *du pourqoi* (*al-burhān al-limmī*)—that is, arguing *from* transcendental sources and using the Divine names of beauty and glory as middle terms *to* the existence of order in the world—reason has the capacity to not only infer the universal orderliness of the world, but also to establish its perfection. For instance, through syllogism *du pourqoi,* al-Ghazzālī traces certain Divine attributes such as the Creator, the All-Knowledgeable, the Generous, Omnipotent, and so forth, to the perfection of the world, which He has created. Shaykh al-Ishrāq approves al-Ghazzālī's method of inferring world's perfection from the attributes of its efficient cause. However, one who is arguing from the attributes of the cosmic Creator to cosmic orderliness and perfection cannot lend his knowledge of the cosmic Creator to a syllogism, which intends to prove Him. The affirmation of this sort of expansive and universal order, which dominates the entire realm of existence, is far beyond the scope of empiricism, which can only relate the limited portion of the cosmos, which is within the sphere of human sensation.

Although empiricism cannot indicate a universal cosmic regularity, nevertheless, an overall order is conveniently provable. This is indebted to the evident immanent and teleological regularities of things discernable to man—whether they pertain to nature, the *mundus imaginalis,* or the intellectual world. For instance, the Peripatetic philosophers infer the presence of plant and animal souls from the many coordinated activities of faunae and florae, which are not because of their body; and Shaykh al-Ishrāq[1] argues for the existence of their archetypes (*arbāb al-*

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[1] Al-Suhrawardī, Abu al-Fath Shahāb al-Dīn Yahyā ibn Habash. *Al-Mutarehāt.* (Tehran: Anjoman-i-Falsafa-i-Iran, 1978), vol. 1, 453. See also: Al-Shirāzī, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Sadr al-Dīn. *Al-Hikma al-Muta'āliya fi al-Asfār al-Arba'a.* (Tehran: Dār al-Maʿārif al-Islamiya, 1959), vol. 2, 53.

anwāʿ) on the basis of their intelligent and wise orderliness. Moreover, if the inquiry of how certain objectives are realized by certain behaviors of the natural elements leads to the creation of various branches of empirical sciences, then these behaviors are marked by knowledge and contrivance. In light of this observation, the presence of design, at least on a limited scale, is not deniable. Hence, the tenability of the argument from design lies with the veridicality of its major premise.

Why does Order Exist?

The inquiry of the major premise of the argument from design is devoted to establishing whether the presence of order in the world can be traced to an intelligent designer. In other words, it assesses the veridicality of a universal major premise, which assigns every order to an orderer (*al-nādhim*) and rules out the possibility of haphazardness. That is because if some orders are brought about by intelligent causal efficacy and some may be haphazard, then—given that the argument is in the form of a first-figure syllogism, which in order to be conclusive, must include a universal major premise—the existence of an orderer cannot be concluded.

It is important to notice that in demonstrative reasoning, it is only epistemic certitude, which can provide logical grounds of inference. Although psychological certitude, which is mostly the result of individual habits and social predilections, is beneficial to religious faith; it cannot withstand rational critique and cannot relay cognitive judgments to others.

Among the methods tried to prove the major premise of the argument is probability. It has been argued that since the likeliness of haphazard occurrence of the natural world's splendid regularity is almost zero, therefore, it cannot be by chance and is indebted to a knowledgeable causal efficacy.

However, there are some points, which undermine the tenability of this perspective:

First: Probability approximates the likelihood of haphazard and desultory occurrence of an orderly arrangement of elements to zero, nonetheless, it never reduces it to zero. Therefore, it may be able to deliver a sort of simplistic confidence and psychological certitude; however, it can never entail cognitive certitude.

Second: The need of contingents with respect to the Necessary and the impossibility of chance are based on definite demonstrations (*barāhīn*), nevertheless as far as the arrangement of the natural elements, regardless of their contingency and equidistance to existence and nonexistence, is concerned, chance and haphazardness cannot be easily ruled out. This is because all conceivable arrangements of natural elements have equal probability with one another.

For instance, the proponent of the probability argument may analogize the orderly nature of the world to a series of one thousand coins, which are marked from one to one thousand. The chances of haphazard arrangement of such a series of coins in a away that coin number one be placed first and coin number two second, and so on until coin one number thousand thousandth, is almost zero. Therefore, if an arrangement as such is rendered, it is not irrational to infer that the arranger is an intelligent agency. However, if this example is carefully analyzed, it becomes clear that all of the other conceivable scenarios have an equally weak probability. Even if coins were arranged in a different order, for instance, if they were arranged from one thousand to one, the odd coins were placed ahead of the even coins, or vice versa, or they were arranged in the most disorderly fashion perceivable, all of the arrangements would have an equal probability in comparison with one another.

If the existence of an all-knowledgeable designer is not already established through rational deduction and the possibility of haphazard occurrence of the present concatenation is not ruled out, the present or even the most perfect concatenation will have an equal likelihood in comparison with any other perceivable concatenation—including the worst and the ugliest. In other words, should each one of the perceivable concatenations be compared with one another, none of them will have more or less probability than another one.

Likelihood is involved when the probability of the present or most perfect concatenation is compared with the sum of the probabilities of other perceivable concatenations. It is in such a situation that it is legitimate to assert that the probability of the present ensemble's desultory arrangement is close to zero; therefore, the probability of the opposite side, which is the totality of all other perceivable concatenations, is close to one. However, notice that the external reality is always one of the perceivable arrangements and the totality that encompasses some or all of the non-perfect concatenations is a mental phenomenon. Reality always bears one of the perceivable arrangements, and whatever arrangement it may be, it has an equal probability against the present or most perfect concatenation.

Third: As explained earlier, probability—even if it is regarded with respect to a specific instance and not a mental totality—is not a real attribute of a thing. As a mental and practical reification (*eʿtebār*), it only indicates the reasonable extent of expectation and hope a person should have about something. However, as far as the external world is concerned, probability does not relate anything about it.

Probability can be helpful for the practical reason (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*). In fact, its valuable applications in the coordination of individual and social acts are not deniable. This is the reason why in disciplines where the overriding objective is practical solution of problems and in whereby comprehension of reality is not critically important, the usage of probability is very popular and even imperative. However, with respect to philosophical and theological doctrines, where truth is the highest consideration and the inquiry does not acquiesce to anything less than certitude, application of probability is futile and erroneous.

To authenticate the cogency of a given argument, as explained earlier, it is important that the truth of its premises and their entailment of the sought conclusion be assessed. We found that the minor premise of the argument from design was by and large acceptable, while its major premise does not have rational foundations.

However, even if the disputability of the universality of its major premise were set aside, the problem of an argument, which proceeds from the intelligent coordination of a certain concatenation, is that, even if conclusive, it does not prove a first efficient cause. It merely demonstrates an agency responsible for a particular design and knowledgeable thereof. However, whether it is above contingency, *hudūth*, and flux, is entirely open to question. Even if the argument were based on the orderliness of the entire world, it would indicate that its orderer is an all-powerful, knowledgeable, and incorporeal being, which is not included in the harmonious totality, nonetheless, it would not establish that his existence is necessary. Therefore, in order to prove the necessity of the designer, further arguments, such as the demonstration of contingency and necessity, would have to be elicited.

In short, if the weakness of the major premise were to be overlooked, the presence of order could be traced to an orderer, and since order is a knowledgeable act, the orderer's attribute of knowledge would be affirmed as well. However, this still does not indicate whether the orderer has necessity or unity. For these limitations of the argument from design, the sages of the Islamic philosophical schools of Illumination (*hikma al-ishrāq*), Peripatetic (*hikma al-mashā'*), and Transcendent Wisdom (*al-Hikma al-Muta'āliyya)* have demurred from it. Certain references to the orderly nature of the world in some of their works are in the context of arguments of Divine attributes such as unity, knowledge, and wisdom. Again, this is because the essential attributes of the necessary are identical with His Essence, however, given their conceptual difference, it is possible to conduct independent analysis and inquiry with respect to each one of them.

The Argument from Design and the Noble Qur'ān

It is deemed prudent to indicate, though in brief, that if the premises of an argument are purely rational, the argument is a demonstration (*burhān*). If the premises comprise rational as well as generally-accepted subjects (*musallamāt*), but the argument relies mostly on the generally-accepted subjects, such an argument is decent contention or kindly exhortation (*al-jidāl al-ahsan*). But if the premises are generally accepted subjects, which lack rational foundations, the argument is a fallacy and void contention.

