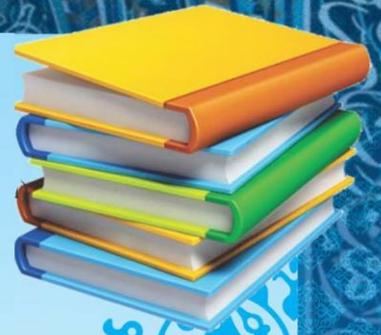# KACA

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MULLĀ ṢADRĀ'S ONTOLOGY: THE FUNDAMENTALITY OF EXISTENCE OVER ESSENCE

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Abstract: One of the critical debates in the philosophical tradition is about existence and essence. The question that arises from this problem is which of the two is more principle or fundamental. Some Muslim philosophers have different points of view regarding this. This article aims to reveal Mullā Ṣadrā's thoughts on the fundamentality of existence. This study is qualitative research with a descriptive and analytical approach. The data were collected from library research. This study found that, in Mullā Ṣadrā's viewpoint, existence is more fundamental than essence as it causes essence to exist. Mullā Ṣadrā's view leads to the solving of many philosophical problems, such as the problem of causality, *tawhid*, the impossibility of the concept of predestination and dualism, for instance, heaven and hell*,* world and hereafter*,* *khaliq* and creature*,* God and universe, material and non-material, transcendent and immanent.
Keywords: ontology, Mullā Ṣadrā, existence, essence, fundamentality.

Abstrak: Salah satu perdebatan serius dalam tradisi filsafat adalah tentang eksistensi dan esensi. Pertanyaan yang muncul dari persoalan ini adalah mana di antara keduanya yang lebih prinsipil atau fundamental. Para filosof Muslim memiliki pandangan yang berbeda mengenai hal ini. Studi ini bertujuan mengungkap pemikiran Mullā Ṣadrā tentang keutamaan eksistensi. Studi ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif dan analitis. Data dikumpulkan dari studi kepustakaan. Studi ini mengungkap bahwa menurut Mullā Ṣadrā, eksistensi lebih utama/real ketimbang esensi karena eksistensilah yang menjadikan esensi itu ada/wujud. Pandangan Mullā Ṣadrā ini penting untuk pemecahan beberapa persoalan filosofis, seperti masalah kausalitas, tauhid, kemustahilan konsep predestinasi dan dualisme, misalnya surga dan neraka, dunia dan akhirat, khaliq dan makhluk, Tuhan dan alam semesta, material dan non-material, transenden dan imanen.
Kata kunci: ontologi, Mullā Ṣadrā, eksistensi, esensi, fundamental.

Introduction

No issue is more central to Islamic philosophy and especially metaphysic than existence (*wujūd*).[1] For eleven centuries, Islamic philosophers and even certain Sufis and theologians (*mutakallimūn*) have been concerned with this subject and have developed based on their study of *wujūd* worldviews that have dominated Islamic thought.[2] That is why it is not exaggerated that this issue became the first stage of metaphysical and ontological views among Muslim philosophers. In other words, it is the main foundation of the whole building or the metaphysical structure of Islamic philosophy.[3]

One of the most fundamental problems of philosophy that must be solved is the problem of the distinction between existence and quiddity. This problem appeared after the difference made by al-Fārābī and then stressed by Ibn Sīnā. Before al- Fārābī, almost all philosophical discussions were centred on quiddity, or at least were unconsciously based on the fundamentality of quiddity, and in statements reported from the Greek philosophers, no clear indication is to be found of any tendency toward the fundamentality of existence.[4] Though this distinction was made by al- Fārābī, there was no question on the fundamentality between existence and quiddity at that time. It may be that they did not realise the consequence of this distinction. Meanwhile, contemporary Muslim philosophers recognise that the difference between existence and quiddity will influence all metaphysical structures of Islamic philosophy.

The distinction between existence and quiddity can be explained as follow; for instance, when we see the specific concrete object "human". In this case, two aspects adhere to the human conceived by the mind. *The first* is its humanity, and *the second* is its existence. If we make a proposition for *the first*, it will be "He is a human being", and *the second* is "He exists". The former refers to the quiddity, differentiating it from other objects like an animal. Whereas the latter refers to the existence that makes it factually exists.

