

The Unity of Existence and the Fundamentality of Existence: A Comparative study of the Thought of Ibn ‘Arabī dan Mullā Ṣadrā

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Abstract: *Abstract: This article seeks to clarify the meaning of wujūd (existence) through a focused comparison of key terminological pairs in the thought of Ibn ‘Arabī and Mullā Ṣadrā, with the aim of elucidating how unity and multiplicity can be understood without lapsing into pantheism. The study employs a qualitative, library-based approach that draws upon both primary and secondary sources. It is conducted through conceptual analysis, comparative examination of terminology, and the mapping of functional correspondences between ideas. The main findings indicate that wujūd constitutes the most concrete reality, while multiplicity appears as a gradation of intensity. This study significantly contributes to the field by demonstrating that Ṣadrā’s wujūd rābiṭ provides the necessary ontological scaffolding for Ibn ‘Arabī’s a’yān ṭābitah, thereby bridging the gap between mystical intuition and rational demonstration. The implications of this study the purification of terminology from pantheistic reduction, the provision of a working matrix for hermeneutics, ethics, and spiritual cultivation, and the establishment of a conceptual foundation for employing imaginal epistemology. The novelty of this research lies in its limitation of scope to two pairs of terms and in the formulation of a functional correspondence between a’yān ṭābitah and wujūd rābiṭ without conceptual identification, thereby providing an explicit and applicable map of correspondence for the dialogue between philosophy and ‘irfān.*

Keywords: *wahdat al-wujūd; tajallī; fundamentality of existence; Ibn ‘Arabī; Mullā Ṣadrā*

A. Introduction

The discourse on wujūd (existence) The discourse on *wujūd* (being or existence) constitutes the central axis of Islamic metaphysics. This term traverses two major currents of the intellectual

tradition. On one side stands philosophy, which unfolds the ontological problem from al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, and Ibn Sīnā to Suhrawardī and the later *muta'akhkhirīn* (post-classical thinkers). Historically, the concept of *wujūd* underwent gradual development. During the phase of translation and assimilation of Greek thought, metaphysical categories were absorbed and further elaborated. The initial mapping of this development can be observed within the Peripatetic school, which situated the discussion of *mahiyyah* (essence) and *wujūd* (existence) as key nodes for explaining the distinction between necessity and possibility. The culmination of this discourse is found in Ibn Sīnā, who distinguished “essence” from “existence” and subsequently articulated the structural framework of *wājib al-wujūd* (the Necessary Existence), *mumkin al-wujūd* (contingent existence), and the causal hierarchy that connects them.¹ The subsequent development marked a shift in emphasis. Suhrawardī challenged the Peripatetic treatment of *wujūd*, proposing instead the illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) perspective that places special emphasis on the ontology of light and the conceptual weight of *mahiyyāh* (essence).² His reformulation prepared the ground for the far-reaching transformation achieved by Mullā Ṣadrā, who established the fundamentality of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*) and the gradation of existence (*tashkīk al-wujūd*), thereby overturning the inherited ontological categories of earlier philosophical systems.³ On the other hand, the tradition of *ʿirfān* (gnosis) was evolving along a distinct trajectory, culminating in the thought of Ibn ʿArabī and the Akbarian school (Akbarīyah). In contrast to philosophy, this mystical tradition articulated the meaning of *wujūd* through the paradigm of *tajallī* (divine manifestation). Here, existence is conceived as a single, all-encompassing reality that reveals itself in endlessly renewed degrees and relations through the Divine Names. The discourse of *ʿirfān* thus privileges a language of manifestation and presence rather than abstract definition, expressing existence as an ever-unfolding process of self-disclosure.

What is central in this discourse is the dimension of presence and unveiling within the subject, as well as the *ʿālam al-mithāl* (imaginal realm) which serves as a *barzakh* mediating between spiritual images and sensory forms. It is essential to emphasize that when Ibn ʿArabī speaks of the unity of existence (*wahdat al-wujūd*), he does not imply a literal fusion between the Creator and creation. Rather, he articulates an order of manifestation that preserves the transcendence of the Divine Essence while at the same time accounting for the multiplicity of creation.⁴ The two traditions are often understood to follow different orientations. Philosophy

¹ R. E. Houser, “Avicenna and Aquinas: Essence, Existence, and the Esse of Christ,” *The Saint Anselm Journal* 9.1, 2013. Quoted Ibn Sīnā, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, translated by M. Marmura, p. 4-6

² A. Bertolacci, “Transmission of Greek Metaphysics,” in *Arabic and Islamic Metaphysics* (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2012), <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/arabic-islamic-metaphysics/>. Accessed on October 31, 2025.

³ Sajjad H. Rivzi, *Mulla Sadra* (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2009), <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mulla-sadra/>. Accessed on October 31, 2025

⁴ William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn ʿArabī's Metaphysics of Imagination* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989). p. 80.

approaches *wujūd* through conceptual analysis, inference, and systematic reasoning, whereas *‘irfān* affirms *wujūd* through *shuhūd* (direct witnessing), *tajallī* (manifestation), and the inner transformation of the subject. Nevertheless, both trajectories converge in the thought of Mullā Ṣadrā, who sought an epistemic and ontological synthesis under the title of *al-Ḥikmah al-Muta‘āliyah* (Transcendent Philosophy). It is within this horizon that the present comparative study is situated.

The relationship between philosophy and *‘irfān* is far from monolithic. Akbarian figures such as Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī and Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī reformulated Ibn ‘Arabī’s terminology in ways that rendered it more communicable to rationalist circles. It is precisely this discourse that later became a major reference point for Mullā Ṣadrā. Modern scholarship has shown that Ṣadrā drew extensively upon Sufi thinkers, including Ibn ‘Arabī, Qūnawī, and Qayṣarī, while simultaneously reinforcing his analyses through *falsafī* (philosophical) argumentation. For this reason, Ṣadrā cannot be reduced to being either a “pure philosopher” or a “pure gnostic.” He developed a synthesis that enabled the concept of existence to acquire explanatory power extending into the domains of ethics, philosophical psychology, and hermeneutics.⁵

On the other hand, Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī observed that many debates among the *mutakallimūn* and philosophers failed to lead to a true understanding of *tawḥīd*, as they remained confined to the conceptual level. He proposed a path that integrated Imāmī Shī‘ī thought with Akbarian *‘irfān*, while simultaneously critiquing the rationalistic tendency that, in his view, generated further doubt rather than unveiling the truth. This interpretive orientation helps explain how Mullā Ṣadrā situated within the Safavid milieu—was able to internalize the spiritual intentionality of *‘irfān* while simultaneously maintaining the methodological discipline of philosophical reasoning (*falsafī*).⁶

In popular understanding, the term *waḥdat al-wujūd* is often misunderstood as equivalent to pantheism. Academic literature, however, rejects such a simplistic identification. Defenses of the doctrine can be found throughout the Akbarian corpus and its commentarial tradition, which distinguish between the level of the Absolute Essence (*al-dhāt al-muṭlaqah*) and the manifestations (*tajallī*) across the gradations of existence (*marātib al-wujūd*). Conversely, criticism has come from certain scholars and Sufi figures. Aḥmad Sirhindī, for instance, introduced the term *waḥdat al-shuhūd* to emphasize the dimension of the servant’s witnessing, as a corrective to what he regarded as the potentially misleading expression *waḥdat al-wujūd*. This long-standing debate underscores the need for scholarly inquiry aimed at clarifying the concept and freeing it from reductionist readings and polemical stigmas.⁷ As Sajjad Rizvi (2009)

