



Refutation of Ibn Kammuna's Shubha with Emphasis on Muhammad Gilani's Response to this Shubha

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Abstract: Sa'd Ibn Mansur Ibn Sa'd Ibn al-Hassan Bin Hebatullah Ibn Kammuna, known as Ibn Kammuna (died 1284), was among the prominent pupils of Shaikh al-Ishraq. In Islamic world, Ibn Kammuna is rather known for shubha he posed about the unity of the God. This paper tried to provide the context of this shubha and refutation thereof with emphasis on the response provided by Shams al-Din Muhammad Gilani to this shubha.

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Biography and Parentage of Shams al-Din Gilani:

Mulla Muhammad Shams al-Din Gilani, known as Mulla Shamsa, was educated in Isfahan school of thought, and left precious work.

At the end of transcript of the book *Tazkarah al-Hakkakin* by Ali Ibn Isa, he wrote about his and his father's name, "I wrote this copy for myself. I am a humble servant of the God, Shams al-Din Muhammad, son of Ni'matullah Gorgani. May the God bless my late parents, and bless us.

In 17th and 18th centuries, a number of Gilani's scholars were known as Shams al-Din Muhammad Gilani and Mohammad Shamsai Gilani, all of whom were educated in Isfahan school of thought. Their having the same name, place of residence, and their living during the same period, have resulted in their works and biographies being confused with one another's.

1- Shams al-Din Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Saeid Gilani Isfahani: He was talented in math and ethics. He was a pupil of Abdulqadir Eshqabadi Isfahani (died 1706). He died in young age in Isfahan, and his tomb is located in Takhte Foolad.

2- Shams al-Din Muhammad Gilani, with nom-de plume of Asiri, wrote the book *Mafatih al-I'jaz fi Sharh Golshane Raz*. Except for name and pseudonym, he shared nothing with Muhammad Ibn Nimat Ni'matullah, and with Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Saeid.

Date of Birth and Death:

His date of birth is not known for certain. The earliest proof of his life is his transcription of several treatises dated 1574.

His date of death is also unknown. According to University List, vol. 3, p. 179, his date of death is 1686. Sayyid Jalal Ashtiani stated in introduction to *Shawahid al-Rububiyah Shamsai Gilani's* date of death to be 1670.

These dates are not compatible with the data specified at the end of a transcript of *Ithbat al-Aql* by Mulla Shams, which is included in Collection 1823 of I.R. Iran's Islamic Parliament, because at the end of this transcript dated 1650, the words "May his dust be fragrant" (indicating that Shamsai had been already dead) follows the name of Shamsa.

In a research on transcripts of the works by Mulla Shamsa, Ibrahim Dibaji concluded that every book and treatise written during the life of the author that bears the expression "long live" was written before 1653.

Thus, it is certain that Muhammad Ibn Ni'mat Allah Gilani was alive in 1574, and died before 1653.

Travels:

Mulla Shamsa was very much interested in travelling and tourism. However, his travels never prevented him from researching and writing, as he wrote many of his works while travelling. He was in Tous in 1644, where he wrote *Huduth al-Aalam*. In 1637, he wrote *Fawa'id Falsafi* or *Maratib al-Wujud* in Hejaz. In 1638, he wrote *Tafsir Surah al-Ikhlaas* and *Ilm Wajib* in Mecca. In 1640 when he was in Shiraz, he wrote *Ibtal Wujud al-Wajibayn*. And he wrote *Masalik al-Yaqin* in Tous in 1648 and 1650.

Mulla Shamsa as described by Mulla Sadra

Sadr al-Din Shirazi wrote two letters describing the high scientific position of Mulla Shamsa Gilani.

Mulla Sadra, who was a prominent philosopher of Safavid era, highly respected Mulla Shamsa, and asked him to review Mulla Sadra's work *Huduth al-Aalam*, and make comments on it. Mulla Sadra's letter to Mulla Shamsa's reads,

"I send this letter to Muhammad, who is a prominent and knowledgeable scholar, and holds the purest and best scientific virtues, and is most detached from worldly attachments, and who is as generous as the sun.

Works:

As said earlier, many treatises have been written by Mulla Shamsa, the most of which are available. His works are mostly focused on philosophical issues, and proof of the God and resurrection; his other works are mostly focused on exegesis. First, his non-exegetic works are described here, and then, two exegetic works of his are discussed.

Aqsam al-qaziyah wa ithbat adam al-wasitah bayn al-mujibat wa al-sabatt

Researches on Animals: In this book, written in Persian, Ibn Makunna discusses important philosophical issues. In *al-Zari'ah*, vol. 1, p. 105, a treatise on proof of the necessary, written in Persian, is ascribed to Mulla Shamsa, and it is said that the said treatise could be part of Ibn Makunna's book *Tahqiqat*.