Thereby, from the intellectual perspective, every single contingent being (*mumkin al-wujūd*) has two aspects that are the aspect of existence and quiddity. As the philosopher has said that "every contingent being is a composite duality, composed of existence and quiddity" (*Kullu mawjūd fa huwa ẓaūj tarkībī, murakkab*

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[1] In English translation, usually *wujûd* translated as "existence". In fact, there is no single equivalent for this term (*wujûd*) in English. *Wujûd* can correspond to Being, being, Existence, and existence depending on its use. See *Kitâb al-Mashâ'ir* translated by S. H. Nasr, introduction, fourth paragraph, in his note. However, it is useless to take a long debate in this case. So, to simplify, what is meant by *existence* is *wujûd* in Arabic terms.

[2] S. H. Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from Its Origin to the Present* (USA: State University of New York Press, 2006), p. 63

[3] Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence* (Tokyo: The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1971), p. 67-70

[4] See M. T. Misbah Yazdi, *Philosophical Instruction: An Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy*, translated by Muhammad Legenhausen and Azim Sarvdalir (USA: IGCS, Binghamton University, 1999), p. 213

min māhiyyah wa wujūd).[5] In other words, these two concepts give two different predicates to the same object, i.e. human. It is undeniable that human, as a concrete object, is one single entity. But because he has two different predicates, he has two different aspects in himself. The question is whether those two different aspects show two different realities or only one reality. How to determine that one is real and the other is not? Because it is impossible that both are unreal or real simultaneously.[6]

The implication from this dichotomy—existence (*wujūd*) and quiddity (*māhiyyah*)—is the appearance of the question on fundamentality (*aṣālat*) of ontology that is the question: which of the two—whether existence or quiddity—is fundamentally real. In other words, is it existence or quiddity that has reality in the external world?[7] The opposite of *aṣālat* (fundamentality)[8] is *i'tibārī* (respective). Therefore, if existence were *aṣīl,* the quiddity surely would be *i'tibārī* and vice versa.[9]

Some previous related literature has been conducted so far. *First*, Jakariya studied *Filsafat Mullā Ṣadrā tentang Eskatologi*.[10] He demonstrates the issues of eschatology, such as resurrection, pleasant and mistreatment of grave, time, blowing of soul, assemble, and two judgment days according to Mullā Ṣadrā. Jakariya argues that Mullā Ṣadrā has different opinions from those of Muslim theologians. *Second*, Lestari studied *Konsep Terbentuknya al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'âliyah Mullā Ṣadrā*. She elaborates on how Mullā Ṣadrā's concept of *al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'âliyah* was established. Genealogically, it studies the sources that form this school of Islamic philosophical thought.[11] Lestari shows that there are four schools of thought that influence Mullā Ṣadrā's view on *al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'âliyah*. Those are *peripatetic, illumination, dialectical theology (kalām), and mysticism.*[12]

Third, Habibullah studied *Filsafat Mullā Ṣadrā tentang Gerak*. He focuses on Mullā Ṣadrā's view of motion. Habibullah tries to elaborate on Mullā Ṣadrā's

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[5] M. T. Misbah Yazdi, *Philosophical Instruction: An Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy*, p. 259

[6] See Dr. Syaifan Nur, *Mullâ Ŝadrâ: Pendiri Mazhab al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'âliyah* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2003), p. 75

[7] The term reality (*haqîqah*) itself, according to Mullâ Ŝadrâ used in various senses. But in this study, he means in the sense of entified reality (*haqîqah 'ayniyyah*). See M. T. Misbah Yazdi, *Philosophical Instruction: An Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy*, p. 217

[8] Fundamentality means from which the effect comes (من حيث تترتب الاثار **)** See in *Bidâyah al-Hikmah*

[9] See Dr. Syaifan Nur, *Mullâ Ŝadrâ: Pendiri Mazhab al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'âliyah*, p. 73-74

[10] See Jakariya, *Mullâ Ŝadrâ: Pendiri Mazhab al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'âliyah tentang Eskatologi* (Thesis S1, Ushuluddin Faculty, Faith and Philosophy Department, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2004)

[11] Lestari, *Konsep Terbentuknya al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'âliyah Mullâ Ŝadrâ* (Thesis S1, Ushuluddin Faculty, Faith and Philosophy Department, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2006) p. 10