The demonstrative shortcoming of the argument from design in indicating the Deity's existence does not imply that it has no exhortative value. The argument, in fact, can conveniently inspire consent of certain individuals—namely the ones who admit that the world is marked with orderliness and believe in the Necessary's unity and "Creatorness" (*khāliqiyya)*—to acknowledge to *al-tawhīd al-rūbūbī* and after that *al-tawhīd al-'ibādi*.[1] For this reason, the Noble Qur'ān resorts to kindly exhortation of the polytheists and idolaters of Hijāz, a group that constituted a considerable portion of population at the time of revelation.

At the early period of Islam's rise, idolatry was the chief social force, which opposed Islam. Idolaters were those infidels who had faith in a single God but believed that idols were their archetypes (*arbāb al-anwā'*), which mediated between God and His creatures. The people of Hijāz offered sacrifices before idols and worshipped them in order to achieve their wishes through their intercession.

Another social group was the People of the Book. These people were mostly the Jewry of Medina and Christians whose presence was felt primarily in the southern parts of the peninsula. In addition to these two groups, the Qur'ān mentions another group of people who ascribed their affairs to time (*dahr*) and considered it the factor, which determined their lives and deaths. After the rise of Islam and establishment of its political domination, these dogmatic patterns were altered; and as it appears from the conversations and debates narrated from the Shiite Imams, ideological opposition to Islam mostly manifested in the form of schools, which negated the very essence of the Necessary.

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[1] *Al-Tawhīd al-'Ibādī* (monotheism in worshipping) states that only the Lord that has created the world and administers it, is the worthy object of worship. *

The Noble Qur'ān, as the book of guidance for the entire human race, satisfies the needs of the gentry of sages as well as the commonality. In some verses—such as the chapter of Monotheism (*Sūra al-Tawhīd*) and the first verses of the chapter of Iron (*Sūra al-Hadīd*)—one can see the profundity, which, over the many ages, has inspired Islamic theosophy and Gnosticism with a sense of direction. On the other hand, the kindly exhortation of some other verses addresses those people who have been inflicted by polytheism and have been led astray with respect to *al-tawhīd al-rubūbī* and *al-tawhīd al-ibādī*. As God, the Exalted, decrees enjoinment by wisdom, admonishment, and kindly exhortation—"And call those unto way of thy Lord with wisdom and kindly exhortation and dispute with them in the manner which is the best"[1]—the apostles in general, and their last and greatest in particular, were heedful of their audience's capacity of comprehension. They exemplified the creed "We the congregation of prophets converse to people according to the capacity of their intellects."[2]

In a lengthy tradition in *Al-Ihtejāj*, when Imam Jaʿfar al-Sādiq, peace be with him, was asked about the *jadals* of the Prophet, he answered that God had obliged him to use *jadal* and the Noble Qur’ān, on occasions, uses it as well.[1] On many issues, which the Shiite Imams, peace be with them, have propounded with demonstrations (*barāhīn*), they have, on certain appropriate occasions, taken recourse to admonition and kindly exhortation (*al-jadal al-ahsan*).

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[1] 16: 125

[2] Al-Majlisī, Muhammad Bāqir. *Bihār al-Anwār*. (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islamiyya), vol. 2, 69.

In his *Al-Tawhīd*, al-Shaykh al-Sadūq, blessings be with him, narrates that two different individuals asked Imam Jaʿfar al-Sādiq, peace be with him, whether God has the power to place the earth in an egg-sized tiny container in a way that neither the earth loses its size nor the container expands. The Imam, peace be with him, gives one of them a rhetorical (*jadalī*) answer and the other a demonstrative one.

In response to the first inquisitor, the Imam, peace be with him, says “Open your eyes, do not you see the expansive heavens and the earth? How God has placed something which is bigger than the earth in your eyes which are smaller than an egg.” This answer was sufficient to satisfy the inquisitor.[2]

In his answer to the second individual, while stressing that by His infinite power, God can do everything, the Imam says “What you have asked is impossible and *nothing* (*lā shai’*).”[3] That is, although God is powerful to do *everything*, however, you have not asked about a “*thing*”; therefore, what you have inquired about is not an exception to the Divine omnipotence; rather, it is excluded from the domain of power. This response of the holy Imam, peace be with him, comprises a profound philosophical analysis about impossible phenomena that an impossible thing has a notion the extension (*misdāq*) of which is “nothing”.

The argument from design has been used in the Noble Qur’ān in a rhetorical manner. It addresses those polytheists whose behavior and belief God, the Exalted, describes thus: “And if thou asketh them who created the heavens and the earth, certainly will they say, ‘God.’”[1] “And worship they besides God, what can neither hurt them nor profit them, and say they: ‘These are our intercessors with God.’”[2]

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[1] Al-Tabrasī, Abu Mansūr Ahamad ibn Ali ibn Abi Tālib. *Al-Ehtijāj.* (Mashhad: Murtadha Publications, 1983), vol. 1, 23.

[2] Al-Sadūq, Abu Jaʿfar Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Husain ibn Bābawaih. *Al-Tawhid.* (Tehran: Maktabat al-Sadūq, 1969), 122.

[3] *ibid.* 130.

The Qur’ān is addressing a congregation, which on the one hand believes in God’s unity and acknowledges that the world is ruled by an intelligent administration and orderliness, and on the other, holds that this administration and orderliness pertain to archetypes (*arbāb al-anwā‘*), which are intercessors between God and His creatures. In this situation, where the premises of the argument from design are grounds of mutual consensus, the Noble Qur’ān resorts to kindly exhortation and, in a rhetorical argument, traces God’s creatorness to *al-tawhīd al-rubūbī* and *al-tawhīd al-‘ibādī.*

In theism’s course of descent (*al-qaus al-nuzūlī*), every higher level substantiates the truth of its lower level. In brief, the Essential unity (*al-tawhīd al-dhātī*) indicates the Creator’s unity (*al-tawhīd fi al-khāliqiyya*), the Creator’s unity is sufficient evidence to yield knowledge to Lord’s (*Rabb*) unity (*al-tawhīd al-rubūbī*), which in its own right, establishes *al-tawhīd al-‘ibādī.* Similarly, in its course of ascent (*al-qaus al-su‘ūdī*), *al-tawhīd al-‘ibādī* can be traced to *al-tawhīd al-rubūbī,* and the fact that He is the Lord (*Rabb*) and is indicated by His creatorness; and His creatorness is proved by His Essential Necessity.

The Argument from Design and the Problem of Evil

The question whether evil exists in the world or not is an independent inquiry. However, even if the dispute of evil’s existence is laid aside, the fact is that the argument from design, in whatever form constructed, is immune to the problem of evil. This is because as long as a given concatenation is harmoniously functioning towards its objective, it can be asserted that it has design and orderliness; and there is no mutual necessity between having design and regularity and having a virtuous objective.

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[1] 31: 25

[2] 10: 18

If the world is orderly, then evil, if existent at all, functions within the structure of the world's order. An animal, which produces poison, does not change any and every food into poison. Rather, he too behaves within the organized network of relations and produces poison and destruction within the boundaries of the existent order.

The argument from design can be rendered defective only if either the present design's purposefulness is denied or it is not ascribed to an orderer (*nādhim*). However, the argument's tenability is not subject to absence or presence of evil in the world.

Chapter Nine

THE ARGUMENT FROM MIRACLES

Miraculous acts—such as the unusual incidents, which occur after invocations and prayers; succor from unseen sources in individuals' lives like heeling of the ill; uncontrollable and unpredictable incidents, which lead to solutions of social predicaments; or flashes of thoughts, which suddenly solve scholarly and scientific problems—have been used in the west's Judeo-Christian theology as premises of an argument for the existence of the Necessary. It has been asserted that such incidents are true and do not have any physical or natural cause, therefore, their cause, which is not physical, exists.

This contention, if not adduced further by some other argument, such as the demonstration of contingency and necessity, is not able to prove the Necessary and is subject to many objections.

First, individuals who have not experienced such extraordinary incidents, and to whom these experiences have not been narrated in an ascertaining manner, can have doubts about the very occurrence of such incidents.

Second, suppose such incidents do occur, their attribution to the Necessary and the consequent affirmation of the Necessary's existence is open to question. Attribution of these incidents to the Necessary can held valid only if three conditions are satisfied: First, the principle of causation is accepted and the "causedness" (*al-maʿlūliyya)* of these incidents is established. Second, all of the natural and metaphysical factors, which can generate these incidents, are taken into account. Third, the causality of all of these conceivable factors, except for the causality of the Almighty Necessary, is invalidated.

The argument in the form presented above is subject to the criticism by people who are skeptical about the principle of causation. Moreover, even if causation is acknowledged, since other factors, which can explain these incidents have not been conceived and ruled out, the argument does not entail the existence of the Necessary.