⁵ Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mulla Sadra on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). p. 221

⁶ S. H. Asghari, “Shi’a Mystical Theology: Notes on Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī’s Jāmi‘ al-Asrār Wa Manba‘ al-Anwār,” *Centre for Religious Sciences Kom IX* (3) (2020). p. 73

⁷ Nunu Burhanuddin, “Sirhindī’s Criticism of the Wahdat al-Wujud in Ibn ‘Arabī Course,” *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 22 (2022). p. 93

argues, Mullā Ṣadrā's metaphysics of *tasykīk* (gradation) serves to safeguard the transcendence of God while maintaining the reality of the world. By moving from the 'oneness of being' to the 'fundamentality of being' (*aṣālat al-wujūd*), Ṣadrā provides a *burhānī* (demonstrative) framework that justifies Ibn 'Arabī's *kashf* (unveiling).⁸

Moreover, the understanding of *wujūd* extends beyond the confines of pure metaphysics. In the realm of epistemology, the definition of existence shapes theories of knowledge. If knowledge is construed as a mode of being, then the act of knowing is not merely representational but entails an intensification of the subject's own existence. On the ethical level, the gradations of *wujūd* provide a framework for understanding why certain virtues ennoble the human being. In the hermeneutical domain, comprehension of *tajallī* and the *'ālam al-mithāl* equips interpreters with tools to read religious signs and symbols without being constrained by literalism, thereby preserving the expansiveness of meaning. In the sphere of spiritual education (*tarbiyah rūḥāniyyah*), the macrocosm-microcosm relationship gains a consistent ontological foundation. All these pathways converge at a single point: what may appear as a difference between the Unity of Being and *tajallī*, on the one hand, and the Primacy and Gradation of Existence on the other, in fact establishes a field of equivalence, allowing for productive comparison without collapsing their methodological distinctions.⁹

From the standpoint of Islamic intellectual historiography, a comparative study of Ibn 'Arabī and Mullā Ṣadrā addresses at least three key needs. First, there is the need for terminological clarification. Discussions surrounding *wahdat al-wujūd* are often misunderstood, with the concept of "unity" frequently reduced to mere "homogenization." In Ibn 'Arabī, however, unity refers to the primordial unity of existence, which manifests across diverse relational names. In Ṣadrā, the fundamentality of existence indicates that existence is the fundamental reality preceding essence (*mahīyyah*), and that it unfolds in a hierarchy of intentional gradations. Second, there is the need for disciplinary integration. This study demonstrates that philosophy and *'irfān* are not mutually exclusive but can illuminate one another, both methodologically and in terms of their conclusions. Third, there is the need for practical relevance. The framework of existence provides a robust ethical and hermeneutical foundation for moral education, the interpretation of religious texts, and spiritual cultivation.¹⁰

This study uses a qualitative methodology, using a library-based and comparative approach with a focused scope on two pairs of terminology: the Unity of Being–*tajallī*, representing the Akbarian school, and the Primacy–Gradation of Existence, representing *al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'āliyah*. Its primary aim is to highlight points of convergence and divergence between these two frameworks, thereby providing a balanced and substantive understanding of *wujūd* within two horizons often considered distant. In terms of sources, the research relies on

⁸ Rizvi, S. H. (2009). *Mullā Ṣadrā and Metaphysics: Modulation of Being*. New York: Routledge.

⁹ William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn 'Arabī's Metaphysics of Imagination*. p. 112

¹⁰ Sajjad H. Rivzi, *Mulla Sadra*. Accessed on October 31, 2025.

relevant primary and secondary materials. For the Akbarian tradition, key references include *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, complemented by contemporary studies that elucidate central concepts such as *wujūd*, *tajallī*, and *‘ālam al-mithāl*. For Ṣadrā, the principal texts are *al-Asfār al-Arba‘ah* and *al-Mašā‘ir*, along with recent resources that positions him as a “metaphysical revolutionary” for his bold affirmation of existence as a graded and dynamic reality. Figures such as al-Qayṣarī serve as conceptual bridges, facilitating cross-traditional dialogue through their commentaries (*Sharḥ*). The study deliberately limits its scope to these two terminological pairs, aiming to achieve a clear and focused comparison without expanding into broader debates. It does not evaluate claims of spiritual authority but rather examines conceptual coherence. The intended outcome is a comparative mapping that can serve as a foundation for subsequent thematic chapters, including discussions of the *‘ālam al-mithāl*, substantial motion, and the macrocosm–microcosm relationship.

B. Method

This research employs a qualitative, library-based approach to investigate the metaphysical intersections between the Akbarian school and Transcendent Philosophy. The study is conducted through conceptual analysis and a comparative examination of terminology, focusing on how both traditions address the problem of existence (*wujūd*).

The methodology relies on primary and secondary textual sources. For the Akbarian tradition, the study draws upon Ibn ‘Arabī’s seminal works, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*. For Mullā Ṣadrā’s framework, the research utilizes *al-Asfār al-Arba‘ah* and *al-Mašā‘ir*. Additionally, the commentaries of Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī are employed as a conceptual bridge to facilitate dialogue between mystical intuition and rational demonstration.

The scope of the analysis is deliberately narrowed to two fundamental terminological pairs: Unity of Being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) and Divine Manifestation (*tajallī*) representing Ibn ‘Arabī, and Fundamentality (*aṣālat al-wujūd*) and Gradation of Existence (*tashkīk al-wujūd*) representing Mullā Ṣadrā.

The data analysis process involves mapping functional correspondences between these ideas specifically exploring how Ṣadrā’s *wujūd rābiṭ* (relational existence) provides ontological scaffolding for Ibn ‘Arabī’s *a‘yān ṭābitah* (fixed entities). By prioritizing conceptual coherence over claims of spiritual authority, the methodology aims to elucidate points of convergence and divergence, ultimately providing a balanced matrix for hermeneutics, ethics, and spiritual cultivation.