[12] Lestari, *Konsep Terbentuknya al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'âliyah Mullâ Ŝadrâ,* p. 9

view of motion and what Mullā Ṣadrā means with the concept of trans-substantial motion. In connection with this problem, Mullā Ṣadrā wants to discourage the common point of view that says that trans-substantial motion (motion in the sense of the process not only restricted to contemporary accidents) is nothing. There is merely existential motion (motion as the accident in which the meaning is only limited in the sense of modern changing in quality, quantity, position, reaction, action, and its relation categories). On the opposite, he says that every accidental changing of the object requires substantial changing because the accident has no existence free from the substance.[13] Last, Nasution studied *Ḥikmah Muta'alliyah, Analisa Filosofis Terhadap Proses Sintesis Mullā Ṣadrā.* This study describes the process of synthesised thought of Mullā Ṣadrā on theology (*kalām*), philosophy, and mysticism (*'irfān*), then well known as "transcendent theosophy" (*al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'alliyah*).[14]

So, to the best of my knowledge, little attention has been paid to Mullā Ṣadrā's thought in correspondence to the issue of ontology, especially his view on existence and quiddity. Therefore, this article tries to fill the gap by studying Mullā Ṣadrā's view on the fundamentality of existence. This issue is important for solving any fundamental philosophical problems.

This study is qualitative research, and the author uses descriptive and analytical methods. The descriptive approach is needed to explain Mullā Ṣadrā's view on existence and quiddity, notably his view on the fundamentality of existence. In contrast, the analytical method required to analyse Mullā Ṣadrā's view can overcome the dispute among Muslim thinkers on the problem of existence and quiddity.[15] The technique for collecting data is carried out by using library research. In this case, the author collects the data, selects it and examines literature related to the research topic.

Existence and Essence

What is meant by the two opposites of *aṣīl* (fundamental) and *i'tibārī* here pertains to the question as to which of two, the existence or the quiddity (essence), refers to entified reality in itself (*dzātan*) without mediation in the precise philosophical sense.[16] There are two alternatives. If we understand

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[13] Habibullah, *Mullâ Ṣadrâ: Filsafat Mullâ Ṣadrâ tentang Gerak*, (Thesis S1, Ushuluddin Faculty, Faith and Philosophy Department, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2007), p. 6-7

[14] Hasan Bakti Nasution, *Ḥikmah Muta'âliyah, Analisa Filosofis Terhadap Proses Sintesis Mullâ Ṣadrâ* (Dissertation, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2000)

[15] This research is a study of a factual figure of philosophy in history that is Mullâ Ṣadrâ's view on existence and quiddity, notably his concept on the fundamentality of existence. In this case, there are some methods we are able to use. Still, the writer uses descriptive, comparative and analytical methods because, in my opinion, it is more appropriate for the objectives of this research. For further explanation, see Anton Barker and Ahmad Charris Zubair, *Metodologi Penelitian Filsafat* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1990), p. 61

[16] See M. T. Misbah Yazdi, *Philosophical Instruction: An Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy*, p. 216

entified reality as an unmediated instance of quiddity, we will uphold the fundamentality of essence and the respectivalness of existence. Vice versa, if we understand entified reality to be the unmediated instance of existence and consider quiddity a mental framework setting the limits for finite realities, we will be proponents of the fundamentality of existence and the respectivalness of quiddity.[17]

While what is meant by the term "existence" and "essence/quiddity"? The word *existence* is sometimes used as an infinitive (*maṣdār*) (to be), and sometimes it is used by logicians with a copulative meaning (is) and also as a verbal noun (*ism maṣdār*) (being). Those two formers are not considered in this study. But the meaning of the verbal noun, in the restricted sense of occurrence, is also not meant unless the above restriction is removed so that it may be predicated on objective realities, including the sacred Essence of God.[18]

In addition, the concept of 'existence' is self-evident and needs no mediating terms. Hence it has no explanatory words in the form of a definition or description because its meaning is more evident than any descriptive term. Such definition as "Existence is what subsists in reality" or "Existence is that which allows of predication" is explications of the word, not true definitions.[19]

Meanwhile, the word quiddity/essence (*māhiyah*) in Islamic philosophy has two meanings. *The first* is in the particular sense (*māhiyah bil ma'nā al-khaṣ*) defined as the answer to the question "What is it?" It is derived from the Arabic word *mā huwa atau mā hiya*. It could be applied to all existent conceived by the mind, and technically, it possesses specific limits of existence. For this reason, it is said that God has no quiddity. Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*) has no quiddity. *The second* is in the general sense (*māhiyah bil ma'nā al-'amm*) defined as by which a thing is what it is (*mā bihi al-shay' huwa huwa*). Quiddity embraces the objective reality of existence and God in this second sense. That is why it is said that the quiddity of God is the same as His identity or existence (*al-haqq mahiyyatuhu inniyyatuhu*).[20]

