

**DISCUSSIONS ON IBN SĪNĀ'S PROOF (ISHĀRAH) THAT  
EXISTENCE IS NOT ADDED TO THE NECESSARY:  
AL-RĀZĪ, AL-ṬŪSĪ, AND ŞADR AL-SHARĪ'AH**

**Güvenç Şensoy**

Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University, Zonguldak-Türkiye

guvenc.sensoy@beun.edu.tr

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7003-4228>

**Abstract**

Later theologians and Peripatetic philosophers concur that existence is added to contingents. However, while philosophers assert that existence is not added to the Necessary, theologians dispute this judgment. According to the argument presented in the fourth *namaʿ* of Ibn Sīnā's (d. 428/1037) *al-Isbārāt wa-l-tanbībāt*, accepting essence as the cause of existence leads to certain issues. The most prominent of these is *taqaddum*, which is the precedence of something over itself. This study explores Ibn Sīnā's argument, al-Rāzī's (d. 606/1210) objections in his *Sharḥ*, al-Ṭūsī's (d. 672/1274) responses to these objections, and Şadr al-Sharī'ah's (d. 747/1346) analysis of al-Ṭūsī's responses. By focusing on these figures, we can understand how the

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acceptance of the concept of *wujūd* (existence), one of the concepts of *al-umūr al-‘āmmah* (general concepts), influenced the course of the debate. Unlike the aforementioned scholars, Şadr al-Sharī‘ah accepts that existence is shared in terms of expression and thus rejects both the distinction between existence and essence and the notion of accidentality. This study will first underscore the critical role of the distinction between existence and essence in the Peripatetic system. After elucidating the position of this distinction within the Peripatetic framework, I will delve into the proof of *al-Ishārāt*, the central focus of this study. This analysis will examine the approaches of al-Rāzī, al-Ṭūsī, and Şadr al-Sharī‘ah in terms of their comparative and interconnected perspectives on the proof. Notably, Şadr al-Sharī‘ah’s approach, which has gained attention in modern scholarship for its methodological significance but has seen less focus on its theological implications, will be particularly emphasized.

*Key Words:* Kalām, the existence-essence distinction, Necessary being, Ibn Sīnā, al-Rāzī, al-Ṭūsī, Şadr al-Sharī‘ah

## Introduction\*

According to philosophers, existence is superadded in contingent beings, whereas it is identical in the Necessary Being. Although both theologians and philosophers agree that existence is superadded to contingent beings, they diverge in their views regarding the Necessary Being. Philosophers have demonstrated that the Necessary Being would be contingent if one does not accept the identity of essence and existence in the Necessary Being. The relation between existence and essence is discussed concerning the oneness of the Necessary Being. In this study, I will examine an ongoing debate over one of the remarks (*ishārah*) in Ibn Sīnā’s *al-Ishārāt*. I have chosen three highly representative scholars for this debate. al-Rāzī analyzes the argument in his *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt* and offers some criticisms. al-Ṭūsī, on the other hand, analyzes al-Rāzī’s objections in his *Sharḥ* and provides answers in defense of Ibn Sīnā. In this respect, these two figures represent Ibn Sīnā’s critics and defenders. The next scholar whose approach I will examine is Şadr al-Sharī‘ah. As a theologian aware of Ibn Sīnā’s proof,

\* I would like to thank the anonymous referees and journal editors for their comments on the article’s first draft.

al-Rāzī's objections, and al-Ṭūsī's responses, he questions the strength and validity of al-Ṭūsī's answers. Given his different view on the relationship between existence and essence compared to the aforementioned scholars, Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah's entry into the debate within the *Ishārāt* tradition is significant. This study aims to illustrate how Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah contributes to this debate with a distinct ontology while addressing the issue of addition to the Necessary Being.

Studies on Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah have primarily focused on his methodological stance, with only a few examining his understanding of existence. In this context, two studies are noteworthy. The first is Mahmut Ay's study, which delves into Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah's philosophy of existence. While this study explores Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah's view on the addition of existence to the Necessary, it does not address the specific points where he diverges from Ibn Sīnā, al-Rāzī, and al-Ṭūsī. Another study investigates Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah's philosophy of existence, particularly focusing on his analysis of the necessity of existence in the Necessary and highlighting his divergences from al-Ṭūsī.<sup>1</sup> This article examines Ibn Sīnā's proof and the subsequent discussions by al-Rāzī and al-Ṭūsī. It ultimately reveals Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah's judgments on these discussions, highlighting the differences in perspective from which the opinions are derived. Through this analysis, the article aims to illustrate how Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah's unique viewpoint contributes to the ongoing debate about the relationship between existence and essence in the context of the Necessary Being.

First, I will present the philosophical approach to the distinction between existence and essence through Ibn Sīnā's argument. Then, I will demonstrate the relation of this distinction to the oneness of the Necessary Being. Finally, I will examine the evaluations of al-Rāzī, al-Ṭūsī, and Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah. It is beyond the scope of this study to provide the final conclusions of the aforementioned scholars on the subject, so I have restricted the discussion to Ibn Sīnā's argument (*ishārah*).

<sup>1</sup> See Mahmut Ay, *Sadrüşşer'â'da Varlık: Ta'dîlî'l-ʿulûmü Temelinde Kelam-Felsefe Karşılaşması* (Ankara: İlahiyât Yayınları, 2006); Güvenç Şensoy, *Sadrüşşer'â'nın Kelâmî Ta'dîl Teşebbüsü: Varlık ve Ulûhiyyet Merkezli Bir İnceleme* (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2023).

## 1. The Philosophical Basis of the Existence-Essence Distinction

While philosophers accept the distinction between existence and essence in contingents, they do not accept this distinction in terms of the Necessary Being. According to them, acknowledging this distinction undermines the necessity of the Necessary. This acceptance is rooted in explaining the nature of things and how they exist. The clear articulation of this distinction first emerged with Ibn Sīnā,<sup>2</sup> and al-Rāzī utilized it as an analytical tool to scrutinize the nature of existence and knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

It is possible to say that this distinction was also present in al-Fārābī. His distinction is based on the difference between what exists and what is true (*ṣādiq*). When something is conceived (*taṣawwur*), it is

<sup>2</sup> For the theses that this distinction takes place as a theory in al-Fārābī, see Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2007), 133 pp; Alparslan Açıkgenç, “İslam Felsefesinde Varlık Öğretilerinin Öncüleri”, *Felsefe Dünyası* 13 (1994), 11-16; Robert Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003), 179. For an example of a situation in which the distinction was not clarified before Ibn Sīnā, cf. Peter Adamson, “Before Essence and Existence: al-Kindī's Conception of Being”, *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40/3 (July 2002), 297-312. See also Ibn Rushd's comments on the distinction between existence and essence. Catarina Belo, “Essence and Existence in Avicenna and Averroes”, *al-Qantara* 30/2 (Julio-Diciembre 2009), 403-426; Fehrullah Terkan, *Recurrence of the Perennial Encounter? Al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd on God's Knowledge* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, PhD Dissertation, 2004), 230, etc. Although the distinction is generally thought to be derived from ancient Greek philosophy, some studies claim that this is not true, but instead that the source of the distinction is the debates between the thing and the existent in early theology; see Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, 145; Robert Wisnovsky, “Notes on Avicenna's Concept of Thingness (Ṣay'yya)”, *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 10/2 (September 2000), 181-187; Ömer Mahir Alper, “İbn Sīnâ'da Tanrı'nın Kanıtlanması Sorunu: O Gerçekten Kelâmcılardan Etkilendi mi?”, *İstanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 7 (2003), 62.