Extraordinary and unexpected incidents, which occur in the realm of soul—such as the sudden solutions of scientific and scholarly questions or practical virtues, which are instantaneously attained through passionate spiritual experiences—can be rooted in the past life of the person blessed with such cognitive or practical benedictions.

Our teacher, ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī, Paradise of Allah be for him, used to say that sometimes a catechumen hears something from his teacher or sees it in a book and chronicles it in a corner of his memory. Then after twenty or thirty years when he assumes the post of teaching, during scholarly analyses, once again that previously heard or read matter appears in his mind. Inattentive towards the reason of such detection, he presumes that this is a flash of his own thought and assumes, *No one has preceded me in this discovery*. One such instance has occurred in the *Al-Makāsib* of our grand shaykh, al-Ansārī—may Allah bless his soul.

As profound a book as it is, *Al-Makāsib* is not a work to have been completed in a short time. Rather, the several years it has been written in have been a good portion of the life of our late Shaykh—may God bless his soul. This renowned jurisprudent, in one section of *Al-Makāsib*, quotes a discussion from the late ʿAllāmah al-Hillī; and then in another section that has been written perhaps a decade later, when that intimation reappears from his noble subconscious mind, and neither seeing it in the limited number of books he had nor recalling it in his recent readings, he assumes this is one of his own innovations and credits himself for it. Just as unknown factors exercise influence in the inward matters of the human being, they can prevail in his external matters as well.

The skeptic atheist can always maintain that the splitting of the sea by Moses, the Interlocutor, or his splitting the earth to swallow Korah, or the split of the moon by the signal of the Seal of Prophets, and incidents like the return of the sun, are all certainly extraordinary events, nonetheless, each one may have an unknown cause that, however not yet discovered, is possible to be identified one day.

Such extraordinary events of help from invisible sources can be instrumental in producing psychological certitudes. However, such certitude—which is actually a sort of confidence and practical satisfaction—does not bear cognitive certitude; and it is well established that in rational demonstrations (*barāhīn*), nothing less than cognitive certitude is satisfactory.

Miracles in the View of Islamic Philosophers and Western Theologians

> According to the Majestic Qur'ān, a miracle is a sign, which attests to the particular prophethood (*al-nubūwa al-khāssa*) of a person who has claimed prophethood. Islamic philosophers and *mutakellimūn* argue *from* the miracles of the most benevolent Prophet *to* his particular prophethood; and when a particular prophethood is proved, general prophethood (*al-nubūwa al-ʿāmma*)[1] is proved as well, since no particular can exist without a universal, and no conditional without an absolute. Nevertheless, no Islamic philosopher or *mutakellem* has ever established an argument to prove the Necessary Essence based on miracles.
>
> For certain individuals, miracles do not have any sort of indication with respect to religious doctrines. For instance, someone who does not accept the existence of God or some of His names and attributes

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[1] General Prophethood (*al-nubuwwa al-āʿmma*) In *kalām,* the principle which states that since the human being is needful of guidance with respect to how he should live his life, and since God is All-Merciful, He will provide guidance to the mankind how to live through His prophets, as it will contradict His mercy not ot answer man's need to guidance.

Particular Prophethood (*al-nubuwwa al-khāssa*) indicates the prophethood of a specific individual. *

such as the Guide (*al-Hādī*), the Administrator (*al-Mudabbir*), and so forth, or a person who does not believe in the general prophethood, or someone who doubts the principle of causation and considers chance and haphazardness possible, cannot infer the truth of religious tenets from an extraordinary event, which cannot be explained on the score of the known physical grounds.

If certain religious doctrines, such as the existence of God and the necessity of apostleship and religious guidance for people who do not have direct guidance from the Deity, are accepted, miracles can rationally indicate the prophethood of a specific person. From this perspective, miracles do not contradict the principle of causation and are not incompatible with natural laws; rather, their occurrence is an imperative law of existence.

If miracles were to contradict the principle of causation, then haphazardness and chance would be permissible, which in turn would make the inquiry of the existence of God irrelevant.

Extraordinary Events: *Muʿjiza, Karāma, Iʿāna,* and *Ihāna*

In *kalāmi* parlance there is a technical difference between different extraordinary acts. A *muʿjiza*[1] is an extraordinary event, which is associated with a challenge to prove a certain prophethood. Being associated with a challenge is the hallmark, which distinguishes a *muʿjiza* from other extraordinary events. If an extraordinary event takes place because of the will or the sacred soul of a saint, it is called *karāma*. If it happens because of the supplication of a righteous servant of God, it is called *iʿāna*[2]. Extraordinary events may occur as a result of causes, which are attained through learning and meditation such as sorcery. It is also possible that they take place to falsify someone who has falsely claimed prophethood and has challenged others. In the last case, an extraordinary event is called *ihāna*[1]. For instance, when al-Musaylama al-Kadhdhāb spat into a well to show to people that he has blessed it and that its water will increase, what happened was that even the little water, which was in the well dried. Although the exsiccation of the well in this manner was an extraordinary event, nevertheless, it was not what the perverted claimant had hoped and it led to his debasement.

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[1] Usually translated into English as "miracle."

[2] Literally meaning assistance.

The most unique characteristic of a *mu'jiza* is that it illustrates God's omnipotence. A prophet, who claims to have a message from the Absolute Origin, as his prophethood is extraordinary and does not come from finite and conditional sources, exhibits an extraordinary sign that attests to his connection to the Source of existence. Because God, the Exalted—Who undertakes the creation and guidance of all entities including the human beings—is not subject to sensual vision, His guidance is not effectuated in a direct manner with them. Rather, it is carried out by the few chosen servants, who with the chastity of their tongues and serenity of their hearts have the aptitude of Divine interlocution and vision. Thus, as instanced by the Qur'ān, His apostles appear with signs that testify to their connection to the Source of creation: "And We have sent thee [O Our Apostle Muhammad] unto mankind as [Our] Apostle, and God is sufficient a witness [thereof]."[2] The witness and attestation of God is that He manifests His extraordinary signs on the hands of His prophets.

Miracles as Rational Proofs

Miracles are proofs of particular prophethood; however, only people who are availed of reason can benefit from them. Someone who perceives miracles with physical eyes only and does not fathom what lies behind the appearance, may evince astonishment and wonder and even succumb to them, nevertheless, he is far from attaining a certitude, which is free of doubts and reservations.

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[1] Literally meaning to insult.

[2] 4: 79

In order to be able to ascertain a given prophethood, first, a reasonable person should be able to differentiate between an extraordinary act and an act, which is performed through artificial means. Second, he should recognize the mutual necessity between the claim's veridicality and the miracle.

In the scene of challenge and defiance by Moses, the Interlocutor, since the magicians were better aware of sorcery's limitations than other people, they instantaneously realized that the extraordinary act was beyond the means of sorcery; and already believing in God as the true Guide, they immediately embraced the Lord of Moses and stood firm in their faith. However, as for the people who merely saw a stick become a serpent and failed to apprehend its rational implications, just as they pinned their faith to Moses by watching a stick become a dragon, they crowded around the Samaritan by seeing the speech of a calf. While the Samaritan's work was sorcery, and his call to the divinity of a calf, a dogma that reason testifies to its falsehood.

Ibn Sīnā in *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt*, and Nasīr al-Din al-Tūsī in his commentary on the same book, divide miracles into two classes: practical miracles (*al-mu'jiza al-fe'lī*) and verbal miracles (*al-mu'jiza al-qaulī*). They hold that verbal miracles are more beneficial for the gentry of people afforded with erudition, whereas practical miracles are more befitting for the commonality.[1]

The Seal of the Prophets had many practical miracles, which mostly satisfied the commonalty. However, the gentry of the companions, well-aware of the profound meanings and exalted stature of the Noble Qur'ān, sufficed on the Qur’ān and never made any demands for practical miracles. The Majestic Qur’ān, the verbal miracle of the Seal of the Prophets, is an eternal miracle that with a clean and vociferous challenge attests to the prophethood of that *Hadhrat,* bliss be for him and his kin, for anyone who believes in God and His attributes.

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[1] Ibn Sīnā, Abu Ali Husain. *Al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt.* Commentary by Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī. (Tehran: Daftar-i-Nashr-i-Kitāb, 1981), vol. 3, 372.

Rational Possibility and Ordinary Impossibility of Miracles

It is sometimes presumed that miracles are rational impossibilities (*al-muhālāt al-ʿaqliyya)* executed by God. However, just as miracles do not violate causation, they are not rationally impossible events either. A miracle is merely an ordinary impossibility (*al-muhāl al-ʿāddī*); that is, it cannot be carried out by the finite and conditional implements; however, God’s omnipotence can perform what may be ordinarily impossible for others. An event that is beyond and inaccessible to the ordinary human capabilities and is not attainable by acts of meditation, is not in the capacity of anyone but God.