C. Result and Discussion

Biography of Ibn ‘Arabī dan Mullā Ṣadrā

Ibn ‘Arabī was born in Murcia on 27 Ramadan 560 H / 1165 CE, with the full name Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn al-‘Arabī al-Ṭā‘ī al-Ḥātimī. He grew up in Seville following political changes in

al-Andalus,¹¹ so his early education was shaped within a major urban environment that hosted networks of scholars and scholarly assemblies. He is known to have met Ibn Rushd, an encounter that influenced the direction of his intellectual development. After performing the pilgrimage to Mecca, Ibn 'Arabī embarked on extensive travels through North Africa, Anatolia, Egypt, and Syria.¹² From 1223 AD until his death in 1240 AD, he resided in Damascus,¹³ where he taught, wrote, and mentored students who would later become influential, such as Şadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, a key figure in the transmission of manuscripts. Historically, Ibn 'Arabī's ideas are most closely associated with the concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, and his dedication to intellectual development is evident in his prolific writing. He left a corpus of approximately 700 works spanning a wide range of subjects. Among these, the two most frequently referenced and central to his thought are *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* and *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. *Al-Futūḥāt* includes sections on cosmology, ethical and spiritual experience, and technical terminology, while *Fuṣūṣ* presents a concise compilation of the "wisdom" of the prophets. Together, these two works are regarded as a compendium of Ibn 'Arabī's entire intellectual legacy.¹⁴

Ibn 'Arabī's influence extended well beyond Sufi circles. Many scholars and writers in the fields of *tafsīr*, *kalām*, and philosophy drew upon his terminological framework. This explains why his works and terminology continue to serve as key references in discussions concerning the relationship between spiritual experience and metaphysical structures. Beyond the two primary works mentioned earlier, the corpus attributed to him includes *Shajarat al-Kawn*, *Misykāt al-Anwār*, *Ma lā budda minhu li al-Murīd*, *Isyārāt al-Qur'ān*, *al-Insān al-Kullī*, *Bulghat al-Ghawwās*, *Tāj al-Rasā'il*, *Kitāb al-Khalwah*, *Sharḥ Khal' al-Na'layn*, *Mir'āt al-Ārifīn*, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, as well as other devotional treatises.¹⁵

On the other hand, Mullā Şadrā or Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm bin Yaḥyā al-Qawāmī al-Shīrāzī, was also known as Şadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī. He was born in Shiraz around Şadrā 979 H / 1571–1572 CE. His advanced education took place in Isfahan during the Safavid period, where he studied under Mīr Dāmād, Mīr Fendereskī, and Shaykh Bahā'ī. The intellectual and social dynamics of his time generated tensions concerning philosophy and *'irfān*. Şadrā subsequently entered a period of seclusion in Kahak, near Qom, which is understood as a phase of conceptual maturation that would later be systematized into *al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'āliyyah* (Transcendent

¹¹ Kautsar Azhari Noer, *Ibn Al-Arabi: Wahdah al-Wujud Dalam Perdebatan* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995). p. 17

¹² William C. Chittick, *Ibn 'Arabi: Heir to the Prophets* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005). p. 12-15.

¹³ Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn 'Arabi* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993). p. 224-225, Muḥammad ibn Sa'd al-Dīn ibn Baranguš Ibn Qamar al-Dimashqī is mentioned as a travel companion of Ibn 'Arabī from Anatolia ke Syria.

¹⁴ Muh. Panji Maulana, *Filsafat Ketuhanan Ibnu Arabi: Telaah Kitab Hill al-Rumuz Wa Mafatih al-Kunuz*, Vol. 4 No. 2 (2018). p. 332

¹⁵ Kautsar Azhari Noer, *Ibn Al-Arabi: Wahdah al-Wujud Dalam Perdebatan*. p. 28-29.

Theosophy). Following this period, he returned to the public sphere, teaching and writing in Shiraz until his death in 1050 H / 1640 AD.¹⁶

Ṣadrā's works are extensive, encompassing a wide range of disciplines, with *al-Asfār al-Arba'ah* regarded as his magnum opus. This work consolidates key theses, including the primacy of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*) and the gradation of being (*tashkīk al-wujūd*). From the foundations of metaphysics, he moves into philosophical psychology, the philosophy of religion, and eschatology. In addition to *al-Asfār*, he authored *al-Mashā'ir*, *al-Shawāhid al-Rubūbiyyah*, various *ta'liqāt* on Ibn Sīnā's *al-Shifā'*, thematic Qur'anic exegesis, and commentaries on Hadith.¹⁷ Nasr provides a comprehensive list of his works and notes that Ṣadrā's Arabic style is clear and fluid, making his writings a lasting reference for subsequent generations. Ṣadrā's network of students included figures such as Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī and 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī,¹⁸ both of whom played crucial roles in disseminating Sadrian terminology and methodology across Persian centers of learning. From the perspective of intellectual history, Ṣadrā's life can be read in three phases: first, his intellectual formation in Shiraz and Isfahan; second, his period of seclusion in Kahak; and third, his return to Shiraz to teach and systematically compile his manuscripts.

Wujūd According to Ibn 'Arabī

Ibn 'Arabī conceives *wujūd* as a singular reality that manifests itself through gradations of *tajallī* (divine self-disclosure). The created world is neither identical with the Real (*al-Ḥaqq*) nor separate from it. It functions as a locus of appearance (*maẓhar*), a place where the Divine Names are reflected without abolishing the ontological distance between Creator and creation. This idea is elaborated in the chapter on Adam in *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, which assigns a microcosmic status to humanity. The Real is said to perceive itself in the forms provided by this locus of appearance. Ibn 'Arabī employs the metaphor of a mirror to illustrate this relationship: the world is like a mirror initially unpolished, which is then varnished by the presence of human beings. This metaphor simultaneously conveys several points: that the source of reality is singular; that the manifested forms add nothing to the essence of *wujūd*; and that the mirror never becomes the owner of the image. In this way, the transcendence (*tanzīh*) of God is preserved alongside the directed resemblance (*tashbīh*).¹⁹

¹⁶ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Sadr Al-Din Shirazi and His Transcendent Theosophy: Background, Life and Works*. (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1978). p. 31-39.

¹⁷ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Sadr Al-Din Shirazi and His Transcendent Theosophy: Background, Life and Works*. p. 46.

¹⁸ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Sadr Al-Din Shirazi and His Transcendent Theosophy: Background, Life and Works*. p. 29-31.

¹⁹ Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*. Edited by Abū al-'Alā 'Affīfī, (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1946). In this research, we use Ibn 'Arabī, *The Seals of Wisdom (Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam)*, translated by Aisha Bewley (Norwich: Diwan Press, 2004) edition. In the chapter of Adam p.4-6, *tanzīh* affirms the absolute incomparability and transcendence of God, while *tashbīh* affirms the relational proximity of God through His Names and self-disclosures (*tajallī*). For Ibn 'Arabī, both principles must be upheld simultaneously to avoid falling into either rigid negation or simplistic anthropomorphism. This pattern is further illustrated in the chapter on Noah, which emphasizes the "wisdom of transcendence" (*ḥikmat al-tanzīh*) as a corrective against an excessive leaning toward transcendence at the expense

The structure of *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* guides the reader through a sequence of “rings” of wisdom (*ḥikam*), each associated with a particular prophet. The entire sequence ultimately converges upon a single center—*wujūd*. This orientation is made explicit in the chapter titled “The Seal of the Wisdom of Existence (*Wujūd*) in the Word of David,” which situates *wujūd* as the interpretive axis of the text rather than as a merely technical concept.²⁰ In addition to the chapter on Adam, several other sections reinforce the pattern of continual *tajallī*, the unceasing flow of divine self-disclosure that renews creation at every moment (*tajaddud al-Khalq*).²¹ Elsewhere, Ibn ‘Arabī associates the “Breath of the All-Merciful” (*nafas al-Raḥmān*) with the emergence of the cosmos, so that the cosmic manifestation is understood as a hierarchically unfolding effusion of divine reality.²²

Linguistically, the root *wajada* carries the nuance of “to find,” which gives *wujūd* an active and experiential connotation rather than that of passive “being.” It points to the discovery of reality within a directed mode of awareness.²³ In the chapter on Adam and in the opening sections of *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Ibn ‘Arabī connects this recognition with witnessing (*shuhūd*), suggesting that knowledge does not stand apart from *wujūd* itself. To know, therefore, is to participate in the same current of divine unveiling (*tajallī*).