<sup>3</sup> Before Ibn Sīnā, the discussions of the thing and the present were made in terms of coherence and meaning. Ibn Sīnā made a synthesis between Mâturīdism and Ash'arism and between Mu'tazilism and al-Fārābī (d. 339/950). Although he, like the Ash'arīs and Mâturīdīs, stated that the thing and the existent are the same in terms of scope, he also continued to argue that “the thing and the existent are different in terms of meaning,” just like the Mu'tazilīs and al-Fārābī; see Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, 153; For an analysis of the concepts of “thing” and “existence” through Ibn Sīnā's texts, see Amos Bertolacci, “The Distinction of Essence and Existence in Avicenna's Metaphysics: The Text and Its Context”, *Islamic Philosophy, Science, Culture, and Religion*, ed. Felicitas Opwis - David Reisman (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 271 ff.

possible to say it has an essence. However, whether this essence exists is another matter. He presents the concept of “emptiness” as an example. When emptiness is conceived (*taṣawwūr*), that is, when its essence is considered, it has no external reality. This shows that the existence of a thing and its essence are distinct.<sup>4</sup> The reason al-Fārābī makes such a distinction, i.e., between the essence of a thing and its existence, is to identify the cause of the addition of existence to essence and the cause of the existence of a thing, i.e., the addition of *wujūd*, as seen in Ibn Sīnā. By doing so, the idea of necessary existence, which is self-caused and not dependent on something external, is grounded; that is, it is impossible for something to be the cause of its own existence.<sup>5</sup>

Ibn Sīnā applied the concepts of necessity and contingency to this distinction. Unlike God, who lacks essence, other existents possess essences and, consequently, compositions. This relationship between a concept and its realization in the external world holds true regardless of whether external beings are singular or multiple. Thus, the concept of existence links essence with external objects beyond the Necessary Being.<sup>6</sup> The existence-essence distinction entails accepting that existence enables essences to unite and constitute an object.<sup>7</sup> In this way, one arrives at the Necessary Being and the absence of a distinction between existence and essence within it, implying the impossibility of attributing essence to the Necessary Being. This is because the distinction leads to the idea that every being with an

<sup>4</sup> Abū Naṣr Muhammad al-Fārābī, *Harfler Kitabı: Kitābu'l-Hurūf*, ed. and trans. Ömer Türker (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2008), 57.

<sup>5</sup> Abū Naṣr Muhammad al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Fuṣūṣ* (Hyderabad: Maṭba‘at Majlis Dā‘irat al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Uthmāniyyah, 1926), 3-5. Also see Mehmet Sait Reçber, “Fārābī ve Tanrı'nın Basitliği Meselesi”, *Uluslararası Fārābî Sempozyumu Bildirileri*, ed. Gürbüz Deniz - Hayrani Altıntaş (Ankara: Elis Yayınları, 2005), 213-227.

<sup>6</sup> Ömer Türker, “Metafizik: Varlık ve Tanrı”, *İslam Felsefesi: Tarih ve Problemler*, ed. M. Cüneyt Kaya (Ankara: İSAM Yayınları, 2013), 628. Also see Ömer Türker, *İslam Felsefesine Konusal Giriş* (Ankara: Bilimsel Araştırma Yayınları, 2020), 156-157; Ömer Türker, “Mahiyet Teorisi”, *Metafizik*, ed. Ömer Türker (İstanbul: Ketebe Yayınları, 2021), 2/675.

<sup>7</sup> Fazlur Rahman Malik, “Essence and Existence in Avicenna”, *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies* 4 (1958), 12-13; İbrahim Halil Üçer, *İbn Sînâ Felsefesinde Suret, Cevber ve Varlık* (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2017), 321; Michael E. Marmura, “Avicenna and the Kalam”, *Probing in Islamic Philosophy-Studies in the Philosophies of Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali and Other Major Muslim Thinkers* (New York: Global Academic Publishing, 2005), 103.

essence, separate from its existence due to causality, must have an external cause for its realization. Since contingency is directly linked to essence, there exists a distinction between existence and essence for contingent beings. In contrast, such a distinction does not apply to the Necessary Being.<sup>8</sup> This is precisely the role of the existence-essence distinction in Ibn Sînâ's system. According to him, "If something is brought into existence by an agent, its essence and the existence it receives from its agent can be distinguished. If something is necessary, meaning it exists without any agent causing it, its essence and existence must be identical."<sup>9</sup> In Ibn Sînâ's system, the distinction between existence and essence serves primarily to differentiate between God and other existents, and to uphold the unity and simplicity of God.<sup>10</sup> Essentially, Ibn Sînâ asserts God's uncausality while recognizing that all beings other than God possess essences in addition to their existence.<sup>11</sup> According to Ibn Sînâ, the contingent being is characterized by the distinction between existence and essence. In contrast, the Necessary Being lacks essence and is solely

<sup>8</sup> Üçer, *İbn Sînâ Felsefesinde Suret, Cevher ve Varlık*, 323; Amos Bertolacci, "Necessary' as Primary Concept in Avicenna's Metaphysics", *Conoscenza e Contingenza Nella Tradizione Aristotelica Medievale*, ed. G. Fioravanti - S. Perfetti (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2008), 31-51. Moreover, Davidson states that Ibn Sînâ was the first philosopher to use the concept of "necessary existence" to prove God's existence. Herbert A. Davidson, "Avicenna's Proof of the Existence of God as a Necessarily Existent Being", *Islamic Philosophical Theology*, ed. Parviz Morewedge (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979), 169. cf. Michael E. Marmura, "Avicenna's Proof from Contingency for God's Existence in the *Metaphysics* of the *Shifâ*", *Mediaeval Studies* 42/1 (1980), 337-352.

<sup>9</sup> Türker, "Metafizik: Varlık ve Tanrı", 640; Eşref Altaş, *Fabreddin er-Râzî'nin İbn Sînâ Yorumu ve Eleştirisi* (İstanbul: Marmara University, Institute of Social Science, PhD Dissertation, 2009), 223; Peter Adamson, "From the Necessary Existent to God", *Interpreting Avicenna: Critical Essays*, ed. Peter Adamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 170-189.

<sup>10</sup> For detailed information, see. Ömer Mahir Alper, "İbn Sînâ ve İbn Sînâ Okulu", *İslam Felsefesi: Tarih ve Problemler*, ed. M. Cüneyt Kaya (Ankara: İSAM Yayınları, 2013), 270; Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, 162. For criticisms of the distinction between existence and essence, see Tuncay Akgün, "Meşşâi Filozoflar ve Gazâlî'nin Ontolojisinde Varlık-Mâhiyet Tartışmaları", *Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 16/2 (2016), 235-258. For the proof of necessary existence based on this distinction, see. Fadıl Ayğın, "Zorunlu Varlığı İspat Bağlamında İbn Sînâ'da Varlık-Mahiyet İlişkisi: Ontolojiden Teolojiye", *İslâmî İlimler Dergisi* 10/1 (2015), 111-131; Alper, "İbn Sînâ ve İbn Sînâ Okulu", 273; M. Cüneyt Kaya, *Varlık ve İmkân: Aristoteles'ten İbn Sînâ'ya İmkânın Tarihi* (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2011), 200, 206.

