

Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's innovative version of proof of the truthful (Burhān-i ṣiddīqīn) and its reception in Islamic kalām

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Abstract: Among the arguments for God's Existence in the Islamic philosophy and kalam, the proof of the truthful (Burhān-i ṣiddīqīn) has a unique position due to its merits. Invented by Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), it soon received a noticeable reception from his followers who tried to present new versions of the proof. Among the post-Avicennian Imāmī theologians, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) set forth an important, new version of the proof of the truthful in his theological treatise entitled Fūṣūl, which is known by some of later Imāmī theologians as an innovative version of the proof. The gist of his argument is that since contingent beings are not beings in themselves, nor can be by themselves the cause for something to exist, there must be a necessary existence among the beings of the universe. Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's innovative version of proof of the truthful and its effects on and reception by the later theological and philosophical works has not received much attention in the recent researches so far. Present article, discussing and analyzing al-Ṭūsī's innovative version of the proof, points out that some of the Muslim theologians paid considerable attention to it and set out various versions of the proof in their writings.

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Introduction: It has often been noted that Muslim scholars have proposed various arguments to prove the existence of God. The proof of the truthful (Burhān-i ṣiddiqīn) is one of the valid and most prominent arguments to demonstrate the existence of God in Islamic philosophy and theology. It was first invented by Avicenna (Avicenna, 1383: 22) and developed via later philosophers and theologians. This proof, due to its own credibility, received a noticeable reception of the post-Avicennian Imāmī theologians who tended to the philosophical views of Avicenna in medieval period. Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī was one of the foremost Imāmī theologians who tried to present an innovative version of the proof of the truthful (Burhān-i ṣiddiqīn) for God's existence in some of his theological works. In his short, concise treatise entitled *Fuṣūl*, he set out his innovative version of the proof as follows: “Anyone knowing the true meaning of the ‘necessary’ and the ‘possible’ in the way set out by us, will have no trouble in understanding that, if something necessary would not

exist, then nothing would exist. This is because by itself and before the existence of this necessary ‘other’, nothing could exist. After all, in that case everything would be merely ‘possible’. So, there must be something other than the possible for the possible to be able to exist. And this thing, other than the possible, is then ‘the necessary.’ It follows, then, that, seeing and experiencing a multitude of things, the perceiving subject knows for sure that one of these things must be necessary” (Ṭūsī, 1335, 12). Thus, the gist of his argument is that since contingent beings are not beings in themselves, nor can be by themselves the cause for something to exist, there must be a necessary existence among the beings of the universe. His argument, which is known by some of later Imāmī theologians as an innovative version of the proof of the truthful (al-Suyūrī al-Ḥillī, 1378: 59; Al-Astarābādī, 1433: 72), though Ṭūsī has not personally claimed such, received much attention from later Imāmī Shi‘i theologians. However, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī’s innovative version of proof of the truthful and its effects

on and reception by the later theological and philosophical works has not received much attention in the recent researches so far. In the present paper, having discussed Ṭūsī's innovative version of the proof, points are made about its reception among Imāmī scholars of the following generations.

Methodology: after explaining the common versions of the argument of the truthful (Burhān-i ṣiddiqīn) in the period of Ṭūsī, by comparing his innovative version of the argument with the previous versions of the proof put forward by former philosophers and theologians like Avicenna, the new features of Ṭūsī's novel argument are shown. In order to identify the arguments adapted from Ṭūsī's new argument, both historical and analytical methods are employed.

Findings: the post-Avicennian Imāmī theologians like Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī have followed an Avicennian method for proving the existence of God and that they tried to benefit from Philosophical teachings of Avicenna in the

demonstration of the existence of God. This new approach in Shiite theology led to an important revolution of the argument in Imāmī theology in the medieval period.

Discussion and Conclusion:

This research, having examined theological sources of Imāmī and Ash'ari scholars, shows that many of them, including Fakhr al-Muhaqqiqīn (Fakhr al-Muhaqqiqīn, 1438: 51), al-Fāḍil Miqdād Suyūrī al-Ḥillī (Suyūrī al-Ḥillī, 1429: 151), Jamāl al-Dīn AL-Kaf'amī (AL-Kaf'amī, 1430: 60), Diyā' al-Dīn Jurjānī (Jurjānī, 1375: 181), Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsā'ī (al-Aḥsā'ī, 1434, 2: 501) and the prominent Ash'arite theologian al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (al-Jurjānī, 1419. 8: 14), relied on al-Tūsī's argument to prove the existence of God in their works.

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