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An Analysis and Critique of Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī's Interpretation of the Nature and Function of Reason in Proving the Existence of God

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The central doctrine of the Abrahamic religions, particularly Islam, is the knowledge of God. Establishing God's existence as the Absolute Perfection is considered the foundational step in religion. Al-Nabhānī, founder of Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr, emphasizes the impermissibility of *taqlīd* (imitation) in religious fundamentals, advocating instead for rational proof in affirming God's existence. He defines reason as the process by which sensory perception, combined with prior knowledge, is interpreted by the brain to understand reality. Al-Nabhānī offers two main rational proofs for God's existence: *dalīl al-ikhtirāʿ* (argument from invention) and *dalīl al-iḥkām wa-l-itqān* (argument from precision and coherence). However, these proofs are dialectical rather than demonstrative and thus do not yield certain knowledge. Even if treated as demonstrative, they fall under the weaker *quia* argument, which lacks epistemic certainty. As a result, stronger arguments are needed—particularly those based on self-evident premises or *quia* arguments that do produce certainty. Among the most rigorous arguments is the *burhān al-ṣiddīqīn* (proof of the truthful), especially as articulated by Ṣadr al-Mutaʾallihīn (Mullā Ṣadrā), which not only proves God's existence but also establishes His unity and attributes. This study primarily explores al-Nabhānī's definition of reason and its function, along with a critical assessment of his arguments for God's existence. It raises key questions: What is al-Nabhānī's method in proving God's existence? How does he define reason, and how valid is that definition? How does he view the arguments of the classical theologians, and how do his own arguments compare? Finally, what stronger alternative proofs might supplement or replace his approach?

Keywords: *Al-Nabhānī, God, reason, dalīl al-iḥkām, contingency, existence, burhān al-ṣiddīqīn*

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Introduction

Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī was born in 1909 in the village of Ijzim, in the district of Ḥaifā. His father, Shaykh Ibrāhīm, was a teacher and the *muftī* of Shām. He began his early education in Syria and completed it in 1922 in his hometown. By the age of thirteen, he had memorized the Qurʾān. He then traveled to Egypt to study at al-Azhar University, where he received the degree of *ʿĀlim* from the Faculty of Sharīʿah. Later, he joined the "World Center for Islamic Law" under the supervision of al-Azhar and was granted the license to serve as a judge. He subsequently studied Arabic at Dār al-ʿUlūm for two years and earned a certificate in Arabic language and literature.

Upon completing his studies, he returned to Ḥaifā in Palestine and became a teacher of Islamic sciences, seeking to nurture a religiously grounded nationalism in his students and to influence their intellectual and ideological orientations. He later served as a judge in the Sharīʿah courts of Bīsān, Ṭabariyyah, al-Quds (Jerusalem), Rām Allāh, and Ḥaifā. In 1953, he founded *Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr* (the Liberation Party) in Jerusalem[1]. Al-Nabhānī was a jurist and Islamic scholar who completed his studies at al-Azhar University. Since its founding, the party has expanded its activities to over fifty countries and is said to have over a million members. It operates not only in Muslim and Arab nations but also across Europe and the Americas. As an Islamist organization, the party declares its goal to be the restoration of Islamic life and the propagation of the Islamic call (*daʿwah*) globally.

Among the prominent figures of the party after al-Nabhānī are: ʿAbd al-Qadīm Yūsuf Zalūm (d. 2003), author of works such as *Niẓām al-Ḥukm fī al-Islām*, *Kayfa Hudimat al-Khilāfah*, and *al-Amwāl fī al-Dawlah al-Islāmiyyah*; ʿAṭāʾ ibn Khalīl Abū Rushtah, a Palestinian scholar, author of *Taysīr al-Wuṣūl ilā ʿIlm al-Uṣūl*, *al-Taysīr fī Uṣūl al-Tafsīr*, and *al-Azamāt al-Iqtiṣādiyyah: Wāqiʿuhā wa-Muʿālajatuhā min Wajhat Naẓar al-Islām*; and Aḥmad al-Dāʿūr, also Palestinian, author of *Naqḍ al-Qānūn al-Madanī*. Other influential members include al-Muḥāmī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mālikī al-Sūrī, author of *al-Siyāsah al-Iqtiṣādiyyah al-Muthlá* and *Niẓām al-ʿUqūbāt*, and ʿUmar Bakrī Fistuqī al-Lubnānī (Al-Dimashqiyyah 2012: 63)[2].