<sup>11</sup> Kaya, *Varlık ve İmkân*, 201.

characterized by existence. Contingency, in this context, signifies that essence depends on a cause of existence. When this relationship between possibility and essence is established, it becomes evident that the existence of contingent essences derives solely from the Necessary Being, which itself requires no external cause for its existence.<sup>12</sup>

The concepts of *wujūb* (necessity) and contingency create space for the notion of causality, and the distinction between existence and essence elucidates the reasons for the existence of a thing at any level of reality. In other words, this distinction has strengthened the metaphysical explanation based on necessity and contingency. Consequently, it became possible to justify the emanation from God to subsequent levels. The significance of this distinction lies in its role in grounding the idea of the universe's eternity and addressing issues that were previously attempted to be resolved and explained in terms of the essences of existence originating from the active intellect before Ibn Sīnā.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the eternity of the universe in temporal terms, albeit not in terms of essence, based on the concept of *imkān*, became an issue that theologians in later periods, who accepted the distinction between existence and essence, placed on their agenda.

Accepting that existence is essential to essence hinges on the acceptance of the separation between existence and essence. Conversely, later theologians argue that existence is added precisely because they acknowledge this distinction. The distinction itself, and the implications of this addition, are central to the debates between theologians and philosophers concerning the existence of the Necessary Being and contingent beings. Both theologians and philosophers agree that existence is added to contingent essences. Their disagreement regarding the Necessary Being stems from differing interpretations of divine attributes.<sup>14</sup> According to Sunnī theologians, God's attributes are distinct from His essence. Because

<sup>12</sup> Üçer, *İbn Sīnâ Felsefesinde Suret, Cevber ve Varlık*, 23-24; cf. Ibn Sīnā, *İşaretler ve Tembihler: al-İshārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, ed. and trans. Ali Durusoy et al. (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2005), 131-132.

<sup>13</sup> For objections to understanding this distinction regarding existence's being contingent on essence, see Parviz Morewedge, "Philosophical Analysis and Ibn Sīnā's 'Essence-Existence' Distinction", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 92/3 (September 1972), 425-435.

<sup>14</sup> Bilal Taşkın, *İslâm Düşüncesinde Varlık Tartışmaları: Sadeddin et-Teftâzânî Merkezli Bir İnceleme* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2020), 260.

they do not accept the unity between attributes and essence, they do not argue that the Necessary Being is simply existence itself.

## **2. The Negation of the Addition of Existence in Necessary Existence: Ibn Sīnā's Proof of *Ishārāt***

The sign that is mentioned in the fourth *namat* of *al-Ishārāt*, "existence and its causes," is as follows:

"It is conceivable for the essence of a thing to cause one of its attributes, and for that attribute to subsequently cause another attribute, such as a specific quality (*hāṣṣa*) causing a differentiating feature (*faṣl*). However, it is impossible for an attribute, which possesses existence, to cause its essence, which lacks existence. This is because the cause precedes in terms of existence, and what precedes in terms of existence cannot itself be caused by existence."<sup>15</sup>

The focus of discussion here is not the initial aspect of Ibn Sīnā's argument, where it's possible for the essence of an existing thing to cause one of its properties, and for one of these properties to cause another. Rather, the crux of al-Rāzī's critique centers on the subsequent conclusion. According to Ibn Sīnā, the existence of a thing cannot be caused by its essence alone; the essence must first exist in order to cause something else. In other words, for an essence to function as a cause, it must already exist prior to the thing it causes. However, the existence of an essence implies that anything attributed to it is contingent upon its existence. Since existence cannot be preceded by anything in terms of existence itself, it cannot be caused by any nonexistent essence or anything else.

In his subsequent argument, Ibn Sīnā analyses the relationship between existence and essence in terms of the realization of the Necessary and *tauhīd*. Nevertheless, since this study analyzes only al-Rāzī, al-Ṭūsī, and Ṣadr al-Sharī'a's interpretations of the above argument, the subsequent arguments will not be discussed.

## **3. al-Rāzī's Objections**

In *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, al-Rāzī's method begins by elucidating Ibn Sīnā's argument and subsequently offering his interpretations of it. Initially, al-Rāzī introduces Ibn Sīnā's proof by highlighting two key

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt*, 129.

impossibilities that are not explicitly addressed in the final part of the demonstration. The first impossibility is that something can precede itself, and the second is the notion of infinite regress (*tasalsul*). According to al-Rāzī, the essence of the argument can be summarized as follows:

"It is impossible for the essence of a thing or one of its attributes to be the cause of its existence. This impossibility arises because the cause precedes the effect in terms of existence. If the essence were to cause its own existence, it would imply that it existed before its existence existed, which leads to a contradiction -either the thing would precede its own existence, or it would imply a double existence, both of which are untenable. Such reasoning would necessitate an infinite regress (*tasalsul*) or return us to the discussion of the primary entity, which would then require an infinite series of causes—a situation that cannot logically hold."<sup>16</sup>

In his commentary, al-Rāzī closely adheres to Ibn Sīnā's concepts, making almost identical use of them. However, towards the conclusion of his commentary, al-Rāzī substitutes the term 'cause' (*'illa*) with reason (*sabab*). Despite this linguistic difference, as noted earlier, al-Rāzī's commentary is significant for explicitly addressing the impossibilities that Ibn Sīnā implicitly presents. Although Ibn Sīnā does not directly mention issues such as "the thing's precedence of itself" and "infinite regress," these concerns are inferred from the structure of his argument. Conversely, al-Rāzī explicitly articulates these problems, thereby providing a clearer exposition of the underlying implications in Ibn Sīnā's reasoning.

For al-Rāzī, this issue is one of the most fundamental topics in metaphysics (*mabāḥith al-ilāhiyyāt*). He emphasizes that "Minds and understandings are often perplexed by this issue."<sup>17</sup> This idea expressed by al-Rāzī is later referenced by al-Ṭūsī. I will make a note of it now and address it in the next part of this chapter.

<sup>16</sup> Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa't-tanbīhāt*, ed. Ali Rıza Necefzâde (Tahran: Encümen-i Asar ve Mefâhîr-i Ferhengî, 2005), 2/355-356.

<sup>17</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2/356. Since this study focuses only on al-Rāzī's explanations in *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, al-Rāzī's claim should be accepted as valid only within this focus. For al-Rāzī's final view, it is necessary to refer to his late works.

After establishing that there is no doubt or dispute in the statement "God exists," al-Rāzī proceeds to discuss how the term "exists" is attributed to God. He distinguishes between two ways in which the term "exists" is attributed: literal and meaning-based. al-Rāzī explains that philosophers and theologians agree on the commonality of these ways of attribution with respect to this expression, despite certain skilled and respected theologians accepting differing views.<sup>18</sup> After presenting the philosophers' arguments against this perspective, al-Rāzī proceeds to critique Ibn Sīnā's argument. This study refrains from analyzing the comparison between literal and semantic commonality views, thus omitting an examination of the evidence al-Rāzī provides on behalf of the philosophers.<sup>19</sup>

Before advancing his objections, al-Rāzī offers a detailed exposition of Ibn Sīnā's argument, emphasizing key aspects that will be subject to critique. According to al-Rāzī's explanation, several implications arise if God's existence and the existence of contingents are considered equal in terms of their existence without any conditions. First, following the theologians' perspective, it could be posited that God's existence is intrinsic to His essence and constitutes one of His actual attributes. The second perspective aligns with the philosophers' view, asserting that there is no distinction between God's existence and His essence—this is encapsulated in the statement that "His essence is His existence." The rationale behind this philosophical stance, as previously mentioned, contends that if God's essence and existence are viewed as separate, it would necessitate God's existence depending on His essence. This implication would categorize God as contingent rather than necessary, as His existence, separate yet essential to His essence, would then be considered an attribute contingent upon His essence. Since an attribute requires a subject (*mauṣūf*), it would logically follow that God's existence depends on His essence, rendering Him contingent. al-Rāzī argues that anything contingent requires a cause, and he explores the potential causes within this framework. If this cause lies outside of God's essence, it would imply that God's existence is caused by something external, which al-Rāzī deems incorrect. Alternatively, if the cause is attributed to God's essence itself, it leads to the aforementioned impossibility: the

<sup>18</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sbarḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/356.