- 1) *Tahqiq sudur al-kathir an al-wahid*.
- 2) A commentary on Tousi's *Ithbat al-uqul*.
- 3) A commentary on *Sharh isharat*.
- 4) A commentary on *Sharh tajrid*. This is a commentary on *Sharh tajrid* by Qushchi, and on the commentary on *Sharh Tajrid* by al-Khafri.
- 5) A commentary on *Sharh hikmah al-ayn*. This is a commentary on the commentary written by Muhammad Ibn Mubarak Shah, known as Mirak Bukhari on *Hikmah al-ayn* by Ali Katibi Qazvini (died 1276).
- 6) A commentary on *Qabsat*.
- 7) A commentary on *Masalik al-yaqin*.
- 8) *Huduth al-aalam*. This treatise was written in Tous in 1644, and this treatise has much been referred to in his commentaries on *Sharh isharat* and on *Ithbat al-aql* by Tousi.
- 9) *Al-Hikmah al-muta'aliyah*. This is long and detailed philosophical book, but it still doesn't cover all philosophical issues.
- 10) *Al-zati wa al-arazi*. This is short writing about the distinction of the essential and the accidental.
- 11) *Fawa'id Falsafi*. He wrote this book in Hejaz in 1637.
- 12) *Kayfiah sudur al-mawjudat an mabda'iha*.
- 13) *Luzumiyah*. This work is a research on the meaning of necessity and its categories, and

also provides the statement of the Proposition of Necessity and its instances.

- 14) *Masalik al-yaqin*. This book covers the question of existence, from both peripatetic and ishraqi perspectives. In this detailed discussion, philosophical argument is combined and compared with ahadith. He completed writing of this book in Tous in 1650.
- 15) *Al-Wahid la yasdur anh ila al-wahid*.
- 16) *Risalah fi al-wujud*. In this book, he discusses Ibn Kammuna's *shubha*, responding to it. The writing of this was completed in 1649.
- 17) *Ibtal wujud al-wajibayn*. He completed writing of this book in Shiraz in 1640.
- 18) *Risalah fi ithbat ihtiyaj al-mumkin*.
- 19) *Risalah fi ithbat al-tawhid*. In the collection of the works of Shamsai Gilani held by Late Mirza Taher Tonekaboni, which is now preserved in Library of I.R. Iran's Parliament, this treatise is named "Burhan al-Tawhid".
- 20) *Risalah fi ithbat al-wajib wa tawhid*. In the end of this treatise, the author interprets the verse "Say: He is Allah, the One and Only" (The Holy Qur'an, 112: 1), and objected Zamakhshari's interpretation of this verse.
- 21) *Ithbat wahdat al-wajib*. In this book, philosophical arguments are adorned with Arabic and Persian poems.
- 22) *Risalah fi imkan al-ashraf*. The doctrine of imkan ashraf (possibility of the most honorable) which is among the evidence in substantiation of the necessary is discussed. This was completed in 1640.
- 23) *Risalah fi burhan al-tawhid*. This is a brief book that is different from his other books on this subject.
- 24) *Risalah fi tahqiq ma'ni al-kuli*. This book proves the necessary through discussion of the meaning of the general.
- 25) *Risalah fi al-taqadum*.
- 26) Solution to Ibn Kammuna's *Shubha*.
- 27) *Ilm al-wajib*. In the list of I.R. Iran's Islamic Parliament, vol. 9, part 2, p. 581, this book is introduced in detail. This was completed in Mecca in 1938.
- 28) *Ilm al-wajib*. This Mulla Shamsa's second book on the God's knowledge.
- 29) *Risalah fi ithbat wilayah Amir al-Mu'minin*. This book is about imamate, and proves imamate based on rational argument and hadiths.
- 30) Exegesis of sura al-Insan. This exegesis is composed of 26 chapters.
- 31) Exegesis of sura al-Ikhlas. This is the book that is the subject of the present study, and

part of it covers refutation of Ibn Kammuna's shubha. He wrote this book in Mecca. This book provides a depth study of proof of the necessary and unity of the God, and is rich in firm arguments and precious knowledge.

Literal Meaning of Shubha

Shubha literally means semblance and concealment. It has other meanings as well, which include suspicion, and doubt and doubt. It also refers to something unclear as to what is true and what is false (Moein, M., Persian Dictionary, entry of shubha; Cheikho, L., al-Munjid (translated by Bandar Rigi, M.), entry of the root sh-b-h).

In other words, shubha is the instance in which two things cannot be distinguish due to their resemblance to each other. "But they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them" (The Holy Qur'an, 4: 157). The terms tashabuh (resemble), mutashabih (cosimilar) and mushtabah (dubious) appear in verse 118 of sura al-Baqarah, and verse 99 of sura al-An'am.