To understand the unity of *wujūd* and the multiplicity of the cosmos without falling into rigid essentialism, the Akbarian tradition employs the terminology of *a’yān ṭābitah*. In the introduction to his *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī organizes this theme alongside discussions of the Divine Names and levels of manifestation. He defines *a’yān ṭābitah* as fixed entities within Divine Knowledge that serve as the archetypal referents for *tajallī* in the created world. These entities do not exist independently of the Real; rather, their function is to preserve unity while allowing for multiplicity at the level of manifestation. Qayṣarī further emphasizes that key terms must be understood as conceptual delimitations for reading *Fuṣūṣ*, such as the clarification that *wujūd* is not a genus to which categories can be added.²⁴ Modern academic discussions note variations in translating *a’yān ṭābitah*—some prefer “fixed entities,” while others retain “permanent archetypes.” This distinction highlights that what is “fixed” pertains to

of immanence. The broader structure of *tajallī* throughout *Fuṣūṣ* reveals a directed intimacy expressed through the cosmic locus of manifestation (*maẓhar*). Chittick and Sachiko Murata also discuss these complementary aspects in *The Vision of Islam*. Murata, Sachiko, and William C. Chittick. *The Vision of Islam*. (St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 1994), p. 77-79.

²⁰ Ibn ‘Arabī, *The Seals of Wisdom (Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam)*. p. 83.

²¹ Ibn ‘Arabī, *The Seals of Wisdom (Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam)*. p. 91. The term *tajaddud al-khalq* refers to the “continuous renewal” of creation at every moment, often expressed through the phrase *ma’a al-anfas*—“with every breath.” Ibn ‘Arabī discusses this notion under the expressions *khalq jadīd* and *tajaddud al-khalq*. A concise formulation appears in the chapter on Shu‘ayb in *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, which affirms that divine self-disclosure (*tajallī*) is unceasing; hence, cosmic forms are perpetually renewed, while *wujūd* itself remains singular and unchanged.

²² Ibn ‘Arabī, *The Seals of Wisdom (Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam)*. p. 70, on the Breath of the All-Merciful *nafas al-Raḥmān*, explaining the emergence of the cosmos as a gradual effusion derived from the Divine Names.

²³ Haidar Bagir, *Epistemologi Tasawuf: Sebuah Pengantar* (Bandung: Mizan, 2017). p. 71.

²⁴ Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ Al-Ḥikam*, edition and introduction of Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Intishārāt ‘Ilmī wa Farhangī, 1375). p. 3-16

Divine Knowledge, not to external existence.²⁵ In this study, the expression “fixed entities in Divine Knowledge” is adopted for consistency, as it remains neutral and resonates with both *kalām* and *ʿirfān* terminology.

Ibn ʿArabī structures the discourse on the cosmos around the principle of *tajallī* (Divine self-disclosure). The Real reveals Himself within the mirrors of entities, so that the cosmos appears as the imaginal image (*ṣūrah khayāliyyah*) of that disclosure. The One remains unchanging; transformation occurs only at the level of the image. In the chapter of Adam, Ibn ʿArabī states that the Real manifests Himself to Himself in the form made available by the locus of manifestation (*maẓhar*).²⁶ In his *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, Qayṣarī elaborates that *ʿālam al-mithāl* represents an ontological boundary constituted from a luminous substance (*jawhar nūrānī*). It resembles the physical world in that perceivable forms exist within it, yet it remains immaterial.²⁷ Thus, the imaginal realm functions as a *barzakh* a boundary that both separates and connects two domains.²⁸ The term *ʿālam al-mithāl* carries two essential meanings. First, it contains the primordial images of forms that reside in the Divine Plane of Knowledge (*Ḥaḍrat al-ʿIlm al-Ilāhī*). Second, it serves as the repository of all images corresponding to entities in the corporeal world. For this reason, it is also called the *objective imagination* (*khayāl munfaṣil*).²⁹ Every meaning and spirit possesses an imaginal form that reflects its degree of perfection. The imaginal form thus mediates the appearance of meanings; consequently, dream interpretation and inner unveiling operate through the correspondence between image and reality. Qayṣarī includes the Throne (*ʿArsh*), the Footstool (*Kursī*), the celestial spheres, the earth, and the angels within the scope of *ʿālam al-mithāl*.³⁰

Ibn ʿArabī portrays the cosmos as a shadow whose existence depends entirely on its source. Human knowledge of the world is therefore analogous to knowledge of a shadow: one who does not recognize what casts it has not yet understood the origin of the shadow. This statement clarifies the claim that everything other than the Real is imaginal (*khayālī*), referring to the mode of existence at the level of image.³¹ Henry Corbin designates this realm as the *Mundus Imaginalis*, an intermediary world in which meaning takes form. This concept facilitates the understanding

²⁵ Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, *The Horizons of Being: The Metaphysics of Ibn al-ʿArabī in the Muqaddimat al-Qayṣarī*, Trans. Mukhtar H. Ali (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2020). p. 92-111, about *aʿyān ṭābitah* and the comparison of the translation “fixed entities” and “permanent archetypes”.

²⁶ Ibn ʿArabī, *The Seals of Wisdom (Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam)*. The Word of Adam, p. 4.

²⁷ Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ Al-Ḥikam*, Volumn 1, Taḥqīq Āyat Allāh Ḥasan Ḥasan-Zādah Āmulī (Qom: Muʿassasat Bustān al-Kitāb, 2003). Chapter 6, p. 117, on the quote, “*huwa ʿālamun rūḥāniyyun min jawharin nūrāniyyin*”.

²⁸ Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ Al-Ḥikam*, Volumn 1. p. 117, on the quote, “*li-annahu barzakhun wa ḥaddun faṣilun baynahumā*.”

²⁹ Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ Al-Ḥikam*, Volume 1. P. 118, on the quote “*wa innamā yusammā ʿal-ʿālam al-mithālīyya li-kawnihī mushtamilan ʿalā ṣuwari mā fī al-ʿālam al-jismāniyyi, wa li-kawnihī awwala mithālīn ṣūriyyin li-mā fī al-ḥaḍratī al-ʿilmiyyati al-ilāhiyyati min ṣuwari al-aʿyāni wa al-ḥaqāʾiq*.”

³⁰ Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ Al-Ḥikam*, Volume 1. p. 119, on the quote, “*wa hādḥā al-ʿālamu al-mithālīyyu yashtamilu ʿalā al-ʿarshi, wa al-kursiyyi, wa al-samāwāti al-sabʿi, wa al-araḍina, wa mā fī jamīʿihā*.”