<sup>19</sup> For the evidence, see. al-Rāzī, *Sbarḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/356-358.

cause precedes the effect in terms of existence. If, according to one possibility, God's essence is accepted as the cause, then God's essence must precede His existence, which contradicts the idea that God's existence is necessary. This elucidates the foundation of Ibn Sīnā's argument refuting the proposition that "God's existence is distinct from His essence." Subsequently, al-Rāzī proceeds to present his objections, which form the core focus of the study.<sup>20</sup>

In discussing the addition of existence to essence, according to al-Rāzī's presentation of Ibn Sīnā's view, Ibn Sīnā asserts that "God's existence is equivalent to the existence of contingents in terms of being. This existence is not added to any essence, and His existence is self-subsistent." In his initial objection, al-Rāzī addresses the relationship of this existence to essence. He outlines that concerning the relationship of existence to essence in the Necessary Being and contingent beings, it can be categorized into three perspectives:

1. **Existence must be added to essence:** This view suggests that existence is not intrinsic to essence but is superadded to it. This perspective is typically applied to contingent beings.
2. **Existence must not be added to essence:** This perspective posits that existence is inherent in essence, such that essence and existence are indistinguishable or identical. This perspective aligns with Ibn Sīnā's position regarding God.
3. **Neither of the two is necessary:** This view allows for the possibility that existence and essence can be understood in ways that do not strictly adhere to the first two perspectives, suggesting a broader interpretation or different metaphysical framework.

These three perspectives frame al-Rāzī's examination of the relationship between existence and essence, forming the basis for his critique of Ibn Sīnā's argument on this matter.<sup>21</sup>

According to al-Rāzī, the first option leads to a correct conclusion that must be substantiated, while the other two options result in impossibilities:

**First Possibility:** In this view, since existence is common to both the Necessary Being and contingent beings, it must be actualized in both. This is because the necessity of existence's truth is realized

<sup>20</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/358.

<sup>21</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/359.

whenever that truth exists. Therefore, to assert that the reality of existence is actualized in contingent essences but not in the Necessary Being implies that while existence exists in reality, its necessity does not exist. This stance contradicts the foundational principle that existence necessitates itself wherever it exists.

**Second Possibility:** This perspective presents the converse reasoning of the first option. If existence does not entail any form of contingency, then it should not be contingent upon any essence. Here, the necessity of existence's truth is nullified. While this scenario explains the absence of essence in the Necessary Being, it precludes assuming nonexistence in contingent beings.

**Third Possibility:** According to this view, the reality of existence does not entail either of the above states. Instead, what determines its existence or nonexistence is an external cause. In this case, the essence of the Necessary Being does not come into existence through its own intrinsic existence but rather through an external cause, suggesting contingency rather than necessity.

These perspectives outline al-Rāzī's critique of Ibn Sīnā's argument concerning the relationship between existence and essence. al-Rāzī argues that only the first possibility, where existence is inherent and necessary for both the Necessary Being and contingents, leads to a coherent and defensible position.<sup>22</sup>

al-Rāzī's first criticism revolves around scrutinizing the relationship between the reality of existence and its addition to essence. This critique can also be framed as a challenge to the assertion that existence, which is added to contingent beings, is not similarly added to the Necessary Being. He questions and ultimately rejects Ibn Sīnā's distinction between the two categories of existence -necessary and contingent- highlighting the inconsistency in treating the addition of existence differently in the Necessary Being compared to contingent beings.

This critique underscores al-Rāzī's contention that if existence is acknowledged as added to contingent essences, then by the same logic, it should also be recognized as added to the essence of the Necessary Being. al-Rāzī argues against Ibn Sīnā's position that posits a fundamental difference between the Necessary Being, whose

<sup>22</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/359.

existence is considered inherent and essential to its essence, and contingent beings, whose existence is added or contingent upon external factors. al-Rāzī asserts that this distinction leads to logical inconsistencies and challenges the philosophical basis for treating existence differently in these two categories. Thus, he aims to demonstrate the untenability of Ibn Sīnā's framework regarding the addition of existence to essence in metaphysical terms.

al-Rāzī's second criticism centers on the distinction between God's existence and His reality, which he argues cannot be perceived in the same manner. He posits that while God's existence can be perceived, His essence remains beyond perception. This distinction leads al-Rāzī to assert that God's absolute existence is understood through prior conception, whereas His essence cannot be directly perceived. Philosophers, according to al-Rāzī, maintain that the existence of contingent beings is added to their essence, supporting this with the analogy that "we know the essence of a triangle even if we doubt its existence," thereby illustrating the difference between what is known and what is unknown. al-Rāzī applies this reasoning to the case of God: despite knowing that God exists, His essence remains unknown. This disparity, according to al-Rāzī, implies that God's reality must differ from His existence. In essence, al-Rāzī's second criticism challenges the philosophical assertion that God's existence and essence can be understood in the same way as contingent beings, arguing instead that the nature of God's existence and the limitations of human perception necessitate a distinction between God's perceived existence and His fundamentally unknowable essence.<sup>23</sup>

The question arises whether the pure *wujūd*, characterized by negations, can exert influence on the existence of contingent beings. Philosophers assert that God's reality consists fundamentally of pure existence alongside negational attributes. Moreover, they contend that God is the primary cause of contingent beings' existence. al-Rāzī, however, identifies an inherent contradiction between these assertions. If God's reality is indeed pure *wujūd* devoid of positive attributes, then these negations, which denote nonexistence, cannot logically function as causal factors for contingent existence. Nonexistence, by definition, cannot be a cause of existence. On the

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<sup>23</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/360.

other hand, if the residual existence that remains after negating these attributes serves as the cause of contingent existence, and if this existence is equated with the existence of contingent beings, then the implication follows that contingent beings share equivalently in God's essence, attributes, and actions. This proposition challenges traditional theological doctrines that uphold a distinct separation between God and His creation. In essence, al-Rāzī's critique highlights the philosophical dilemma of reconciling God's transcendental essence, characterized by pure wujūd and negations, with His role as the cause of contingent existence. This discussion prompts deeper exploration into the metaphysical underpinnings of existence and causation within philosophical and theological frameworks.<sup>24</sup>

In this objection, al-Rāzī delves into the philosophical assertions regarding God as the cause of contingent existence and raises fundamental questions about the nature of this causal relationship. He begins by asserting that since existence is integral to contingent beings, if this existence is understood as a shared entity, then it logically follows that this shared existence between God and contingent beings must be linked to God's own existence, given that He is posited as their cause. Thus, al-Rāzī's objection revolves around scrutinizing the coherence and implications of attributing causality to God concerning contingent entities.

In his fourth objection, al-Rāzī contends that existence, viewed as a species nature, necessitates uniformity across all its instances. This assertion draws upon philosophical principles that uphold the consistency of what is entailed by the nature of a species. al-Rāzī applies this reasoning to the concept of existence itself, arguing that since existence is fundamentally what every essence requires, it must exhibit uniform characteristics across all beings. Just as philosophers maintain the uniformity of principles in other contexts, such as the celestial spheres and the rejection of Democritus's theory of indivisible parts, al-Rāzī extends this principle to the realm of existence. Therefore, he argues that this uniformity should also apply when considering the nature of God.<sup>25</sup>

In his analysis of the statement that "the cause precedes the caused in terms of existence," al-Rāzī offers objections to Ibn Sīnā's argument.