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1 Among the works, one can mention the three-volume book *al-Shakhṣiyyah al-Islāmiyyah* and other books such as *Niẓām al-Islām*, *Mafāhīm Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr*, *al-Niẓām al-Iqtiṣādī fī al-Islām*, *al-Niẓām al-Ijtimāʿī fī al-Islām*, *Niẓām al-Ḥukm fī al-Islām*, *al-Dustūr*, *al-Dawlah al-Islāmiyyah*, *al-Khilāfah*, and some other books which were either written by al-Nabhānī himself or under his supervision.

2 Regarding the critique and review of the ideas of this party, books and articles have been written, among which the most comprehensive is the book *Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr: Munāqashah ʿIlmiyyah li-Ahm al-Mabādiʾ al-Ḥizb wa Radd ʿIlmī Mufaṣṣal Ḥawla Khabar al-ʾĀḥād*, au-

Each intellectual school that has addressed the issue of proving the existence of God has done so based on its own foundational principles. While some approaches are valid, others are flawed. Among the contemporary intellectual currents in this field is *Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr*, whose considerable influence —especially in the Arab world and at times beyond—makes it necessary to clarify its foundational views and subject them to scholarly critique in order to distinguish what is sound from what is unsound.

1. Al-Nabhānī's Method in the Rational Proofs for the Existence of God

The importance of proving the existence of God is evident to all. Throughout history, various perspectives have been offered on this matter. Some consider the existence of God to be self-evident and in no need of argument, for there is nothing more apparent than God through whom one might come to know Him. Others have offered arguments for God's existence. They fall into two categories:

a. A Priori (Pre-empirical) Proofs

These aim to prove the existence of God without relying on created things as intermediaries. Such proofs include:

1) *Burhān al-Ṣiddīqīn* (the proof of the truthful),
2) The ontological argument,
3) The argument from *fiṭrah* (innate disposition),
4) The argument from religious experience,
5) The moral argument,
6) The argument from rational coherence.

b. A Posteriori Proofs

These rely on created things as intermediaries in the demonstration of God's existence. These include the causal argument (*burhān al-ʿillah*), the argument from possibility and necessity, the teleological (design) argument, the argument from motion, the argument from degrees of perfection, the argument from miracles, and the argument from the abrogation of firm resolve (*fasakh al-ʿazāʾim*).

thored by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Dimashqiyyah. This work addresses the refutation of their ideas concerning the non-authenticity (non-binding nature) of ḥadīth wāḥid and the prohibition of relying on it in beliefs, and consequently the denial of the punishment of the grave. This book was published by Maktabat al-Ghurabāʾ in 1996.

Al-Nabhānī's method in proving the existence of God is rational (*ʿaqlī*). He emphasizes that belief in God, prophethood, and the Qur'an must be established through reason, and that a Muslim must ground their faith in rational inquiry. He deems imitation (*taqlīd*) in doctrinal beliefs impermissible (Al-Nabhānī 2000: 8, 43).

Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr does not accept any of the commonly held definitions of reason. After critiquing them all, it posits the following definition: "Reason, or thought, or cognition is the transfer of sensory perception of reality through the senses to the brain, along with the presence of prior knowledge through which that reality is interpreted" (ibid.: 42).

Muḥammad Aḥmad al-Nādī, in his commentary on this definition, writes: "From this definition we conclude that the thinking process requires four pillars:

1) The external reality, which is the object of contemplation—this must be one of five things perceptible to human senses: either it is seen by the eyes, heard by the ears, touched by the hands, smelled by the nose, or tasted by the tongue.
2) The senses, which transmit the perception of the reality to the brain—the five senses are sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch.
3) A sound brain capable of linking the object of thought to prior information.
4) Prior information by which the reality under contemplation is interpreted."

