IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS INSTITUTE
DEPARTMENT OF CIVILIZATION STUDIES

MASTER'S THESIS

MULLĀ ṢADRĀ ON MAN'S JOURNEY SEEKING PERFECTION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF *ĪQĀẒ AL-NĀIMĪN (AWAKENING THE SLEEPERS)*

SHERIFE SLOCUM ARSLAN

THESIS SUPERVISORS
ASSOC. PROF. DR. BURHAN KÖROĞLU
PROF. DR. ALPARSLAN AÇIKGENÇ

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APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master.

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Sherife Slocum Arslan

ABSTRACT

MULLĀ ṢADRĀ ON MAN'S JOURNEY SEEKING PERFECTION:
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF *ĪQĀẒ AL-NĀIMĪN (AWAKENING THE SLEEPERS)*

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03.09.2021, 158 Pages

So far, studies on Mullā Ṣadrā have mostly focused on his philosophical corpus while his relationship with the school of Ibn al-'Arabī and Sufism remains less explored. As such, given this gap, this thesis aims to provide a critical analysis of the content, structure and scope of one of Ṣadrā's understudied mystical treatises, namely, *Īqāẓ al-Nāimīn (Awakening the Sleepers)* in which he explores man's place in the cosmos and his journey to realization and perfection through it. In this treatise, which has not, as of yet, been the focus of an independent study, Ṣadrā argues that it is one's knowledge of God and servanthood that enable the seeker in attaining spiritual awakening and ultimate perfection. In this effort, Ṣadrā is critical of those (i.e. the Peripatetics) who argue for a kind of philosophy that doesn't require spiritual discipline and religious commitment while also being critical of those (i.e. the pseudo-Sufis) who follow a purely ascetic approach that is devoid of true knowledge. According to Ṣadrā, true philosophy is that which transforms the wayfarer as a whole and ultimately aims to earn proximity to God. As such, the *Īqāẓ*, on the one hand, stands as a demonstration for Ṣadrā's claim of the unity of rational inquiry (*al-baḥth*) and spiritual unveiling (*kashf*) and witnessing (*shuhūd*). On the other hand, it reveals his indebtedness to the school of Ibn al-'Arabī and in particular, his chief disciple Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, in his ultimate success at integrating the perspectives of the schools of philosophy and Sufism. Lastly, from a historical point of view, in putting forth Ṣadrā's robust defense of the school of Ibn al-'Arabī against accusations of pantheism, his attempt to

demonstrate the underlying harmony among the views of the commentators of this school and his criticism of the scholars who have sought closeness with the rulers, it also provides new insights into Ṣadrā's views regarding the intellectual and political climate of his time. This study hopes to contribute to a wider rethinking of Ṣadrā's system of thought whereby ideas deemed "more akin to Sufi thought" are integrated and a more holistic reading is achieved.

Keywords: *Īqāẓ al-nāimīn; Mullā Ṣadrā; spiritual journeying (al-sulūk); critique of rational inquiry (al-baḥth), supra-rational unveiling (kashf), heart (qalb).*

ÖZ

MOLLA SADRÂ'DA İNSAN'IN İSTİKMÂL SERÜVENİ:
İKÂZÜ'N NÂİMÎN ÖRNEĞİ VE ANALİZİ

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Şimdiye kadar Molla Sadrâ üzerine yapılan çalışmaların ekseriyeti felsefi eserlerine odaklanmış, düşünce sisteminin Meşşâi okul ile olan uyumluluğu açıkça incelenip, vurgulanmış, Ekberiyye okulu ve tasavvuf ile olan ilişkisi yeterince konu edilmemiştir. Bu sebeple, bu tezin amacı, az çalışılmış olan ve tasavvufi risalelerinden biri kabul edilen *İkâzü'n nâimîn* eserinin içeriğinin ve yapısının analizini yapmaktır. Henüz müstakil bir çalışmanın konusu olmamış olan bu eserde Sadrâ insanın kainattaki yerini ve istikmâl serüvenini ele alır. Varlık (*vücûd*) üzerine temellendirmiş olduğu birlik metafiziğine dayanarak, insanın manevi uyanmasının ve nihai istikmâlinin iki şeye dayandığını savunur: Tanrı'yı bilmek (*mârifetullah*) ve kulluk etmek (*ubûdiyyet*). Bu minvalde, Sadrâ manevi yaşantıya yer vermeyen ve dinin emirlerine bağlı bir hayat yaşamayı şart koşmayan bir felsefe anlayışını savunan Meşşâi filozofları eleştirir. Aynı zamanda, gerçek bilgiden yoksun ve sadece münzevi bir yaklaşım benimseyen sahte Sufiler olarak kabul ettiği ve *mutasavvife* olarak adlandırdığı kişileri de eleştirir. Sadrâ'ya göre, gerçek felsefe saliki bir bütün olarak dönüşüme sevk eden ve nihai olarak Tanrı'ya yakınlaşmayı hedefleyen uğraştır. Böylelikle, *İkâzü'n nâimîn*, bir yandan, Sadrâ'nın temel iddialarından biri olan, akli istidlal ve keşf ve müşahedenin uyumluluğu için bir örnek teşkil etmektedir. Diğer bir yandan, felsefe ve tasavvufun yaklaşımlarını başarılı bir şekilde bütünleşmesinde Sadrâ'nın Ekberiyye okuluna ve özellikle de Sadreddin Konevî'ye olan borcunu ortaya koymaktadır. Son olarak, tarihi bir bakış açısından, Sadrâ'nın Ekberiyye okuluna yöneltilmiş olan panteizm

iddialarına karşı duruşu, Ekberiyye şârihleri arasında bir uyumsuzluğun olmadığını ispatlamaya çalışması ve zamanının ulemasına siyasiler ile yakınlık aramaları sebebiyle eleştirmesiyle, Sadrâ'nın kendi zamanındaki fikri ve siyasi olayları nasıl yorumladığına dair de yeni açılımlar sunmaktadır Bu tez, Sadrâ'nın düşünce sisteminin yeniden düşünülmesi, "daha çok tasavvufa ait" görüşleri de içerecek şekilde, daha bütüncül bir okumaya tabi tutulmasına katkı sağlayabilmeyi hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *İkâzü'n nâimîn; Molla Sadrâ, seyri süluk, akıl eleştirisi, keşf, kalb*

To my parents, Selman and Laika Slocum…

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I am also deeply thankful to Prof. İbrahim Kalın for introducing me to Mullā Ṣadrā's system of thought, inspiring me to work on him and for suggesting the *Īqāẓ* to be the textual anchor of my thesis given my areas of interest and inquiry. Also, I am deeply grateful for him having, despite his many other commitments, made the time to discuss my thesis, helped me in determining its scope and finally, provided me with all the feedback he did in the reading of my thesis.

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tremendously generous in reading through the introductions and hadith notes for the 1982 and 2007 critical editions of the *Īqāẓ* with me, all of which were in Persian. Without our classes, I would have been completely unable to overcome the hurdle of deciphering them on my own. Prof. William Chittick allowed me to audit his class focusing on his book, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*. In addition to his lectures, his books and articles were very helpful to me in developing a clearer understanding of not only Ṣadrā's own system of thought but, perhaps most importantly in the case of the *Īqāẓ*, the impact the school of Ibn al-'Arabī and its chief proponent Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī had had on his intellectual evolution. Prof. Bilal Kuşpınar was very generous in reviewing the translations I had made from the *Īqāẓ* and used within the text of my thesis. His comments, corrections and suggestions helped me avoid terminological mistakes and made the relevant sections far more precise, accurate and lucid than they could have ever been were it not for his contributions. I would also like to thank Dr. Sümeyye Parıldar for being supportive throughout and for offering me such valuable feedback following her close reading of my thesis, as well as, for making me aware of some of the most recent publications on Ṣadrā, which proved to be very useful and relevant to my study. I would also like to express my appreciation to Dr. Abdurrahman Atçıl for pointing me in the right direction while researching the political and intellectual climate of Ṣadrā's time and to Dr. Zahit Atçıl for kindly reviewing my work and suggesting articles that could further enhance my understanding of the social, political and intellectual dynamics that shaped this period in Safavid history. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Ercüment Asil for kindly offering me his valuable suggestions towards improving my abstract and introduction.

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seekers of truth throughout their lives and for their attentiveness and devotion to us all. It has been a blessing to be a big family and I am thankful to each one of my four older siblings, Meryem, Ayshe, Kadriye and Abdulkadir, for affording me the comfort and challenge of having them as such great role models. Finally, of course, I would like to thank my only younger sister and best friend, Selma, for in her wisdom, grace and loving nature uplifting me time and time again and for taking the time to proofread the entirety of my thesis.

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I cannot part my ways with this thesis without thanking Mullā Ṣadrā… Through my time studying his system of thought and the many long hours I spent reading the *Īqāẓ,* I have learned to not be torn between the demands of rigid definitions and seeming contradictions but to rather rise to the challenge of discovering the underlying harmony informing all points of view. Ultimately, the *Īqāẓ* provided me with many new insights, but not answers, for as Ṣadrā would have probably reminded, journeying is not about setting one's sight on attaining a certain destination, but rather in seeking to be present enough to witness the gifts the Real has to offer at each and every moment along the way. I remain eternally grateful for all the growth and learning this endeavor has offered me…

Sherife Slocum Arslan

Istanbul, 2021

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Asfār	*al-Ḥikmat al-muta'āliyah fi'l-asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah*
Īqāẓ	*Īqāẓ al-Nāimīn*
Mashā'ir	*Kitāb al-Mashā'ir*
al-'Arshiyya	*al-Ḥikma al-'Arshiyya*
Iksīr	*Iksīr al-'Ārifīn*

"O seeker of the mysteries of Unity and the wayfarer towards Allah through the footsteps of servanthood…"

(Īqāẓ,11)

"The purpose of philosophical inquiry is to purely prepare the one on the path for an encounter with the horizon of the sacred land and that is the open horizon; and it will be as though it has knocked on the door of the unknown so that that which is sought may be effused upon the heart of the seeker."

(Īqāẓ, 114-115)

"It suffices me in pride and honor that I am a servant to you and it suffices me in nobility that you are my Lord. O my Lord! Verily, I have found you to be the Lord of my wishes, make me the servant of Yours."

(Īqāẓ, 105)

INTRODUCTION

Ṣadr al-Dīn al- Shīrāzī (1571 – 1640), known more popularly as Mullā Ṣadrā, "is one of the most important figures of post-Avicennan Islamic philosophy and certainly the most prominent philosopher of Safavid Persia (1501-1722)," according to Edward Browne.[1] As the chief representative of the height of the School of Isfahan[2], he wrote extensively on all the central problems of Islamic philosophy that were handed down from the Greeks to his own time, from the question of existence and causality to self-knowledge and knowledge of God.[3] His works irreversibly changed the discipline of Islamic philosophy[4] and as such, "his voluminous output is an eloquent disproof of the view expressed by many historians of Islamic medieval[5] philosophy that by the end of the eleventh century al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) had dealt philosophy a crippling blow from which it never recovered."[6] On the contrary, having come much later than the more foundational figures, including al-Fārābī (d. 950) and Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037) among the Muslim Peripatetics, Suhrawardī (d. 1191) among the Illuminationists and Ibn al-ʻArabī (d. 1240) among the Sufis, Ṣadrā set out to weave together the diverse set of intellectual currents he inherited towards building a unified, holistic and dynamic

[1] Edward G. Browne, *A History of Persian Literature IV* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 408. Toussi makes an even bolder claim, writing Ṣadrā to be "the single most important and influential philosopher in the Muslim world of the last four hundred years." Seyyed Khalil Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 20.

[2] The phrase "School of Isfahan" was coined by Corbin and Nasr "to describe philosophical inquiry in the Safavid period and in particular in the age of Shah ʻAbbās I [r. 1588–1629] [which] became the paradigm through which later scholars studied Safavid philosophy. They perceived continuity in the later (Iranian) philosophical tradition in Islam from Suhrawardī in the twelfth century to Sabzawārī and the Shaykhiyya in the nineteenth century as thinkers engaged in the same quest for mystical understanding of the nature of reality and a thorough esoteric approach to questions of philosophy. The suggestion was that the school of Isfahan was an intellectual, spiritual and cultural (and significantly apolitical) movement based in Isfahan." Sajjad H. Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 138.

[3] Ibrahim Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), xii.

[4] Mohammed Rustom, *The Triumph of Mercy: Philosophy and Scripture in Mulla Sadra*, *The Triumph of Mercy: Philosophy and Scripture in Mulla Sadra*, 2012, 15.

[5] It is important to note here that the term "medieval" is part of Western historical periodization; the Islamic civilization does not have a medieval period. In Islamic intellectual history, the period Fakhry is referencing here can be understood as the later, post-Avicennan period. For more, see: Thomas Bauer, *Neden İslam'ın Orta Çağı Yoktu?* (İstanbul: Runik Kitap, 2021). Alparslan Açikgenç, "The Framework for a History of Islamic Philosophy," *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC)* 1, no. 1&2 (1996): 1–19.