<sup>24</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/360.

<sup>25</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/360-361.

He challenges the notion that if essence were the cause of its existence, it would precede itself in terms of existence. This objection delves into the causal relationship between essence and existence, questioning whether essence can logically precede itself in the act of causing its own existence. Al-Rāzī's objections likely focus on the philosophical implications of such a proposition. He might argue that if essence were indeed the cause of its own existence, it would imply a temporal and logical priority of essence over existence, which contradicts the accepted metaphysical principles regarding causality. Causality typically implies that the cause must precede its effect, but applying this directly to the relationship between essence and existence raises complex metaphysical questions. Moreover, al-Rāzī may argue against Ibn Sīnā's position by suggesting that existence is not something that can be caused by essence in the traditional sense of causality. Essence and existence, in the classical philosophical framework, are treated as distinct metaphysical categories, and the idea that essence could cause its own existence blurs these distinctions and introduces ambiguities into the concept of causality itself. Therefore, al-Rāzī's objections likely aim to clarify and challenge the coherence of Ibn Sīnā's argument regarding the relationship between essence and existence, particularly in terms of how causality operates within metaphysical inquiry.<sup>26</sup>

In his analysis of the concept of "precedence" as used in philosophical discourse, al-Rāzī contends that if the term implies "the causal priority of the cause over its effect in terms of existence," it universally signifies efficient causation. However, if it denotes "the temporal priority of the cause over the effect in terms of existence," this directly addresses the crux of the philosophical debate. Here, the focus lies on establishing that God's existence is efficacious through His essence, without presupposing His existence as prior. Asserting that causation entails the effect's existence following the cause's existence shifts the discussion to different terminology while addressing the same fundamental issue. This interpretation rejects any alternative meaning of priority that does not involve agenthood.<sup>27</sup>

In this objection, al-Rāzī scrutinizes the notion of the cause preceding its effect in terms of existence. He distinguishes between two interpretations: first, that precedence implies efficient causation,

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *al-Isbārāt*, 129.

<sup>27</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/361.

and second, that it signifies a temporal priority of existence. According to al-Rāzī, if precedence in terms of existence is understood as efficient causation, it aligns with established philosophical principles. However, if it suggests a temporal priority of existence, it directly addresses the ongoing debate about whether essence is implicated in God's existence. Therefore, al-Rāzī argues that merely stating that the cause precedes in terms of existence does not significantly advance the discussion regarding God's existence.

According to al-Rāzī, the proposition that every cause precedes its effect in terms of existence warrants further exploration. al-Rāzī's analysis delves into the relationship between the essences of contingents and their potential for existence. He argues that while contingent essences possess the potential for existence, they also require causes for their actual existence. In this context, it is not necessary for the cause of this potential to precede its effect in terms of existence. The same principle applies to the efficient cause. In contrast, Ibn Sīnā posited that the essence of a thing can be the cause of one of its attributes. If the essence acts as an agent in producing an attribute, it must do so without preceding the attribute in terms of existence. This perspective suggests that attributing precedence in terms of existence to the essence indicates that the essence alone is insufficient as the cause, and instead, it is the existing essence itself that acts as the cause. Ibn Sīnā maintains that the essence itself is the cause, not something prior to it in terms of existence.<sup>28</sup>

In this context, adhering to Ibn Sīnā's premises can lead to conclusions that appear contradictory to his initial assumptions. Therefore, the priority of the agent over the effect does not necessarily need to be understood in terms of existence alone.<sup>29</sup> According to al-Rāzī, the contention arises that if essence is not acknowledged to exist in its function as an agent, it could be argued that its non-existence necessitates its role as a cause. al-Rāzī responds as follows:

"The assertion that 'the cause of an essence does not depend on the existence of an essence' does not imply the validity of the proposition that 'an essence can cause existence when it does not exist'. Similarly, stating that 'the potential for a contingent essence to exist does not rely on the existence of

<sup>28</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/361.

<sup>29</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/362.

that essence' does not affirm the idea that 'an essence is capable of existence when it does not exist'. Rather, it underscores that essence and its existence or non-existence are distinct aspects of being. We assert that only the essence itself, in terms of its inherent nature, has influence over existence, and this assertion does not exclude the possibility of its non-existence."<sup>30</sup>

al-Rāzī unequivocally rejects the notion that essence could function as a cause regardless of whether it is actualized. Whether essence is considered a cause, the debate over whether its precedence over the effect pertains to its essence or existence becomes irrelevant given the impossibility of essence functioning as a cause when it does not exist. al-Rāzī explicitly refutes any inference that "essence can be a cause while it does not exist" or "essence can be capable of existence while it does not exist". His rationale hinges on the understanding that essence, as a causal factor in existence, pertains fundamentally to its own intrinsic nature, independent of its actual existence. Therefore, according to al-Rāzī, acknowledging essence as a causal agent based on its inherent nature does not preclude its potential as a cause even in its absence. In essence, objections asserting the impossibility of essence acting as a cause in its non-existence are deemed invalid by al-Rāzī.

Another objection that can be raised against this assertion is whether an essence can influence its own existence when it does not yet exist. If such a scenario were plausible, it would imply that the essence could potentially impact the existence of the world before even coming into existence itself. This raises a critical distinction: the necessity to differentiate between the essence's theoretical potential to influence existence and the actual causal relationship observed in the world. Without this distinction, one might erroneously infer the existence of an agent responsible for bringing things into being solely based on the existence of entities in the world.<sup>31</sup> The objection posits that al-Rāzī's assertion renders *ithbāt al-wājib* (the proof of the Necessary) untenable. If essences can exert influence on their existence even when they do not exist, then there is theoretically no barrier to them exerting influence on the world when they themselves

<sup>30</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/362.

<sup>31</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/362.

do not exist. Consequently, it becomes problematic to assert the existence of an efficient agent solely based on the existence of entities in the world. al-Rāzī distinguishes between “existing *li-zātibī*” (existing in itself) and “being the cause of something else when it does not exist.” It is a fundamental principle that something cannot act as a cause unless it exists; this is self-evident. However, the concept of existing “*li-zātibī*” implies that its essence inherently necessitates its existence.<sup>32</sup> It would be inaccurate to assert that because essence can potentially cause its own existence, it can also be the cause of external things like the world. The distinction lies in the nature of causation: while essence influencing its own existence might be conceivable under certain philosophical frameworks, extending this to external entities such as the world involves a fundamentally different level of causative relationship and ontological status.

#### 4. al-Ṭūsī’s Defense of Ibn Sīnā

In delineating al-Ṭūsī’s analysis, it can be compartmentalized into two principal segments. Initially, he elucidates the rationale behind al-Rāzī’s purported misconceptions, followed by a systematic presentation of objections to al-Rāzī, substantiated with precise arguments. Central to al-Ṭūsī’s critique is the contention that al-Rāzī, having initially demonstrated the impossibility of a direct commonality of *wujūd* in a literal sense, proceeds to posit an equivalence among all existents on a uniform plane.<sup>33</sup> According to al-Ṭūsī, al-Rāzī’s misunderstanding leads him to equate the existence of the necessary with that of the contingent. Seeing that existence is attributed to essence in contingent beings, al-Rāzī mistakenly concludes that the same attribution must apply to necessary beings. al-Ṭūsī explicitly argues that al-Rāzī lacks a proper understanding of predication by *tashkīk*.<sup>34</sup> Attribution by *tashkīk* involves assigning a concept with the same meaning but at varying levels across all individuals to whom it applies. For instance, *wujūd* (existence) is attributed in the forms of precedence-subsequence in cause and effect relationships, universality-absence of universality in substance and accidents, and

<sup>32</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2/362.