Thus, in al-Nabhānī's view, reason is based on sensory perception. His notion of perceptible reality refers to that which can be experienced through the five senses—whether material or abstract. According to *Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr*, Islam is thought (*fikr*), and thought is the act of judging reality. Hence, Islam itself is the judgment of reality. Consequently, everything Islam has introduced must be subject to rational analysis according to the above definition—that is, the intellect must either perceive it through the senses or grasp its essence intellectually (ibid.).

Regardless of the critiques of al-Nabhānī's definition of reason and its limitations, the core methodology of *Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr*—that the path to proving God's existence is through reason and rational analysis—is fundamentally sound. The only viable path to affirming God's existence, which is the foundation of a religious worldview, is the path of rational deliberation.

The devotional (*taʿabbudī*) method entails a logical circularity, since it is secondary and dependent upon prior verification of the authority of its source. In other words, one must first establish the prophethood of the messenger to accept his message. But before that, one must first prove the existence of the

Sender (God). Clearly, one cannot establish the existence of the Messenger or the Sender based on the message itself—for example, one cannot argue: "Because the Qurʾān says that God exists, therefore He does." Only after proving the existence of God, recognizing the Prophet of Islam, and affirming the truth of the Qurʾān can one accept other doctrinal and practical matters based on the authority of a reliable source. Fundamental issues, however, must be resolved through other means.

The mystical (*ʿirfānī*) path for proving God's existence is also insufficient, as it requires a particular mental refinement that is only attainable through long-term rational and philosophical training. Those who lack such intellectual discipline may employ ambiguous terms and concepts, which can lead to significant deviation and confusion. Moreover, in many cases, what is actually experienced through *kashf* (mystical unveiling) may be confused with imagined projections or with the subjective interpretation imposed by the mind—even upon the one experiencing the so-called vision (Miṣbāḥ Yazdī 2009: 59).

Al-Nabhānī's definition of reason and his restriction of its function to the analysis of perceptible phenomena reflect the foundational epistemology and methodology he adopts in his argument. He holds two assumptions: first, that only self-evident matters are rational, and second, that only sensory experiences can be self-evident. Moreover, he seeks to prove the existence of God through self-evident truths. This approach is flawed on two fronts. First, rational truths are not confined to self-evident premises. Second, self-evident truths are not limited to sensory experiences.

While al-Nabhānī's attempt to provide a self-evident proof for God's existence is commendable, it should not lead to the reduction of reason to sensory analysis or the denial of its essential function. It is evident that the intellect does more than analyze sensory data—it has a far broader scope. We know through introspection that reason can analyze non-sensory matters. For instance, when we possess *ʿilm ḥuḍūrī* (immediate or unmediated knowledge), reason can analyze this form of knowledge, even though it is immaterial and thus non-sensory.

Furthermore, many non-sensory intuitive truths (*wijdānīyāt*) are more certain and infallible than empirical observations. These internally present perceptions are abstracted into conceptual forms in the mind, which are not only self-evident but possess a degree of self-evidence that exceeds that of sensory data.

Setting aside the discussion of self-evident conceptions (*taṣawwūrāt badīhiyya*), reason (*ʿaql*) affirms certain propositions which, although not grounded in sensory experience, are nonetheless accepted as axiomatic. These include: affirmation of the *principle of causality* (*qānūn al-ʿilliyya*), that every whole is greater than its part, that every whole is dependent on its parts, the validity of

the first figure of the categorical syllogism (*qiyās iqtirānī*), the validity of both conditional and disjunctive hypothetical syllogisms (*qiyās istithnāʾī ittiṣālī wa infiṣālī*), and the impossibility of the simultaneous affirmation or negation of contradictories (*ijtimāʿ wa irtifāʿ al-naqiḍayn*). These are all affirmed as self-evident truths by the intellect, despite being beyond the realm of sensory perception. Hence, the restriction of the function of reason in this context solely to empirical data, justified by appeal to self-evidence or infallibility, is untenable.