[6] Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1970), 321.

understanding of reality,[7] culminating in his unique synthesis and new school of thought, called "transcendent wisdom" *(al-ḥikmat al-muta'āliyah).*[8] Thus, it is for this reason that Kalin writes, "To read Ṣadrā is to read the history of how persisting philosophical problems can be re-discussed, restated, and reformulated in new contexts."[9]

Furthermore, while it is natural to assume that the greatest philosophers are those who break completely with the ideas of their predecessors[10], I agree with Adamson when he writes that, "the great philosophers are those who bring together and rethink the ideas they find in the previous tradition. Their originality consists in creative

[7] Nasr attributes this success mostly to Shi'ism. In his view, while philosophy, in the Sunni world, following the emergence of the new adversary, Ash'arite theology, or *kalam*, one of its most representative figures being al-Ghazālī, nearly disappeared (only logic continued to be taught in the madrasas), the case of Shi'ite Islam stood in stark contrast. "The theosophy of the school of Suhrawardī became gradually integrated with the philosophy of Avicenna on the one hand and the gnostic doctrines of Ibn al-'Arabī on the other – all in the matrix of Shi'ism and in fact serving as an isthmus between philosophy and pure gnosis. It is for this reason that a historian viewing the intellectual life of Persia and the lands where Persian culture was influential - such as India, for example, where Ishrāqī doctrines spread even among Sunni circles – would say that Islamic philosophy in its true meaning did not end […] but really commenced [at this stage]." Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages* (New York: Caravan Books, 1976), 56. However, Algar disagrees with Nasr, insofar as it relates to the development of Sufism and writes that this contention obscures the legacy of Iranian Sunni spirituality and does not address or take into account the politically coercive and suppressive means often enforced by the Safavid rulers. For more, see: Hamid Algar, "Observations on Religion in Safavid Persia," *Iranian Studies* 7, no. 1/2 (1974): 287, 290. Also, see: Shahzad Bashir, *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Iran* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2013).

[8] Nasr refers to Ṣadrā's synthesis as "Transcendent Theosophy". He explains his reasoning by writing, "'Transcendent Theosophy' must not in any way be confused with the transcendental categories of Kant or the transcendentalism of an Emerson or Thoreau. The doctrines of Mullā Ṣadrā are theosophy rather than philosophy because they are not derived from discursive thought alone but are ultimately the fruit of a vision of the divine order. And this theosophy is transcendent in the true sense of the word because it derives from the knowledge of a world that transcends the ontological status of man in this terrestrial state of existence and stands above his everyday status of consciousness." Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ṣadr Al-Dīn Shīrāzī and His Transcendent Theosophy* (Tehran: Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, 1978), 57. He also adds in his work, *Three Muslim Sages*, "By theosophy we mean that form of wisdom which is neither philosophy nor theology but a knowledge of the Divine mysteries as the original meaning of this world implied, before it became emptied of meaning by modern pseudo-spiritual movements." Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*, 56. However, Rizvi raises some of his concerns regarding this connotation. He writes, "stress upon the interior does not necessarily render adequately the method of Mullā Ṣadrā." Sajjad H. Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Metaphysics* (London: Routledge, 2009), 7. As such, Rizvi is not a fan of the term "theosophy" because he thinks it can easily be associated with forms of "'irrationalism' such as the Theosophical movement." Perhaps most strikingly, he explains that a philosopher reading Nasr would not come to recognize the analytic features of Ṣadrā's system of thought which would in turn prove to be a strong deterrent to contemporary philosophers. In this respect, he expresses his concerns, writing, "Corbin and Nasr are correct to lament the Orientalist assumption that philosophical inquiry ended in Islam after Averroes [d. 1198]. But to re-designate philosophy in Islam post-Averroes as theosophy and mysticism would deter contemporary philosophers." Ibid.

[9] Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, xiii.

[10] Adamson refers to this assumption as "the Descartes syndrome" in honor of Descartes' claim to be starting from scratch, putting aside the accumulated arguments of scholastic philosophy. Although from the same period, Descartes and Mullā Ṣadrā were unaware of each other as well as one another's works.

engagement, not creative destruction."[11] In support of this being the case, Nasr challenges those who keep referring to Ṣadrā's sources as a way of questioning his originality. In his defense, he explains, "Creativity in a traditional setting means not an individualistic rediscovery or creation of a 'truth' but a fresh vision of that Reality which always is and will always be. […] When an actual comparison is made between the original statements concerning these doctrines and their exposition by Mullā Ṣadrā, the transformation that these ideas have undergone in becoming elements in the intellectual universe of Ṣadr al-Dīn stands out clearly."[12] On a similar note, Rahman expresses that through his engagement of these different currents, Ṣadrā "produced a veritable synthesis [and] discover[ed] a master-idea, a grand principle under which the entire range of reality falls, and he interpret[ed] it to make sense, a new sense, and a significant one."[13] As such, it seems Ṣadrā's creativity and originality lies in his ability to interpret and apply these same universal truths in keeping with his moment in time. He grounded everything in *wujūd* and then moved on to apply it to the entire range of problems present in the Islamic philosophical tradition. In fact, the *Īqāẓ* will go to show the implications of this bold stance when it comes to the nature of God, the nature of the World and the nature and destiny of man.

Literature Review

As for the academic study of Ṣadrā's system of thought, as Kalin attests, it has "a surprisingly long history,"[14] with the earliest study being Comte de Gobineau's *Les Religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*[15], published in 1866, after which comes the works of Max Horten, who published independent works on Ṣadrā in 1912 and 1913. Of course, within the European context, the contributions of the French philosopher Henry Corbin, cannot go unmentioned. All this said, the proper introduction of Ṣadrā to Western academia was only as late as the 1970s,[16] at which point Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Fazlur Rahman played leading roles. Furthermore,

[11] Peter Adamson, *Philosophy in the Islamic World: A History of Philosophy Without Gaps* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 386.
[12] Nasr, *Ṣadr Al-Dīn Shīrāzī and His Transcendent Theosophy*, 79–80.
[13] Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā (Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Shīrāzī)* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975), 13.
[14] Ibrahim Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 23.
[15] Ibrahim Kalin, "An Annotated Bibliography of the Works of Mullā Ṣadrā with a Brief Account of His Life," *Islamic Studies* 42, no. 1 (2003): 34.
[16] Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Metaphysics*, 6.

before exploring some of the more recent works on Ṣadrā, it is essential that we pay close attention to Seyyed Hossein Nasr's and Fazlur Rahman's points of view, for their fundamentally divergent approaches to Ṣadrā, especially with regard to his relationship with Sufism or lack thereof, continue to impact the character of the literature produced on Ṣadrā in significant ways.

In 1975, Rahman published his work, *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, which became the first work serving as an introduction to Ṣadrā's system of thought in the West. In this work, Rahman approached Ṣadrā as a philosopher who was primarily trained in the Peripatetic-neo-Platonic tradition of Ibn Sīnā and his followers and denied the presence of "any important Ishrāqī school of thought […] [as well as] the existence of a scholarly Sufi tradition"[17] at his time. In this respect, Rahman wrote in very open terms. He said, "several contemporary scholars of Ṣadrā seem to insist that, according to Ṣadrā, or even for understanding his thoughts, Sufism is needed besides philosophy, as though Sufism is an independent cognitive avenue of truth, indeed, over and above philosophy. […] Ṣadrā gives no hint anywhere of Sufism, except in the sense of theosophy, which he calls *ma'rifah* or *'irfān* – after Ibn 'Arabi's model."[18] Hence, while Rahman acknowledges the influence Ibn al-'Arabī had on Ṣadrā[19], he is adamant that "Ṣadrā is a *philosopher* of the genre, say, of Bergson, since the *content* of his experience as well as of his thought is the same and is cognitive in character."[20] In short, it is clearly observable that Rahman was "uninterested in the mystical aspects of Ṣadrā's philosophy."[21] As a consequence, in his recognition of supra-rational experience yet maintenance that this was "not a mystic experience at all, but about an intuitive apprehension of truth or a rational experience"[22] Rahman encouraged a reading and interpretation of Ṣadrā that did not provide much for the acknowledgement of Ṣadrā's devotion to the theoretical and practical aspects of the Sufis' method in the achievement of certainty. Nonetheless, Regarding the treatise at the center of this study, the *Īqāẓ,* Açıkgenç, who wrote his doctoral dissertation under the supervision of the prominent Pakistani thinker and worked closely with him for years, thinks that

[17] Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā (Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Shīrāzī)*, 1.
[18] Ibid., 5.
[19] Ibid., 11.
[20] Ibid., 4.
[21] Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, 6.
[22] Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā (Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Shīrāzī)*, 5.

had Rahman been aware of the presence of the *Īqāẓ*, his views would have been different and that he would have made far greater of an emphasis on the Sufi dimension of Ṣadrā's system of thought.

Shortly thereafter, in 1978, Nasr published his introduction, titled, *Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī and His Transcendent Theosophy*, and put forth a reading of Ṣadrā that stood in stark contrast to that of Rahman's. Nasr wrote, "Through Ibn 'Arabī's immediate disciple, Sadr al-Din Qunyawī, as well as through his doctrinal commentators, […] this school developed a very elaborate metaphysics without which the whole doctrine of Mullā Ṣadrā is incomprehensible."[23] Nasr wrote that Mullā Ṣadrā was attuned to "both the logical demands of the mind and the requisites of the spiritual vision that is made possible through the opening of the 'eye of the heart.'"[24] While Nasr admitted that it had been an unsolved problem trying to decipher the exact nature of Ṣadrā's spiritual affiliation, he had no doubt around there being one, in one form or another. He explained, "It is hard to decide the situation of Mullā Ṣadrā, to determine definitely whether he received regular Sufi initiation or was inspired by the invisible spiritual hierarchy."[25] Moreover, throughout his exposition Nasr liberally relies on Sufi terminology and refrains from referring to Ṣadrā's doctrines as philosophical; his choice rather being to refer to it as theosophical. In this respect, he relays his reasoning by writing, "The doctrines of Mullā Ṣadrā are theosophy rather than philosophy because they are not derived from discursive thought alone but are ultimately the fruit of a vision of the divine order."[26] As is easily ascertained from these sections, the language Nasr chooses to use whilst explaining Mullā Ṣadrā as a thinker provides for a reading that openly acknowledges his commitment to the theoretical and practical components making up the method of the Sufis. Needless to say, these two early works and their respective, contrasting methods of reading Ṣadrā's system of thought have informed and heavily shaped the literature on Ṣadrā thus far, the impact of which is clearly observable in the approach to his mystical treatises.

At the beginning of his recent book, titled, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Metaphysics,* Sajjad Rizvi

[23] Nasr, *Ṣadr Al-Dīn Shīrāzī and His Transcendent Theosophy*, 27.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., 37.
[26] Ibid., 57.

provides a concise summary of the different approaches carried in the literature on Ṣadrā under four headings, namely, esotericism, comparative philosophy, Avicennism and finally, Iranian nativism. Rahman and Nasr's approaches are mentioned under the Avicennanist and esotericist categories, respectively. Rizvi is critical of the "esotericist" approach upheld by Corbin and Nasr, arguing that ironically, "despite its attempts at presenting Ṣadrā as a serious and important thinker in the Islamic tradition, […] that these interpreters share certain 'Orientalist' assumptions about the nature of later Islamic philosophy."[27] Here, what Rizvi means by "Orientalist assumptions" is holding the view of the *ḥikmat* tradition being mostly esoteric, mystical and in opposition to the exoteric jurists. From this vantage point, he also seems to communicate a measure of dissent for this approach that has prioritized Ṣadrā's mystical writings over his *ḥikmat* writings. Moreover, Rizvi writes of the works of James Winston Morris and Zailan Moris as being continuations of the esotericist approach. Though complementary of the former's work, he is critical of the latter's, deeming it to be "rather derivative, [mostly] rel[iant] upon Morris's translation, and repetitive."[28]

As for the Avicennanist reading of Ṣadrā, pioneered by Rahman, Rizvi is openly complementary, writing "Fazlur Rahman remains the best introduction to Sadrean philosophy through a study of the *Asfār.*" That being said, he is also openly critical of Rahman for his assertion, as I mentioned above, of there being no evidence for an existing Illuminationist or Sufi metaphysical tradition of his time. He corrects Rahman and explains, "Recent research on philosophy in Shiraz in the Timurid period have proven Rahman's conjecture to be false."[29] Rizvi has other questions and concerns regarding the Avicennanist method employed by Rahman as well and explains that while Rahman acknowledged the influence of Ibn al-'Arabī, he did not follow through its implications. Along with Rahman, Rizvi lists the works of Izutsu and Shehadi, as well as those of Bonmariage as being continuations of this way of reading Ṣadrā.