³¹ Ibn ʿArabī, *The Seals of Wisdom (Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam)*. The Word of Joseph, p. 41.

of the Sufi assertion that the cosmos is *khayāl*, yet rooted in the Real.³² William Chittick further interprets *khayāl* as a *barzakh* of knowledge, emphasizing analogically that the existence of the cosmos functions as a boundary bridging existence and nonexistence. The framework of *‘ālam al-mithāl* refines the comprehension of the primacy of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*) and the gradation of being (*tashkīk al-wujūd*) in Ṣadrā’s philosophy. The gradation of existence provides a schema of intensity, with the imaginal world representing a necessary degree of manifestation. In Ibn ‘Arabī, the emphasis falls on theophanic symbolism and the identity of the cosmos as *khayāl*.³³

The relationship between macrocosm and microcosm functions as a didactic device. Human beings appear as *Insān Kāmil*, embodying and summarizing the order of the cosmos. The cosmos itself is a field of *tajallī*. This bidirectional relation ensures that humans are not passive spectators; rather, they serve as loci in which *tajallī* is consciously realized. In selected passages of *Futūḥāt*, the topic of macrocosm-microcosm is presented alongside discussions of the levels of being and the Divine Names, allowing the reader to perceive how knowledge and existence unfold simultaneously.³⁴ Within this framework, two levels of *khayāl* must be distinguished. *Khayāl Muḥaqqaq* (the realized or cosmic imagination) refers to the imaginal horizon of the cosmos, already structured as *‘ālam al-mithāl*.³⁵ It functions as a *barzakh*, simultaneously separating and connecting the spiritual and material realms. The dream world represents one station along this same continuum. Due to its cosmic status, *khayāl Muḥaqqaq* is objective and independent of personal imagination.³⁶ The second level, *Khayāl Muttaṣil*, denotes the imagination operating within the human being as microcosm and can be further divided into two aspects. First, the human soul functions as an individual *barzakh* situated between the spiritual and sensory realms. Positioned at the center, the soul contains pairs of opposing qualities: light and dark, subtle and coarse, high and low. Second, the imaginative faculty (*quwwat al-khayāl*) serves as a creative cognitive power that bridges sensory knowledge toward the spiritual intellect.³⁷ These two levels of imagination are interwoven. *Khayāl Muḥaqqaq* provides the cosmic space where form and meaning converge, while *Khayāl Muttaṣil* receives, reflects, and interprets this convergence

³² Henry Corbin, “Mundus Imaginalis or The Imaginary and the Imaginal,” *Cahiers Internationaux de Symbolisme*, Trans. Ruth Horine, 1964, p. 3-26, Corbin coined a new terminology to find an English equivalent for the Sufi concept of *khayāl* through the Latin term *Mundus Imaginalis*, and in English he adopted the term “Imaginal.” This neologism distinguishes the *‘ālam al-mithāl* (Imaginal), which exists ontologically, from mental imagination (Imaginary). Consequently, in this study, the author opts to use the term “imaginal” rather than “imagination.”

³³ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt Al-Makkīyah* (Kairo: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyyah al-Kubrā, 1329). Volume II, p. 310, All manifestations (*tajallī*)—or everything other than the Real—are imaginal, so their ontological status is inherently ambiguous. They exist in an intermediate position between Being and nonbeing. For further discussion, see Henry Corbin, *Imajinasi Kreatif Sufisme Ibn Arabi*, (LKIS: Yogyakarta, 2004), p. 239.

³⁴ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Selections from Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkīyya*, Terj. Aisha Bewley (2006), bab 6 dan bab 7. <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/ABewley/fut4.html>.

³⁵ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt Al-Makkīyah*. Volume II, p. 310.

³⁶ William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn ‘Arabī’s Metaphysics of Imagination*. hlm. 119

³⁷ William C. Chittick, *Dunia Imajinal Ibn ‘Arabī: Kreativitas Imajinasi Dan Persoalan Diversitas Agama*. p. 127

within the individual. Knowledge becomes possible when the imaginal forms of the cosmic horizon encounter the human imaginative faculty and are then guided back toward the meaning they reveal.

From this perspective, the macro-micro relationship does not compromise unity. Both reflect one another hierarchically: the cosmos serves as a mirror for human beings, and humans as a mirror for the cosmos. The diversity of forms does not undermine the unity of the source. This reading aligns with the guidance of *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, which presents the world as a shadow dependent upon its reflector. *Khayāl* manifests meaning in perceptible forms, which the intellect then interprets and returns to their essence. Chittick explains that the entire order exists within the imaginal *barzakh*, so that the cosmos itself is understood as an intermediate realm between Being and nonbeing, organized in graduated levels. Kamaruddin Mustamin, borrowing from Huston Smith, emphasizes the correspondence between levels of reality and levels of selfhood.³⁸ Ontologically, the entire scheme of *khayāl* is rooted in Absolute Being (*Wujūd mutlaq*). *Al-Ḥaqq*, as being qua being, constitutes the ultimate source of all existence, while the Divine Names are understood as His *tajallī*.³⁹ *Al-ʿĀlam al-mithāl* functions both as a site of manifestation and as the manifestation itself: it is where meaning takes form, and form in turn points back to its source. What appears as multiplicity is merely the gradation of manifestation within the imaginal *barzakh*. This diversity does not fragment Divine unity; rather, it affirms *tawḥīd* at the level of disclosure.

In conclusion, at its origin, *wujūd* is singular. The diversity that appears arises from *tajallī* upon the mirrors of entities according to their readiness. *Aʿyān ṭābitah* do not add anything to the essence of *wujūd*; they are merely designs within Divine Knowledge that guide manifestations in the cosmos. Here, the imaginal *barzakh* functions so that meaning takes form, and form, in turn, leads back to meaning. The imaginal world thus constitutes both manifestation and the locus of manifestation, so that the diversity of images remains centred on a single origin. The three levels of *khayāl* clarify the macrocosm-microcosm relationship. *Khayāl Muṭlaq* signifies that everything other than the Real is imaginal, nothing but His imagination. *Khayāl Muḥaqqaq* represents the cosmic horizon of *ʿālam al-mithāl*, objective and serving as the intermediary between the spiritual and material realms. *Khayāl Muttaṣil* is the human imaginative faculty as microcosm, which receives, reflects, and interprets the images toward their meaning. Within this

³⁸ Kamaruddin Mustamin, "Ontologi Tasawuf Falsafi Dalam Konsep Wahdatul Wujūd Ibnu Arabi," *Rausyan Fikr* Vol. 16 (2020). p. 278, it's also mentioned in other works of Azhar Arsyad and Muhammad Sabri, *Membangun Tradisi Hikmah dan Mengasah Inner Capacity*.

³⁹ Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufisme: Samudera Makrifat Ibn 'Arabi*, Terj. Musa Kadzim & Arif Mulyadi (Jakarta: Mizan, 2015). p. 23, Ibn 'Arabī designates the absoluteness of *wujūd* without employing explicitly religious terms such as God or Allah, since such naming would impose determinations upon the Absolute. He chooses the term *al-Ḥaqq* because it carries two mutually reinforcing layers of meaning. On one hand, *al-Ḥaqq* signifies ultimate Reality, and on the other, it denotes absolute Truth. Through this choice, he preserves *tanzīh* (divine transcendence) while simultaneously providing space for *tajallī* (manifestation), so that multiplicity does not obscure the One. See p. 30-31, where Ibn 'Arabī elaborates this concept through an interpretation of Quran al-Syu'ara': 23-24.

framework, humans are guided to read themselves as *maẓhar*. Diversity does not fracture Divine unity; rather, it reveals the unity of *wujūd* at graduated levels of manifestation.