A stick’s becoming a serpent, or running water’s coming to a halt and other miracles are not rational impossibilities. For instance, it is not impossible that wood, with the progress of time and decomposition of its elements, become the food of a snake and be assimilated into its body, and then transform into sperm and become a snake. Similarly, a strong storm or dam can hinder the flow of water and deviate it or bring it to a halt. Nonetheless, the metamorphosis of a stick into a dragon or the halt in the flow of Nile—in the way done by Moses, the Interlocutor—or splitting the moon by the signal of the Beneficent Prophet, can neither be carried out by the finite implements, which are at man’s disposal nor by meditation and sorcery.

A rationally impossible thing cannot have an external extension. Therefore, when Imam Jaʿfar al-Sādiq, peace be with him, was asked about God’s power to place the world in an egg-shell, he responded, "Although God's power is infinite, nevertheless, what you are asking is a *nothing*."

"*Nothing*" (*lā shai*), like non-existence or conjunction of contradictories, is a concept, which does not narrate an external extension. Therefore, because it is nothing, it is not subject to the infinite power of God.

The Qur'ān, a Divine book revealed over twenty-three years upon the pure and holy heart of the Benevolent Messenger of Allah, bliss be for him and his kin, and free of contradictions and discrepancies, is not a rational impossibility. Rather the production of a work parallel to it is an ordinary impossibility (*al-muhāl al-'āddī*). Al-Shaykh al-Tūsī in *al-Tibyān*, and after him Amīn al-Islam al-Tabarsī in *Majmaʿ al-Bayān* and many interpreters from the commonality of the Muslims, who consider miracles rational impossibilities, have tried to answer what they consider the criticism that Qur'ān is not a rational impossibility, and have tried to prove the rational impossibility of bringing a work parallel to the Noble Qur'ān. However, the fact is that neither are miracles rational impossibilities, nor is the Noble Qur'ān an extension of a rational impossibility.

The Noble Qur'ān's purity from any discrepancey and its harmony and consistency, despite the fact that it was compiled in different circumstances during twenty-three years, is a reality, which is not attainable by ordinary means. God, the Exalted, says on this matter: "And if it had been from any other than God, they surely would have found in it much discrepancy."[1] Similarly, the eloquence of the Majestic Qur'ān is not a rational impossibility. Instead, it is an ordinary impossibility that is coupled with a challenge from the Prophet—a challenge which does not seek to prove God or the general prophethood, but rather, proves the particular prophethood of the Benevolent Messenger of Allah, bliss be for him and his kin.

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[1] 4: 82

Chapter Ten

THE ARGUMENT FROM RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Religious Experience and Demonstrative Reasoning

Absence of ratiocination and weak fundamentals of philosophical thinking have led the Judeo-Christian theological tradition to some delirious admonitions and discourses, which are devoid of demonstrative tenability. Later, along the history of western philosophy, this set of demagoguery has invited a series of disorderly and confused pro and con debates.

Among the arguments, which lack philosophical and demonstrative form, is an argument, which has been called the argument from religious experience. It proceeds from the inward experiences, discoveries, and visions with respect to a reality, which has an intrinsic sanctity and value.[1]

Though rational argument supports the possibility of *shuhūdi* cognition of the reality of existence, nevertheless, two points have to be established here. First, *shuhūd* has several levels and it is only in its certain levels whereby certitude about the content of a given *shuhūd* can be held. Particular and convulsive (*mutazalzil*) *shuhūds* are not ascertaining even during the experience and vision. Second, though a person who is not familiar with *shuhūdi* experiences cannot establish a definite argument to reject or invalidate the *shuhūds* of a Gnostic, on the other hand, the Gnostic's *shuhūds* cannot bring forth certitude for him either.

The only way that a person who has not been in the realm of *shuhūd* can gain knowledge and certitude regarding the content of another person's *shuhūd* is to have convincing proof about its truth. Such proof is either established directly on the experienced reality such as the demonstrations for the existence of God, or through proving the infallibility of the individual who has experienced such *shuhūds* in the three stages of revelation, reception, and conveyance.

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[1] For instance, see: Schleiermarcher, Friedrich. *Über* d*ie Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern.* Translated as *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers.* (Gloucester, Mass.: 1958).

Some western theologians have suggested an argument for the existence of God on the grounds of religious experiences of individuals. This argument can be summed up as follows:

> Experience in relation to a sacred and transcendent reality exists.
>
> Such experiences are not the works of natural causes.
>
> Therefore, a supernatural reality, which is God, exists.

Even if the skeptic agnostic who has not undergone any such inward experience overlooks what he views as the disputability of the first premise, the argument is still untenable because its second premise is evidently on shaky grounds, since according to some psychological theories, religious experience has been explained on purely natural accounts. For instance, they have been ascribed to the psychological and social factors, which cause other mental phenomena. Moreover, even if the veridicality of the second premise were laid aside unchallenged, the argument would only indicate a supernatural entity. However, whether this supernatural entity has unity or necessity of existence is wide open to question.

The fact of the matter is that religious experiences, simply because they are inward and conscious experiences, do not bring about any cognitive certitude (*al-yaqīn al-ʿilmī*) for the person who undergoes them or for others for that matter. In order to have certitude regarding the content and truth of one's *shuhūd*, one must have "truth of certainty"[1] during his *shuhūd*; otherwise, after his *shuhūd*, he must rationally establish that his experience was not influenced by psychological factors and it really reflected reality.

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[1] 102:7

Definite and Indefinite *Shuhūds*

Some people think that during the actual course of mystical or religious experiences, one cannot have doubts and doubts arise only after ecstasies cease and one returns to the realm of acquired knowledge. This is a false presumption.

Many *shuhūds* and mystical experiences are devoid of certitude and are coupled with doubt and uncertainty. This is similar to when you observe a group discussion in a dream and hear contradictory remarks; in this state, you analyze some of the remarks and experience doubt and uncertainty about them, and finally, you may be convinced of a different opinion.

Definite *shuhūds* are devoid of delirium and incoherence; they have immutability and universality. The universality of *shuhūdi* realities is not conceptual; rather, it is expansive. Therefore, *shuhūdi* certitude is attained by reaching intellectual (*al-haqā'iq al-'aqliyya)* and meta-intellectual realities (*al-haqā'iq fauq al-'aqliyya),* not by accumulating concepts. The certitude secured from these realities is not psychological certitude, which might be regarded as a dyad of fantasy or surmise, and consequently, it would be justified to inquire whether this certitude is brought about by unscientific means. Such certitude is epistemic certitude. As factual external realities, the necessity of veridicality of *shuhūdi* realities encompasses the comprehension in a way that there remains no chance for doubt or uncertainty regarding them. Epistemic certitude—which is the necessity of veridicality as in the necessity of the basic reality, for instance—encompasses human comprehension in a way that it becomes impossible to doubt it. When a person encounters a necessity as such, he has no choice but to accept it.

Once the *shuhūd* of intellectual and meta-intellectual realities attained, one finds the infinite presence of these realities from every direction; and consequently, doubt and uncertainty becomes impossible.

Particular *shuhūds*, which take place in the inferior levels of existence and pertain to the natural world and the *mundus imaginalis* (*'ālam al-khiyāl*), due to the flux of their subjects, are subject to change; and due to their finitude, the faculties of imagination (*khiyāl*) and estimation (*wahm*) cause deceit and trickery and transfuse the qualities and effects of finite realities from one realm to the other. Thus, a reality that is witnessed in the *mundus imaginalis* (*'ālam al-khiyāl*) is not reflected in the image that develops after the involvement of imagination and estimation, and therefore, the individual is overwhelmed by doubt and uncertainty.

If the wayfarer lets the star of reason illuminate his soul, the fooleries of imagination and estimation will be diminished; and then, imagination and estimation shall follow the command of reason and illustrate the realities of nature and *mundus imaginalis* as they are observed by intellects. Then, once again, the *mundus imaginalis* becomes commensurable to perception, and with the absence of nonconformity, doubt and skepticism are supplanted and light of certitude shines through to the lowest levels of *shuhūd*. At this state, at every direction that the Gnostic looks, he sees nothing but the Real, and he does not have the slightest doubt or skepticism about Him. The Master of the Monotheists and the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, bliss be for him, says, "I have not doubted the Real, since I have seen Him."[1]

Thus, skepticism, delirium, and disorientation can sometimes be found in the content of *shuhūd* as well and they cannot be avoided but through *shuhūd* of intellectual realities. If during the journey, the wayfarer finds the ability to communicate with intellectual realities or with people who have reached them, he discovers the falsity of experiences that are influenced by the fooleries of imagination and estimation and are rooted in his terrestrial and earthly past. This in turn facilitates his familiarity with realities of the *mundus imaginalis* (*'ālam al-khiyāl*). However, if he fails to achieve this benevolence, he strays in *shuhūd*, and in brief, he is a person astray in the state of *shuhūd* who cannot differentiate between the way and the non-way.