In addition, the second meaning of *māhiyah* is the ontological sense. Here, it is nothing other than being because, for Ṣadrā, the only reality is being. The first meaning of *māhiyah,* which concerns the logical essence, is usually translated as "quiddity" to distinguish it from "essence" in the general and ontological sense.[21]

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[17] See M. T. Misbah Yazdi, *Philosophical Instruction: An Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy*, p. 217

[18] See M. T. Misbah Yazdi, *Philosophical Instruction: An Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy,* p. 214

[19] See M. H. Thabathabai, *Bidâyah al-Ḥikmah* in Arabic and English language (The Islamic College Jakarta: Ibn Arabi and Mulla Sadra Corner, 2011), p. 2

[20] See M. T. Misbah Yazdi, *Philosophical Instruction: An Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy,* p. 215.

[21] See Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence*, p. 75

The meaning of quiddity in a general sense is not contradictive with existence because existence itself is the quiddity in this meaning. While quiddity, in a particular sense, is really different from existence because it is a mere mental conception or the result of abstraction of the mind. Quiddity in this meaning is contradictive with existence. Therefore, in this study, what is meant by the expression "quiddity" is the former meaning in the particular sense and not in the general sense.

Different Viewpoints among Muslim Philosophers

Back to the question above, on the distinction between existence and quiddity and which is the real one—whether existence or quiddity—in the external world, The philosophers have differed as to which of the two concepts is fundamental. The Peripatetics[22] hold existence to be fundamentally real (*aṣālāt al-wujūd*). The belief in the fundamentality of quiddity (*aṣālāt al-māhiyah*) has been ascribed to the Emanationists (*Ishrāqiyyūn*).[23] The view that both of them may be regarded as fundamentally real is one that no one has held, for that would imply that everything is two things, which is logically inadmissible.[24]

Let us see one by one their argumentations. Ibn Sīnā from the school of Peripatetics is a Muslim philosopher demonstrating the difference between existence and quiddity. In his writings, he often says that existence is something real. Even he insists that quiddity is merely an accident or mental abstraction. It is not quiddity that corresponds to the external reality but existence. Thus, it can be said that he is the pioneer of the primacy concept of existence. But in Peripatetic's perspective, everything has distinct existence one another, even though it is principal in corresponding to the quiddity.[25]

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[22] Aristotle's followers are known as peripatetics because it is said that he delivered lectures to his students while strolling through the Lyceum garden outside Athens, thus the word Peripateticism (mashsha'iyat). Although all the major Muslim philosophers, including al-Fârâbî, Ibn Sînâ, Ibn Rushd, and others, were primarily known as Peripatetic, Peripatetic in the history of Muslim religio-philosophical thought continued to stand in conflict with various theologies and Platonism, and more specifically with al-Hikmah al-Ishrâqiyyah. This was true even though Aristotle had a significant influence on Muslim philosophy. See ICAS, *Dictionary of Islamic Philosophical Terms* (Jakarta: ICAS, 2003)

[23] A school of Muslim religio-philosophical thinking known as "Illuminationist Theosophy" (Ishrâqiyyah) associates philosophy with knowledge and gnosis rather than speculative abstraction and logical systematisation. In order to reach the light of wisdom, which, it claims, was first revealed to the prophets and only understood and even misunderstood by the Greek philosophers, it places a greater emphasis on intuition (attained through invocation, mediation, and soul purification) than on discursive intellect. Shihâb al-Dîn Suhrawardî (549-587/153-1191), the school's founder, stated in the Hikmat al-Ishrâq integrates Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy with the Zoroastrian principles of light and darkness along with its peculiar angelology and Hermetic ideas and places the whole system within the context of Sufism. See ICAS, *Dictionary of Islamic Philosophical* Terms (Jakarta: ICAS, 2003)

[24] See M. H. Thabathabai, *Bidâyah al-Ḥikmah* in Arabic and English language, p. 4

[25] K.A. Walid. '*Mullā Ṣadrā's Criticism of Reincarnation*', *Kanz Philosophia: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism 9, no.* 1 (June, 2023), 133–154. https://doi.org/10.20871/kpjipm.v9i1.274

They put forth some of these arguments. According to the Peripatetics, quiddities give rise to multiplicity and diversity. If existence had not been fundamentally real, there would have been no true unity or union between two quiddities (in one thing). Because logical necessity demands the opposite of it, there would be no predication, which denotes unity in existence (as in a sentence of the kind, "A is B"). As a result, existence is inherently real and exists independently of quiddity.[26]

Another indication that quiddity exists outside is that it exhibits the predicted characteristics. However, quiddity lacks all these characteristics when it is a mental presence. There would therefore be no distinction between these two modes of being if existence were not real and quiddity, which exists in both modes of being, were real. Since this consequent premise is invalid, the antecedent must also be such. [27] Those are some of Peripatetics' arguments to prove the fundamentality of existence.