<sup>33</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2/356. cf. Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt*, ed. Sulaymān Dunyā (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1960), 3/30.

<sup>34</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 3/31.

intensity-weakness in qualities like blackness and whiteness. In both necessary and contingent beings, *wujūd* is predicated in these three distinct manners.<sup>35</sup> According to al-Ṭūsī, comprehending *tashkīk* resolves all of al-Rāzī's inquiries because it attributes existence, as philosophers accept it, uniformly across all instances under its purview. However, this uniform attribution does not imply equivalence among necessities. Various truths can concur under a single necessity without necessitating equality.<sup>36</sup> Here, al-Ṭūsī refers to "the *malzūms* of existence" as encompassing both the existence of the necessary and the contingent. While these entities share a commonality in their existence (*lāzim*), which is a unified concept, their *malzūms*, or what is intended by that existence, do not necessarily align at the same level. This *lāzim*, or existence, is predicated diversely across different levels. Therefore, the existence attributed to the necessary being and that attributed to contingent beings differ in their *malzūm*, despite sharing a singular conceptual meaning.

In responding to al-Rāzī's first objection regarding the addition of existence to essence, the following points can be addressed: al-Rāzī posits three possibilities regarding the relationship between existence and essence; that existence must be added to essence, that it must not be added, or that neither addition nor non-addition is necessary. According to al-Rāzī, in the first and second possibilities, where existence could either be necessarily added to essence or not, there arises an implication that the necessary being and the contingent being should be treated equally in terms of this addition. However, in the third scenario where an external cause determines whether existence is added or not, it suggests a need for an external factor to dictate this condition.<sup>37</sup> In addressing this objection, al-Ṭūsī's response draws upon the concept of *tashkīk*, as previously discussed. He illustrates this with examples such as sunlight and other light sources, and heat from different sources. Despite both being instances of light or heat, their effects and attributes differ based on their specific characteristics. For instance, sunlight may clear vision while other sources do not, and different types of heat may or may not sustain life or affect different

<sup>35</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *Sbarḥ al-Isbārāt*, 3/31.

<sup>36</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *Sbarḥ al-Isbārāt*, 3/32.

<sup>37</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sbarḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/359.

species equally. This distinction arises because the *malzūm*, or the essence and attributes associated with light or heat, varies depending on the specific nature and source of each instance. Thus, while existence may be predicated universally, the specific qualities and effects attributed to it can differ significantly based on the context and nature of the entities involved.<sup>38</sup> That is, al-Rāzī argues that the concept of existence yields diverse outcomes among entities that share it due to variations in their *malzūm*, or underlying essence and attributes. Consequently, he contends that uniform effects cannot be universally expected across all individuals to whom the concept of existence is applied.

“If *wujūd* were universally uniform, as al-Rāzī posits, it would necessitate a causal mechanism that mandates addition, analogous to contingents. However, in the Necessary, *wujūd* does not require a causal mechanism that mandates addition. The absence of addition is not contingent upon a cause; the mere absence of a cause for addition suffices to explain its absence.”<sup>39</sup>

The response to al-Rāzī’s second objection concerning the distinction between God’s existence and His reality, where he argues that God’s existence is perceivable but His reality is not, is as follows: al-Rāzī contends that acknowledging the knowability of God’s existence while asserting the unknowability of His reality necessitates a differentiation between the concepts of existence and reality.<sup>40</sup> In response to this objection, al-Ṭūsī posits that while God’s existence is singular, what is apprehended a priori is absolute existence. The intellect can grasp absolute existence but not God’s singular existence itself. Among unique entities, some are comprehensible while others are not. The particular existence of God remains inscrutable to the intellect. The apprehension of absolute existence does not necessitate the direct apprehension of singular entities; otherwise, apprehending existence would entail apprehending all unique entities. Thus, al-Ṭūsī concludes, “The distinction between the apprehension of existence and the apprehension of God’s reality indicates that God’s reality is distinct from absolute existence.” In addition, he asserts that “There is

<sup>38</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 3/32.

<sup>39</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 3/32.

<sup>40</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/360.

no intrinsic necessity for God's reality to coincide with His singular existence."<sup>41</sup>

The response to al-Rāzī's third objection, concerning whether the mere *wujūd*, characterized by negatives, can influence the existence of contingents, follows this line of reasoning: According to the philosophers, God's reality consists of pure *wujūd* along with negative attributes. al-Ṭūsī counters al-Rāzī by asserting that what impacts the existence of contingents is not the negative attributes, which denote non-existence, but rather the *wujūd* itself. This *wujūd* is equivalent to their existence. Furthermore, al-Ṭūsī underscores the distinction between God's existence and that of contingents. God's existence is not universal but rather an individual and specific existence belonging uniquely to Him. This substantial existence, unlike that of contingents, is self-subsistent.<sup>42</sup> In al-Ṭūsī's view, al-Rāzī's objection stems from a misunderstanding of the concept of existence, which is predicated with a unified meaning but exists at various levels.

In response to al-Rāzī's fourth objection regarding the uniformity of a species' nature, the philosophers contend that a species' nature necessitates uniformity across all its instances. This principle extends to existence, which is considered part of a species' nature. Therefore, the effects or attributes related to existence should not vary among different instances. For instance, the judgment concerning the existence or nonexistence of an essence should remain consistent and not subject to variability.<sup>43</sup> In response to this objection, al-Ṭūsī rejects the premise that existence is a nature of species, which he posits as the only viable response to al-Rāzī's criticism. According to al-Ṭūsī, philosophers cannot be faulted on this basis because existence is not uniformly attributed across all members of a species, unlike other attributes that are inherently part of a species' nature.<sup>44</sup> According to al-Ṭūsī, existence, being predicated through *tashkīk*, cannot be considered a species' nature. Therefore, objections claiming that existence entails the same characteristics across all individuals to which it is attributed are invalid. *Tashkīk* allows for different levels of

<sup>41</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *Sbarḥ al-Ishārāt*, 3/33.

<sup>42</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *Sbarḥ al-Ishārāt*, 3/33.

<sup>43</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sbarḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2/360-361.

<sup>44</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *Sbarḥ al-Ishārāt*, 3/34.

predication of existence, indicating that it is not uniformly applicable in the same manner across different entities.

According to al-Ṭūsī, the assertion that “the cause precedes the caused in terms of existence” implies that the effect’s existence depends on the cause’s prior existence. However, if the essence is considered a cause only when it exists externally, this implies a circular conditionality where “the essence must exist for it to exist,” which al-Ṭūsī deems impossible. This highlights the logical contradiction inherent in a thing being conditioned by itself.

al-Rāzī’s objection centers on the notion that while essence does not precede existence in terms of its actual existence, it can still function as an agent in bringing about existence, particularly in its potentiality for existence. This distinction underscores his critique of the philosophical position that attributes causal efficacy to essence without necessitating its prior existence in a substantial sense.<sup>45</sup> al-Ṭūsī counters al-Rāzī’s assertion regarding essence having an external existence apart from its actual existence by positing that essence primarily exists within the intellect as a conceptual or mental existence. This mental existence allows the intellect to contemplate essence independently of existence (*wujūd*). Importantly, the absence of recognition of a thing does not imply the recognition of its non-existence.<sup>46</sup>

### 5. Şadr al-Sharī‘ah’s Perspective on the Issue

Şadr al-Sharī‘ah diverges from previous thinkers in his view that the commonality of existence among existents is not merely conceptual or in terms of meaning, but is realized literally. This stance contrasts with the approach of other philosophers who attribute existence in a qualified manner or with distinctions.<sup>47</sup> Accepting that *wujūd* (existence) is common in meaning entails elucidating the differentiation between what exists in terms of essence, thereby implying the addition of *wujūd* to these essences. Conversely, when commonality in terms of lexis (expression) is accepted, there is no

<sup>45</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sbarḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/362.