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[1] *Nahj al-Balāgha*, sermon 4.

If there is any succor for such a person, it can be given only after cessation of the passion and after his emancipation from the evil of the Satan who dominates him. In this state, he can judge his experiences on the basis of rational concepts, which are attained from distant visions of intellectual realities, and gain certitude about that portion of his experience only which is supported by rational proof. This certitude, however, is not because of his mystical experiences, but rather owes to the rational proof, which authenticates its truth. He must reject experiences, which the rational approach attests to its falsity, and regard experiences that have neither been authenticated nor rejected by reason with doubt and uncertainty. Then, in the light of reason, should he succeed in discerning the necessity of the presence of Divine guidance in creation—that is, the necessity of prophethood—and furthermore, through miracles and the like, should he be successful in identifying its instantiation, he can also rely on the sayings of the prophets and their legatees. This will further enable him to exercise judgment with respect to those observations, which the rational arguments were incapable of authenticating. Thus, he can be certain of any *shuhūd*, which is in accordance with the authenticated and reliable traditions of the prophets and their successors, and thank and praise God for observing them, and rebuff any discovery, which is not compatible with the veracious sayings, and seek refuge with the Benevolent God from their evil.

Deviation from Rational Cognition and Decline into Open and Latent Skepticism

The evaluation of inner experiences through rational arguments, the Noble Qur'ān, and the traditions of the Infallibles, peace be with them, is feasible only for a person who trusts acquired knowledge, that is to say, he does not consider the affirmation of central religious doctrines, such as the existence of God, prophethood, the hereafter, and so forth, beyond the capacity of reason. But consider a person whose *shuhūd* does not reach the intellectual and meta-intellectual realities, when not in the state of *shuhūd*, he is not afforded acquired knowledge, whose conceptual cognition is limited to sensual perceptions, and what he considers knowledge is hypothesis and theories which are not only indemonstrable but cannot be definitely invalidated either, in short a person who is inflicted by open or disguised skepticism (*shakkākiyya).* Even supposing such a person is having inward experiences, his experiences are devoid of cognitive worth and he has no criterion for their cognitive evaluation.

Such experiences, besides their nonconformity with each other and with the experiences of other people, are delirious and confused perceptions, which only provide hypotheses and theory-subjects for psychologists who can only regard them as objects of knowledge, not as a form of knowledge.

If a person receives an intimation in a dream or he thinks he is witnessing the visage of an infallible entity while awake, this mere exemplification cannot bring cognitive certitude. It is possible that visage has been exemplified by the foolery of his ego and assistance of Satan. As for the traditions stating that Satan does not appear in form of infallible entities, even supposing that such a person has affirmed monotheism and prophethood by acquired knowledge and has paved the way for himself to receive guidance from the infallibles, these traditions do not provide him with sufficient grounds to argue for the validity of his experience. As Mulla Muhsin al-Faydh al-Kāshānī says in his *Al-Mahajja al-Baydhā'*, if a person has not seen God’s chosen servants, Satan can falsely attribute to the Benevolent Prophet or his successors an image the appearance of which has been occasioned by his ego. If Satan is able to attribute an image or statement to God or His Prophet at the hands of forfeiters of traditions in wakefulness, is he unable to accomplish that in stupor?

In short, the inner experiences of people who do not have intellectual and meta-intellectual *shuhūd* have no cognitive worth. Therefore, central religious tenets such as the existence of God and His names of beauty cannot be based on such uncertain grounds. It is only if the person trusts the conceptual format of knowledge that he can evaluate these experiences through the criterion of reason. Therefore, inner experiences, which are not substantiated by reason, are devoid of any cognitive reflection about reality. If such experiences have any reflection at all, it is of the sort of narration that any natural phenomenon would have about its causes. Such experiences are like nightmares, which reflect the psychological conditions and past deeds of individuals. Therefore, such experiences are rather more useful to psychologists who study phenomena like the causes and nature of nightmares.

Indeed, the inner experiences of such people do have another sort of reflection regarding their efficient causes. Nonetheless, their sound interpretation is solely in the capacity of people who are aware of the clandestine mysteries of the worlds, recognize the manifestations of the Divine beauties and majesties, know the stages of Paradise and Hell, and identify the signs of benevolence and wrath of the Benevolent and Avenging God.

Chapter Eleven

THE MORAL ARGUMENTS

Discursive Arguments based on Moral Commands

Moral arguments have a variety of expositions. In some of its versions, the existence of an immutable and absolute authority and mentor has been argued on the basis of the immutability and absoluteness of moral codes. In some others the existence of a non-human source whose will overrules the human will has been substantiated by feeling the magnitude of moral commands in circumstances in which man's will is tempted by other choices at his disposal. Other expositions use the mutual necessity between law and a lawgiver to prove a legislative source; or the presence of moral codes common across diverse cultures has been used to support the supposition of a god who has inscribed these codes on human hearts.

Sensing the voice of conscience or the moral command and the resultant feeling of guilt and contrition or the sense of worry and fear during or before an immoral act is the common element and shared premise of these arguments. The common weakness of all of them also stems from this premise, because only after confirmation of its accuracy is it possible—with an exposition however different from the ones mentioned—to argue for the existence of a source and cause, which it may imply. Still, this will not prove this causes' existential and eternal necessity.

If the fundamental premise of the argument, which claims the universality of moral codes, is accepted, the argument can lead to the non-human source of these codes. In other words, if it is authenticated that *every* person, before acting in non-compliance with meritorious moral behavior, feels fear and unease, and afterwards, he experiences shame and regret, and the universality of these laws and rules are such that everybody—regardless of social class, race, culture, and support or ostracism from the society—undergoes the sense of sinfulness and fear, it can be inferred that the source of these codes is none of these situations, and rather they spring from a source beyond them.

The Common Criticism of the Moral Arguments

The focal point of criticism is the first premise, since there is no way to prove it. The premise could be affirmed through either induction or deduction. Induction can bring certainty only if it is complete, and we can never attain a complete induction of the consciences of all individuals. And as far as the deductive method is concerned, the relationship between the subjects and predicates of its premises, which is expressed by the copulas, must be necessary in order for the deductive method to bring certainty. Relationships are necessary when the predicate is an essential part or an essential property (*al-'aradh al-dhātī*) of the subject. In the first case, the proposition will have an analytical form, and in the latter, if it is not axiomatic, it must be made so by using axiomatic middle terms.

The universality of moral commands in a way that they are acknowledged by everyone is disputable. In order to adequately justify the existence of God on the grounds of the universality of moral commands, the argument must first prove the said premise in an ascertaining manner, since in philosophic matters, nothing less than certitude is satisfactory.

Because disciplines, which are dedicated to the inquiry of natural phenomena are meant to advance practical purposes, they can make due with conjectural information also. Rather, in many instances, because of the difficulty of attaining certitude, the natural scientist does not have a choice but to suffice on uncertain hypotheses.

A science dependent on experiment and induction, such as medicine, cannot abandon patients struggling between life and death and wait for the attainment of certitude. Rather, it is forced to try to solve the imperative issues of life by making use of theories with an acceptable probability of success.

While mathematical sciences depend upon natural premises, or are used with regard to natural phenomena, they also face the dilemmas faced in the natural sciences, and consequently, lose their syllogistic quality.

Should the existence of surface, which is used in most geometric figures, be doubted on the basis of theories such as the atomic theory of Democritus, it will entail uncertainty about the natural and external existence of any figure that an architect may draw for a building. Nevertheless, the architect—despite his doubts, but with a decent probability of the validity of his view, or even without regard to its validity or invalidity—uses the sketch because of the confidence he has in its practical applications.

Cognition of God as a reality, which is the foundation of faith and bastion of true belief can neither be based on hypotheses that have solely practical use and lack ontological veridicality, nor can it be founded upon conjectural information. This is because conjecture has no use in a field where the criterion is certitude, and where the claimants are not satisfied with anything less than certitude. "Verily conjecture availeth not the truth at all."[1] "Say [O' Our apostle Muhammad], 'Bring forth your proof if ye be truthful.'"[2]The validity of the moral arguments depends on proving the minor premise. And until it is proved, the argument remains subject to doubt, since doubt does not depend on disproving the claim; the inability to prove the claim is enough to cast doubt. In addition to that, since the said premise is in the form of universal affirmative, it cannot be proved by presenting particular examples.

