Hakim Mullah Mohammad Mehdi Naraqi arguments on the unity of God

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Abstract

Obligatory monotheism is one of the important doctrinal principles and issues that have been always considered by many scholars who have raised scattered arguments. Zoroastrian cults, like Disaneh and Manavi, accepted duality and were dualistic. Christianity embraced trinity and some others believed in multiple Gods and multiple origins of the universe. Some people completely denied monotheism and began to idolatry and polytheism and pursued star-worship, sun-worship and moon-worship. Muslims believed in monotheism and rejected multiple Gods by resorting to the slogan "No God but Allah". Mullah Mohammad Mehdi Naraqi is a Muslim vehement advocate of obligatory monotheism who has propounded many varied arguments about monotheism. The present study sought to explain the specific view of Mullah Mohammad Mehdi Naraqi on monotheism, and then to list his related arguments. The arguments have been collected from his various books, especially his philosophical works.

Keywords: Mullah Mohammad Mehdi Naraqi, Monotheism, Preference without the preferable, pure existence, Determination.
Introduction

When obligatory monotheism is based on rational principles and arguments and is judged by wisdom, it makes believe in God. In all commandments of Islamic Sharia law especially in the principles of the religion, particularly in monotheism, imitation is disapproved and rational arguments and rational criteria are emphasized and wisdom and bate in monotheism are recommended in many verses of the Holy Quran (Shafahi, 1980:15). Although monotheism arguments are stipulated in Quran and tradition of divine prophets, but the ways of obligatory unity are numerous, scattered and confused in scholars’ rational standards. Mulla Sadrain the book Al-Asfar states that: “Intellect, Sharia and enthusiasm are needed to prove God and his unity and religion and the wisdom of Quran Sharia be ignored as well” (Shafahi, 1979:119).

Mullah Mohammad Mehdi Naraqi, in his philosophical books, has listed arguments for obligatory monotheism which should be reflected to see the reasons presented for the existence of God and to find out which of these reasons are correct and which of them are incorrect and also to find the strongest and the most confounding reasons. He argued sometimes based on the method of fixation with the issues such as the existence of God, God’s infinity and being determinant, equality of the existence of the necessary and its nature, the necessity of the existence of God, the relationship between essentially existence and necessity, and works citing God, and sometimes he argued based on the negative approach using issues such as negation of pluralism, negation of nature, negation of participation, negation of gender, differentiation and type, purity obligated by combination and denial of participation, and he proved the unity of God. In the present study we have reviewed the arguments of Hakim Naraqi about the unity of God collected from his philosophical books. Some of these arguments are rational and some others are narrative. Although Hakim Naraqi believes that recognition of God through theoretical approaches is difficult and states that God is infinite and every infinite thing is unprovable, and he recommends intuitive knowledge through struggle in the field of recognition of god, but he accepts theoretical knowledge of God through the study of the divine holiness in wonders of divine power and states that this type of recognition takes place through the grace and manifestation of God Almighty.

Monotheism

Monotheism literally means unity and uniqueness, and colloquially it means knowing God unique and the unity of the origin of the universe. In other words, monotheism is the belief in the oneness of God in all his features including nature, attributes, actions, governance of the world, worship etc.

There are several interpretations of monotheism. The most important of them are as follows: monotheism in the necessity of existence, unity of infinity and non-combinability, unity of essence and attributes equality, unity of the Creator and divinity, unity of action and governance, unity of obedience and legislation.
From the perspective of Mullah Mohammad Naraqi, monotheism is “The monopoly of existence as one thing that is genuine and essentially existed and also the monopoly of every attribute as the attribute of God and every action as his action. Everything is the shade of God and is amortized in God and is created by his consideration and destroyed by his lack of consideration” (Naraqi, 1978:75). He considers unity equal to the existence and its provisions as the provisions of existence and states that: “The unity of God is pure, equal to the essence and non-numeric and it depends on itself. Monotheism is pure being and infinity and non-combinability. This unity and monotheism is ruling not only on the essence of God but also on his attributes and actions (Ibid: 75).

Monotheism arguments from the perspective of Mullah Mohammad Mehdi Naraqi

The first argument

If anyone open up his insight eyes and pay attention to the world of introvert and extrovert and see its order and harmony, he finds out that this order cannot be possible but by a sentient, wise and authorized moderator. Because if there are two kings in a land, the land is unable to be regular and corruption and dysfunction will occur as well (See Anis al-Movahedin, Naraqi: 13-18).