The third is the "comparativist" approach whereby "an attempt is made to map Sadrean philosophy on to paradigms that may be more familiar to contemporary

[27] Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Metaphysics*, 8.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid., 11.

philosophers."[30] Rizvi writes there to be three distinct tendencies, namely phenomenological, Platonic and, finally, analytic. Examples for this first trend can be seen in Corbin's introduction and translation of *al-Mashā'ir* where he compares Ṣadrā's "existentialism" and continental existentialism. It can also be seen in Alparslan Açıkgenç's doctoral dissertation, where he aims to demonstrate a certain parallelism between Heidegger and Mullā Ṣadrā's respective ontologies. Rizvi also includes Muhammad Kamal's works as following this trend. Nonetheless, Rizvi admits that these efforts have tended to "suffer from a 'commensurability' gap and indeed from a 'credibility' gap of displeasing both sets of specialists."[31] As for examples for the second trend, or the Platonic one, it can be seen most clearly in Jambet's work, *The Act of Being: The Philosophy of Revelation in Mullā Ṣadrā*, where, as Rizvi explains, Jambet "expounds upon Corbin's insight that for Ṣadrā, metaphysics is concerned with 'acts of being', the unfolding and manifesting of being from the One in a series of levels of disclosure with an explicit eschatological goal of returning to the One."[32] From this point of view, much like the Platonic tradition, philosophy is approached as being a way of preparing for death, a method of making sense of the self, this world, death, and the afterlife. Finally, the third trend within the comparativist approach is that which places Mullā Ṣadrā among the contemporary analytic philosophers. From this perspective, scholars like Ziai and Morewedge maintain that it is imperative for studies on Ṣadrā to move beyond the theological framework and head more towards problem-based studies. In this regard, "Morewedge clearly states that his translation of *al-Mashā'ir* is intended for analytic philosophers and is an attempt at convincing them of the analytic nature of Sadrian argumentation."[33] According to Rizvi, both scholars' attempt to study Ṣadrā through more modern lenses "provide an important corrective to the Nasr/Corbin approach since analytics (and many post-analytic philosophers take neither mysticism nor Heidegger seriously."[34] As for Rizvi himself, he has contributed greatly to our knowledge of Ṣadrā's biography, bibliography and the history of his philosophical legacy. Most striking, however, is his assertion that a true understanding of Ṣadrā's system of thought requires an appreciation for the

[30] Ibid., 8.
[31] Ibid., 9.
[32] Ibid., 10. Christian Jambet, *The Act of Being: The Philosophy of Revelation in Mullā Ṣadrā* (New York: Zone Books, 2006).
[33] Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Metaphysics*, 11.
[34] Ibid.

Neoplatonic understanding of philosophy "as a way of life," which will come to inform my reading of Ṣadrā's *Īqāẓ* as well, where spiritual practice and religious commitment go hand in hand in the spiritual journey of man as he works to attain proximity to the Divine.

Finally, the fourth approach, or the "Iranian nativist" approach, mostly encompasses the various ways in which the Iranians have appropriated Ṣadrā towards justifying their own causes. After all, to Rizvi's admission, "philosophy in Iran is a deeply political practice."[35] Nonetheless, since the relationship or lack thereof between the Iranian revolution and Ṣadrā's system of thought is not relevant to our study at hand, we will not go into further details.[36]

As far as local studies are concerned, there is much going on in Turkey, with a number of ongoing master's and doctoral dissertations focusing on Ṣadrā's system of thought. The titles for some of the ongoing master's theses include, "Molla Sadra'nın Tanrı Anlayışı" (Mullā Ṣadrā's Conception of God), "Molla Sadra'da Ezelilik Meselesi" (The Notion of Immortality in Mullā Ṣadrā), "Molla Sadra'nın Varlık Anlayışı" (Mullā Ṣadrā's Conception of Existence), "Molla Sadra'da Bilgi Teorisi (Esfar-ı Erbaa'sı Çerçevesinde)" (Mullā Ṣadrā's Theory of Knowledge Within the Bounds of His *Asfār*), "Molla Sadra'da Mead Anlayışı" (Mullā Ṣadrā's Conception of the Return). As for some of the titles for the ongoing doctoral theses, they include, "Molla Sadra ve Kelam Anlayışı" (Mullā Ṣadrā and His Conception of Theology), "Molla Sadra'nın Kur'an Anlayışı ve Yorum Yöntemi" (Mullā Ṣadrā's Understanding of the Qur'an and His Method of Hermeneutics), "Molla Sadra'nın Nedensellik Teorisi" (Mullā Ṣadrā's Theory of Causality), "Molla Sadra Felsefesinde İdrak Problemi" (The Problem of Perception in the Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā), "Molla Ṣadrā'da Zaman Anlayışı ve Tarih Bilinci" (The Conception of Time and Historical Consciousness in Mullā Ṣadrā), "Molla Sadra'nın Kur'an Yorumu" (Mullā Ṣadrā's Quranic Hermeneutics).[37] The tentative titles for the master's theses, with the exception of a few, seem to suggest a predominant interest in the relationship between Ṣadrā's system of thought and

[35] Ibid., 12.
[36] For more, see: Ibid., 12–15.
[37] These titles have been taken from the ISAM Library Database. See: http://ktp.isam.org.tr/?url=tezilh/findrecords.php

theological issues. The ongoing doctoral dissertations, on the other hand, indicate a somewhat greater variety and a greater focus on Ṣadrā's Qur'anic hermeneutics. Since Ṣadrā's works in the transmitted sciences remain understudied, these may indicate valuable contributions to the field. However, none seem to indicate an exploration of Ṣadrā's mystical works or his relationship with Sufism, which is the aim of this study.

That being said, among those who have already completed their doctoral theses on Mullā Ṣadrā and who are publishing articles on his system of thought in Turkish, are, Mahmut Meçin and Fevzi Yiğit, both of whom are recently writing on Ṣadrā and his relationship with Sufism. Meçin[38] has recently published an article, titled "İslam Düşüncesinde Felsefe - Tasavvuf Yakınlaşmasına İbnü'l Arabi'nin Etkisi: Molla Sadra Örneği"[39] (Ibn al-'Arabī's Impact on Philosophy and Sufism Growing Closer: Mullā Ṣadrā as an Example) where he expounds the parallels between Mullā Ṣadrā and Ibn al-'Arabī's frameworks. In another one of his recent articles, titled, "Felsefe ve Tasavvufta Sefer Metaforu: Akli ve Manevi Yolculuk"[40] (The Metaphor of Wayfaring in Philosophy and Sufism: Intellectual and Spiritual Journeying), he explores the similarities between both schools through the metaphor of journeying and wayfaring.
As for Fevzi Yiğit, after working on Ibn al-'Arabī's notion of man in his master's thesis[41] and then writing his doctoral dissertation on causality in Ṣadrā's system of thought[42], he was been most recently publishing his Turkish translations for Ṣadrā's works. Thus far, he has personally published translations for *al-Ḥikma al-'Arshiyya*,[43] *Iksīr al-'Ārifīn* [44] and the *Īqāẓ al-Nāimīn*.[45] He has also published the Turkish translation for *al-Mashā'ir* together with Ahmet Kamil Cihan and Salih Yalın.[46]

[38] Mahmut Meçin, "Sadrâ'ya Göre Ölüm Sonrası Hayat" (İnönü Üniversitesi, 2013). Mahmut Meçin, "Molla Sadrâ'da Zaman Anlayışı ve Tarih Bilinci" (Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, 2019).
[39] Mahmut Meçin, "İslam Düşüncesinde Felsefe - Tasavvuf Yakınlaşmasına İbnü'l Arabi'nin Etkisi: Molla Sadra Örneği," in *Uluslararası İbnü'l Arabi Sempozyumu: İnsanlığın Hakikat Arayışı ve İbnü'l Arabi* (Ankara: İnönü Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2018), 597–614.
[40] Mahmut Meçin, "Felsefe ve Tasavvufta Sefer Metaforu: Akli ve Manevi Yolculuk," *Journal of Ilahiyat Researches*, no. 2 (2020): 329–53.
[41] Fevzi Yiğit, "İbn Arabi Metafiziğinde Insanın Yeri" (Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi, 2003).
[42] Fevzi Yiğit, "Molla Sadra'nın Nedensellik Teorisi" (Erciyes Üniversitesi, 2018).
[43] Sadr al-Din Al-Shirazi, *Arş'a Ait Hikmetler*, tr. Fevzi Yiğit (İstanbul: Önsöz Yayıncılık, 2019).
[44] Sadr al-Din Al-Shirazi, *Ariflerin İksiri*, tr. Fevzi Yiğit (İstanbul: Önsöz Yayıncılık, 2017).
[45] Chittick was critical of Yiğit's translation of the title, "Kalbin Uyanışı" which means the awakening of the heart. According to him, this is not true enough to the original and overlooks the magnitude of "sleep" as a philosophical and mystical notion laden with meaning. Sadr al-Din Al-Shirazi, *Kalbin Uyanışı*, tr. Fevzi Yiğit (Istanbul: Önsöz Yayıncılık, 2019).
[46] Sadr al-Din Al-Shirazi, *Metafiziğe Giriş*, tr. Salih Yalın, Ahmet Kamil Cihan, Fevzi Yiğit (İstanbul: Endülüs Yayınları, 2019).

Needless to say, despite Ṣadrā's introduction to Western academia in the late 1970s, the amount of scholarship that has been produced on him thus far is quite remarkable.[47] All this said, there are still a number of areas in his thought that remain unexplored and a number of his texts that are yet to be studied, critically edited and translated,[48] which would make it possible for them to be integrated into university curriculums. In this respect, while Ṣadrā produced works across the spectrum, in traditional sciences, such as Qur'anic commentaries as well as intellectual sciences, such as philosophy and mysticism, as part of his all-inclusive, holistic and multi-dimensional engagement with reality, as Rustom rightfully asserts, it is his philosophical corpus that has been studied most.[49] As such, areas such as his eschatology, anthropology, imamology and Qur'anic hermeneutics remain less explored.[50] Needless to say, paramount among such gaps is his mystical treatises. It is for this reason that the aim of this thesis is to focus on one of Ṣadrā's understudied mystical treatises, namely, *Īqāẓ al-Nāimīn*.

Though referenced in some Persian articles and in some of the works published on Ṣadrā in English,[51] as of yet, there has not been an independent work devoted to providing an analysis of the *Īqāẓ* in English. In this short, yet dense, treatise, Ṣadrā explores man's place in the cosmos and the close relationship between knowledge of God and servanthood, as they enable one's spiritual awakening and ultimate perfection whereby one earns proximity to God. The *Īqāẓ* not only comes across as a striking representation of Ṣadrā's devotion to mysticism and his indebtedness to the school of Ibn al-'Arabī, but also as a profound demonstration for Ṣadrā's great claim and argument for the unity of religious and intellectual sciences, revelation and reason, and philosophical inquiry and mystical insight. As such, this thesis aims to provide an analysis of the *Īqāẓ* and the way in which Ṣadrā goes about exploring his greatest project, man's place in the cosmos and his journey to realization and perfection

[47] Sayeh Meisami, *Knowledge and Power in the Philosophies of Ḥamīd Al-Dīn Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 126.
[48] For a list of the scholars producing serious writing on Ṣadrā and/or translating Ṣadrā's works into European languages, see: Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā*, 24.
[49] Rustom, *Triumph Mercy Philos. Scr. Mulla Sadra*, 15.
[50] Meisami, *Knowledge and Power in the Philosophies of Ḥamīd Al-Dīn Kirmānī and Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī*, 126.
[51] Muhammad U.Faruque, "Heidegger and Mullā Ṣadrā on the Meaning of Metaphysics," *Philosophy East and West* 67, no. 3 (2017): 633. Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, 155. Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā*, 10, 32, 49, 62, 63, 66, 75, 77, 78, 79, 89, 90, 95, 99. Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 87–88.

through it. In this effort, it hopes to, on the one hand, situate the *Īqāẓ* within Ṣadrā's intellectual evolution. On the other hand, to contribute to a wider rethinking of Ṣadrā being read in a more holistic way whereby his system of thought is rethought and reconfigured to include ideas that have been rendered "more akin to Sufi thought" and thereby assumed to be in conflict with Ṣadrā's system of thought.[52]

While the *Īqāẓ* is characterized by a kind of "fluid" organization, where many issues are approached from a multitude of angles, I would argue that the *Īqāẓ* carries three overarching realms of discussion. In keeping with this framework, this thesis is comprised of an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion. In the "Introduction", first, I will put forth a concise account of Ṣadrā's life and historical background. While one's life experience and their context cannot be attributed with having the power to *determine* one's views, it is undeniable that they inform them. It is for this reason that an examination of his life and an understanding for the political and intellectual context from which he emerged is imperative. Second, I will provide a concise review of the *Īqāẓ*, addressing its structural qualities, including its organization, sources, language, audience, authenticity debates raised against it and finally a review of available critical editions.