Meanwhile, the Emanationists, represented by Suhrawardī, as the most outstanding figure of this school, argue as follows; for him, to know something is to understand its quiddity and not its existence.[28] He begins from the principle that a mental difference does not necessarily imply a real difference, i.e. that two things being distinguishable from one another *qua* concept does not necessarily indicate that they are different also *in concreto*. On this basis, he argues that "quiddity" and "existence" are two different things only at the level of conceptual analysis and that in the extra-mental world, on the contrary, they are one single "reality", not a composite of two independent elements. Here, he explicitly and emphatically states that the concept of "existence" is through and through *i'tibārī,* there being nothing real directly corresponds to it in a real "existent". In reality, the objective referent of the word "existence" is nothing but "quiddity" as it actually is (*māhiyah ka-mā hiya*). It is "quiddity" that is primarily and fundamentally real, and the fundamentality of "quiddity", when conceptually analysed, produces the concept of "existence".[29]

It is admissible to argue that "existence" in the external world is something different from "quiddity" on the ground that we can conceive of the latter quite independently of "existence". (This is inadmissible) because in quite the same way, we can form a mental image of "existence"—for instance, the "existence" of a fabulous bird, *'anqâ'*—without knowing whether it (i.e. that particular "existence") does exist (i.e. is actualised *in concreto*) or not. Thus "existence" would require another "existence", and so on until ultimately, we would have to admit an infinite series of "existence" being actualised at the same time.[30] Those Suhrawardī's statements are a criticism of Ibn Sīnā, who

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[26] See M. H. Thabathabai, *Bidâyah al-Hikmah* in Arabic and English language, p. 5

[27] See M. H. Thabathabai, *Bidâyah al-Hikmah* in Arabic and English language, p. 5

[28] Mehdi Amin Razavi, *Suhrawardî and the School of Illumination* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997), p. 33

[29] See Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence*, *in* Henry Corbin (ed), *Kitâb al-Talwîhât*, (Istanbul: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1945), p. 22

[30] Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence*, p. 111

argues that "existence" must be something different from "quiddity" because it often happens that we represent in our mind a "quiddity"—triangle, for example—and yet doubt after representing it, whether it really exists or not.[31]

Then, Suhrawardī argues that all beings exist equally, and it is not the case that some existent beings exist more than others, indicating that existence is a universal concept.[32] Existence is a universal attribute that can be applied to all existent beings. For example, "human exists, "animal exists", and "tree exists", etc. He then enunciated a general principle that every general concept (like existence, unity, necessity, contingency, etc.) whose nature is such that if a corresponding factor or form is assumed to exist in external reality, this will lead to an infinite regress, must exist only in the mind and not in external reality.[33]

Suhrawardī also said that existence as a universal concept requires an existent being to manifest itself. Since existent beings require a quiddity to be, quiddity must precede existence in the order of actualisation. In order words, since quiddity is needed for an existent being to exist and existence is contingent upon an existent being, then existence is contingent upon the quiddity.[34] Those are the arguments from the Emanationists on the fundamentality of quiddity. However, the dispute on this problem is not finished.

Mullā Ṣadrā and His Works

Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrahīm ibn Yahya al-Qawamī al-Shirāzī, also known as Mullā Ṣadrā, Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn, or simply Akhund, was born in the central Iranian city of Shiraz between the years 979–98/1571-2 AD. He received his education in Isfahan under the tutelage of people like Mir Damad and Shaykh Baha' al-Dīn al-'Amilī, Shaykh-e Baha'i, before retiring to the village of Kahak, close to Qum, where he spent several years in spiritual seclusion and discipline. Here, he finished the *Asfār* (The Four Journeys), the first section of his great masterpiece. He was then allowed to return to Shiraz by Allahwirdi Khan, the governor of the Fars region, where he continued to teach for the rest of his life. In ah 1050/ad 1640, he passed away in Basra while on his seventh foot pilgrimage to Mecca.