This argument is based on the refusal of any incident because of the multiplicity of wills not the opposition and conflict of them. So, if there are multiple necessarily existents, assuming coordination and agreement of wills, there is refusal and in fact this argument consists of three issues. Firstly, essentially necessarily existent is not a potential and possible dignity. It means that if he is capable, then he is essentially capable not possibly, and if he is wise then he is essentially wise not possibly, etc. Secondly, existence dignity is an effect and is due to one cause not two causes. Thirdly, preference without the preferable is impossible, which means that if an object is equal to two objects, it is impossible to upset the balance and equality without the intervention of an external factor. Therefore, we can say that if an existent can be existed, based on the first issue, all the obligatory should give it the existence then it turns into the second issue that nothing is existed. Therefore, assuming a plurality of necessarily existents, it is necessary that nothing be existed, because the existence of this existent becomes impossible.

Preference without the preferable

Preference means that two different actions and two effects can be done by a subject, so that the subject is equal to the two actions. If the subject influences on one of them and creates it without the preferable, it will be preference without the preferable that is impossible, like a person who is faced with two options and must choose without the preferable.” (Karaji, 2002: 68). It should be noted that preference without the preferable is about the subject that is acting two actions and chooses or determines one side without being changed, but tendency without the preferable is about the object that can accept both sides and is equal to both sides and accepts one side without the preferable. Despite this difference in subject and object, it should be said that preference without the preferable and tendency without the preferable are both abstained.
The second argument

When there are two necessarily existents, and one of them wants one thing to be existed while the second one wants it not to be existed, then we have three cases; first, their wills are both realized, or none of their wills are realized, or the will of one of them is realized and the other one’s is not realized. In the first case there is a paradox and oxymoron and it requires that one thing be existed and not be existed simultaneously. In the second case inability of both necessarily existents are proved. In the third case the power of one necessarily existent and inability of the other one are proved. This case is our favorite one and indicates that there is just one necessarily existent (Naraqi, 1980:81).

The third argument

God is the pure existent, the true and real unity, and pure existent does not have requirement and multiplicity (Naraqi, 2002:258). In this argument, Hakim Naraqi has rejected obligatory plurality due to the rational rule that “pure existent is unique and is not repeated”. He has concluded that God is the pure existent and the pure existence requires unity or plurality or both. Now, if we accept the first case of the first argument, our favorite is achieved and does not need to be proved, because unity is the requirement of pure existent. If we accept the second case, i. e. pure existent requires plurality, and then no unity is achieved. Because if there is no unit, there will be no plurality and the source of plurality is unity. So, if pure existent requires plurality, plurality and unity both are rejected. In the third case, both unity and plurality must be affected and an effect needs a cause, whereas as the necessarily existent, needing cause is inconceivable. Therefore, pure existence requires unity and this is obvious.

The fourth argument

If God is plural, there must be two cases, one of them is better than the other one and has a perfection that the other one has not, or they both are perfect equally. In the first case, the lack of perfection indicates failure and there is no failure in God. In the second case, plurality is required which is meaningless because in this case we will not have two things and our favorite, i. e. unity, is achieved (Ibid: 261).

So, it can be said that mediocrity in the argument is God’s infinity and its non-combinability. Therefore, this argument completes the pervious argument or indicates it and cannot be considered as an independent argument.

The fifth argument

Necessarily existent is unique or plural. If it is unique, our favorite is achieved and the second existent is not ever assumed for it. If it is plural, then it is rejected because plurality is caused by multiplicity (Naraqi, 423-554). The criterion for multiplicity and plurality is otherness or place and subject or situation and location or time and none of these criteria existed. Situation and location require time, and time is a requirement of action not essence. On the other hand, time
requires motion and motion is required by plurality. Otherness is caused by nature and essence or by meaning, and both of them are impossible in necessarily existent because its nature and essence is incumbency (See Elahiat-E Shefa, Motahari, Vol. 2: 234-233).

The above argument states that plurality is not appropriate to the nature of God. If plurality is appropriate to the nature of God, the obligatory never happens. Because, whatever be considered as obligatory, it will be plural and plural is not realized without individuals.

The sixth argument

Each creature, obligatory or possible, is determined. When we prove that one creature is obligatory or possible its determination is fixed. On the other hand, if an essence is multiple and plural, then its essence should be apart from personal determinations. If its essence is personal determinations, then plurality will be impossible as well. In addition, essence and determination are not separated from each other in determinant. If they are assumed separated, combination becomes necessary. So, we conclude that every essence is united with its determination (Naraqi, 2002: 555).

This argument deals with determined and characterized necessarily existent. There are three cases here: its determination is as its essence, or determination is necessary to existence of God, or determination is effected by his essence. In the first case, there will no plurality and multiplicity and plurality is impossible. The second case requires that if necessarily existent is realized, it is together with determination. This assumption leads to rejection of plurality as well. In the third case, it is required that God be effected and determination needs a cause that is impossible (Motahari, 2008: 39).