Next, in the first chapter of the thesis, titled, "Reengaging the Unity of Being (*tawḥīd*): Ṣadrā's Metaphysics of Existence (*wujūd*)" I will establish the metaphysical foundation informing Ṣadrā's epistemological and anthropological claims, which come to be explored in the subsequent second and third chapters of the thesis. This is paramount, for, according to Ṣadrā, there is no truth without the foundation of the world of existence and therefore, unless one acknowledges existence, which precedes everything else, one runs the risk of being unable to engage with it. In this chapter, I will explore the meaning/s of *wujūd*, followed by the distinction between the concept and reality of existence. Next, I will put forth how Ṣadrā establishes the ontological relation between the Real and the world of creation. Then, I will focus on the primacy of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*), which expresses itself in the form of the Akbarian metaphysics of Unity (*tawḥīd*), the distinction between existence (*wujūd*) and essence (*māhiyyah*), the gradation of being (*tashkīk al-wujūd*) and finally, there being the

[52] Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 87.

existence of a "specific face" (*wajh khāṣ*)[53] through which all beings remain indirectly connected to their divine principle. While focusing on these ontological principles central to Ṣadrā's worldview, I will also, as Ṣadrā does, refer to the theological implications that draw forth as well as present his defense for the school of Ibn al-'Arabī against accusations of pantheism.

In the second chapter of the thesis, titled, "Knowledge of God: Setting the Grounds for Spiritual Journeying" I will focus on the epistemological implications of Ṣadrā's metaphysics, as they come to establish the grounds that make possible spiritual journeying (*al-sulūk*) and actualization. In this effort, I will first focus on Ṣadrā's construction of knowledge as a "mode of existence" (*naḥw al-wujūd*), the implication of which is that everything, in sharing in existence, comes to be understood as being intrinsically intelligible. On this note, Ṣadrā writes that all things carry within a "divine mystery" (*sirr rabbānī*) and are in the practice of praising their Source, the Divine, whether aware of it or not. As such, Ṣadrā moves on to establish knowledge of the Source, or knowledge of God as a necessary component for true servanthood,[54] without which true knowledge and therefore realization is not possible.[55] However, as Ṣadrā argues in the *Īqāẓ*, this is not any theoretical kind of knowledge and cannot be attained through abstract mental analysis, which brings us to Ṣadrā exploring knowledge, as in the case of existence, in a graded manner. Here, Ṣadrā argues that while *'aql* can provide a mental and conceptual understanding of reality and thereby God and the self, it fails to comprehend its true reality and thereby things "as they really are." This brings about a discussion regarding the dynamic between *'aql* and *qalb* and thereby the methods espoused by the Peripatetics and the Sufis respectively. Ultimately, Ṣadrā establishes the superiority of supra-rational "unveiling" (*kashf*) and witnessing

[53] Richard Todd and William Chittick render this term as "specific face". See: Richard Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 46. William C. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn Al-'Arabi's Cosmology* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 118. In contrast, Kalin translates it as "special face." Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā*, 99. I have chosen to translate it as "specific face" in order to ensure harmony and continuity with the already dominant literature.

[54] "Knowledge of any mode of existence among the modes of the existence of entities, the created world, is not possible except through the knowledge of its Author (*al-Mubdi'*) and Creator. (*al-Khāliq*)" Then, later on, again, "Complete/Certain knowledge of entities the essences of which have causes is not attained except through knowledge of its causes and purposes." (t.r. mine). Mullā Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, ed. Mohammed Khansari (Tehran: SIPRIn, 2007), 66.

[55] In this respect, for Ṣadrā there are exceptions, as in the case of the prophets, who belong to a different category, and those chosen by the Divine. Ibid., 114.

(*shuhūd*), the locus of which is the heart, over reason. However, this superiority does not come at the expense of denying the merits of rational inquiry. On the contrary, Ṣadrā simply asserts that philosophical inquiry must meet the ultimate standard of awakening the soul towards seeking and yearning for arrival, for unless so, "it is not possible to attain contentment in the heart, tranquility in the soul, [or] comfort in the mind."[56] Thus, perhaps what is most striking here is that Ṣadrā beautifully weaves together philosophical and Sufi approaches, transcending "the simple dichotomy between a discursive, ratiocinative mode of reasoning and knowing and a more intuitive, poetic and non-propositional mode of knowledge."[57] In this way, Ṣadrā argues for reality to be understood through "a mixture of logical reasoning and spiritual inspiration"[58] where they are seen as being complimentary. As such, reality, unlike what the modern mind would like to conceive, becomes a dynamic, fluid enterprise within which cognitive faculties such as reason and the heart are not conceived as being mutually exclusive but rather as sharing in the same reality of existence in different ways and to different degrees. In conclusion, this second chapter will clearly demonstrate that knowledge of God, through the relevant modes of knowing, is essential in laying the foundation for the seeker to journey towards the attainment of truth.

All this said, for Ṣadrā, knowledge, without practice, is not true knowledge, for it is through practice that knowledge comes to transform the human as a whole. As such, coupled with knowledge of God, Ṣadrā envisions servanthood (*al-'ubūdiyyah*), as the greatest station of praise[59], which constitutes the second essential component on the journey to spiritual realization. Furthermore, in the third and final chapter, titled, "The Practice of 'As if Seeing': Servanthood as the Greatest Station of Praise'" I will focus on the anthropological vision that comes forth through Ṣadrā's ontological and epistemological views. In this respect, much like Ibn al-'Arabī, for Ṣadrā, what makes the human being superior to all other created beings is not merely that one is a "rational animal," but rather that one is created in the Image of the Divine, as His viceroy and

[56] Ibid., 7. See also: Sadr al-Din Al-Shirazi, *Al-Ḥikmat Al-Muta'Āliyah Fi'l-Asfār Al-'aqliyyah Al-Arba'Ah* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1981), I, 1, 11.
[57] Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Mulla Sadra," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, n.d., https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mulla-sadra/.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Sadra, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 105.

with the spiritual potential to attain the greatest proximity. It is for this reason that, according to Ṣadrā, this proximity is achieved to the degree to which one "serves" the Caster of all forms. Accordingly, Ṣadrā writes that the prophets and thereby the Perfect Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*) is he who manifests within him all the Divine Names and Attributes,[60] who witnesses the Real in everything and attains unity amidst the multiplicity. This chapter also puts forth Ṣadrā's vision for the stations of spiritual journeying, starting with what Ṣadrā refers to as "intentional death" (*al-mawt al-irādī*) and spiritual birth (*al-wilādah al-ma'nawiyyah*) and culminating in the final point of self-annihilation (*fanā'*) where "God Loves him and becomes his hearing with which he hears, and his sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks."[61] Here, we find Ṣadrā discussing in detail the ways in which one can discover one's spiritual self, by freeing oneself from material attachments and fully turning to God (1), by using each function of the human soul in harmony with the purpose for which it was created (2), and finally by purifying the heart through various different intellectual and spiritual practices so that it may become a loci for the Divine Self-Disclosure. (3) Furthermore, for Ṣadrā, each religious and supererogatory practice is essentially a removal of the veils of darkness and in this respect a form of "awakening" through which the light can come through. Finally, as present in the case of existence, which is a vast panorama of ranking in degrees, in keeping with Ibn al-'Arabī, this time, we find Ṣadrā ranking in degrees of excellence (*tafāḍul*) the seekers, situating the realizers at the highest station.

Ṣadr al-Dīn Al-Shīrāzī: His Life, Works, and Impact

Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Yaḥyā Qawāmī Shīrāzī, who was more commonly known as Mullā Ṣadrā and venerated by theologians through the honorific title of Ṣadr al-Dīn (Pundit of Religion)[62] and by philosophers who came after him through his designation as Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn (foremost among those who have become Divine-like)[63] was

[60] Ibid., 83.
[61] Ibid., 91.
[62] Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman, eds., *History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 1125. Also, Kalin explains, "The word *ṣadr* (lit. chest, bosom), signifies the 'heart and source' and 'being foremost'. The title *ṣadr al-dīn* conveys the authority of one who has attained the heart of truth by his eminence in the *dīn*, religion." Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā*, 18.
[63] Kalin continues, explaining, "*Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn*, another major title given to him, means 'foremost among those who have become Divine-like' and goes back to Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, the founder

born into a courtly and well-known family in Shiraz, southern Iran, in around 979-80 AH/1571-72.[64] Given his intellectual interests,[65] being an only child,[66] and his father's role as governor of the province of Fars, Ṣadrā came into contact with some of the most renowned scholars of his time. While there is little we concretely know about his life[67], most accounts follow Henry Corbin's chronology and tripartite division.[68] According to this division, the first stage of Ṣadrā's life consisted of his educational training. In this respect, he was first trained in his hometown of Shiraz in the "transmitted sciences" (*al-ʿulūm al-naqliyya*), including Arabic and Persian grammar, Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and the narrations of the Prophet (*ʿilm al-ḥadīth*)[69], before moving to Isfahan, in the year 1060[70] to study the "rational sciences" (*al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya*), including logic, theology, philosophy, metaphysics

of the School of Illumination, and has a specific referent in Suhrawardī's triple classification of the types of human thought and knowledge. The *muta'allih*, whom Suhrawardī identifies as 'God's real vicegerent on earth' (*khalīfat Allah*), is the philosopher-sage or godly philosopher who has combined rational inquiry with spiritual realization." Kalin, "An Annotated Bibliography of the Works of Mullā Ṣadrā with a Brief Account of His Life," 21–22. As for Leaman, he suggests, "Exemplar, or Authority of Divine Philosophers." Nasr and Leaman, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, 1125. Nasr, on the other hand, prefers rendering this honorific title as, "foremost among the theosophers." Nasr, *Ṣadr Al-Dīn Shīrāzī and His Transcendent Theosophy*, 31.

[64] This date is deduced from evidence in his works, from the Uṣūl section of *al-Kāfī*, his commentary on Sūrat al-Ṭāriq, his autograph of *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir* and also a sentence found in the margin of a manuscript discovered of the *Asfār*, which was copied in 1197/1703 based on a copy autographed by Mullā Ṣadrā, reading, "I received this inspiration at the time of sunrise of Friday the seventh of Jumādī al-ūlā of the year 1037 A.H. [corresponding to January 14, 1628] when already 58 lunar years had passed from the life of the author." Furthermore, as Nasr explains, while this account has been confirmed by other sources, since it is not possible to know whether the 58 years is a period between 57 and 58 years or 58 complete years, it is set between the years 1571 and 1572. Nasr, *Ṣadr Al-Dīn Shīrāzī and His Transcendent Theosophy*, 31. See also, Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 5.

[65] Ṣadrā had a clear interest in philosophy from an early age, as he writes in the introduction of the *Asfār*, "I devoted my capabilities for many years since my childhood and youth to divine philosophy." Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Reconsidering the Life of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1641): Notes towards an Intellectual Biography," *Iran* 40 (2002): 183.

[66] Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 6.

[67] As Rizvi expresses, "The standard biographical and historiographical sources reveal very little about his life. […] This is a familiar state of affairs to those engaged in the study of Islamic intellectual history. Pre-modern intellectuals did not live in the glare of media attention; nor did scholarship and antiquarian interest produce a scrutiny of the minute trivia of lives. […] No doubt the construction of a discursive and coherent life is not always of prime importance to the compilers of biographical dictionaries: details of his life were thus less important than his lived presence that gave authority to his ideas and legacy. As Hayden White once said, 'no-one and nothing lives a story', so we ought to beware of neatly packaged lives if we find them." Ibid., 2–3.

[68] For more on Rizvi's more recent suggestion of it being more appropriate to divide his life into four phases, in keeping with the order present in the *Asfār,* see: Rizvi, "Reconsidering the Life of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1641): Notes towards an Intellectual Biography," 187.

[69] Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā*, 12–13.

[70] Rizvi, "Mulla Sadra."

and gnosis.[71] Here, sources unanimously inform us that he became a student under two of the greatest scholars of his time, namely Sayyid Bāqir Muḥammad Astarābādī, known as Mīr Dāmād (d.1631), and Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad al-'Āmilī, known as Shaykh Bahā'ī (d. 1622).[72] Ṣadrā's relationship with both of them seems to have gone beyond simply that of a student-teacher relationship and Mīr Dāmād had a greater influence on Ṣadrā in developing a synthetic methodology, with Shaykh Bahā'ī seeming to have influenced him most in his mystical reading. Ṣadrā's teachers were multifaceted figures within the Islamic context who were well versed in many disciplines, including, philosophy, mathematics, mysticism, theology and jurisprudence, among others. For example, Shaykh Bahā'ī was also renowned for his knowledge of astronomy and architecture. Even further, both were politically well-established figures; Shaykh Bahā'ī served as Shah 'Abbās' *Shaykh al-Islām* in Isfahan and Mīr Dāmād was another prominent courtier.[73] Unlike either of them, however, Ṣadrā remained outside of politics over the course of his life and perhaps believed, like Socrates, that a true philosopher or lover of wisdom has no real business in political life.[74] However, this does not mean that Ṣadrā remained unimpacted by it.

[71] Based on the date of his daughter's birth, it also appears that he would have married his wife Ma'sūma during his time in Isfahan as well. Ṣadrā had six children, three sons and three daughters. As Meisami writes, "all three sons followed in their father's footsteps and became scholars, though only a few works by the first son, İbrahim, survive. He specialized in Islamic law, hadith, theology and philosophy, completely turning his back on Sufism. In line with the ways of the world in those days nothing much is reported about the daughters except that they were married to three of Ṣadrā's students. Ṣadrā treated all his students as members of his own family." Sayeh Meisami, *Mulla Sadra* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2013), 9.