Mullā Ṣadrā was pivotal in the notable renaissance of philosophical learning during the Safavid era. Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī had developed and revitalised the Peripatetic philosophy of Ibn Sīnā at the beginning of the Mongol period. This school had several significant proponents in the century before Mullā Ṣadrā. Shihab al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī's philosophy, known as the Illuminationist (*ishrāqi*) school, had also been a considerable movement. Before the tenth century ah (sixteenth-century AD), the speculative mysticism of Ibn al-'Arabi's Sufism had also established itself, and theology (*kalam*), mainly Shi'ite

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[31] Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence,* p. 110
[32] Mehdi Amin Razavi, *Suhrawardî and the School of Illumination,* p. 33
[33] See Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullâ Ṣadrâ* (New York: Albany, 1975), p. 35-36
[34] Mehdi Amin Razavi, *Suhrawardî and the School of Illumination,* p. 34

theology, had increasingly begun to be expressed in terms of philosophy. This development was primarily the work of al- Ṭūsī. In his magnum opus, *al-Ḥikma al-muta'alliya fi'l-asfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* (The Transcendent Wisdom Concerning the Four Intellectual Journeys, also known as the *Asfār*), Mullā Ṣadrā created a true fusion of all four philosophical strands. Several philosophers had previously combined different aspects of this philosophical heritage in their writings, but Mullā Ṣadrā was the first to do so. Mullā Ṣadrā wrote some books, and they are *al-Ḥikmah al-muta'alliya fi-'l-asfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* (The Transcendent Wisdom Concerning the Four Intellectual Journeys), *Kitāb al-mashā'ir* (The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations)*, and *al-Ḥikma al-'arshiyya* (The Wisdom of the Throne).[35]

Mullā Ṣadrā's View on the Fundamentality of Existence

The discussion on which is fundamentally real between existence and quiddity reaches its peak with the emergence of the school of "transcendent wisdom" (*al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'ālliyah*).[36] This school is tributed to Mullā Ṣadrā. As one of the contemporary Muslim philosophers, he also dramatically concerns this problem. He comprehensively explains this problem in his mater piece *al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'ālliyah fī al-Asfār al-'Aqliyyah al-'Arba'ah* (2002).

Mullā Ṣadrā is the philosopher who attributed the doctrine of fundamentality of existence to the Peripatetics and the philosophy of fundamentality of quiddity to the Emanationists. However, since the topic of the fundamentality of existence had not been previously presented as an independent topic, and the concept of it had not been previously explained, philosophers can not easily be explicitly grouped and definitively about it. Supposing, however, that this classification is correct, one must not forget that the fundamentality of existence was not presented by the followers of the Peripatetics in such a way that it could take its proper place among the problems of philosophy to shed light on the solution of other philosophical problems. Instead, the Peripatetics often presented and explained philosophical problems more compatible with the doctrine of the fundamentality of quiddity.[37]

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[35] http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/rep/H027.htm#H027WKENT1

[36] *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'āliyah* has come to mean the particular school of tradition theosophy formulated by Mullâ Ŝadrâ. It is identified with wisdom or theosophy, which is based on a purely metaphysical foundation reached through intellectual intuition and, at the same time, presented in a rational but not rationalistic form and making use of rational arguments. This school of thought is based on three principles: intellectual intuition or illumination, reason and rational demonstration, and religion or revelation. By those sources, Ŝadrâ aimed to harmonise Sufism (*'irfân*), the school of Ishrâq, the school of peripatetic and Islamic theology (*kalâm*). See S. H. Nasr*, Ŝadr al-Dîn al-Shîrâzî and His Transcendent Theosophy* (Iran: Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, 1997), p. 87-88

[37] See M. T. Misbah Yazdi, *Philosophical Instruction: An Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy*, p. 213-214

Likewise, the Emanationists' arguments may be found which are more compatible with the fundamentality of existence and which do not adequately justify the doctrine of the fundamentality of quiddity.[38] The point is that neither the Peripatetics nor the Emanationists can solve the distinction between existence and quiddity. Their arguments are not appropriate to defend each of their views.