Wujūd According to Mullā Ṣadrā

Ṣadrā opens the first volume of *al-Asfār* by placing *wujūd* (existence) at the center of philosophical inquiry.⁴⁰ He demands explanations concerning objects, the soul, knowledge, and God, all discussed with the prior clarification of what *wujūd* is and how it serves as the foundation for reality (*ḥaqīqah ‘ayniyyah*).⁴¹ His initial formulation is clear: *wujūd* is the reality that exists independently of the mind, whereas *māhiyyah* (essence) is a product of rational consideration that attains meaning only insofar as it is sustained by existence itself. Moreover, *wujūd* functions as a self-evident (*badihī*) concept.⁴² Through this framework, the map of metaphysics is reorganized so that arguments across various domains are interconnected within a single horizon of existence.⁴³ The fundamentality of existence is established through several steps. First, *wujūd* possesses the most immediate and evident reality (*ḥaqīqah ‘ayniyyah*); we apprehend it through its presence, while the concept arises later as an abstraction.⁴⁴ Second, *wujūd* is neither a genus nor a species, and thus it cannot be defined using the genus-differentia scheme.⁴⁵ Third, this affirmation culminates in the simplicity of *wujūd* at the most fundamental level. From this point, *aṣālat al-wujūd* functions as a working principle that governs how all disciplines of wisdom are read and interpreted.

From the fundamentality of existence arises the gradation of existence. At the conceptual (*mafhūm*) level, existence is understood collectively, whereas at the level of reality, it manifests in degrees. The distinction between objects and the soul, as well as between created beings and the ultimate reality, is understood as a difference in the intensity of being. Predication of existence is analogical, not uniform or identical in an absolute sense. Ṣadrā emphasizes this point when discussing the universality of the concept of *wujūd* and rejects readings that reduce multiplicity to separate species. Thus, a single reality can manifest in various degrees of intensity without fragmenting into distinct kinds. A direct consequence is evident in the relation between existence and “something.” A thing can be called a “something” insofar as it partakes in existence. Nothing stands prior to existence.⁴⁶ In Ṣadrā’s terminology, a “something” is equivalent to being

⁴⁰ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta‘āliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-‘Aqliyyah al-Arba‘ah*, Volume 1, Third edition (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1981), <https://lib.eshia.ir/71465/1/0>. p. 20 the opening section of the first journey concerning the nature of existence.

⁴¹ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta‘āliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-‘Aqliyyah al-Arba‘ah*. p. 38.

⁴² Alfit Sair, “Metafisika 1,” in *Syarah Bidayah Al-Hikmah Allamah Thabathabai: Diskursus Eksistensi, Non Eksistensi Dan Wujud Mental*. (Makassar: Lyceum Press, 2021). p. 14-15, the concept of wujud as badihi is a concept that can be understood through its own existence, without requiring any other conception.

⁴³ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Sadr Al-Din Shirazi and His Transcendent Theosophy: Background, Life and Works*. p. 85-87.

⁴⁴ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta‘āliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-‘Aqliyyah al-Arba‘ah*. p. 35.

⁴⁵ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta‘āliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-‘Aqliyyah al-Arba‘ah*. p. 50.

⁴⁶ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta‘āliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-‘Aqliyyah al-Arba‘ah*. p. 75.

granted existence. At the level of part-whole relations, Ṣadrā explains *al-wujūd al-rābiṭ* as the ontological dependence linking an entity to its source. The term *al-wujūd al-rābiṭ* denotes existence that does not subsist on its own, but is present as a relational tie to something else. Its counterpart, *al-wujūd al-mustaqil*, is existence that subsists independently.⁴⁷ This relation clarifies why multiplicity of manifestations does not fragment singular existence, for what differs is merely the degree of intensity. Such a pattern provides a bridge to the discourse of *tajallī* in the Akhbari tradition, as both sides uphold unity while acknowledging variation in contingent existence.⁴⁸

Ṣadrā's epistemology follows this very architecture. Knowing does not mean attaching a representation to a subject; rather, knowing is itself a mode of being. Thus, in the act of knowing, the subject and the object coincide within one reality according to the degree of their intensity. This is the unity of the knower and the known.⁴⁹ Such a conception reorganizes the relationship between the concept of knowledge and the mode of existence.⁵⁰ *Ilm ḥuḍūrī* (knowledge by presence) is not positioned outside the realm of reason but is understood as the presence of the form of existence within the soul. This framework remains coherent because what is primary is graded existence (*tashkīk al-wujūd*), allowing for the unification of knowledge without falling into a dualism of representation.⁵¹ Substantial motion (*al-ḥarakah al-jawhariyyah*) then explains the inner dynamism of existence within the world. Ṣadrā distinguishes accidental change—which occurs in attached attributes, such as change of place or quantity—from substantial change, which occurs within the very core of being. It is not a change of accidents but a renewal at the depth that constitutes a thing's very identity. Hence, the world is not static; the substance of nature flows continuously through time, so that at every moment a new degree of existence is brought forth. His argument begins from the principle that existence is one yet graded. If reality manifests in varying degrees of intensity, the transition from a weaker to a stronger degree cannot be explained merely as accidental change. Ṣadrā connects this to his understanding of time as the measure of motion. Time is not conceived as an empty container that holds change, but as the form of order within the renewal of being itself. Matter, therefore, is not treated as a frozen recipient of forms; it is pure potentiality moving toward stronger actuality. Thus, *ṣūrah* (form) is

⁴⁷ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'aliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-'Aqliyyah al-Arba'ah*. p. 78, Compare the framework of *al-wujūd al-mustaqil* through the affirmation of existence as *ḥaqīqah 'ayniyyah* and its rejection as a genus in *al-Asfār*, volume 1, p. 38 and 50.

⁴⁸ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Sadr Al-Din Shirazi and His Transcendent Theosophy: Background, Life and Works*. p. 88, It is mentioned that Ṣadrā and the Akbarian thinkers, such as Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, share a similar intellectual pattern. On pages 86–87, it is noted that the term *al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'aliyyah* had already been used earlier by Qayṣarī, and was later revived and popularized by 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī.

⁴⁹ Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mulla Sadra on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*. Chapter Sadra's Ontology, p. 86.

⁵⁰ Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mulla Sadra on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*. p. 218, pada Knowledge as Being.

⁵¹ Sajjad H. Rivzi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Metaphysics: Modulation of Being* (New York: Routledge, 2009). p. 38.

not an accidental attribute but a rank of being that guides the movement toward perfection.⁵² The implications of this thesis are far-reaching. In eschatology, the human journey is not viewed as a discontinuous leap, but as a continuous intensification of being that culminates in reunion with its source.⁵³ In cosmology, substantial motion upholds the view that the universe is alive, for the core of its existence undergoes ceaseless renewal. Consequently, both the cosmos and the ultimate destiny of humankind can be interpreted through the same formula: the modulation of existence moving from the lower to the higher.