[72] While Rizvi mentions the fact of Ṣadrā having no formal *ijāza* from his teachers having survived, he writes that a literary-poetic collection, dating from the early eleventh/seventeenth century from Qazwin, including autograph notes of Mīr Dāmād, Shaykh Bahā'ī and Mullā Ṣadrā , carry some *ijāza*-like statements, which go on to demonstrate the close relationship between them, not only in the form of a student-teacher relationship but also of the kind of a spiritual discipleship. Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 13.

[73] Rizvi, "Reconsidering the Life of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1641): Notes towards an Intellectual Biography," 182. Also, as Newman mentions, both of them undertook political missions for Shah 'Abbās I. Andrew J. Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (New York: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2006), 58. Later on, when Shaykh Bahā'ī would leave his post as *Shaykh al-Islam* because of the harassment he would experience for his Sufi tendencies, particularly his dress, Mīr Dāmād would come to take on his role, becoming *Shaykh al-Islam* at a certain point as well. For more on their respective relationships with Shah 'Abbās, see Introduction and Chapter 1 of: Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*.

[74] Indeed, our understanding of political in the modern context and that in the traditional context are different. According to Toussi, for example, while Ṣadrā was not part of "day to day" politics, he was not apolitical and, in fact, had a sophisticated and well-developed political philosophy. In this respect, Toussi stands in opposition of the Corbin/Nasr line of reading Ṣadrā as an apolitical philosopher. For more, see: Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*.

In fact, on the contrary, the political and intellectual climate had a part to play in Ṣadrā's self-imposed exile to the small, uneventful village in Kahak, near Qum in around 1023 or 1024/1613,[75] where he remained in isolation from anywhere between seven to fifteen years.[76] While the exact reasons that contributed to Ṣadrā leaving Isfahan,[77] at a time when he was probably just beginning to make a name for himself among scholarly circles, are not known, there are a number of factors that appear to have contributed to this being the case. According to Rizvi, Ṣadrā was frustrated by the city having forgotten the value of the study of philosophy and by his failure to find an adequate patron.[78] Morris, on the other hand, suggests that "it was either his interest

[75] This is the earliest date when we can place him in Qum for certain, because it is the date of his commentary on the Throne Verse, in which he describes himself as being around forty-five years old and living in Qum. Another letter to Mīr Dāmād, in which he says that he had been away from Isfahan for twelve years, places him in Qum in 1026/1617. Another letter places him in Qum in 1028/1619. So, Rizvi indicates that we can estimate for him to have stayed in Shiraz for around ten years before leaving for Qum due to the problems present in his hometown. Hence, according to Rizvi, unlike most sources up to now have stated, Ṣadrā fled Shiraz and not Isfahan.

[76] Rizvi, "Reconsidering the Life of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1641): Notes towards an Intellectual Biography," 181. Scholars have put forth different possibilities with respect to the number of years Ṣadrā might have spent in Kahak. According to Rizvi's later work, it "lasted probably five years in the middle of 1010s/1600s." Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 14. As for Açıkgenç, he maintains that the number of years he stayed in retreat simply remains unknown. Alparslan Açikgenç, "Molla Sadra," in *TDV Islam Araştırmaları Ansiklopedisi* (TDV Islam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2005), 260. According to Dr. Muḥsin Mu'ayyadī, the critical editor of the 1982 publication of the *Īqāẓ*, Corbin thought it to have been between nine to eleven years. Mulla Sadra, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, ed. Muhsin Mu'ayyadi (Tehran: Cultural Studies and Research Institute, 1982), 11. According to Rahman, it was, once again, up to fifteen years. Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā (Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Shīrāzī)*, 3. Most recently, according to Toussi, his retreat lasted between seven to ten years. Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, 21.

[77] Unlike most of the traditional sources which indicate Ṣadrā to have left Isfahan, Rizvi suggests that Ṣadrā actually returned to his hometown of Shiraz before retreating to Kahak from there given the problems present in his hometown. This seems plausible, for as he also mentions, the presence of such figures as Shaykh Bahā'ī, who was a philosophically and mystically-minded jurist serving in the position of the *Shaykh al-Islam* in Isfahan in the later years of Shah 'Abbās' reign seems to indicate there not being the kind of intellectual dissent directed towards Ṣadrā from scholars present in Isfahan. While Rizvi does not deny Ṣadrā having endured public harassment and criticism, he suggests Ṣadrā having been subjected to such treatment at the hands of the teachers of hadith who had come to dominate the city of Shiraz at the time. Hence, Rizvi argues, "Facing the opposition of teachers of hadith who now dominated the city, he retired to Kahak near Qum. It was these people that he criticized in *Asfār* and in *Sih Asl*." Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 35. All this said, this pulls into question why the madrasa for Ṣadrā would be built in Shiraz for him to return there, if, in fact, it was the locus of the harshest dissent against him. Of course, we know he was under the protection of Imāmqulī Khān and perhaps the point here is that, by the time of Ṣadrā's return, Shiraz had changed quite a bit; yet, this too doesn't seem to be the case based on Ṣadrā's letters. The fact of Shaykh Bahā'ī having had to leave his post of *Shaykh al-Islam* because of similar forms of harassment makes this assertion, once again, doubtful. Thus, the claim that he left Shiraz and not Isfahan does not appear to be fully convincing. Nonetheless, irrespective of the city from which he left for Kahak, the madrasa he returned to teach at was in Shiraz and remains there to this day.

[78] Despite Ṣadrā's influential and wealthy family, unlike some of his predecessors, perhaps most notably Ibn Sīnā who made his living as a physician, Ṣadrā did not have a separate profession. Hence, having a patron would have been especially important. In this respect, wanting to maintain his distance from the field of politics and political figures might very well have been difficult. Ṣadrā revealing in one of his

in these popularly suspect writers [i.e., Ibn al-'Arabī, Suhrawardī, and his commentators] or […] because of his rash public espousal of these writers and open attacks on the mass of literal-minded clergy and legal scholars"[79] that brought on the dissent. Kalin agrees with Morris, adding that the subsequent "hostility of the literalist-exoterist scholars in Isfahan played a part in his decision."[80] Furthermore, the hostility was mostly because these scholars, as Meisami suggests, were "unhappy with the esoteric side of his philosophy due to the general distrustful attitude towards Sufism under the Safavids."[81] Newman supports this claim and writes, "Mulla Ṣadrā was also denounced for his 'popular' Sufi tendencies, and, despite repeated efforts to distance himself therefrom, finally abandoned the capital for a prolonged residence in Kahak, near Qum."[82] In fact, this dissent, according to some other accounts, even culminated in Ṣadrā being harassed and accused with heresy for "his belief in the unity of Being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), his reliance upon interpretation beyond the surface of religious texts (*ta'wīl*) and particularly the unveiling of hidden meanings in the Shi'i texts."[83] In fact, this criticism and frustration is also present in his works, at times openly, at others, implicitly. In the *Īqāẓ*, for example, Ṣadrā responds to these accusations, denying pantheistic claims and rejecting the criteria that the interpretation of religious texts should fulfill.[84]

In short, while the political and intellectual currents Ṣadrā was up against will become clearer as we explore his context in these respects exclusively in the next section, what is relevant to mention here is that while Ṣadrā clearly felt misunderstood and unappreciated,[85] seriously concerned by the accusations of heresy directed towards

letters to his teacher Mīr Dāmād to be struggling financially in providing for his family, also contributes to the possibility of him having had a hard time in finding a patron. Nasr and Leaman, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, 1066. This also seems likely given what is relayed from the letter Ṣadrā wrote to Mīr Dāmād citing the lack of support coming from the Safavid court. Sadra, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 12.

[79] James Winston Morris, *The Wisdom of the Throne: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 16.

[80] Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā*, 13.

[81] Meisami, *Mulla Sadra*, 2.

[82] Newman adds that Ṣadrā's teacher, Shaykh Bahā'ī endured a similar kind of harassment. He writes, "The strident denunciations of Shaykh Bahai's alleged Sufi tendencies, apparently visible in the supposed mystical dimensions of his poetry and the dervish dress he is said to have worn, as well as his preferences for an expanded role for the clergy, eventually forced him to resign as Isfahan's *Shaykh al-Islam*." Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire*, 70.

[83] Meisami, *Mulla Sadra*, 2.

[84] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 30–31.

[85] In the introduction of the *Asfār* and the letters he wrote to Mir Dāmād, dating back to this time, as well as his 'autobiographical' work *Sih Aṣl*, Ṣadrā openly laments of the ignorance, as well as the

him[86] and saddened by having to retreat, he also approached this second stage of his life as an intellectual and spiritual opportunity.[87] He wrote,

> I restrained my thoughts from dealing with people and mixing with them, and abstained from their companionship and friendship. Then the turning of cycles [i.e., the passing of days] and the obstinacy of the people of the present time became easier for me. I released myself from their repudiation and acceptance, and their praise and harm became equal for me. Then I turned my face to the Cause of all causes, and humbled myself before the One Who makes all difficult matters easy. I stayed in this state of secrecy, retreat, obscurity, and withdrawal for a long time. I busied myself with long moments of spiritual exercise as a luminous work, and my heart burned with the desire of attaining more spiritual discipline in a very strong way. Then the lights of the angelic world (*anwār al-malakūt*) began to emanate upon my heart, the secrets of the world of Dominion (*jabarūt*) were unfolded, the light of the One reached it, the Divine subtleties came upon it, and I obtained the secrets of which I was not aware before. The symbols were unveiled to me, and this unveiling (*inkishāf*) was not a result of logical demonstration (*burhān*). On the contrary, with a plenitude of direct witnessing and seeing of the Divine mysteries, I witnessed everything that I had learned before through logical demonstration.[88]

In fact, Kahak would come to serve a crucial role in Ṣadrā's spiritual evolution as he chose to spend his time focusing all his energy on deep meditation and spiritual practice. Eventually, as Rahman writes, "if he had gone into retirement totally disillusioned and broken-hearted."[89] he now obtained renewed courage and vigor which drove him out of that seclusion,"[90] bearing profound insights that would prepare him for the many different works he would come to compose upon his return.[91]

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intellectual and spiritual poverty that had corrupted the religious scholars of his hometown and nostalgically reminisces of the good times he had had with his teacher in Isfahan.

[86] Sadra, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 10–11.

[87] Kalin, "An Annotated Bibliography of the Works of Mullā Ṣadrā with a Brief Account of His Life," 27. Nasr, *Ṣadr Al-Dīn Shīrāzī and His Transcendent Theosophy*, 35.

[88] Kalin, "An Annotated Bibliography of the Works of Mullā Ṣadrā with a Brief Account of His Life," 28. Sadra, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 10.

[89] In the introduction of the *Asfār*, he writes, "The stifling of the intelligence and congealment of nature, which follow from the hostility of our period, forced me to retire to a faraway place, hiding myself in obscurity and distress, deprived of my hopes and with a broken heart." Nasr, Ṣadr Al-Dīn Shīrāzī and His Transcendent Theosophy, 35.

[90] Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā (Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Shīrāzī)*, 3.

[91] For an account of a spiritual illumination Ṣadrā shared from his trip to Kahak, narrated by his son, İbrahim, see: Rizvi, "Reconsidering the Life of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1641): Notes towards an Intellectual Biography," 185. For the actual account, see: *Risālat al-khulsa (Epistle on the Fleeting Moment).* For more on his retreat to Kahak, also see: Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, 21.

Furthermore, following his period of isolation, the third stage of Ṣadrā's life began with his return to Shiraz, "at the bequest of (possibly his former student) Imāmqulī Khān (d.1042/1633)"[92] who had succeeded his father Allāhvirdī Khān as the governor of Mullā Ṣadrā's home province of Fārs. Here, he was appointed as the head master of a new madrasa, *Madrasa-yi Khān*, devoted to the teaching of intellectual sciences. We know that the school was built specifically for Ṣadrā and that he spent many years teaching and writing upon his return from Kahak, becoming a much-respected teacher. That being said, not all seems to have been resolved with reference to the political and intellectual harassment he was subjected to, for in his last letter to his teacher Mīr Dāmād, he expresses that, while he had hoped for things to have changed, the current circumstances had proven to be disappointing. [93] This letter indicates a sense of sadness on Ṣadrā's part and a sense of yearning for the days when scholars could experience true freedom around being able to express their views without fear and concern for the political backlash they might end up having to endure. Nonetheless, despite the continued challenges, this late period of his life was very productive; Ṣadrā wrote prolifically, taught and became a highly respected teacher. As a devout and deeply spiritual thinker, he went to pilgrimage on foot six times and, in fact, passed away in Basra on his way to his seventh pilgrimage by foot to Mecca, on 1050/1640-41.[94]

As mentioned earlier, Ṣadrā was a prolific writer. He produced over fifty books and treatises,[95] which can be categorized in three areas: those in the field of philosophy, transmitted sciences and finally, Sufism. Ṣadrā's most renowned work in the field of

[92] Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shīrāzī: His Life and Works and The Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 22. While many of the academic biographies available on Ṣadrā indicate Allāhvirdī Khan having been the one who invited Ṣadrā to teach. Rizvi writes that this is unlikely, for the fact of him having passed away before the madrasa was even built. Meisami writes in support of this being the case. That being said, this still does not conflict with the view of Allāhvirdī Khān having ordered the building of the madrasa with Ṣadrā in mind. On a separate note, tragically, Imāmqulī Khān would come to be killed, along with his entire family by Shah Ṣafī in 1633. For more on this, see: Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, 27.