<sup>46</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *Sbarḥ al-Isbārāt*, 3/34.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Ubayd Allāh Ibn Mas‘ūd Şadr al-Sharī‘ah, *Sbarḥ Ta’dīl al-‘ulūm* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Library, Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 143a. For an analysis of Şadr al-Sharī‘ah’s thought, see Şensoy, *Sadrüşşer‘a’nın Kelâmı Ta’dīl Teşebbüsü*, 94 ff.

addition of *wujūd*. This distinction arises because acceptance of commonality in meaning acknowledges the differentiation between *wujūd* and essence, thereby affirming addition.<sup>48</sup> According to Şadr al-Sharī'ah, the distinction drawn by those who differentiate between existence and essence, as well as between the contingent and the Necessary, lacks justification. This stance arises from the philosophical perspective where in the contingent realm, existence is intrinsic to essence, whereas in the Necessary realm, no such distinction exists due to its inherent causality requirement.<sup>49</sup>

Şadr al-Sharī'ah critically examines the philosophers' concept of addition through the lens of al-Ṭūsī. He critiques this notion by highlighting the potential for a vicious circle between essence, which is considered the cause, and *wujūd*, its effect. This critique underscores Şadr al-Sharī'ah's broader skepticism toward the philosophical framework, particularly concerning the relationship between essence and existence.<sup>50</sup> However, the denial of essentiality he articulates here pertains not exclusively to the Necessary but also extends to the contingent. The article's focus excludes an analysis of the rejection of addition in contingents.

As previously discussed, al-Ṭūsī argued that the objections raised by al-Rāzī could be resolved through the principle of *tashkīk*.<sup>51</sup> Şadr al-Sharī'ah, in his critique, argues that merely invoking the principle of *tashkīk* is insufficient. He contends that the analogy drawn between expressions like "man being a thinking creature" and "triangle being a shape" is flawed because they do not share a single meaning; rather, they share the expression of existence (*kawn*). Furthermore, according to Şadr al-Sharī'ah, the crux of the matter lies not in determining the form of commonality but rather in understanding why certain entities, which are considered to have a unified existence, are self-subsistent while others are not.<sup>52</sup> Since al-Ṭūsī was aware of this, as will be remembered, he argued that absolute *wujūd* remains unchanged, but its *malzūms* vary. While *wujūd* is predicated uniformly across individuals as a single meaning, the specifics of what it entails (its

<sup>48</sup> Murat Kaş, *Seyyid Şerîf Cürçânî'de Zibnî Varlık* (İstanbul: Marmara University, Institute of Social Sciences, PhD Dissertation, 2017), 151.

<sup>49</sup> Şadr al-Sharī'ah, *Şarḥ Ta'dil al-'ulūm* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 143a-144a.

<sup>50</sup> Şadr al-Sharī'ah, *Şarḥ Ta'dil al-'ulūm* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 146b.

<sup>51</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *Şarḥ al-Isbārāt*, 3/31 ff. cf. al-Rāzī, *Şarḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/356 ff.

<sup>52</sup> Şadr al-Sharī'ah, *Şarḥ Ta'dil al-'ulūm* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 147a.

*malzūms*) need not be identical. al-Ṭūsī clarified that while *wujūd* is attributed uniformly to both necessary and contingent beings, this does not necessitate an equivalence in the existence of necessary and contingent entities.<sup>53</sup> Şadr al-Sharī‘ah’s argument posits that the notion of “*malzūms* change” does not adequately address the underlying issue. He illustrates this by highlighting that certain attributions cannot be equated directly in the form of “it is that”. For instance, one cannot assert that “thinking (*nutaq*) is laughing (*dihk*)” or that “heat (*ḥarārah*) is attraction (*jadhb*)”. Such direct identifications are only permissible in derived terms (*musbtāq*). Instead, one can appropriately say “*nāfiq* is genius” or “*ḥārr* is attractive”. In essence, Şadr al-Sharī‘ah contends that while Ṭūsī’s argument about the variability of *malzūms* attempts to reconcile the uniform attribution of *wujūd* with the diversity in what it entails, this approach fails to fully resolve the issue because the relationships between entities cannot be reduced to mere interchangeable terms without considering their distinct essences and attributes.<sup>54</sup>

In his analysis, Şadr al-Sharī‘ah adopts a language-centric approach to predication. He challenges the conventional distinction between existence and essence, and consequently rejects the idea of *wujūd* being added -specifically, he does not accept the predication of *wujūd* that is not derived from language. According to Şadr al-Sharī‘ah, the accuracy of predication hinges on whether the derivative of the predicate coexists with the subject. If this coexistence, termed *qiyām*, is not present, meaning if there is no inherent relation where one essence necessitates another, then the predication is deemed incorrect in his view. Thus, Şadr al-Sharī‘ah’s approach emphasizes linguistic coherence and the interplay of derived meanings in validating philosophical assertions about existence and essence.

Regarding the addition of existence to essence, al-Rāzī contends that existence should entail uniform implications across all entities regarding its presence or absence. This stance reflects his insistence on a consistent understanding of existence across philosophical discourse.<sup>55</sup> al-Ṭūsī responded to this objection by invoking the concept of *tashkīk*, which posits that existence is attributed in a

<sup>53</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 3/32.

<sup>54</sup> Şadr al-Sharī‘ah, *Sharḥ Ta‘dīl al-‘ulūm* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 147a.

<sup>55</sup> al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 2/359.

nuanced manner across different entities. This approach allows for distinctions in how existence manifests within various contexts, thereby addressing al-Rāzī's concerns about uniformity in the implications of existence.<sup>56</sup> Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah critiques al-Ṭūsī's response, arguing that it inadequately addresses the objection raised. He disputes al-Ṭūsī's differentiation concerning what is necessitated, particularly rejecting the notion that beings are necessitated by an absolute *wujūd*. According to Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah, this distinction does not sufficiently resolve the philosophical issue at hand.<sup>57</sup> In Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah's critique, he contends that attributing differentiation to what is required does not adequately resolve the philosophical issue. He challenges al-Ṭūsī's assertion that no justification is necessary for nonaddition, arguing that this response fails to address the core of the matter. According to Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah, nonaddition signifies that existence subsists with its essence. al-Ṭūsī's statement, "It is either subsistent with its own essence, or with something else, or neither of these," suggests that substance and accident predicate existence either due to their intrinsic nature or due to some external factor. If it arises from their essence, then existence must universally manifest as substance or accident across all instances. Conversely, if it stems from an external cause, then the necessary existence deriving from its essence must trace back to an external agent. Nonaddition implies that existence originates from itself, a concept distinct from nonexistence. Therefore, claiming "the absence of the cause of being added is sufficient" is inappropriate because it does not pertain to absence. Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah contrasts this with self-subsistence, where existence possesses an inherent power to be independent of a specific locus. This characteristic, seen in substances and accidents, signifies their capacity to exist autonomously, not as an absence but as a manifestation of strength absent in accidents. The independence of existence from nonexistence does not necessitate independence from another entity in existence itself.<sup>58</sup>

From this perspective, according to Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah, if we were to accept al-Ṭūsī's explanation that justifies the situation based on the absence of something, it would invalidate our ability to discuss the

<sup>56</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 3/32.

<sup>57</sup> Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah, *Sharḥ Ta'dīl al-'ulūm* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 148a.