In the order of cause and effect, this framework reinforces Ṣadrā's metaphysical vision. He rejects any separation between cause and effect, arguing that the effect does not stand outside its cause, since the effect is merely a weaker degree of the cause's existence.⁵⁴ Thus, causality is understood as an *emanation* (*fayḍ*) or *bestowal* (*ja'ʿl*) of existence.⁵⁵ It is a continual act of existential origination rather than the transfer of material entities. Causality, in this view, is the graded outpouring of existence in an ordered hierarchy. This model preserves the unity of the highest existence while explaining the multiplicity of appearances below it. Ontology and theology converge, for the world's very mode of being is explained as a modulation of the single source. At the theological level, the highest existence (*Wājib al-wujūd*) is necessarily identical with its own essence, excluding all forms of composition or contingency. Unity is maintained in its purity, while graduation is accounted for in the levels beneath. This formulation also clarifies why *Wājib al-wujūd* cannot be conceived under genus and differentia.⁵⁶ It is not a member of a class but the principle by which all analogical predication of existence becomes possible. In *al-Asfār*, Ṣadrā articulates this as the necessity of identity between existence and essence at the highest level, followed by an analysis of the relationship between *wujūd* and *māhiyyah* across the manifold of contingent existence.⁵⁷

Ultimately, the Sadrian perspective on *wujūd* presents two interrelated theses. First, the primacy of existence over essence, which locates reality in that which is present beyond the mind. Second, the gradation of existence, which allows for multiplicity without fracturing unity. *Al-Ḥikmah al-Mutaʿāliyyah* integrates rational demonstration, intuition, and spiritual experience

⁵² Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Sadr Al-Din Shirazi and His Transcendent Theosophy: Background, Life and Works*. p. 90-93, *ḥarakah jawhariyyah* refers to continuous motion at the level of substance, in which the very degree of existence itself undergoes transformation. This differs from Ibn Sinā, who restricts motion to accidents such as place, quality, and quantity. For a detailed explanation, see Kholid al-Walid, *Perjalanan Jiwa Menuju Akhirat: Filsafat Eskatologi Mulla Ṣadrā*, pp. 49-53.

⁵³ Kholid Al-Walid, *Perjalanan Jiwa Menuju Akhirat: Filsafat Eskatologi Mulla Sadra* (Jakarta: Sadra Press, 2012). P. 41-42, Ṣadrā rejects the reoccurrence of what has ceased to exist (*lā tiktār fī al-wujūd wa imtīnā' i'ādat al-ma'dūm*), so the culmination of the human journey is the ultimate encounter with its ontological source.

⁵⁴ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Kitāb Al-Mashā'ir (al-mash'ar al-khāmīs)*, p. 75, the mode in which *māhiyyah* receives *wujūd*. <https://traditionalhikmah.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Kitab-al-Mashair-by-Mulla-Sadra.pdf>.

⁵⁵ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Kitāb Al-Mashā'ir. (al-mash'ar al-sābi')* p. 84.

⁵⁶ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Mutaʿāliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-'Aqliyyah al-Arba'ah*. p. 96

⁵⁷ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Mutaʿāliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-'Aqliyyah al-Arba'ah*. p. 101

within a single horizon of existence. The world thus appears as an ascending journey of being, with the return to the Origin representing the culmination of existential intensity.

The Comparison of the Thought of Ibn 'Arabī and Mullā Ṣadrā

This chapter juxtaposes two perspectives on *wujūd*. In Ibn 'Arabī, *wujūd* is the Real that manifests (*tajallī*) into all appearances (*māẓhar*). Multiplicity arises because the Divine Names illuminate the stable images (*a'yān ṭābitah*) within the knowledge of God. These *a'yān ṭābitah* do not exist independently outside Divine knowledge; rather, they are fixed patterns corresponding to the manifestations in creation.⁵⁸ Consequently, plurality does not compete with unity but rests upon it. Ibn 'Arabī positions *khayāl* as the axis of disclosure. The *'ālam al-mithāl* functions as a *barzakh* connecting the macrocosm and microcosm. Without understanding the ranks of *khayāl*, one risks misreading reality,⁵⁹ since sensory forms are merely shadows of the objective imaginal forms within the finer order of existence. Mullā Ṣadrā, on the other hand, begins from the primacy of existence. What is primary is existence (*wujūd*), not essence (*māhiyyah*).⁶⁰ Diversity does not indicate distinct kinds that fracture the unity of *wujūd*, but rather differences in degrees of intensity. *Tashkīk* expresses a single reality of existence graduated between strong and weak, perfect and imperfect. In this framework, Ṣadrā rejects treating *māhiyyah* as ontologically primary while also rejecting a unification that erases all degrees of existence.⁶¹ This graded unity is the key to explaining the relationship between *Wājib al-Wujūd* and *mumkināt*, as well as to interpreting how unity manifests within multiplicity without being divided.

In Ibn 'Arabī's framework, *a'yān ṭābitah* are fixed entities within Divine Knowledge. Drawing from recent analytical studies, these entities can be mapped onto Ṣadrā's *wujūd rābiṭ* (relational existence). As Ṣadrā explains in *Al-Asfār*, the existence of the effect is nothing but its relation to the cause. Thus, *a'yān ṭābitah* are not independent 'things' but modes of ontological dependency (*faqri*) of the cosmos upon the Absolute.⁶² Limited existence does not stand independently; it exists as a nexus of relations that refers back to the Absolute. In this way, Ṣadrā emphasizes that multiplicity does not consist of autonomous entities but rather of nodes of attachment to the source of existence. This relational matrix safeguards two aspects simultaneously: the integrity of the flow of existence and the differentiation of degrees at the level of the *maujūd* (existent). Here, Ṣadrā's differentiating structure converges with Ibn 'Arabī's language of *Nisbah*, even though their conceptual tools differ.⁶³ Both share a dynamic cosmological horizon. Ibn 'Arabī employs the concept of *tajaddud al-khalq fi'l-ān*, the continuous renewal of creation at every moment. Ṣadrā formulates this existential dynamism as *al-Ḥarakah al-Jawhariyyah*, motion

⁵⁸ Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt Al-Makkīyah*. volume II, p. 95

⁵⁹ Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt Al-Makkīyah*. volume II, p. 313

⁶⁰ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'aliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-'Aqliyyah al-Arba'ah*. volume I, p. 46

⁶¹ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'aliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-'Aqliyyah al-Arba'ah*. volume II, p. 328

⁶² Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'aliyyah fī al-Asfār al-'Aqliyyah al-Arba'ah*. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth, 1981).