The First Shubha

It has been said that the first shubha was posed by Iblis in the matter of creation of Adam, in which case Iblis said that Adam was made of soil, while Iblis was made of fire, and so, it was below Iblis's dignity to prostrate before Adam (Khatami, p. 136).

Difference between Question and Shubha

There a number of differences between question and shubha, the most important of which can be described as follows.

Question is human quest for knowledge, and the questioner seeks to obtain knowledge, shubha is aimed undermining the belief of the audience in the subject-matter of shubha. In fact, the difference between question and shubha lies in the function and objective. Function of question is obtaining knowledge, while shubha is posed to challenge the audience. On the other hand, false elements are intentionally included in shubha, and the person who poses shubha aims to misrepresent the false words as true words by mixing false and truth. This is why Imam Ali (PBUH) said, "Shubha is called so because it has semblance of truth" (Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 27, p. 161; Nahj al-Balagha, p. 81).

About Ibn Kammuna

Sa'd Ibn Mansur Ibn Hassab Hebatullah Ibn Kammuna (died 1284), was a philosopher and ophthalmologist, whose date and place of birth is not known – even Ibn Fuwati, a contemporary of his, who wrote Ibn Kammuna's biography, didn't make any mention of his date and place of birth. Although many authors have

said Ibn Kammuna's ancestor, Hebatullah Ibn Kammuna Israeli, to be a Jewish philosopher contemporary of Avicenna, Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, and Abu al-Khayr Khammar (Agha Bozorg Tehrani, vol. 2, p. 286), there is no reference in earlier sources to these. Ibn Fuwati, as the earliest writer to speak about Ibn Kammuna, described him as a literary man, philosopher, logician, and mathematician, and had many pupils. He was so famous that Ibn Fuwati asked him to write something to adorn Ibn Fuwati's book, in response to which Ibn Kammuna sent some verses to him (Talkhis Majma' al-Adab, vol. 4, pp. 160-161).

The religion and faith of Ibn Kammuna is highly disputed. Some have said him to be Jewish, while others have said him to be Muslim and even Shiite on the grounds that he used to salute Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Bihari, vol. 4, p. 524; Agha Bozorg Tehrani, vol. 2, p. 268). However, some (Bihari, vol. 4, p. 524) have claimed that, as seen the history, he didn't hold much belief in any religion, and such disbelief was so strong that following publication of the book Tanqih al-Abhath, people of Baghdad rioted against him, and Baghdad's sheriff sentenced him to death by burning; however, his advocates placed him in covered box, and carried him to Hilla secretly, where he stayed for a time until he died (Al-Hawadith al-Jami'at, pp. 441-442; Ibn Rafi', p. 25; Azawi, vol. 1, p. 330; Bihari, vol. 4, p. 524).

However, it seems that the said event cannot be considered as proof that Ibn Kammuna was irreligious, because Baghdad's Zahiriyah did such things to many scholars who didn't support Asha'irah's rulings, including al-Tabari, al-Hallaj and even Shaykh Tusi. Besides, Ibn Kamunna's fame is mainly based on shubhat ascribed to him, which were usually posed as part of treatises in which Ibn Kammuna tried to respond to such shubhat. Among such shubhat is an important one related to unity of necessary existent, which is discussed below.

It should be noted that although the early sources dint not made any reference to biography of Ibn Kamunna, what later made him very famous was is one of the hypotheses of the question he posed and answered to with regard to the unity of the God (Aal kashif, pp. 250, 251; Hassanzadeh Amoli, vol. 2, pp. 110-114). It should be noted that according to Mir Damad (Hassanzadeh Amoli, vol. 2, p. 514), Mulla Sadra (Hassanzadeh Amoli, p. 1, vol. 30), this shubha had been previously posed by others, and is found in the writings of people who lived before Ibn Kammuna, for example, this shubha was posed and responded to by Avicenna (Bihari, vol. 4, p. 524; Avicenna, vol. 2, p. 302); however, in the writings of the later scholars, this shubha is known as Ibn Kammuna's shubha, including Mulla Sadra's Commentary on Shifa (p. 33ff.) and Sabzevari (p.148) and Lahiji (p. 130).

Invoking a transcript of Asfar, Hassanzadeh Amoli held that the first person to pose this shubha was Proclus (Hassanzadeh Amoli, vol. 2, p. 514). Quoting Mahbub al-Qulub Daylami, Hassanzadeh Amoli described Proclus as an African man who posed many shubhat. However, quoting from Asfar, Allamah Tabatabai held this shubha to be first posed by Shaykh Ishraq in Mutarihat, and stating that Ibn Kammuna discussed the said shubha as he was the commentator of Shaykh Ishraq's works.

This shubha has such a strong influence on Islamic scholars and kalaam scholars, whether peripatetic or ishraqi, that it was one of the concerns about the issue of the unity of the God, even some faqihs and scholars called him iftikhar al-shayatin (pride of the devils), believing that this shubha made a huge contribution to goals of devils.