Another critique lies in the structure of Nabahānī's arguments. Although all of his evidences, as will be discussed, are empirically grounded, they ultimately culminate in a rational proposition: "Every created being is in need of a creator." This judgement is not sensory in nature but supra-sensory (*fawq al-ḥiss*). Furthermore, in demonstrating his previous claim, we arrive at the concept of *imkān* (possibility/contingency), which is a metaphysical and philosophical notion, and thus falls under the domain of intellectual concepts (*mafāhīm ʿaqliyya*). In fact, his argument may be formulated as follows: "Since these are possible beings, and all possibilities are equally disposed toward existence and non-existence, they require something external to bring them into existence; and that external cause must be necessary (*wājib*)."

From this line of reasoning, it follows that the concept of *imkān* is essentially concomitant with that of *wujūb* (necessity). It is evident, therefore, that both of these are rational constructs. Thus, Nabahānī's definition of reason and its function, according to the epistemological foundations he adopts, is insufficient.

2. Nabahānī's Approach to the Methodology of the Theologians and Philosophers

After defining reason in accordance with his own epistemological premise, Nabahānī critiques the theologians (*mutakallimūn*), challenging their arguments and validating only those that are rooted in sensory perception. For instance, in his work *al-Shakhṣiyyah al-Islāmiyyah* he writes: "Then they began to investigate the origination of the world and to establish arguments for the occurrence of things, and they began to expand upon this. New subjects were opened before them, and they proceeded to explore them and what branches from them to their logical conclusions. Thus, they were not investigating the verses in order to understand them, as was the methodology of the early scholars and as is the purpose of the Qur'an. Rather, they believed in them and began to establish proofs based on what they understood from them" (Al-Nabahānī 2003a: I/61–68).

In response to this statement, it suffices to note that the method of the *mutakallimūn* is not limited to adducing arguments based solely on the middle

term of the *ḥudūth* (origination) of the world. Theologians have employed three primary grounds for proving the existence of God: (1) *ḥudūth* (temporal origination), (2) *imkān* (contingency), and (3) *faqr wujūdī* (existential indigence). Those among the theologians who adopt the second criterion often combine theological discourse with philosophy, treating it as a supporting discipline and accepting rational demonstration (*ibnāʾ al-dalīl*).

They argue that if the subject of the proposition (as per the principle of causality) is "being" in an absolute sense, then this implies that every being, insofar as it is a being, requires a cause. However, such a proposition is neither self-evident nor supported by demonstrative proof. On the contrary, proofs for the existence of God indicate that a being can exist without requiring a cause. Therefore, the subject of this proposition must be restricted. Theologians, they maintain, understood this restriction to be "temporal origination"—i.e., a being that did not exist at one time and came into existence later must have a cause. Accordingly, the only uncaused being is the Eternal (*qadīm*)—namely, God (Miṣbāḥ Yazdī 2009: II/123).

In contrast, philosophers (and some theologians in agreement with them) contend that the appropriate restriction (*qayd*) is *possibility* (*imkān*), meaning that any being whose non-existence is not logically impossible requires a cause. Whether its duration is short or long does not eliminate its dependence; indeed, the longer its existence, the greater its dependence. Even an eternal contingent being would still necessitate a cause of infinite power. Based on the reasoning of the rationalists (*ahl al-ʿaql*), the existence of an eternal effect is not impossible.

However, it must be noted that the *imkān* cited as the criterion for causal dependence is a property of *māhiyyah* (quiddity). As the philosophers explain, quiddity in itself has no predisposition toward existence or non-existence; its relation to either is equal. Thus, something external must determine its actualization, and that is the cause. Therefore, they identify *imkān māhuwī* (ontological possibility) as the proper criterion (ibid.).