If, as is actually the case, the arguer holds that the immutable and universal moral commands are not brought about by any particular cultural, political, economical, or psychological condition, given it is a universal and all-encompassing assertion, its truth must be proved for every situation; and until it is proved, its universality remains subject to skepticism. Rather, the discovery of even one example contradicting the held universal affirmative is sufficient to explicitly illustrate its falsehood. Moreover, if in the absence of one of these conditions, even if one individual dismisses these moral commands, the influence of that absent condition in the formation of moral commands can be inferred. For these reasons and the ones to come, the affirmation of the Necessary as the only authority who is the source and cause of moral principles, on the basis of moral commands, is questionable.

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[1] 53: 28

[2] 2:111

The Affirmation of Incorporeal Existence through Analysis of Reason

Through analysis of the activities of both practical and theoretical reasons, Islamic philosophers have argued for metaphysical and supernatural existence. However, their approach is different from the moral arguments above, where God's existence has been used to explain the prevalence of universal moral codes shared across different social and natural conditions.

In the fourth chapter of *Al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt*, Ibn Sīnā, may God bless his tomb, conducts an exceptional analysis of the psyche. On the grounds that the activities of the theoretical reason (*al-ʿaql al-nadharī*) and other inner conditions such as love, sincerity, will, and the like, are not marked by any physical and material characteristics, he argues for the incorporeality of soul.[1] Ibn Sīnā's argument can unquestionably proceed even from a single universal concept, will, or sincerity of a single human being, in a specific condition. However, this argument does not prove the Necessary. It merely proves incorporeal existence; and even the incorporeal being, which it proves is not outside or beyond the soul. Its conclusion is limited to the incorporeality of the soul and some of its theoretical and practical features.

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[1] Ibn Sīnā, Abu Ali Husain. *Al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt.* Commentary by Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī. (Tehran: Daftar-i-Nashr-i-Kitāb, 1981), vol. 3, 8.

Kant’s Moral Arguments

Emmanuel Kant does not intend to theoretically analyze moral commands and explain them on theistic accounts; rather, he holds that the acknowledgement of moral commands presupposes the existence of God, the everlastingness of soul, and some other issues that he views the theoretical reason (*al-ʿaql al-nadharī*) incapable of discerning. He believes that after the practical reason (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*) discerns moral commands, which are necessarily true, the mind inevitably acknowledges their corollary, namely the existence of God and the everlastingness of the human soul. Therefore, from Kant’s perspective, faith in God is founded on moral consciousness as opposed to the moral codes being based upon belief in God.[1]

Notice that Kant’s argument *from* the truth of moral commands, which are aimed to promote *summum bonum*, that is, the highest good, *to* the external existence of the highest good and everlastingness of the soul does not rely on the induction of moral commands in every human being. Moreover, it does not endeavor to trace the presence of these principles to their source. And finally, it only depends on the discernment of these commands by people who can discern them. Notwithstanding, his argument is open to two fundamental criticisms. These criticisms undermine the tenability of his argument even if one does not dispute Kant’s position that the practical reason (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*) acknowledges these commands.

The First Criticism of Kant’s Moral Argument

The first criticism states that Kant’s argument cannot indicate the existence of the Necessary, soul, free will, and so forth, since in Kant’s view, if mental concepts are not associated with sensual perception, they cannot narrate about the external world or bear any meaning with respect to reality. Therefore, the mutual necessity he suggested between principles of the practical reason (*al-ʻaql al-ʻamalī*) and the acknowledgement of God and human will and so on, has only moral value, and does not open a window to the external world.

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[1] Kant, Immanuel. *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft.* Translated by L. W. Beck. (Chicago, 1949), .

Kant's moral argument does not demonstrate God's existence as an external reality, nor does it satisfy any doubts a person may have about God. It merely says that if one wants to think morally, he must embrace these presuppositions. In other words, if the moral principles, which are embedded in the practical reason, are acknowledged, the existence of will, free choice, soul, everlastingness thereof, and the existence of the highest good must be acknowledged as well. One need not be reminded that such acknowledgement, as far as the narration of reality is concerned, is devoid of any credibility. Therefore, his moral argument does not prove the existence of God, a reality Who calls forth the ascent of humans towards Himself as claimed by the Divine religion.

The Second Criticism of Kant's Moral Argument

The second criticism questions whether any moral command can yield knowledge of a proposition, such as the existence of God or the everlastingness of human soul, which is pertinent to the theoretical reason. Moral commands pertain to the theoretical reason (*al-ʻaql al-nadharī*) and have specific subjects and predicates, and some of these propositions, as stated by Kant, are self-evident to the practical reason (*al-ʻaql al-ʻamalī*). However, regardless of which propositions are self-evident, a proposition, which belongs to the theoretical reason (*al-ʻaql al-nadharī*), cannot be reasonably deduced from propositions, which pertain to the practical reason. Therefore, moral commands do not lead to theoretical propositions. This is not to deny that new propositions pertinent to the practical reason (*al-ʻaql al-ʻamalī*) can be inferred from syllogistic arrangement of propositions pertinent to the practical reason with propositions pertinent to the theoretical reason. That is, when a principle of the practical reason is added as a major premise to a proposition pertinent to the theoretical reason, this addition forms a syllogism the conclusion of which—in terms of being affirmative or negative, universal or particular, and likewise in being theoretical or practical—like all syllogisms, is determined by its inferior premise. And since in this sort of syllogism the major premise is a practical proposition, the conclusion will be a practical proposition as well. For instance:

> A teacher educates a pupil.
>
> Anyone who educates someone else deserves his respect.
>
> Therefore, the teacher deserves to be respected by the pupil.

In the example above, the first proposition narrates an external reality. The second proposition is related to the practical reason (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*), and the syllogism's conclusion is a practical and moral principle.

Practical principles, before reaching the stage of implementation, and before appearing before human will and choice in the form of a particular duty, inevitably depend upon particular and specific theoretical premises, which relate to external individuals and realities. Therefore, in order to be applicable, moral commands make use of some theoretical and ontological propositions that convey the existence of numerous particular realities, like the propositions "The highest good exists," "A being with free will is real," and "The needy and the free of need exist in the external world." Hence, if the highest good does not exist, the moral command "One must endeavor to reach the highest good" can never come into effect and can never oblige anyone to do anything. Similarly, if free will does not exist, none of the moral propositions can be applicable.

Likewise, if there are no needy, no duty can confront those free of need.

To conclude, none of the presuppositions of the practical reason (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*) can prove the realities that bring about the existence of their subjects or accommodate the conditions of their coming into effect. Doubts about free will or the existence of the highest good, concepts included in moral commands, cannot be effaced by relying on moral commands themselves. Instead, it is the discursive affirmation of these realities that lends credence to moral commands. Similarly, the said concepts satisfy the necessary condition of the abstraction of self-evident concepts and formulation of self-evident moral commands. In other words, the mind, through conception of goodness, the highest good, its short-comings, and the free will it has, conceives the moral obligation of trying to obtain that conceived good and then decides to procure it. Therefore, contrary to what Kant presumes, despite the mutual necessity, which exists between the truth of moral commands and some theoretical propositions, the necessity does not spring from moral commands; rather, theoretical premises necessitate moral propositions. In short, certain theoretical concepts and judgments about man and the world necessitate the fundamental moral commands.

If the naturalistic perspective were valid—that is, as the verse of the Noble Qur'ān narrates the position of the sensualist people, "There is nothing but our life in this world; we die and we live and we shall not be raised again,"[1] should human life be restricted to this world and should the human soul not be everlasting, or the human soul, as in Kant's philosophy, be doubted, or God as the highest good, the one Who is desired by virtue of His Essence (*al-matlūb bi al-dhāt*) be a mere concept without any external extension—though when the practical reason (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*) conceives the subjects and predicates of the moral propositions, it may acknowledge their validity, however, one is justified in wondering what relevance such moral commands have. In a world where there is no God, no absolute virtue, and the human being is a mere body, moral commands cannot oblige anyone to do anything, and thus, they cannot call forth sacrifice as a moral obligation, when vanity tempts the soul towards other considerations.