[93] Sadra, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 18.

[94] While there is no extant grave, Ṣadrā's place of death and burial is accepted to have been in Basra based on Ṣadrā's grandson's account. As Rizvi writes, "His grandson Muhammad 'Alam al-Hudā (d. 1115/1703-4), the son of Fayḍ Kāshānī, reported that his grandfather died in Basra in 1045/1635/6 and was buried in Najaf in the precinct of the shrine of Imam Ali." Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 29.

[95] Meisami, *Mulla Sadra*, 9. According to Corbin, this number is higher. "He was a prolific writer in both Arabic and Persian, with a bibliography of more than a hundred and twenty titles." In the same section, contrary to the established account of Ṣadrā not having followed up on the request for him to translate al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā*' into Persian, Corbin writes that Ṣadrā "rewrote, from the Shiite point of view, the *Iḥyā' al-''ulūm al-din (The Revival of the Religious Sciences)* Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 344.

philosophy is his nine-volume *magnum opus The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Intellectual Journeys of the Intellect (al-Ḥikmat al-muta'āliyah fi'l-asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah)*, more commonly known as the *Asfār*, "including all the philosophical domains, which, in modern categorizations, fall under […] ontology, epistemology, psychology, cosmology, eschatology, and theology."[96] A few of his other, primarily philosophical, works include, *Divine Proofs (al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya)*[97], which is a summary of the main themes of the *Asfār, The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations (Kitāb al-mashā'ir)*, which is one of Ṣadrā's most widely read works presenting his ontological doctrines and the fundamental theses informing his "transcendental wisdom," *The Wisdom of the Throne (al-Ḥikmat al-'arshiyya)* and *The Book of the Beginning and End (Kitāb al-mabda' wa al-ma'ād)* both of which explore Ṣadrā's metaphysical cosmology and eschatology. In the field of transmitted sciences, on the other hand, Ṣadrā is most renowned for his unfinished, seven volume commentary of the Qur'an,[98] which, in Meisami's words is "unprecedented in relation to past philosophers in terms of scale and depth alike."[99] Here, he is also known for his commentary on the Shi'i book of hadith, called *'Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, and his books on the hermeneutics of the Qur'an, including *Keys of the Invisible World (Mafātīh al-ghayb)*, which, according to Kalin, "contains the most extensive discussion of Ṣadrā's approach to the Qur'an and his methodology in interpreting the Sacred Book,"[100] *The Allegorical Verses of the Qur'an (Mutashābihāt al-Qur'ān)*, which is an in-depth exposition on the allegorical verses in the Qur'ān, and *Commentary on the 'Uṣūl al-Kāfī: The Book of Intellect and Ignorance* (*Sharḥ 'Uṣūl al-Kāfī: Kitāb al-'aql wa-l-jahl)*, which finds Ṣadrā addressing issues such as the meaning and degree of the intellect and the relation between the heart and the intellect, among others. Finally, in

[96] Ibid., 10.
[97] According to Rahman, this is also thought to be his last work because it "simply states Ṣadrā's these without discussing and criticizing earlier philosophers' views." Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā (Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Shīrāzī)*, 18.
[98] Ṣadrā provides a commentary for the opening chapter of the Qur'an al-fātiḥa, the first 65 verses of al-Baqara, Āyat al-kursī (2:225), Āyat al-nūr (24:35), Al-sajda (32), al-Yāsīn (36), al-wāqi'a (56), al-Ḥadīd (57), al-jum'a (62), al-Ṭāriq (86), al-'alā (87), al-zilzāl (99) and al-Tawḥīd or al-Ikhlāṣ (112). Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā*, 26.
[99] Meisami, *Mulla Sadra*, 12. Kalin adds to this, writing, "Considering that the majority of the Muslim philosophers prior to Ṣadrā were concerned with transmitted sciences only in a secondary way and that very rarely did they compose works in this field, Ṣadrā stands out as a conspicuous exception, a figure who combines both the transmitted-religious and intellectual-philosophical sciences." Kalin, "An Annotated Bibliography of the Works of Mullā Ṣadrā with a Brief Account of His Life," 22.
[100] Kalin, "An Annotated Bibliography of the Works of Mullā Ṣadrā with a Brief Account of His Life," 36.

the field of Sufism, Ṣadrā is most recognized for his treatise, *The Elixir of the Gnostics* (*'Iksīr al-'arifīn*), which identifies self-knowledge and disengagement (*tajrīd*) as the means for spiritual perfection, *The Demolition of the Idols of Ignorance (Kasr al-'aṣnām al-jāhiliyya)*, which is a critique of the "pseudo-ascetics" who claim to be the masters of spiritual knowledge, and, perhaps most importantly, given the textual anchor point of this thesis, *Īqāẓ al-nā'imīn (Awakening the Sleepers)*, which is an eloquent expression for how "a proper understanding of ontology and epistemology in the Sadrean sense leads to realized knowledge and spiritual refinement."[101]

Moreover, Ṣadrā 's impact on Islamic thought was not limited to that which took place in his own lifetime amongst Persian intellectual and religious circles.[102] Rather, through the commentaries of his two most important students, Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (d. 1680) and 'Abd al-Razzāq ibn al-Ḥusayn Lāhījī (d. 1662), both of whom also married Ṣadrā's daughters, his ideas spread out far and wide and influenced generations of philosophers, theologians and scholars, especially in India.[103]

The Political and Intellectual Context

Ṣadrā lived during a central period in Safavid history, corresponding to the reigns of Muhammad Khudābanda (1578-87), Shah 'Abbās I (1587-1629), and Shah Ṣafī (1629-42) when the Safavid political agenda had a direct impact on intellectual life. Before starting with the relevant rules of Ṣadrā's life, it is important to mention some of the events of the period immediately preceding his, for it is what happened during that time that contributed most to the harsh enforcement of certain political motives during his lifetime. Ismail I (1501-1524) and Tahmasp I (1524-1576), together, nearly ruled

[101] Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā*, 32.
[102] Relying upon the fact of the information present in biographical dictionaries being superficial, Rizvi argues that "there seems to be little strong evidence to suggest that Ṣadrā was recognized in his lifetime as an important scholar." He writes that Ṣadrā's student and son in-law Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn al-'Āmilī who had served as Shah 'Abbās's *Shaykh al-Islām* in Isfahan, and Mīr Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Dāmād, who was another prominent courtier, had received much greater attention and suggests this to be the result of "perhaps the political exigencies and attitudes demonstrative of the Safavid moral universe in these dictionaries." He admits that, "it might also be the case that these individuals were prominent courtiers whose history is far more accessible to both court chroniclers and dictionary compilers." Rizvi, "Reconsidering the Life of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1641): Notes towards an Intellectual Biography," 182. The latter seems more likely, for, unless "recognized as an important scholar" it seems unlikely that he would be subject to such scrutiny and harassment.
[103] Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā*, 2.

for a century and their deaths resulted in great internal conflict, civil war and subsequent vulnerability to external invasions. In this respect, the greatest threat for the Safavids was the Ottoman Empire.[104] Accordingly, the century leading up to Ṣadrā's birth experienced a number of invasions by the Ottoman empire, losses of land and subsequent peace treaties, all of which propelled the Safavids to hold onto the qualities that distinguished them most among the other ruling powers of the time.[105] In this respect, the most prominent feature the Safavids would choose to hold on to, as they continued to incur losses against the Ottomans,[106] was Twelver Shi'ism. While the reigns of Ismail I and Tahmasp I revealed a heterodox religious, spiritual and cultural dynamic, with mere nominal profession of the Twelver Shi'ite faith being sufficient for members to be part of the court,[107] this approach would go in the direction of unprecedented flexibility during the short reign of Ismail II (1576-78) before finding radical enforcement during the lifetime of Ṣadrā.

Following Tahmasp's death, Ismail II's rule was marked by what historians refer to as "Sunni flirtation."[108] Instead of instituting Twelver Shi'ism more strongly, Ismail II made choices that would strengthen the narrative of the Sunnis, most notably in his choice of Mirza Makhdūm, a renowned Sunni who drew large crowds to his preaching of Sunni sentiments, as chief judge of Fars.[109] While the many peace treaties signed with the Ottomans by this time, all of which required the Safavids to stop their cursing of the three caliphs, may have contributed to Ismail II trying to tread a politically safe line externally, internal opposition began to escalate with Shi'i clerics seeing affirmation of the Twelver Shi'ite faith as being imperative to the strength and sustenance of the Safavid project. Thus, the death of Ismail II, following his brief period of rule, brought on "spiritual uncertainty" which, not so surprisingly, found "Khudābanda's subsequent ten-year rule [the leadership Ṣadrā was born into] witness[ing] a resumption in the identification of Twelver Shi'ism as the realm's established faith and the person of the shah as chief spokesman for and defender of,

[104] Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire*, 27.
[105] Ibid., 49.
[106] The loss incurred at Chaldiran in 1514 is most notable in this respect. Ibid., 22.
[107] Andrew J. Newman, "The Myth of the Clerical Migration to Safawid Iran: Arab Shiite Opposition to ʿAlī Al-Karakī and Safawid Shiism," *Die Welt Des Islams* 33, no. 1 (1993): 74–75, 95.
[108] Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire*, 47.
[109] For more on Ismail II's motives, see: Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, 24–25.

the faith."[110]

Moreover, the anxiety of legitimacy appears to have become even more acute during the reign of Shah 'Abbās I,[111] whose response to such challenges was unforgiving. In this respect, he was most strongly opposed by popular Sufi movements to which he responded by ordering a number of executions to take place over the course of his reign, between 1587-1589, 1592-3 and 1614-16,[112] respectively. The relentless quest for self-legitimacy escalated only further when territorial losses continued, particularly those of Shi'i shrines. Furthermore, the Shi'ite clerics were positioned to be actively involved in the process of stopping the Sufi uprisings. Thereby, the more the uprisings, the more power did 'Abbās I delegate to the Shi'i clerics. In this effort, they would monitor the activities of the Sufis, preach in ways to ensure orthodoxy and at a certain point, even came to assume all the practical responsibilities of the Imam. Hence, as Meisami writes, the "religious and political urgency led to the formation of an unusually powerful clergy. They were on guard against all kinds of 'unorthodox' ideas and manners, but the main target of their attacks was Sufism."[113] In contrast, "philosophers and theologians of the Neoplatonist tradition of Ibn Sīnā and Suhrawardī still enjoyed relative support and patronage."[114]

In addition to the power 'Abbās I allocated to the clerics, he also funded the building of a large number of religious edifices, all of which aimed to "reassert Safavid spiritual legitimacy and commensurate with political authority in response to the domestic political-spiritual challenges."[115] Hence, this period seems to hint at a paradigm shift within the Safavid project where the Shah moved to become a royal figure[116], positioned as the apex of the many diverse discourses, whether they be spirituo-

[110] Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire*, 47.
[111] Nasr and Leaman, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, 1061.
[112] As Babayan indicates, the fact that Shah Abbas I went to such lengths to consolidate his power and was as violent in his way of doing so indicates how widespread and strong the dissent was during his time. These dates are of particular importance, for they make clear that Ṣadrā would certainly have been aware of them, if not having witnessed them personally. Ṣadrā would have been 16-18, 21-22, and then 43-45 years old, respectively, when these executions took place. For more, see: Kathyrn Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002), 411–29.For more, also, see: David Blow, *Shah Abbas: The Ruthless King Who Became an Iranian Legend* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 182.
[113] Meisami, *Mulla Sadra*, 15.
[114] Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, 26.
[115] Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire*, 56.
[116] Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 31.

political or cultural, whose legitimacy and authority was strictly identified with Twelver Shi'ism. Eventually, by the end of the 16th and the middle of the 17th centuries, the Sunni character of greater Khurasan, the heartland of Persia, had mostly been erased, and "such Sufi orders as the Naqshbandiyyah, Khalwatiyyah, Nurbakhshiyyah, Ni'matullāhiyyah and the Qalandariyya/Malāmatiyyah were either completely subdued or driven out of the Safavid Empire."[117]

Furthermore, Ṣadrā's life corresponds to a time in Safavid history where Twelver Shi'ism as a way of legitimizing the Safavid project and as a way of maintaining the authority of the shah was enforced to unprecedented measures.[118] The product of this approach was an increasingly powerful clergy and thereby a growing opposition towards philosophical and spiritual inquiries. After all, the members of the clergy, found such realms to be "detrimental not only to the metaphysical foundations of their own discourse but to their social status and political power as well."[119] In this respect, Sufi movements were considered particularly threatening for a number of reasons. The early connection of Safavids with a Sunni Sufi order, to say the least, created political complexities. In addition, the Sunni roots of Sufism as an intellectual current was another problem with the increasing strength and vitality of the Ottomans. As part of their "vehement promotion of Shi'i doctrine, [the Safavids] reject[ed] both Sunni theology and the eponymous figures of their tradition."[120]As for philosophy, in their literalist, anti-intellectualism, the members of the clergy found, this time, the "interpretation of the Qur'an and of the sayings of the Prophet of Islam, and those of Shi'i Imams" threatening.[121] Hence, in contrast to the *uṣūlīs*, these scholars, known as the *akhbārīs,* argued that it was sufficient to rely on the literal authority of the Imams, which only furthered their own objective of "bolstering the socio-religious status of rulers and scholars who claimed family descent from those Imams."[122] Moreover, the