Yet, this explanation accords with the doctrine of the primacy of quiddity (*aṣālat al-māhiyyah*). For those who subscribe instead to the primacy of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*), the metaphysical foundation of inquiry ought to be existence itself. It is for this reason that Ṣadr al-Mutaʾallihīn (Mullā Ṣadrā) argued that the criterion for an effect's dependence on a cause lies in the *modality of its existence*—in other words, in its *existential poverty* (*faqr wujūdī*) and *essential dependence*. The subject of the proposition in question, then, is a *poor* or *dependent existent*. When the gradational nature of existence (*tashkīk al-wujūd*) is taken into account—wherein weaker levels of being depend upon stronger ones—the subject of the proposition may be regarded as a *weaker existent*, and the reason for its causal dependence is its ontological deficiency (ibid.).

A careful examination of Ṣadr al-Mutaʾallihīn's exposition reveals, first, that the causal relationship must be sought between the existence (*wujūd*) of the cause and the existence of the effect, not between their quiddities (*māhiyyah*). This is the natural outcome of affirming the primacy of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*), contrary to those who have imagined that the cause brings about the quiddity of the effect or qualifies it with existence—claiming that causation applies to quiddity or to the attribution of existence to quiddity. Both of these views are based on the primacy of quiddity (*aṣālat al-māhiyyah*), and with the refutation of this doctrine, no space remains for such opinions. Second, the effect's *being an effect* (*maʿlūliyyah*) and its dependency are intrinsic to its very existence. A dependent existence can never become independent or needless of a cause. In other words, the existence of the effect is essentially attached and dependent upon the bestowing cause. On this basis, concrete existence is divided into two categories: independent (*mustaqill*) and relational (*rābiṭ*). This is the precious insight cultivated within the school of *ḥikmat al-mutaʿāliyah* (transcendent theosophy) (ibid.).

Nabhānī, in another passage, critiques the methodology of the theologians (*mutakallimūn*) as follows:

> "The flawed nature of this methodology is evident in several respects. First: this method relies on establishing proofs on a logical foundation, rather than on sensory foundations—and this is erroneous for two reasons. One: it places the Muslim in need of learning formal logic in order to prove the existence of God... The second reason: from the standpoint of existence, a thing that admits no possibility of error at all is required; anything that could be subject to error cannot be a valid foundation for faith.
>
> Second: the theologians departed from the empirical and perceptible realm and extended their inquiry into the non-perceptible. They discussed what lies beyond nature—God's essence and attributes—beyond the reach of sense perception, and entangled this with discussions pertaining to the perceptible.
>
> Third: the theologians' method grants the intellect complete freedom to speculate about everything—whether perceptible or imperceptible. This inevitably leads the intellect to make judgments about that which it cannot apprehend, speculate about hypothetical constructs, and attempt to establish proofs based on mere conceptions of things which may or may not actually exist" (Al-Nabahānī 2003a: 57–62).

Leaving aside the various arguments offered in defense of logic as a science, we shall suffice here with a straightforward and self-evident formulation of the *burhān al-imkān wa-l-wujūb* (the proof of contingency and necessity).

This is because, if in affirming the existence of God we present a version of the theologians' proof that is based on axiomatic propositions, then none of Nabhānī's criticisms apply. For the criterion he emphasizes in his sensory arguments is precisely the element of self-evidence (*badāhah*), to ensure that the proof is immune from error.

Some contemporary scholars have formulated the *burhān al-imkān wa-l-wujūb* based on axioms and in a logical structure as follows:

There exists a being. Every existent is, by rational necessity, either *wājib al-wujūd bi-dhātih* (necessary in existence by itself) or *mumkin al-wujūd bi-dhātih* (contingent in existence by itself). The existent in question is either necessary or contingent. If it is necessary, then the existence of a *wājib al-wujūd* is proven, which is our objective. If it is contingent, then it must have a cause, since every contingent being that comes into existence must have a cause (this is the *principle of causality*). The cause of a contingent being is either a necessary being, or it lies in a chain of causes that ultimately ends in a necessary being. Otherwise, circular causality (*dawr*) or an infinite regress (*tasalsul*) would result, both of which are impossible. Therefore, the only valid conclusion is that the cause of the contingent being is either itself a necessary being or a link in a causal chain that culminates in a necessary being. Thus, the existence of a *wājib al-wujūd* is established (Fayyāḍī 2008: 190–193).