In Ferdows A'laa, page 200, late Shaykh Muhammad Hussein Aal Kashif said, "Muhaqiq Khansari, the peripatetic philosopher and author of the precious book Mashariq al-Shumus (the scholar who was entitled aql hadi ashar (the eleventh reason) said that when Imam Mahdi (PBUH) reappears, I will not ask him for any miracle but to respond to "Ibn Kammuna's misconception".

Statement of Ibn Kammuna's Shubha

Proposition:

"Why shouldn't it be possible for two necessary existents to be essentially contradictory, and at the same time they do not have the same species, and do not have distinctions, given they would thus not be required to be complex, and therefore, not subject to problem of complexity, because what these two necessary existents share is their characteristic of being necessary existent, which is an abstract entity, and which has no equivalent in the physical world."

Mulla Shamsa's Response

Thus, if it is, God forbid, said, "Why two necessary existent may not exist in the world, with each of these two necessary existents being unfathomable and purely simple, and with appearance of each of them being exactly the same as their essence; briefly speaking, with each of them being a perfect necessary existent, in such a way that in each of them, the properties of the necessary-in-itself be present, and yet, the general necessary existent that is shared by both of them would not be in the nature of their essence, so that they would not be required to be complex?"

Because it is possible for the general necessary existent that is shared by both of them to have an accidental rather than essential nature, then, they would not be required to be complex.

Answer:

This shubha is known as "Ibn Kammuna's Shubha", and also as "problem of non-righteous people". The answer to this shubha is as follows: the existence of an existent can take two forms: the existent may either exist in itself, irrespective of whether or not something else exists, or exists for itself, with its existence being dependent on another thing.

In the first case, the existent is existent in itself, that is, its existence doesn't require any cause; while in the second case, the existent exists for itself, and its existence depends on another thing.

And thus, if necessity of the necessary is dependent on something else, such dependence can take two forms: necessity of the necessary can either be based on itself, and not anything other than its own essence, or be based on another thing.

Thus, the first is the necessary existent that doesn't require any cause, and its necessity is necessity in itself; and the second is necessity-for-itself, in which case necessity depends on another thing.

The same applies to science, power, will and other perfect attributes, because they all are in the nature of essence in case of the necessary existent, while they are in the nature of contingency and accident in case of possible existent. Among properties of necessary existent, as proved by argumentation, is that existence, necessity of existence, science, power, will, and other perfect attributes of necessary existent are in the nature of the essence, and not in the nature of contingency and accident.

Thus, if it is assumed that there are two necessary existents in the world, then, it would be required that all of such properties of the necessary existent be present in both of these two necessary existents, because, if any of such properties not be present in either of these two necessary existents, then, than one would not be necessary existent.

Thus the proposition is contradicted, because it was considered to be necessary for properties of two necessary existent to be present in both of them, and given one of the properties of the necessary existent is that necessary its properties, including existence, power, science, will and other perfect attributes, must be in the nature of its essence, then, these two things must share their essence, rather than their contingent attributes, while the shubha assumes that they share contingent attributes only. Existence also is in the nature of essence, because existence of the necessary existent is existence in itself, the same applies to power, science, and other perfect attributes, and such attributes as shared by these two entities also are in the nature of essence. Thus, what they share is in the nature of essence. And since these two separate entities must have distinction as well, they must have a complex nature (since what they share must be combined with

what distinguishes them). Since, each of them will be complex, and every complex thing is possible existent and not necessary existent. Also, the argument that perfect attributes of the God are objective indicate that he must be necessary existent, and at the same time his perfect attributes must not be in the nature of essence, as is the case with possible existent, which would constitute a defect for the God, and thus is not true.

On this basis, duality of these two necessary essences must be abolished, because if perfect attributes constitute the uniqueness of each of them, then, the unique attributes of one of them must be held by another as well, thus abolishing their difference. Thus, it would be required for the appearance of each of them to be different from appearance of another, which in turn requires. On this basis, duality of these two necessary essences must be abolished, because if perfect attributes constitute the uniqueness of each of them, then, the unique attributes of one of them must be held by another as well, thus abolishing their difference. Thus, it would be required for the appearance of each of them to be different from appearance of another, which in turn requires

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This is a good way to refute polytheism, which has not been used by any person but me, which has been favored by the God to me.

Conclusion

Ibn Kamunna's shubha is a bitter story in the realm of philosophy and science, which conveys many messages. People researching "the behavior of scholars while encountering shubha and criticism", or even

those who are simply interested in this field, cannot ignore this historical event, as it has a very big lesson to teach.

The most beautify words made in this regard are those of the God saying,

"If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides Allah, there would have been confusion in both! but glory to Allah, the Lord of the Throne: (High is He) above what they attribute to Him!" (the Holy Qur'an: 21: 22).

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