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[1] 23: 37

Chapter Twelve

THE DEMONSTRATION OF PRIMORDIAL NATURE

Since the validity of moral arguments has been widely questioned in Islamic philosophy and the sages of Divine wisdom have demurred from them, this should not be confused with another set of arguments, which have been called the demonstration of primordial nature (*burhān al-fitra*). The demonstration of primordial nature does not claim that the truth of certain principles pertinent to the practical reason (*al-ʿaql al-ʿamalī*), that is, the moral codes, presupposes the truth of ontological propositions pertinent to the theoretical reason. In other words, it is not its objective to justify theism by discursive analysis of moral codes and their commonality across diverse cultures or to trace moral laws to a lawgiver, and so forth. In the light of this, the demonstration of primordial nature or *burhān al-fitra* is in no way identical to the moral arguments.

The human being is characterized by two dimensions, namely, the practical dimension and the epistemic dimension. It is his practical dimension, which is the focal point of the demonstration of primordial nature. It reaches the Necessary by rational analysis of man's factual propensities.

Usage of Reciprocity in the Demonstration of Primordial Nature

The demonstration of primordial nature focuses on a reciprocal (*mutadhā'if*) portion of the human being's reality. That is, on the basis of reciprocity (*tadhā'uf*) of his certain reciprocal attributes, it traces the existence of one side of reciprocity to the existence of its other side.

Two reciprocal things, such as highness and lowness, being a parent and being an offspring, being a lover and being a beloved, are realities the mutual of which relationship is governed by comparative necessity (*al-dharūra bi al-qiyās*). In these instances, the existence of one side of reciprocity is always sufficient evidence for the existence of the other side.

Highness and lowness, two qualities abstracted from the comparison of external objects, are reciprocal realities.

This means that whenever highness is actualized, its other reciprocal side, lowness, becomes actual as well; and when highness has potential existence, lowness is potential as well. The reciprocity between highness and lowness is real reciprocity (*al-tadhāyf al-haqiqī*), and the objects, which are described by the qualities of highness or lowness, have figurative reciprocity (*al-tadhāyuf al-mashhūrī*).

Being a parent and being an offspring are also two reciprocal qualities. That is, if being an offspring is potential, paternity is potential as well, and when being an offspring is actualized, paternity becomes actual too. Although the essence of a parent may exist before the actualization of the quality of paternity, nevertheless, his characterization by the attribute of paternity is subject to actualization of the quality of being an offspring. Likewise, the actual attribution of being an offspring to someone is subject to the truth of an actual attribution of paternity to a parent's essence.

Love is also a real reciprocal reality. Its two sides are "belovedness" and "loverness." Similar to paternity and highness, which are not actual without the actuality of being an offspring and lowness, belovedness is not actualized without the actual existence of loverness. Similarly, being a lover does not have any meaning if the existence of a beloved is not established.

Another instance in which the relationship of two things is dominated by reciprocity is gravitation. If one entity is being gravitated, it indicates that another entity, which is its gravitater exists, because being gravitater and being gravitated are two reciprocal qualities, and the gravitater and the gravitated simultaneously become characterized with these two qualities.

For instance, when a celestial body is observed to be gravitated by something, it does not take enormous mental effort to deduce the actual existence of the center of its gravitation. Moreover, even the force of gravitation of the gravitater can be measured from the extent of how much gravitation has been exerted on the gravitated body. In this fashion, astronomy proves certain stars, which thanks to their enormous mass and gravity that do not allow light to escape are invisible.

The demonstration of primordial nature, on the basis of reciprocity, a justified grounds of inference employed in every dimension of human life, demonstrates a reality that is the other side of the human being's many reciprocal attributes. For instance, by making use of attributes such as love and hope, the argument traces these reciprocal attributes to the absolute recipient of love and the compassionate bastion of hope.

Two Expositions of the Demonstration of Primordial Nature

Imagine a storm-ravaged sailor whose ship, caught in the terrifying waves of the sea, has broken; and it is obvious to him that the ostensible and natural implements of succor cannot be availed to him. While on the verge of drowning, such a person cannot even think, yet he feels the hope of succor in the depths of his being and does not lose the prospect of rescue. This optimism, which is manifested as his invocations, is a reciprocal reality, and therefore, its other side is existent. This is so because, in the said supposition, it is none of the ordinary implements of succor, and rather, none of the finite realities, which is the object of his hope and the addressee of his prayers. Hope and prayers are directed towards a reality that is not finite and, as the beacon of hope, answers the supplications of the hopeful when all of the finite and conditional instruments are beyond one's reach. Such an absolute reality, whose power and authority is not subject to any condition, is God.

Another reciprocal reality that can also serve as the middle term of the demonstration of primordial nature is love. Love is an existential attribute and its reality presupposes the existence of the entity, which is its object, namely the beloved.

The human being's perpetual struggle to attain maximal and absolute happiness, wealth, power, beauty, and other perfections such as wisdom, knowledge, fame, glory, life, and so forth, is an undeniable dimension of his personality, and an indication of his intense love for them. In the light of this, it is fair to ask what is the real extension of the other side of the reciprocal reality of the love, which permeates the human being's existence, and who is its object.

This question cannot be answered in terms of worldly perfections, because worldly perfections are finite, whereas the human being is in love with the absolute. He does not struggle to reach the finite and conditional. Rather, he is in pursuit of the infinite, the unlimited, the absolute. The tangible evidence of this is the fact that no matter how happy he is, he wants to be happier; no matter how wealthy he is, he desires to accumulate more wealth; no matter how powerful he is, he still longs for more power; and no matter how beautiful he is, he yearns to be more beautiful. This principle of love for the superlative and the maximum is true with regard to every perfection.

Asking and interviewing different individuals is not a method that can lead to a single or a set of definite and satisfactory answers. Everyone depicts a different sketch of his beloved entity and many people despise something, which they once loved. Few are not the thirsty who fall in love with mirage and chase it until their deaths. However, despite all this, people's hearts are caught in the mystical cords of a beloved whom they many times fail to identify. And if people pursue finite perfections, it is due to the marks, either true or false, that these finite entities bear from that Infinite Reality.

Just as the human being's heart and soul is an external reality, the entity for whom the heart yearns and for whom the soul craves is also an external reality. The human life is not driven by the conception of love. It is the external reality of love and affection, which gives it energy and pushes it forward. Man is gravitated by love, and undoubtedly, this practical propensity has a real gravitater. When people feel the passion of love and receive energy and motivation from it, they choose the direction of their lives according to their interpretation and understanding of the object of their love. If their interpretation were correct, it is fair to assume that they come by happiness and satisfaction when they reach their beloved. However, if their interpretation is false, they spend their lives in the pursuit of a beloved that is simply not.

If man should see the Divine visage in finite entities—that is, they do not attract him towards themselves but rather lead him to God—and love them, given it is because of his love for the Infinite Reality, this love is a figurative love (*al-ʿishq al-majāzī*). As a figurative thing, it does not have any objectivity by virtue of its essence, and is a passage or medium[1] toward another thing. However, if the finite entities do not illustrate for him the way to God and inspire the individual's greed to acquire them for their own sake, their love, like the love of a mirage, is a false love. In view of the difference between *majāz* or a passage, and falsehood, false and erroneous things cannot be the passage to truth and veracity.

The Minor Premise of the Demonstration of Primordial Nature

As far as its major premise is concerned, the cogency of the demonstration of primordial nature, whether based on hope or love, is well secured. It can hardly be disputed that the reciprocal realities of hope and love require two sides. The argument's difficulty lies in its minor premise, as its tenability rests on proving that the human being, from the depths of his reality, not in his thoughts and surmises, is hopeful of and in love with an absolute and eternal being.

When someone whose ship has been wrecked in a virulent whirlpool in a dark night and whom the roaring waves of the sea have filled with terror places his hope in a reality, which is independent from all instruments, he finds Him. Such a person reaches the argument's conclusion, the

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[1] *Majāz* means a place of passing through.

Almighty God, before its minor premise. This is because at that instant, from the window of his urgency and need, he attains *shuhūd* of the absolute reality, and therefore, his knowledge—which is intuitive, and not conceptual—is antecedent to his hope. That is, in proportion to his existential capacity (*al-si'a al-wujūdiyya*), he first attains the *shuhūd* of absolute reality and then becomes hopeful and optimistic. It is similar to what occurs when one sees something with the physical eye. He first sees it and then develops a craving for it. Obviously, after being rescued from drowning, when he describes his experience in the conceptual framework, he places his experiential observation as the minor premise of the syllogism. For someone, however, who lives through the vanities of his ego and whose sight has been blinded by worldly comforts, the cogency of this demonstration is dubious.