A close look at the premises of this argument reveals that none of them rely on sensory evidence, and all are self-evident (*badīhī*). This proof can also be formulated in another way that does not rely on rejecting circularity or regress:

Every existent is either *wājib al-wujūd bi-dhātih* (necessary in itself) or *wājib al-wujūd bi-ghayrih* (necessary through another, i.e., contingent). In the totality of contingent beings, without the existence of a *wājib al-wujūd bi-dhātih*, actualization is impossible. As a result, none of them would exist, since none of them possess necessity in themselves, and their necessity is derived. Until there exists a being that is necessary in itself, no derived or external necessity (*ḍarūrah bi-l-ghayr*) can actualize. Thus, there must exist a *wājib al-wujūd bi-dhātih* from whom the contingent beings derive their necessity and existence (Miṣbāḥ Yazdī 2005: II/423–424).

3. Explanation of Al-Nabahānī's Proofs

Al-Nabhānī's main rational argument for the existence of God is based on reasoning from the created to the Creator. This is referred to as the argument of invention, creation, and origination (*dalīl al-ikhtirāʿ aw al-khalq wa al-ījād*) (Al-Nabahānī 2003b: I/39–55). He also uses the argument based on order and

precision (*dalīl al-iḥkām wa al-itqān*) found in the universe, indicating a wise Creator (ibid.).

To briefly explain these two arguments:

- 'The argument of creation' infers the existence of a Creator from the existence of created things. It proceeds as follows: Observable creatures are either eternal and pre-existing—which is invalid, because we observe their origination and dependence, and believing in their eternality is inherently absurd—or nature itself is the creator of these things, which is also invalid, because nature is nothing but a part of the created order and its existing system. If we claim it is the creator, then it must simultaneously be both creator and created—an obvious impossibility to any rational person. Therefore, the only reasonable conclusion is that these creatures were created by an eternal, omnipotent, and all-knowing Creator who brought this world into existence from nonexistence—and that is none other than Allah, may He be glorified and exalted (ibid.: 61).
- 'The argument of order and precision' bases the existence of a wise Creator on the detailed and exact system of the world. This vast universe operates according to a specific pattern and fixed laws, continuing on its path of perfection. It possesses a wise and intelligent system in all of its parts, which guides any rational person to the existence of a wise, knowledgeable, and managing Creator. This Creator is Allah. For, had this universe been built upon random and coincidental laws, chaos would have prevailed, and we would not witness such order and precision (ibid.).

Al-Nabahānī's arguments align with the Qur'anic approach to this issue. Regarding the first argument, he cites several verses of the Qur'an, including:

> Were they created from nothing? Or are they themselves the creators? (al-Tur: 35)

> So let man consider what he was created from. He was created from a gushing fluid... (al-Tariq: 5–6).

> Do they not look at the camels—how they are created? And at the sky—how it is raised? And at the mountains—how they are fixed? And at the earth—how it is spread out? So remind them! You are only a reminder (al-Ghashiyah: 17–20).

Their messengers said, ‘Is there any doubt about Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth? He calls you that He may forgive you of your sins and give you respite for an appointed term.’ They said, ‘You are nothing but human beings like us who want to turn us away from what our forefathers used to worship. So bring us a clear proof!’ (Ibrahim: 10)

Do you not see that Allah created the heavens and the earth in truth? If He wills, He can do away with you and bring a new creation (Ibrahim: 19); along with many other verses.

Regarding the second argument, the following verses are referenced:

Did We not make the earth a cradle? And the mountains as pegs? And We created you in pairs. And We made your sleep a source of rest. And We made the night a covering. And We made the day for livelihood. And We built above you seven strong heavens... (al-Naba’: 6–12).

Blessed is He who placed constellations in the sky, and placed in it a lamp (the sun) and a shining moon (al-Furqan: 61).