Regarding this problem, Ṣadrā hardly criticises his predecessors, the Peripatetics and the Emanationists. Even though his arguments are compatible with the Peripatetics as the proponent of the reality of existence, he is different in how he sees this problem. In any case, Ṣadrā was the first to place this topic at the head of the discussion of ontology, and he suggested solutions to other problems on this basis.[39]

Ṣadrā realises that the solution to all significant philosophical problems depends on the truth of his concept on the fundamentality of existence, and solving them through the principle of fundamentality of quiddity is unsatisfactory and leads to a dead end. The principle of fundamentality of quiddity admitted could overcome some philosophical problems, but if we compare some critical philosophical issues (whose solutions are) based on the fundamentality of essence, it is relatively minor. It is different from the principle of fundamentality of existence that can overcome many critical philosophical problems as follows: the problem of causation and the reality of the relation between cause and effect, the conclusion of which, based on the fundamentality of existence, is the dependence of the impact on the cause. The implication of this dictum affects the rejection of predestination (*jabr*)[40] and libertarianism (*tafwīḍ*)[41] principles and also the affirmation of the unity of God (*Tawḥīd*). Therefore, Mullā Ṣadrā's idea on the fundamentality of existence is one of the most serious and fundamental issues to study and must never be treated casually and offhand.[42]

Mullā Ṣadrā is the founder of the school of transcendent theosophy or Hikmah Muta'alliyah. Wisdom, in this regard, is the wisdom gained through

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[38] See M. T. Misbah Yazdi, *Philosophical Instruction: An Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy*, p. 213

[39] M. Zainal Abidin, *"Dimensi Spiritual-Intelektual Filsafat Mulla Sadra Dan Kontekstualisasinya Bagi Kehidupan Modern". Millah* 3, no. 2 (December 2016), 159-71. https://journal.uii.ac.id/Millah/article/view/7017

[40] *Jabr* is the sect that says that all past, present and future incidents have been determined to be real by God. It is the teaching that whether the soul or the body of someone will go to paradise or hell has been decreed by the will of God. See Lorens Bagus, *Kamus filsafat* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2002), p. 881

[41] *Tafwīdl* is the sect that states that every human has liberty and freedom in determining his life. According to this faith, human has the freedom and power to act. It is also well known as free will. See Harun Nasution, *Teologi Islam* (Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta: UI press, 2002), p. 33

[42] See M. T. Misbah Yazdi, *Philosophical Instruction: An Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy*, p. 220-221

spiritual enlightenment or intellectual intuition and presented in the form of rational using rational arguments.[43] Existence is the key to understanding Ṣadrā's philosophy because its entire epistemological building relies on existence. This school of philosophy always refers to the concept of existence as the keyword in discussing philosophical problems. The idea of existence is central in this school, so some people do not hesitate to call it a kind of existentialism of Islam.[44]

Existence, according to Ṣadrā, comprises all beings. Two concepts of existence (*wujūd*) and quiddity (*māhiyah*) emerge. For Ṣadrā, the real being is existence, not essence. It means that existence precedes essence. The essence is meaningless without existence. The difference between existence and essence, the most substantial, is that existence is a necessary being. It is infinite and immaterial. It comprises everything, from the divine realities to abstract and material realities.[45] Whereas the essence is unnecessary and finite.

In the context of the ontology of Ṣadrā, all realities in this universe are a reflection of existence. Existence gives reality to everything; the essence is nothing in itself and merely the abstraction of the mind.[46] At the ontological level, what so-called humans, animals, plants, gods, planets, and the like are the same beings in the sense of existence? It means that human beings' existence is similar to that of animals, plants, etc. Therefore, in the level of existence or ontology, all differences, in essence, become meaningless as anything is one single existence. All the diversities are at the level of essence.

The ontological unity, functionally, is the starting point for the knowledge known as *'ilm al-ḥuḍūrī* (knowledge by presence), which is the principle of transcendent theosophy. 'Ilm al-huduri is a pattern of relation between subject and object which ontologically have melted into one. Technically, a relation between subject and object indicates a relation between existence (*wujūd*) and existence (*wujūd*). Both subject and object are the existence itself. So when the subject relates to the object, it (the subject) affirms itself. Thus it is present, and as it is present, a fusion occurs between subject and object.