Likewise, someone who witnesses his own reality and observes his love for God by *shuhūd*, sees the infinite visage of his beloved before or during his *shuhūd*. For him also, in the phase of interpretation and notional understanding, the demonstration is tenable. For people, however, who have pledged their hearts to finite and conditional beings and who waste their lives in the fantasy of reaching them, or who lack any such fantasy and call the world ruined and decrepit, and view themselves as desolate wanderers, this demonstration is not easily comprehensible. Such individuals are inattentive to their hope and love for the Almighty God and deny the hope and love of other people.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Divine hope and love genuinely permeates the primordial nature of every individual, the tenability of this demonstration does not rest on the presence of hope or love in every individual. A single instance in which hope or love is held with respect to an absolute reality is sufficient to substantiate the argument. In other words, just as the argument retains its cogency if the arguer intuitively feels the passion and love of an infinite reality inside himself, likewise it is tenable if he observes it in another individual who speaks of its blazing flames in such fiery and brilliant terms as, "So if Thou were to place me for my sins with Thy enemies and put me in the congregation of those who deserve Thy punishment and separate me from Thy lovers and friends, then O' my Lord, my Master, my Ruler, even if I endure your punishment, how would I endure separation from Thee; and even if I endure the blazes of Thy fire, how would I endure not being able to see Thy benediction."[1]

Because love is a reciprocal reality and the existence of a lover presupposes the existence of a beloved, the presence of love in relation to the infinite and unconditional reality, even in one individual, proves the existence of an infinite Divine beloved. However, if the existence of such love is doubted, it can be established by drawing attention (*tanbīh*), observation, and rational argument. For instance, the existence of love for the finite and conditional entities can be illustrated by introspection or observation of others; and then absence of happiness in vanity-driven lives, and the plenitude of malice and spite towards the putative beloved entities after they have been reached, can explain the falsity of such forms of love.

The glitters of the world, despite their attraction for the followers of the *dūnya*, are a saltwater, which does not quench thirst, but rather increases it. Lives of individuals whose most adequate object of love and devotion is the worldly life do not have tranquility. Rather, their vexation, discontent, parsimony, and most importantly, the feeling of being separated from the real beloved, ever increase. The more the seeker of wealth comes closer to it, and the more he accumulates, the more his avarice for what he does not have and the worse his fear of losing what he has.

It is not difficult to prove that the human being is in love and that finite things like the world are not the real object of his love and devotion. In view of these premises and the reciprocity of a lover and a beloved’s relationship, the everlastingness of soul and the existence of incorporeal realities can easily be established. And when the falsity of the affections with respect to finite and conditional things, whether corporeal or incorporeal, is proved, it becomes clear that the real object of the human being’s love is the infinite God.

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[1] Al-Qummī, Shaykh ʿAbbās. *Mafātīḥ al-Jinān.* The Supplication of Kumail.

A Criticism and Its Evaluation

It may be objected that the reciprocity of hope and love is acknowledged, and a hopeful individual or a lover, because of reciprocity between the two sides of hope and love, must have hope or love in relation to something. This, however, fails to prove the external existence of the thing, which is the object of hope or love, as it cannot be ruled out that the individual is hopeful, or in love with something, which is merely in his mind and has solely mental existence. It follows that the object of hope and love does not have to be an external object; rather the reciprocal nexus may also exist between the individual and an artifact of his own imagination. In other words, hope or love may be held with respect to an external reality or may be extended to something, which does not exist except in an individual’s fantasy. Therefore, the inference of an external existence from this mere reciprocity is unjustifiable.

The response to this important criticism is that the demonstration of primordial nature revolves around the reality of hope and love and proceeds from their external reciprocity. It is not founded on people’s conceptual surmise or knowledge or the description they give about the objects of their hope or love.

In the version based on hope, the person who is pessimistic of every finite and conditional implement does not entertain any concept or notion. At the emergency scene of, an earthquake, he bumps against the wall instead of using the exit. What he finds his being imbued with is the reality of hope, not its concept. This hope, because it is an external reciprocal reality, requires two sides that exist in the external world. Certainly, its other side cannot be a finite and conditional thing that the individual is pessimistic about.

In the case of love as well, the argument is not based on how individuals describe their object of affection so that their beloved entities could be the artifacts of their fantasies.

The love that permeates the human being's reality and gives motivation and energy to his life is not directed to a mental image. By pinpointing that finite entities are not what the human being is in love with, or by direct *shuhūd*, reason identifies the true object of man's love, irrespective of what people think who their beloved is.

The Demonstration of Primordial Nature in The Noble Qur'ān

The Noble Qur'ān is not a mere book of philosophy, which comprises abstract notions and discursive arguments. In addition to impartation of wisdom, the Noble Qur'ān describes its duty as the purification of souls. In Qur'ānic verses, its two features of education and purification are not separated from one another. Purification being the objective, and thus, antecedent to education, it mentions purification before education. In the few cases that education has been mentioned before purification, it is because education is a prerequisite of purification. For this reason, the Qur'ān mentions educational and moral guidance side by side and its epistemic expositions are coupled with real-life examples. For instance, while explaining virtue, it speaks of its epitome, that is, the virtuous man:

> *Virtue* (*birr*) *is not that ye turn your faces to the East or the West*; *virtue is rather the person who believeth in God and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets and giveth his wealth out of love for Him to the kinsmen and the orphans and*

> *the poor and the traveler and the needy and for those in bondage [to ransom slaves]; and established prayer and payeth the alms; and those who fulfill their promise when they make a promise and the patient ones in distress and affliction and in the time of war; these are they who are truthful and these are they who are the God-fearing.*[1]

A book that is solely concerned with theorizing about topics such as ethics, home economics, and so forth, when it explains virtue, it mentions values like faith, justice, and piety. However, when the Majestic Qur'ān explains virtue and righteousness, it mentions the virtuous men. The commentators who have failed to notice this fine point have had trouble in this and similar verses, and some have suggested that *"birr"* (virtue) should be read *"barr"* (virtuous)—as has been recited by some narrators of Qur'ānic recitations—and some have assumed an annexed noun in meaning, that is, "the people of virtue".

Given the demonstration of primordial nature can have a remarkably positive influence on the moral excellence of individuals, and its first premise is attainable by self-purification and *shuhūd* on an individual basis, it is one of the arguments, some of which were mentioned, that can be derived from verses of the Noble Qur'ān.

In the chapter of Luqmān, the Noble Qur'ān says,

> *Has thou not seen that the ships sail on the sea by the blessing of God, that He may show you some of His signs? Surely in this are signs for every steadfast, grateful [person]. And when covereth them a wave like*

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[1] 2*:* 177

> *mountains they call upon God in sincere devotion unto Him, but when He bringeth them safe to land, some of them are lukewarm, and none disputes Our signs except every ungrateful traitor.*[1]

In the chapter of Spider it says: *And when they embark on ships, they call on God sincerely, vowing worship [only] unto Him, but when He delivereth them safe to the land, behold! They associate [others with Him].*[2]

This and other similar verses indicate that the hope of a person who is pessimistic of every finite entity is a reciprocal reality the other side of which cannot be a finite entity. The reality of the object of hope, in the life-and-death situation of someone whose ship is about to be swallowed by a storm, is witnessed by *shuhūd*; and later, after being saved, this *shuhūd* becomes the premise of a discursive argument for the Necessary.

In some other verses, the demonstration of primordial nature has been explained by making use of love towards God.

> *And thus We were showing Abraham the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and that he may be of those who are sure. When the night overshadowed him, he saw a star and said, "This is my Lord." But when it set he said, "I love not the setters." When he saw the moon rising, he said, "This is my Lord." But when it set, he said, "If my Lord does not guide me, I would certainly be of the people gone astray." When*

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[1] 31: 32

[2] 29: 65

> *he saw the sum rising, he said, "This is my Lord; this is greater." But when it set, he said, "O' my people! I am clear of what ye associate. I have turned my face to Him who originated the heavens and the earth, being upright, I am not of the associators."*[1]

In the first of the above verses, God points out, We showed the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth to Abraham; and for its reason, He suffices to say, "and that he may be of those who are sure." A statement such as this indicates that showing the Kingdom to Abraham, peace be with him, had many reasons, and one of them was to secure certitude. Interpreters have presented a great variety of opinions regarding the nature of Abraham's reasoning. Some consider these verses reflect the demonstrations of motion, hudūth, and contingency and necessity. However, Abraham's, peace be with him, discourse includes no indication to these arguments.

The middle term of Abraham's demonstration, peace be with him, is love and affection. The Deity, which it proves, is a Deity that is loved and adored. Abraham, peace be with him, negates the divinity of celestial bodies on the grounds that love cannot be proportioned to something that is finite. He argues from his love and affection for an infinite and eternal Deity who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

All praise belongs to God, the Lord of the worlds.

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[1] 6: 75–79

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