No! Man has not yet accomplished what He commanded him. Then let man look at his food: We poured down water abundantly. Then We split the earth in clefts. And We caused to grow therein grain, and grapes and clover plants, and olives and date palms, and gardens dense with foliage, and fruits and fodder—a provision for you and your cattle (ʿAbasa: 24–33); and other similar verses (Al-Nabahānī 2003b: I/130–132).

3. 1. The Main Critique of These Arguments

The most important objection to these arguments is that they are not absolute, and this kind of reasoning does not provide certainty (*yaqīn*). Therefore, one still requires other types of proofs to reach the level of certainty. Moreover, these kinds of arguments are not even true demonstrations (*burhān*) in the technical sense, as they belong to the category of dialectical argumentation (*jadal*), which does not reach the level of demonstration and hence is not certain knowledge. It is used merely for silencing opponents or for reinforcing a point.

Another critique is that all of these arguments are based on the acceptance of the principle of causality, which is a rational principle not derived from sense perception.

A further objection is that such arguments are incapable of proving the following: infinity, self-subsistence, absolute perfection, oneness and unity, simplicity, eternity, absolute knowledge and power, absolute goodness, personhood and abstraction, and immutability and impassibility. This is the very valid criticism that David Hume directed at the argument from design, and it rightfully applies here as well.

4. A Response to the Qur'anic Use of Teleological Arguments

Here, an important objection is raised: if this category of argument lacks sufficient philosophical weight, why does the Qur'ān utilize such a method? In response, it has been stated: "The denial of demonstrative value (*burhānīyah*) to analogical reasoning based on design (*qiyās al-naẓm*) does not entail the denial of its dialectical value (*jadalīyah*). Therefore, employing it dialectically remains beneficial when addressing those who accept the existence of order either in parts of nature or the universe as a whole, and who already believe in a necessary being (*dhāt wājibah*) and divine creativity, as well as ontological monotheism (*tawḥīd dhātī*). In such cases, the argument from design can be used to establish divine lordship (*tawḥīd rubūbī*) and, consequently, monotheism in worship (*tawḥīd ʿibādī*). On this basis, the Noble Qur'ān engages in the 'best form of disputation' (*jidal bi-allatī hiya aḥsan*) with the polytheists and idol-worshippers of Ḥijāz, who constituted a large segment of the society into which revelation was sent" (Jawādī Āmulī 2009: 378).

The Qur'ān, as a book tasked with the guidance of all humankind, addresses the diverse intellectual needs of different groups in various parts of its discourse. In some verses and chapters—such as Sūrat al-Tawḥīd or the opening verses of Sūrat al-Ḥadīd—it meets the intellectual and spiritual needs of the elite and the gnostics (*khawāṣṣ ahl al-maʿrifah*). In other verses, it responds to the doubts of those who deny the origin or resurrection. And in yet others, it engages with those who have fallen into polytheism or error regarding divine lordship (*tawḥīd al-rubūbiyyah*) or worship (*tawḥīd al-ʿibādah*) through *jidal aḥsan*.

The prophets, likewise, adhered to this method, respecting the intellectual capacities of their audience, as illustrated by the prophetic dictum: "Indeed, we—prophets—have been commanded to speak to people in accordance with their level of understanding." God, exalted is He, also commands the Prophet: "Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom (*ḥikmah*), good exhortation (*mawʿiẓah ḥasanah*), and argue with them in the best manner" (Qurʾān 16: 125). And the Prophet Muḥammad implemented this divine command in the most excellent way.

Given this explanation, Nabhānī's objection—that one should only rely on arguments the Qur'ān explicitly cites—is unfounded. In any case, the integrity of the various proofs, and the fact that some are not reducible to others, has long been a concern of theologians (*mutakallimūn*), philosophers, and metaphysicians (*mutaʾallihūn*). Hence, they have sought recourse to higher forms of proof—such as the *burhān al-ṣiddīqīn*.