<sup>58</sup> Ṣadr al-Sharī'ah, *Sharḥ Ta'dīl al-'ulūm* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 148a.

Necessary being independently. In other words, attributing the Necessary being's independence solely to the absence of a causal factor related to nonexistence implies a problematic stance. It suggests that the Necessary being's independence hinges on the non-existence of a cause rather than on its inherent essence or self-subsistence. This contradicts the notion that the Necessary being exists independently, without reliance on external causes or conditions.

In addressing the question of whether the mere *wujūd*, categorized with negatives, can have an effect on the existence of contingents, Şadr al-Sharī'ah critiques the philosophical views on this matter, which he finds to be both erroneous and contradictory. Central to his critique is the discrepancy he identifies in how philosophers understand *wujūb* (necessity) and *wujūd* (existence). According to Şadr al-Sharī'ah, philosophers hold the view that God's reality is *wujūd* subjected to negation (*salbī limits*), yet they also equate *wujūb* with *wujūd* by asserting that necessity strengthens existence. This perceived contradiction arises from the philosophical stance that *wujūb*, being a subjunctive concept indicating necessity, is treated as equivalent to *wujūd*, which is described using a form associated with negation (*salbī*). Şadr al-Sharī'ah argues that *wujūb* and *wujūd* cannot be equated in this manner because *wujūb* implies a state of necessity, while *wujūd*, when described in a *salbī* form, indicates a negated or limited existence. Equating the two would thus imply treating something that signifies existence with something that signifies non-existence or limitation, which he finds logically untenable. Therefore, Şadr al-Sharī'ah's criticism centers on the philosophical inconsistency of equating *wujūb* with *wujūd*, highlighting the need for a more precise understanding of these terms and their implications for theological and metaphysical discourse. His analysis underscores the importance of clarity in defining concepts like *wujūb* and *wujūd* to avoid conceptual confusions and contradictions in philosophical reasoning.<sup>59</sup>

In philosophical discourse, the proposition that *wujūd* (existence) represents both God's reality and the essence of existent entities poses a significant theoretical challenge when juxtaposed with the notion of *wujūd* being subject to *salbī* (negation) limits. If philosophers maintain

<sup>59</sup> Şadr al-Sharī'ah, *Sbarḥ Ta'dil al-'ulūm* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 170a.

that *wujūd* constitutes God's reality and encompasses all existent entities, the implication that God's reality could also be subject to *salbī* limits necessitates equating *wujūd* with a form of negation or limitation. This proposition leads to a logical contradiction: *wujūd* inherently signifies affirmation and existence, while *salbī* denotes negation or restriction. Therefore, suggesting that God's reality, which is understood as *wujūd*, could be subject to *salbī* limits introduces an inconsistency in philosophical reasoning, challenging the coherence of metaphysical assertions concerning the nature of existence and the divine.<sup>60</sup>

In addressing the objection that "the existence itself is not substance and accident, but some of its members, i.e., *wujūdāt*, are substance and some are accident," Şadr al-Sharī'ah argues against the differentiation of entities required by a single nature. He asserts that if something is attributed to a single nature, such as existence (*wujūd*), it cannot simultaneously exhibit qualities of both substantiality and accidentality. According to Şadr al-Sharī'ah, the inherent nature of *wujūd* implies uniformity among its constituents; therefore, positing that some *wujūdāt* (existents) are substantial while others are accidental contradicts the unified essence of *wujūd*. This argument challenges the notion that *wujūd*, as a fundamental concept, can manifest in diverse forms that fundamentally differ in their ontological status.<sup>61</sup> As recalled, al-Ṭūsī contends that *wujūd* (existence) does not constitute the essential nature of a species.<sup>62</sup> This is due to the species' nature being uniformly attributed to its individuals on an equal level (*ṭawāṭu*<sup>3</sup>), not through differentiation (*tasbkīk*) as with *wujūd*.<sup>63</sup> According to Şadr al-Sharī'ah, this response remains insufficient. He critiques the assertion that "essence and its parts do not differentiate." If this statement implies that existence is attributed with conditions like strength and weakness, as Şadr al-Sharī'ah argues, then absolute existence itself becomes differentiated. What undergoes differentiation, not essence per se, must be present universally. Furthermore, *wujūd*, delimited by factors such as strength and

<sup>60</sup> Şadr al-Sharī'ah, *Sharḥ Ta'dīl al-'ulūm* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 170a.

<sup>61</sup> Şadr al-Sharī'ah, *Sharḥ Ta'dīl al-'ulūm* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 148a; al-Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 3/33.

<sup>62</sup> Şadr al-Sharī'ah, *Sharḥ Ta'dīl al-'ulūm* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 148a; al-Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 3/34.

<sup>63</sup> al-Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, 3/34.

weakness, cannot be considered a component of existence. Thus, Şadr al-Sharī‘ah queries, “Why cannot it be asserted that what differentiates is absolute *wujūd*?”<sup>64</sup> According to Şadr al-Sharī‘ah, al-Ṭūsī’s concept of differentiation does not pertain to distinctions among externally differentiated individuals. This perspective, Şadr al-Sharī‘ah argues, is flawed. For instance, when examining heat and posing the question “What is it?”, despite its manifestation in various forms, the response remains consistent that each instance is indeed heat. Attributes such as heat, motion, growth, weight, and lightness apply universally, with variations in their degrees among different entities; this does not align with the claimed notion of differentiation.<sup>65</sup>

### Conclusion

The distinction between existence and essence, a cornerstone in philosophical discourse distinguishing the Necessary from the contingent, has evolved into a principle advocating the nonaddition of existence to the Necessary being. Ibn Sīnā critically examined this issue in his *al-Isbārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, particularly in his fourth *namaṭ*, addressing the inherent contradictions when essence is posited as a causal factor in the Necessary. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, in his *Sharḥ al-Isbārāt*, scrutinized Ibn Sīnā’s argument, prompting responses from al-Ṭūsī who suggested that al-Rāzī’s objections could be resolved through a nuanced understanding of *tasbīk* and addition.

Şadr al-Sharī‘ah, however, offered a distinct critique, analyzing al-Ṭūsī’s responses and challenging the broader philosophical tradition, especially the perspectives of Ibn Sīnā and al-Ṭūsī. al-Rāzī’s criticisms spanned various dimensions, questioning whether accidental existence constitutes a fundamental property, the justification for distinguishing the known existence of the Necessary from its unknown reality, the implications of mere existence on contingents, the universal manifestation of species nature, and the causal precedence of cause over effect.

al-Ṭūsī countered al-Rāzī across these fronts, defending Ibn Sīnā’s concept of essentiality. In contrast, Şadr al-Sharī‘ah departed from traditional views by positing that existence is not merely common in

<sup>64</sup> Şadr al-Sharī‘ah, *Sharḥ Ta’dīl al-‘ulūm* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 148b.

<sup>65</sup> Şadr al-Sharī‘ah, *Sharḥ Ta’dīl al-‘ulūm* (Antalya-Tekelioğlu, 798), fl. 148b.

meaning but rather in a literal sense, thereby engaging al-Ṭūsī's arguments from his unique perspective on existence.

The accepted stance on *wujūd*, a pivotal concept in *al-umūr al-‘āmmah*, significantly shapes discussions on related issues. This perspective influences the trajectory of debates depending on whether existence is viewed as common in meaning or wording, thereby impacting the direction and outcome of philosophical discourse. Ultimately, this intellectual evolution can be seen as Şadr al-Sharī‘ah's integration into the *al-Ishārāt* tradition, albeit through a specific argumentative lens.

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