In the discussion of existence in Ṣadrā's philosophy, there are two keywords that are commonly used for the analysis; those are *aṣālat al-wujūd* and *tashkīk al-wujūd*.[47] As for the idea of ashalat al-wujud, it truly begins with the debate over the distinction between existence and essence. The distinction can be illustrated simply as follows. For instance, there are two elements that are present when we observe the specific concrete object "human" in this situation. Its humanity comes first, followed by its existence. The proposition would be,

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[43] Haidar Baqir, *Buku Saku Filsafat Islam* (Bandung: Mizan, 2006)

[44] Haidar Baqir, Buku Saku…, p. 173

[45] M. T. Misbah Yazdi, *Buku Darras Filsafat Islam* (Bandung: Mizan, 1999), p. 177

[46] Sayyed Hossein Nasr, *Ensiklopedi Tematis Filsafat Islam* (Bandung: Mizan, 2003), p. 902

[47] Haidar Baqir, *Buku Saku Filsafat Islam*… p. 173

"He is a human being," and for the second, "He exists." Therefore, the former alludes to the quiddity that sets it apart from other items like an animal. The latter, however, refers to the existence that gives something factual existence.

Additionally, the idea of "existence" is self-evident and does not require any intermediary concepts. As a result, it lacks any definitional or descriptive explanatory terminology because its meaning is more precise than any such term. Such explications of the term, as in "Existence is what exists in reality" or "Existence is that which allows for predication," are inaccurate definitions.[48] The first is in the specific sense, defined as the response to the question, "What is it?" (*māhiyyah bil ma'nā al-khas*). Its origins are in the Arabic word *mâ huwa* or *mâ hiya*. It could be applied to anything that exists and can be conceptualised by the mind as long as it technically falls within certain bounds. Because of this, it is argued that God does not have quiddity. There is no quiddity in Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*).[49]

Thus, from an intellectual standpoint, existence and quiddity are the two aspects that every contingent being (*mumkin al-wujūd*) possesses. According to the philosopher, "every contingent being is a composite duality, composed of existence and quiddity" (*Kullu mawjūd fa huwa zaūj tarkībi, murakkab min māhiyyah wa wujūd*).[50] In other words, the same object, a human, has two different predicates given by these two distinct conceptions. Unquestionably, a human being is a single, tangible entity. However, he has two separate sides to himself because he has two distinct predicates. It is unclear if those two disparate characteristics represent two distinct realities or just one. How to tell which one is real and which one is fake? Because it cannot be both real and unreal at the same time.[51]

This duality between existence and quiddity implies that the question of the fundamentality of ontology—i.e., which of the two, existence or quiddity, is really real—appears. In other words, which has reality in the outside world—existence or quiddity? Because, as was already explained above, wujud provides essence an existence, Mullā Ṣadrā claims that existence is more essential than essence.

While *tashkīk al-wujūd*, better known as the gradation or ambiguity of wujud, emphasises that wujud is not only one but also diverse or plural, stretching in a gradation or hierarchy from the highest existence of God to the lowest existence. Every more elevated level of existence contains all realities manifest in the lower level.[52] According to Mullā Ṣadrā, existence is a single

[48] M. H. Thabathabai, *Bidâyah al-Ḥikmah* in Arabic and English language (The Islamic College Jakarta: Ibn Arabi and Mulla Sadra Corner, 2011), p. 2

[49] M. T. Misbah Yazdi, *Philosophical Instruction: An Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy,* p. 215.

[50] M. T. Misbah Yazdi, *Philosophical Instruction*: *An Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy*, p. 259

[51] Syaifan Nur, *Mullâ Ṣadrâ: Pendiri Mazhab al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'âliyah (Jakarta: Teraju, 2003), p. 75*

[52] Sayyed Hossein Nasr, *Ensiklopedi Tematis Filsafat Islam*, p. 916-917

reality which appears in different gradations or stages.[53] So we have to be concerned that existence is one, but the gradation of existence is varied. But the gradation occurs at the essence level only, not at the level of existence. At the level of existence, wujud is one.

Conclusion

Mullā Ṣadrā holds the view that existence is more fundamental than quiddity (*aṣālat al-wujūd*). It precedes quiddity or essence. Existence is found in all beings, both necessary and contingent beings. Therefore, he has a different opinion from Ibn Sīnā and Suhrawardī. He argues that existence (*wujūd*) will always exist because it does not come from nothingness. And because nothingness has no existence, it automatically impossibly exists or gives existence. Therefore, existence is necessary, infinite and universal. The problem of dualism and pluralism merely occurs in essence. Therefore, Mullā Ṣadrā's transcendent theosophy tries to bridge any differences and binary opposition created by humans. The binary opposition like heaven-hell, world-hereafter, Khaliq-creature, God-universe, material-nonmaterial, transcendent-immanent and the like are melted in Ṣadrā's philosophy.

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[53] Haidar Baqir, *Buku Saku…*, p. 177

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