[117] One of the direct consequences of this policy was also the migration of a number of notable Sufi masters to India and other places, and the drastic decline of Persian Sufi poetry in the heartland of Iran. Kalin, "An Annotated Bibliography of the Works of Mullā Ṣadrā with a Brief Account of His Life," 23–24.
[118] Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire*, 64.
[119] Nasr and Leaman, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, 1061.
[120] Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Sayyid Ni'Mat Allāh Al-Jazā'Irī and His Anthologies: Anti-Sufism, Shi'ism and Jokes in the Safavid World," *Die Welt Des Islams* 50, no. 2 (2010): 232.
[121] Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā*, 14.
[122] Ibid., 14–15. "Usuilism is generally characterized as having stressed recourse to rationalist, subjective forms of analysis-particularly the principle of *ijtihād* (independent judicial reasoning)-on

dominance of the clergy created an unfavorable atmosphere for the free exercise of logocentric tendencies in theological, philosophical and scientific disciplines.[123] In this sense, it seems the School of Isfahan can be attributed more to the "diligent and relentless philosophical engagements of a limited number of individuals rather than considered the product of favorable and conducive social circumstances.[124] As such, Ṣadrā's overt interest in philosophical inquiry, not to mention his open Sufi practice and reliance upon Sunni Sufi figures, the most prominent one being Ibn al-'Arabī and his commentators[125], was enough to make him vulnerable to being associated with the popular movements.[126] Thus, it seems it would not be an exaggeration to claim that he came to pursue philosophy and mysticism at his own peril.[127]

Against this back drop, Ṣadrā took issue with both groups of people; on the one hand, the literalist, arrogant scholars, i.e., the *akhbārīs*, on the other hand, the popular Sufis movements, who he referred to as the 'pseudo-Sufis' (*al-mutaṣawwifa*). Both stood at two extremes; on one end the orthodox traditionalists advocating the unquestioned authenticity of all hadith, on the other, the mystic who does not correctly practice the religion and while he may be ascetic is "nonetheless ignorant."[128] The *Īqāẓ*, though not a political treatise, carries clear elements that are of a critical nature of the hadith scholars of his time and the pseudo-Sufis. Ṣadrā is openly disapproving of the scholars who seek political alignment with the Safavid kings and considers them as having deviated from the path of true knowledge and wisdom. With respect to the Sufis, Ṣadrā seems adamant at making a distinction between the popular Sufis, who he called pseudo-Sufis (al-mutaṣawwifa), and authentic ones as he consistently responds to the

legal questions where the revealed sources were deemed wanting. Akhbārism has been portrayed mainly in negative terms, as having forbade recourse to speculative reasoning in favor of reliance solely on the Twelver-accepted revelation- the Qur'an and the Sunna, the latter especially including the *akhbār* (sg. *khabar*), the Arabic- language body of statements of and narratives about the Twelver Shi'i." Andrew J. Newman, "The Nature of the Akhbārī/Uṣūlī Dispute in Late Ṣafawid Iran. Part 1: 'Abdallāh Al-Samāhijī's Munyat Al-Mumārisīn," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 55, no. 1 (1992): 22. Also, see: Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, 32–35.

[123] Nasr and Leaman, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, 1063.

[124] Ibid.

[125] This was deemed to be in strict opposition of the way of the Imams. Rizvi, "Sayyid Ni'Mat Allāh Al-Jazā'Irī and His Anthologies: Anti-Sufism, Shi'ism and Jokes in the Safavid World," 237.

[126] Given his lack of desire to take part in politics, to have a supporting role at the court and his particular wish to not be close to political figures, the ruling elite may have had a hard time in being able to see his Sufi tendencies as being separate and independent of the Sufi oppositional movements.

[127] Nasr and Leaman, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, 1066.

[128] Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, 35.

false accusations made against theoretical Sufism.[129] In the introduction of the treatise, referring to the pseudo-Sufis, Ṣadrā writes,

> In our day and age there has come to be a group of many people who are ignorant of the station of knowledge and who have been played by their desires and this denial has extended into those who busy themselves with theoretical and realized knowledge […] to the point of claiming that knowledge is a veil.[130]

Later on in the treatise, Ṣadrā is openly critical of the literalist scholars for their superficialities and refers to them as those who have been stuck at the station of matter, unable to access any of the higher stations.[131] That being said, it is not abundantly clear from the *Īqāẓ* , where he stood on the *akhbārī/'uṣūlī* dispute.[132] For example, in the *Īqāẓ*, while speaking of the allegorical verses, he argues, in keeping with the thoughts of the *akhbārīs* that the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet and those of Shi'i Imams, were complete as they were,[133] without needing interpretation. However, right afterwards, relaying a hadith of the Prophet, Ṣadrā maintains that there is an external as well as an internal meaning to the Qur'an (once again there being grades, degrees of meaning)[134] and that only those "firm in knowledge" are qualified to seek the inner meaning. Perhaps this makes clear that he refrained from choosing between the two, unwilling to settle for one or the other. Rather, Ṣadrā seems to go for situating each view in its proper place and advocating for a balanced approach.

With regard to the popular Sufis, as in the case of his work *Kasr al-'aṣnām al-jāhiliyya*, Ṣadrā is openly disapproving. Referring to them as "pseudo-Sufis" *(al-mutaṣawwifa)*, he writes that because of the weakness of their intellects, they have thought God to be the totality of all things, when, in fact, He remains ontologically separate and free of

[129] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 7,32,38.
[130] Ibid., 5. Here, Ṣadrā seems to be referring to those pseudo-Sufis who thought of existence as being an illusion. Al-Shirazi, *Kalbin Uyanışı*, 8. On a similarly critical note, Ṣadrā writes in his *Kasr Aṣnām al-Jāhiliyya*, "The majority of ill-informed scholars *('ulamā al-ghafilūn)* believe they were perfect and deserve to be respected by the people, while they are unaware of their defects and moral evil. O whoever reads these words, how can you hide that you have too much ambition for political position and worldly lusts? Can you not see that, for the sake of gaining worldly enjoyments, you serve people of wealth and power, and waste your time in worshipping monarchs and statesmen? Look how you devote your lives to them and try to make provision for worldly pleasure by sly means." Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, 29.
[131] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 32.
[132] For more on Ṣadrā in relation to the dispute, see: Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, 32–35.
[133] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 30.
[134] Ibid., 31.

the world of creation.[135] Despite his clear effort to free the school of Ibn al-'Arabī from misinterpretations and his critique of the pseudo-Sufis, Ṣadrā does not seem to address this issue with the direct aim of correcting political polemics. Rather, Ṣadrā's focus seems to be in elevating the conversation whereby authentic Sufism and that which is practiced by the popular movements of his time are not confused for each other. While Ṣadrā was not known to be a part of any Sufi order[136], he was deeply influenced by and sincerely devoted to theoretical Sufism; gnosis (*'irfān*). As such, in the *Īqāẓ* , we find Ṣadrā mostly devoting his energies to providing an articulate expression of Sufi gnosis integrated into a philosophical discourse. Hence, it would be accurate to say that Ṣadrā was trying to protect authentic Sufism from false affiliations while at the same time keep knowledge and wisdom free from falling victim to the temporary and fluctuating whims of politics. Nonetheless, given the trials and tribulations he encountered in his life, it seems that despite Ṣadrā's wish to remain out of politics, his views simply could not be free from political attention and criticism.

Īqāẓ al-nā'imīn (Awakening the Sleepers)

Īqāẓ al-nā'imīn (*Awakening the Sleepers*) is listed among Ṣadrā's mystical treatises.[137] In the introduction, Ṣadrā openly reveals that the focus of this treatise is not any purely theoretical kind of knowledge.[138] Rather, Ṣadrā argues that it is through a proper grounding in the unity of existence and thereby the superior form of knowledge, i.e. unveiling (*kashf*) and witnessing (*shuhūd*), that one is able to have knowledge of God, and hence of things "as they really are" and by bringing together one's knowledge with practice, i.e. servanthood, attain closeness to one's Origin. In this effort, he writes that this is the ultimate aim true knowledge must seek and the standard philosophy must therefore serve. As such, admittedly, this work is not the product of a "bookish study"

[135] Ibid., 38.
[136] Ṣadrā was not known to be part of a Sufi order. Rather, his interest remained in theoretical Sufism, gnosis (*'irfān*). Nonetheless, in private, he engaged in the practical aspects of Sufism and, as Rizvi mentions, Ṣadrā might have been a *murīd* of Mīr Dāmād, relying upon the nature of the *ijaza* statement. However, Rizvi translates the term as disciple and this seems to mean a very close intellectual relationship that also included receiving spiritual guidance.
[137] Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā,* 32; Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 87.
[138] Ṣadrā writes about the limits of theoretical philosophy and writes that "these great Sufis (*al-akābir al-'urafā'*) have not reached the station of realized knowledge and witnessing through the ordering of logical premises and definitions and through the rules of mental impressions, but rather through a clean heart, through the purity of their intentions and actions." Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 8.

of philosophy; instead, it bears the fruits of contemplation and inspiration, attained through Ṣadrā's divine unveilings (*kashf*) and witnessing (*shuhūd*). Relying on the primacy and unity of existence, Ṣadrā makes the argument for true knowledge being a lived reality and writes,

> Among the things you must know, my dear, is that these high stations and great levels are not attained purely through the reading of the content of books, without walking the path of the Real nor without disengaging from creation (*khalq*) nor without spiritual practice and the disciplining of the faculties.[139]

Critical of the tendency displayed by the theologians and the Peripatetics of indulging in disputations merely for the sake of disputation, Ṣadrā envisions knowledge as a complete and real connection with reality, where the human being as a whole, body, soul, mind and heart, becomes engaged.[140]

Organization and Method

Although a comprehensive treatise, addressing the ultimate questions of the nature of existence to man's place therein, the *Īqāẓ* stands as a far more manageable text in comparison to Ṣadrā's other voluminous works, such as the *Asfār*, or those of the authors he references, such as the *Futūḥāt* of Ibn al-'Arabī or the *Nafaḥāt* of al-Qūnawī. Furthermore, with respect to its organization, while the modern mind, informed by separate categories and there being clear boundaries between discussions, may consider this treatise to be "unorganized," for lack of a better word, in actuality, it is a great representation of how Ṣadrā layers ontological claims, epistemological discussions, spiritual insights and ethical practices together, all while painting the holistic worldview he is so renowned for. As such, over the course of the introduction and nineteen smaller sections that make up this treatise[141], we find that while the individual topics of discussion and the main threads of his thought are discernible, they also remain inseparable. Thus, throughout the treatise, the reader is continually challenged to build the connections between Ṣadrā's discussions by remaining conscious and aware of the unity that informed his vision.

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[139] Ibid., 95.
[140] Ibid. Also, Al-Shirazi, *Al-Ḥikmat Al-Muta'Āliyah Fi'l-Asfār Al-'aqliyyah Al-Arba'Ah*, II, 10.
[141] The titles of each section, in the appropriate order, are as follows: Tamhīd, Tamhīd, Irshād, Ish'ār, I'lām, Tanbīh, Wahm wa Tanbīh, Īqāẓ, Hidāya, Tanwīr, Ifāḍah, Tajalliyāt, Lama'āt Kashfiyya, Nafaḥāt Qudsiyya, Nafaḥāt, Ishrāqāt Ilāhiyya, Tamthīl Istifāḍi, Tanbīh, Maqam Jam'ī.

Ṣadrā also employs a different method in the writing of this thesis, which would only be appropriate, for, unlike his previous works where he had relied on rational demonstrations, in the introduction of this treatise he writes that his approach will be of a "different, divine kind and with a new, sacred language, only the unifying knower would recognize its value and only a special kind of realizer (*'ārif*) could comprehend its depth."[142] He continues his words by saying that the method he has followed this time is one where he has brought together the universal truths and realities for the wayfarers. This quality presents itself on numerous occasions throughout the text. For example, when it comes to putting forth the primacy of existence, instead of delving into the discussion from a philosophically demonstrative point of view,[143] Ṣadrā chooses to study the Qur'anic verse "All things perish, save His Face"[144] by relying upon, of all figures, the Sunni theologian, philosopher, and mystic Imam al-Ghazālī's commentary, *Mishkāt al-anwār*. In doing so, Ṣadrā writes that all things, are composed of two faces[145]; one in relation to themselves and one in relation to their Source. While they are non-existent in the first case, they are existent to the degree to which they are connected with the Source of existence.