It is concluded that plurality will require that God be effected and being effected is inconsistent with obligatory and the fact that God is as determination, and if not, it will be required a cause for this determination which requires that necessary need possible which is impossible and inconsistent with the essence of necessarily existent.

Characterization and determination

Characterization is the particular existence of each creature but determination is something by which an object is distinguished from the others so that the others are not involved in this object (Karaji, 2002:74).

An object determination is relative and sometimes as the essence, such as necessarily existent determination which is inherently distinguished from the others; and sometimes it is superfluous to essence such as distinguishing author from the others. But characterization is the particular existence of an object and its identity. Conceptually, it is as existent (See Asfar, Vol. 2: 15).
The seventh argument

The fact of any pure existent cannot be multiple and plural due to its essence and there must be one thing outside its essence to make multiplicity and plurality be required. This non essential thing indicates that necessary needs others. So, the essence of God is unique and he has no partner (Ibid: 557).

This argument has contents of the previous argument, but it can be said that it is different from it as well, because the previous argument tried to prove possibility and said that pure existent must be as determination, but this argument tries to prove validity of the existence and says that pure existent cannot have multiplicity.

The eighth argument

In the universe we cannot have two essentially obligatory, because if we have two essentially obligatory then their existences will be as their natures and we cannot distinguish their existences from their natures.

Therefore, whatever related to their nature will be equal to both of them; because for them existence is as nature, so all nature requirements are common in them. Anything that wants to affect this fact needs an expert outside the essence and it is not allowed that necessaries affect the others because they cannot allocate this effect to themselves. So, inevitably, there must be something else to allocate these effects. If this something else is external, it requires that both of them be effects. Allocation of external effect to each of them requires an allocator, so determination of allocator is prior to determination of assumed necessaries which is impossible; because we were trying to introduce assumed necessaries as the cause of causes (Naraqi, 2002: 259).

The argument states that multiplicity of pure existent is impossible, because in this case the existence of two assumed necessaries is as their nature and an external effect is their allocator. On the other hand, to be allocated by the external allocator, an allocator is needed, so determination of allocator is prior to determination of assumed necessaries which is impossible.

The ninth argument

If we consider the necessity of existence as an attribute of God, this attribute (the necessity of God) is one of the two: either this attribute is necessary to him or possible. In the first case this attribute will be the condition for necessarily existence and in the second case the described thing will not be necessarily existent, because it was assumed that necessarily existent is necessarily existent from all aspects. Therefore, the attribute of necessarily existent is applicable for just one described thing (unique necessarily existent) (Naraqi, 2001: 576-575).

In this argument the relationship between essentially existence and necessarily existence is investigated. Therefore, it can be said that the relationship between existence and essence is one of the two: either necessarily existence is prior to the nature of necessary, i.e. God has a nature
that requires necessarily existence, or necessarily existence is as the nature of necessary, i.e. necessarily existence is as the nature of necessarily existent. The first case requires that nature be the cause of necessarily existence and necessarily existence be an effect of a cause which is not essentially existed. In the second case necessarily existence is as the nature of necessary and the desired result is achieved.

So, it is concluded that necessity is not an attitude of God, because it leads to requirement of necessary and rejection of attitude.

The tenth argument

If there are two or more necessarily existents, they must have differences to be distinguished from each other. This requires combination in the nature of God and combination needs the requirement to components which is opposite to essentially existence (Naraqi, 2002: 559).

This argument is based on difference between necessary and others, and indicates that if there are multiple necessarily existents then there are two cases: either their difference is intrinsic which consists of a combination of difference and atonement, or their difference is non-intrinsic and these necessaries are effects. These effects can be one of the two: effect is unnecessary and God needs others to be characterized, or effect is the essence of God and existence is prior to characterization, however there is no essence before characterization. Therefore, multiplicity of God is impossible.

The eleventh argument

If there are multiple Gods, the concept of the necessity of existence is shared between them. Due to the concept of necessity, they will require gender or differentiation. In the first case they must be distinguished from each other by a differentiation, and in the second case they must be distinguished by a personal factor. In both cases combination in the nature of the two necessaries is required which is impossible (Naraqi, 2002: 259).

The twelfth argument

This argument is called "distinction" argument and gives meaning to pure existence of necessary. The argument states that if there are multiple pure existent necessaries, they will be united or not. In the first case the cause of distinction and differentiation between them must be determined which is certainly an external cause. This assumption requires the possibility of one or both of the two necessaries. In the second case (i.e. in the absence of unity of the two) the necessary existent must affect one or both of them. This requires a cause which is incompatible with necessarily existence. So, the fact of necessarily existent is its strict existence (Naraqi, 2002: 258).