⁶³ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'aliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-'Aqliyyah al-Arba'ah*. volume I, p 79 and 82

within the substance, so that the cosmos undergoes continual existential renewal.⁶⁴ Thus, the continuity of *tajallī* in Ibn ‘Arabī finds its philosophical articulation in Ṣadrā. The difference in terminology does not divide the orientation: one emphasizes the theophanic face of Divine creativity, while the other interprets that creativity as the intensification of existence within the depth of reality.⁶⁵ The imaginal axis (*khayāl*) links these two frameworks. Ibn ‘Arabī stresses the rank of *khayāl* as an objective realm from which forms traverse toward the senses. The *‘ālam al-mithāl* functions as a *barzakh* where meaning takes form. Ṣadrā engages this discourse with a rigorous analysis of knowledge and subtle forms, even citing the *Fuṣūṣ* regarding the power of *khayāl* to represent that which has no existence except within it.⁶⁶ Both conceive the imaginal as an ontological medium binding the spiritual and the material. What distinguishes them is the manner of conceptual governance: Ibn ‘Arabī preserves the theophanic language, whereas Ṣadrā organizes it within the architecture of his existentialist ontology.

In the realm of epistemology, *ma’rifah* according to Ibn ‘Arabī is rooted in the manifestation of existence (*wujūd*), a presence that necessitates the involvement of a purified subject within the Divine Names.⁶⁷ Ṣadrā formulates this mode of present knowledge as *al-‘ilm al-ḥuḍūrī*,⁶⁸ knowledge that is identical with the manifestation of the *maujūd* (existent) within the knowing subject. Knowledge is not reduced to a representational image but is understood as a level of existence. Consequently, the language of *syuhūd* and *tazkiyah* in Ibn ‘Arabī converges with Ṣadrā’s analysis of *ḥuḍūr* within a single argumentative line: knowing is a mode of being, not merely a reflection in the mental mirror.⁶⁹

For clarity, the following pairs of terms demonstrate the correspondence of themes. The Unity–Tajallī in Ibn ‘Arabī corresponds to the Primacy–Gradation in Ṣadrā. The A’yān ṭābitah, whose permanence resides in the Divine Knowledge, corresponds to the matrix of *wujūd rābiṭ*, which relates the *mumkin* to the Absolute. The *‘Ālam al-mithāl* as a *barzakh* corresponds to the discussion of subtle forms and the analysis of imaginal existence in the *nūrī body*.⁷⁰ *Tajaddud al-khalq* corresponds to *ḥarakah jawhariyyah*. At the pinnacle of contemplation, the *Insān Kāmil* as the mirror of union in Ibn ‘Arabī intersects with Ṣadrā’s principle of *basīṭ al-ḥaqīqah kull al-*

⁶⁴ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta‘āliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-‘Aqliyyah al-Arba‘ah*. volume VIII, p. 345, see the explanation in the same volume p. 256

⁶⁵ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta‘āliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-‘Aqliyyah al-Arba‘ah*. volume VI, p. 327

⁶⁶ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta‘āliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-‘Aqliyyah al-Arba‘ah*. Volume I, p. 266, in the excerpt: “*wa yu‘ayyidu dhālika mā qālahu al-Shaykh al-Jalīl Muḥyī al-Dīn al-‘Arabī al-Andalusī qaddasa sirruhu fī kitābi Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam ‘bil-wahmi yakhluqu kullu insānin fī quwwati khayālihi mā lā wujūda lahu illā fihā’ wa hādha huwa al-amr*”.

⁶⁷ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt Al-Makkīyah*. Volume I, p. 365, discusses the nonexistence of real *wujūd* in time and *tajaddud*. The manifestation of *wujūd* then moves from *Sarmad* to *dahr* and then to *zaman* as forms. In brief, time is the rhythm of the descent of *tajallī*, and *ma’rifah* is the presence of the subject within that rhythm. See also *Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*, Volume I, p. 490.

⁶⁸ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta‘āliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-‘Aqliyyah al-Arba‘ah*. Volume VII, p. 64. Also see volume VI, p. 151 and p. 229

⁶⁹ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Kitāb Al-Mashā‘ir*. p. 40-52

⁷⁰ Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabi* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). p. 125

*ashyāʾ*⁷¹ which explains how the Simple–Pure (*Al-Ṣādir al-Bāri*) encompasses all perfections without division.

The closing notes encompass two points. First, the continuity of influence: Ṣadrā's frequent references to Ibn 'Arabī, whether in eschatological topics or cosmological structures, indicate that the Akbarian canon served as a rich reservoir of terminology and vision which he reworked. Second, a critical observation: Ṣadrā occasionally corrects readings that absolutize “unity” to the extent of denying gradations, particularly when the impression of unification renders multiple existents merely conceptual⁷² He positions gradation as a middle path that preserves oneness without obscuring the reality of difference. This correction is not aimed at the core of Ibn 'Arabī's thought on unity through *tajallī*, but at tendencies in understanding unity in general that could diminish the intensity of *wujūd*.⁷³ Accordingly, this chapter concludes that the two thinkers complement each other: one preserves the theophanic aspect of reality, while the other provides a logical structure for that theophanic flow through the language of existential intensity.

D. Conclusion

Based on the preceding discussion, this study has achieved its objective by mapping the correspondence between the Akbarian concept of unity-*tajallī* and Ṣadrā's primacy-and-gradation of existence. Both frameworks agree that *wujūd* represents the most real form of reality. Diversity does not disrupt oneness; rather, it manifests through hierarchically graded levels. In the Akbarian perspective, the concept of *tajallī* explains why the One appears as many. Within the horizon of *ḥikmah muta'āliyah*, the primacy and gradation of existence account for how diversity unfolds through differences in intensity. At the epistemological level, *syuhūd* and *al-ʿilm al-ḥuḍūrī* converge in the thesis that knowing entails the presence of the *maujūd* within the knowing subject. The primary distinction lies in the explanatory apparatus employed: Ibn 'Arabī conveys reality through theophanic language, whereas Mullā Ṣadrā structures it through a demonstrative, argumentative framework. Conceptual bridges are evident in the correspondences between *a'yān ṭābitah*, *ʿalam al-mithāl*, *tajaddud al-khalq*, and *al-ḥarakah al-jawhariyyah*. The implications extend to hermeneutics and spiritual pedagogy (*tarbiyah rūḥāniyyah*), positioning the human being simultaneously as a *maẓhar* and an agent in the progressive actualization of existence.

The focus of this study was deliberately narrowed to two pairs of terms, so that the historical details of terminology and the variations across editions were not fully addressed. Future research could be deepened along three themes. First, the conceptual relationship between *a'yān ṭābitah* and *māhiyyah* through a philological reading across Akbarī and Sadrian corpora. Second,

⁷¹ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'āliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-'Aqliyyah al-Arba'ah*. volume II, p. 368 and p. 372

⁷² Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'āliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-'Aqliyyah al-Arba'ah*. volume I, p. 71

⁷³ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'āliyyah Fī al-Asfār al-'Aqliyyah al-Arba'ah*. volume II, p. 380. Also see volume II, p. 397.

the linkage of *‘ālam al-mithāl* with the framework of *asālat* and *tashkīk al-wujūd* to map the function of the imaginal within a stratified structure of existence. Third, a systematic alignment of *tajaddud al-khalq* and *al-ḥarakah al-jawhariyyah* within the horizon of time and ontological change, including its implications for hermeneutics, ethics, and spiritual pedagogy (*tarbiyah rūḥāniyyah*). These recommendations respond to existing studies, which are often sectoral in scope, highlighting the need for more structured, cross-textual comparative research.

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