5. A Critique of Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr's Proofs in Light of Burhān al-Ṣiddīqīn

Given the inadequacy of non-absolute *quia* proofs (*barāhīn innī ghayr muṭlaqah*) in comparison to *limmī* or absolute *quia* proofs, some thinkers have turned to *burhān al-ṣiddīqīn* as a more robust alternative. We shall here reference the formulation provided by Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (Mullā Ṣadrā).

He argues that once it has been established that *existence* (*wujūd*) is primary (*aṣīl*) and *quiddity* (*māhiyyah*) is mentally posited (*iʿtibārī*), and that external reality is nothing but existence itself—and that this existence is one in its essence, though multiple in degrees—not through categorical plurality but through *graded intensity* (*tashkīk*), then a further conclusion follows. The differences among beings are due to gradations of perfection and imperfection, strength and weakness.

Given these premises, existence itself (*ḥaqīqat al-wujūd*) is either pure being (*wujūd ṣirf*)—utterly actual and independent—or it is dependent upon such a pure being. If it is the former, then it is the Necessary Existent (*wājib al-wujūd*). If it is the latter, then it must rely upon that highest and most complete level of being, which lacks any imperfection or non-being. Therefore, whether we consider the highest level of being or that which depends on it, we ultimately arrive at the existence of the Necessary Existent. By contemplating the hierarchy of being (*marātib al-wujūd*), one arrives at knowledge of the *wājib al-wujūd* (Mullā Ṣadrā 1981: XIII).

This argument (*burhān*) of Ṣadrā possesses several unique features:

1) It is based on the reality of being, not on the concept of being. The *ḥaqīqah* of *wuḥūd* is an abstraction from all sensory and material elements. In this formulation, what is considered is whether this reality of being is self-subsistent or essentially dependent on something else.
2) It introduces the notion of ontological poverty (*imkān faqri*) within the framework of transcendent philosophy (*ḥikmat al-mutaʿāliyyah*). The reality of existence (*ḥaqīqat al-wujūd*) never includes *māhiyyah*. The highest degree of it is inherently self-sufficient (*ghanī bi-dhātih*), and the lower degrees are by essence relationally dependent upon that

higher degree. Thus, *māhiyyah* is not at all involved, and consequently, essential possibility (*imkān māhuwī*) does not arise—only *imkān faqri*, which is a relational poverty.

3) This proof does not require the refutation of circularity (*dawr*) or infinite regress (*tasalsul*). Even aside from the impossibility of these two, this argument establishes the Necessary Existent independently. In fact, within this approach, the Necessary Existent is established first, and then the impossibility of circularity and regress is shown in its light.
4) The structure of the argument itself avoids regress entirely. Based on *ḥikmat al-mutaʿāliyyah*, the reality of existence is either self-subsistent or dependent upon that which is self-subsistent. Since what is dependent on another must ultimately rest upon something that is independent, the issue of regress or circular reasoning is bypassed. In this formulation, the proposition is not that a possible being must terminate in a necessary being, but rather that the relationally dependent (*mā bi-al-ghayr*) must be grounded in what is self-sufficient (*mā bi-al-dhāt*). Hence, either being is pure existence (making it the Necessary Existent), or it is ontological poverty (*faqr*) —defined entirely by its dependence.

According to this formulation within *ḥikmat al-mutaʿāliyyah*, not only is the essence of the Necessary Existent established, but so too are His unity (*tawḥīd*) and all His attributes of perfection (Jawādī Āmulī 2009: V).

Conclusion

In light of the above discussions, the argument presented by *Hizb al-Tahrir* for proving the existence of God, in terms of epistemic value, falls under the category of dialectical reasoning (*jadal*). This argument, being non-definitive in nature, does not yield certainty. Therefore, in this context, we are in need of other certain proofs, such as the argument of *possibility and necessity* (*imkān wa wujūb*), articulated in a form where its premises are self-evident, or the *ṣiddīqīn argument*, which is a *lammī* (demonstrative-causal) proof. The latter not only establishes the existence of God, but also, in the most complete manner, affirms the necessary attributes of the Exalted Necessary Being.

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