If there are two essentially existents, there must be a third issue to distinguish them. This third issue must be essentially existent, because if it is possible, then it will need others. Therefore, the existence of two necessaries requires the existence of three necessaries. There must be
distinctions between them. This requires two distinguishing factors to distinguish the third necessity from the two previous necessaries. Therefore, three necessaries require five necessaries, five necessaries require eight necessaries, eight necessaries require thirteen necessaries, and this trend continues to infinity. Therefore, it requires a combination of infinite necessaries which is impossible and incompatible with the nature of necessary.

Distinction argument is the same as combination argument but in this argument distinction is necessarily existent not possible existent and there is analogically possibility relationship between the two necessaries.

The thirteenth argument

God has no partner or alike in no sense, because partnership between two or more things is existed when they have a common concept while they are different from each other. The common concept is intrinsic such as totality, type and possibility. They do not exist in the nature of God. The common concept may be abstracted from existence, such as unity and activity. It should be said that necessarily existent is at the top of these levels with infinite intensity, contrary to other objects that are at the lowest level (Naraqi, 2002: 59).

The argument can be argued so that if the necessarily existent does not have gender, type, quantity, quality, and status, so it does not have heterogeneity, form, similarity, equality, and coordination, and adding it to objects is required guardianship.

The fourteenth argument

If necessarily existence is common between multiples, two cases are required: either the common issue is their gender which is divided by differentiation, or the common issue is their type which is divided by effects. The first assumption is invalid because of two reasons:

1. It requires that the differentiation dividing gender also constitute it which is impossible. Because differentiation does not become gender.
2. It requires that essentially existent needs others which is invalid. Because essentially existent is naturally existed and if we consider differentiation or effect for the necessary, then components will give existence to the necessary and effected existence will be achieved. The second assumption is invalid because it requires combination of essentially existence and effected existence (Naraqi, 2001: 569-568).

It seems that there is a defect in this argument, because Hakim Naraqi has summarized division and multiplicity of necessarily existent as division of gender into types and division of type into individuals. The third division can be considered as division of general casual nature into contradictory types.
The fifteenth argument

If two necessarily existents exist, they must have same activities and the effect of them must be equal, because both of them are similar in existence and necessity. Therefore, relating activity and effect to one of them without the other requires preference without the preferable which is impossible. If activity is related to both of them, doing a single activity by multiple actors is required which is impossible. So, the multiplicity of God is impossible (Naraqi, 2002: 584).

"This argument is accurate and complete when we consider two necessaries without differences as plural. Otherwise, if we say that two necessaries, while sharing in the necessity of existence, have differences, then our reason is incomplete and it will be said that a special effect is caused by a cause that is compatible with it” (Motahari, 2011: 310).

The sixteenth argument

Sometimes we think about necessarily existent based on its necessarily existence and sometimes we think about a necessarily existent object, i.e. it has an objectivity and obligatory and necessarily existence is occurred to the objectivity. Now, if we have two necessarily existents, the fact of their necessarily existence, which requires necessity of existence, is a fraudulent to make necessarily existent necessary or describe it with the necessity of existence. This requires that they should not be essentially existent and necessarily existence affects it. So, essentially necessarily existent is unique (Ibid: 583).

The seventeenth argument

If there is another God, the second God must send prophets and books and laws to introduce itself. But it has not happened, because all prophets had spoken of one God, not multiple Gods (Naraqi, 1990:84).

As analysis of this argument it should be said that believe in a single necessarily existent based on the miracle of a certain person such as a prophet is not recognition in monotheism, but it is an imitation. In fact, there is difference between a person who has believed in something through rational understanding and the person who has believed in something through listening to someone. Therefore, citing the prophet words to prove essentially necessarily existent is considered an "distant". But this is not meant to neutralize the role of prophets in increasing the level of human knowledge about God.

Conclusions

Due to presented arguments, it is concluded that Mullah Mohammad Mehdi Naraqi is one of the philosophers of “monotheism” and he is an excellent interpreter and commentator. He believes that unity of God is ruling on his nature and attributes; and plurality, neither rationally nor externally, does not exist in the fact of the necessary. It can be concluded that the essence of God is pure necessarily existent, infinite and pure of nature and existence limitations and it essentially does not accept multiplicity and plurality. Everything is limited but him. So from his perspective,
the real existence is the existence of God and creatures are all signs and symbols of God’s names and attributes.

It can be said that the most reliable reason for unity of God is the third argument which is based on pure existence of God and fourth, fifth, and twelfth arguments conclude the same results as well. The sixth and seventh arguments indicate a same result. But the sixth argument proves validity of the possible while the seventh argument proves the validity of the existent. The twelfth argument known as “distinction” consists of the results obtained by the tenth argument, i.e. combination argument. The difference is that in the distinction argument, the difference is considered as necessarily existent. The fifteenth argument is valid if we consider two necessaries without differences as plural. The seventeenth argument is considered an imitation, not an identification and recognition of monotheism.
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