As part of this "different method," we also find Ṣadrā devoting a great deal of attention to the theological implications of his views. For example, when addressing the theological implications of the distinction between existence and essence, he writes that, a proper understanding of the distinction enables one to see that the source of evil is not existence but rather essence, for essences are non-existent and perishing.[146] This grounds itself in the ontological separation between God and the created world. That being said, in order to ensure the Source of Existence not being assumed to be one that is merely a philosophical principle, Ṣadrā once again makes sure to add that those who are "firm in knowledge" will be able to combine the poles of *tanzīh* and *tashbīh* with respect to God, for as Ibn al-'Arabī would argue, although seemingly contradictory,

[142] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 7.
[143] For those who are looking for the philosophical exposition, Ṣadrā openly directs them to reading the relevant sections of the *Asfār*. Ibid., 30.
[144] Seyyed Hossein Nasr et al., eds., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2017), 966. (Q 28:88)
[145] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 33.
[146] Ibid., 58,60.

God's immanence is ultimately the greatest expression of His transcendence.[147] While in this method, at times, a certain repetitiousness becomes unavoidable[148], as Fakhry confidently expresses, "this should not detract from the achievement of al-Shīrāzī, who was the last great encyclopedic writer in Islam."[149]

Sources of the *Īqāẓ*

Convinced by the unity of truth, irrespective of the source it had emanated from, we find a bold Ṣadrā drawing from a multitude of different sources in this text, ranging from Qur'anic verses to hadith narrations, from ancient Greek philosophers and commentators to Islamic philosophers, from theologians to Sufi mystics, among others. However, without question, amidst the multitude of sources, the greatest is Ibn al-'Arabī's chief disciple Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī. This is evident from the fact that Ṣadrā references al-Qūnawī's works most. Also, when not directly referenced, a close adherence to his system of thought is discernible through the use of the concept of "a specific face" *(wajh khāṣ)*, for example, as well as his critique of rational inquiry when it comes to metaphysical questions. The chart below carries the number of times each figure and his relevant text were referenced in the *Īqāẓ*:[150]

Table 4.1. Number of Mentions for Each of Ṣadrā's Sources

Sources	**Mentions**
Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī	**15**
Without the name of the text[151]	2

[147] Everything other than the Necessary being, to the mind, is a compound of existence and essence. While the existence of each thing, in being derived from the Necessary Being, is analogous to Him, the essence of each thing is where one differs from Him. It is for this reason that essences cannot be attributed to His action. Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 318.

[148] This became particularly visible while Ṣadrā was explaining the distinction between existence and essence and his reliance upon this distinction while providing a convincing defense of Ibn al-'Arabī's metaphysics of the unity not leading to pantheism.

[149] There are a number of examples for this. One can be the case where Ṣadrā revisits the false accusations of pantheism against the Sufis while discussing the distinction between existence and essence and then while also discussing the meaning of *wujūd*. Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 321.

[150] I have not included in the list those who have not been named. See: Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 93. I have also not listed the ḥadīth narrations of Prophet Muhammad as they are listed at the end of the 2007 critical edition. Also, I have not included in the count of the individuals the times when Ṣadrā paraphrases their ideas without directly quoting from them.

[151] Ibid., 12, 104.

Miftāḥ al-Ghayb[152]	2
Tafsīr al-Fātiḥa[153]	4
al-Nuṣūṣ[154]	2
al-Nafaḥāt al-Ilāhiyya[155]	4
Sharḥ al-ḥadīth al-'arba'īn[156]	1
Ibn al-'Arabī	**10**
Without the name of the text[157]	1
al-Futūḥāt[158]	**7**
al-Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhiyya[159]	1
Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam[160]	1
'Alā' al-Dawla al-Simnānī	**13**
Without the name of the text[161]	1
Sharḥ al-Futūḥāt[162]	7
al-Shārid wa al-Wārid[163]	1
Madārij al-Ma'ārij[164]	2
Fawāid al-'Aqā'id[165]	2
Imām al-Ghazālī	**4**
Mishkāt al-Anwār[166]	4
Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī	**3**
al-Mathnawī[167]	3
al-Suhrawardī	**4**
Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq[168]	2

[152] Ibid., 16, 39.
[153] Ibid., 16, 17, 39, 83.
[154] Ibid., 20, 50.
[155] Ibid., 30, 48, 55.
[156] Ibid., 56.
[157] Ibid., 82.
[158] Ibid., 15, 20, 22, 23, 24, 61, 99.
[159] Ibid., 39.
[160] Ibid., 103.
[161] Ibid., 21.
[162] Ibid., 15, 20, 22, 23, 24, 46.
[163] Ibid., 39.
[164] Ibid., 39, 46.
[165] Ibid., 53.
[166] Ibid., 29, 42, 46, 76.
[167] Ibid., 12, 20, 111.
[168] Ibid., 95.

al-Rashf[169]	1
al-Muṭāraḥāt[170]	1
Imām ʻAlī[171]	**3**
al-Nīsābūrī	**2**
Tafsīr al-Nīsābūrī[172]	2
Shabustarī	**1**
Without the name of the text[173]	1
Farīd al-Dīn al-ʻAṭṭār	**1**
Without the name of the text[174]	1
Abū al-Qāsım al-Junayd al-Baghdādī	**1**
Without the name of the text[175]	1
Aristotle	**1**
Without the name of the text[176]	1
Porphyry	**1**
Without the name of the text[177]	1
ʻAbdullāh al-Anṣārī	**1**
Manāzil al-Sāirīn[178]	1
al-Hallāj[179]	**1**
Ibn al-Fāriḍ	**1**
al-Qaṣīda al-Tāiyya[180]	1

Furthermore, given the multitude of sources, it is a regular occurrence in the *Īqāẓ* to encounter a quote from one of the ancient Greek philosophers or commentators, for instance, and it being elaborated on through the works of Ibn al-ʻArabī or his commentators. For example, while writing of knowledge taking place through the

[169] Ibid., 100.
[170] Ibid., 96.
[171] Ibid., 76, 83, 105.
[172] Ibid., 50, 105.
[173] Ibid., 45.
[174] Ibid., 20.
[175] Ibid., 53.
[176] Ibid., 72.
[177] Ibid., 96–97.
[178] Ibid., 24–25.
[179] Ibid., 102.
[180] Ibid., 107.

unification of the knowing subject with the object (*ittiḥād al-ʻāqil wa-l maʻqūl*), Ṣadrā first writes an account of Porphyry's statements, before expanding on the same concept through the writings of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī.[181] Similarly, while discussing how essences are, in fact, mirrors for the existence of the Real, he first refers to Aristotle, before turning to Ibn al-ʻArabī's comments in the *Futūḥāt*.[182] In cases where the idea Ṣadrā wishes to explore simply "cannot be properly captured in the garment of letters and words"[183] we also find him turning to quoting from poetry, whether that be in Persian or Arabic.

Despite the variety of his sources, instead of coming through as a mere conglomeration, Ṣadrā's utilization of these sources makes it so that they come together to inform a multi-dimensional image. Perhaps one of the most striking examples of this being the case is Ṣadrā's engagement with the philosophical problem of the "one and the many" following his discussion of the categories of existence. On this issue, the philosophers were renowned for upholding the principle of "one emerges from one" as a way of reconciling this seemingly contradictory assertion of one being the source of many.[184] In a brilliant and tactful manner, we find Ṣadrā managing to explain the relationship between God and the world of creation by relying upon this philosophical principle, all the while utilizing the Sufi principle of God's Self-Disclosure (*tajallī*) as a way of appeasing the concerns of the theologians, who were adamant that this theory of "emanation" necessarily led to *shirk* and constituted a clear affront to God's single, perfect act. Ṣadrā demonstrates this to not be the case, for God acts each and every moment. This discussion is simply one example for Ṣadrā successfully bringing together philosophy, theology and Sufism towards informing a "unified" vision and holistic understanding of reality, where each is able to reflect a true insight from a different perspective without needing to fall victim to the assumption of inherent contradiction.

In addition to the variety of the sources, given Ṣadrā's context, his choice of sources from amongst the many is also revealing. From this vantage point, much like al-

[181] Ibid., 36.
[182] Ibid., 61.
[183] Ibid., 9.
[184] Ibid., 18.

Suhrawardī, Ṣadrā seems to agree with the idea of the Ṣūfīs being the genuine successors of the early Greek sages, for, as Ṣadrā writes in the introduction, they are the exemplars he will turn to in the path leading to self-realization and perfection. On a separate note, Ṣadrā doesn't hesitate to make reference to other figures who were similarly, controversial among the Shi'ite 'ulamā'. For instance, he references al-Ghazālī on a number of occasions.[185] This is clearly reflective of Ṣadrā's strong commitment to Sufism, enough to refer to one of the greatest representatives of Sunni theology. After all, this would not have been welcomed, for as Cooper writes, "[Sufism] was, and indeed still is, seen by some Persian *'ulema* to dilute a person's Shiism and draw him towards Sunni sympathies and the label Sufi is sometimes used pejoratively in this sense."[186] Nonetheless, Ṣadrā did not deem this to be inconsistent with being a devoted Twelver Shiite. In addition to the references made to *walāyah*, Ṣadrā turns to a number of narrations by Imām 'Alī and praises him in the same way that he would the Prophet Muhammad,[187] which a Sunni would not do. In this regard, his loyalties are clear. Not surprisingly, in an effort to shun such possible critiques, Ṣadrā writes that this treatise is written for those "seeking the mysteries of unity through the steps of servanthood"[188] and warns his chosen readers to preserve the text from the ignorant and from those who have pretensions to philosophy but who lack mystical insight and commitment,[189] and who have been struck with spiritual illnesses, who have spoiled their natures though an attachment to the material world and to personal popularity[190] and therefore likely to misconstrue his writings.

Language and Style

As for the language of the *Īqāẓ*, it reveals a predominantly Sufi orientation and is clearly under the strong influence of Ibn al-'Arabī and Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī. In this respect, in a way that would be entirely uncharacteristic of a purely philosophical treatise, when turning to make his suggestions to the wayfarer, Ṣadrā says that one

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186 Rizvi, "Reconsidering the Life of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1641): Notes towards an Intellectual Biography," 188. Also, see: Toussi, *The Political Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, 37.
187 Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 71, 107.
188 Ibid., 8.
189 Andrew J. Newman, "Sufism and Anti-Sufism in Safavid Iran: The Authorship of the Ḥadīqat Al-Shī'A," *Iran* 37 (1999): 102.
190 Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 7.

must be, first and foremost, God-fearing! (*Ūsīke bi taqwā Allah*). Another example that can be provided would be Ṣadrā occasionally speaking to the reader by referring to him as "My dear" (*ḥabībī*). That being said, in having been written in Arabic and not in Persian, which was the language of the laymen, it is clear that the audience of the treatise is learned seekers and wayfarers.

Moreover, aside from the predominantly Sufi orientation, Ṣadrā also makes ample use of language derived from scriptural concepts and terms. In this regard, a striking and regular occurrence is Ṣadrā weaving Qur'anic words into his own narrative. He does this seamlessly to the point of the editor of the 2007 publication of the *Īqāẓ,* Dr. Mohammed Khānsārī suggesting him to have probably been a *ḥāfiẓ*.[191] At times, Ṣadrā even manages to combine more than a single verse, all while expressing a single thought. For example, while discussing how unique the human being is, in having, by nature, an indefinite station, able to change and grow, moving from the station of the plant and then the animal before awakening from the "sleep of both stations"[192] and rising to the station of the intelligent soul, Ṣadrā writes, "And the earth of his body will shine with the Glory of his Lord." Here we can clearly realize the reference to the Chapter Zumar, verse sixty-nine. [193] In another instance, Ṣadrā uses the adjective "mighty arrogance," from the Chapter Isrā', verse four, while referring to those who attribute imperfection and need for another while speaking of the level of Absolute Existence, that which cannot be comprehended and thereby necessarily remains unknown.[194] Ṣadrā also turns to Islamic imagery through the use of metaphors and analogies while building his discussions. For example, when describing the relationship between reason and the heart, Ṣadrā writes that while the former can be understood as the Station of Abraham (*Maqām Ibrāhīm*), the latter stands for the Ka'ba. When writing about *tashkīk,* for example, he utilizes the notion of light coming through different shaped and colored pieces of glass. Also worthy of mention is the metaphor of the mirror as a way of elucidating the distinction between existence and essence.

[191] Ibid., iv.
[192] Ibid., 80.
[193] Ibid. "The Earth will shine with the Light of its Lord." Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 1134. (Q 39:69)
[194] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 12. "Surely you will work corruption upon the earth twice, and you will ascend to great heights." Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 694–95. (Q 17:4)

Authenticity Debates

Dr. Muhsin Mu'ayyadī, the critical editor of the 1982 publication of the *Īqāẓ,* maintains that this treatise was authenticated by Corbin and Dānishpazhūh.[195] According to him, it was also accepted as one of Ṣadrā's mystical texts by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who not only studied the philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā with traditional masters but also played a leading role in introducing Mullā Ṣadrā to Western academia.[196] As for the 2007 publication, the critical editor does not raise any questions in this respect. Nonetheless, more recently, Rizvi has raised questions in this regard.[197] His critique is threefold. First, he writes that not only has the *Īqāẓ* been discovered "only a few decades ago but the manuscripts known are very late."[198] Second, he writes that "the ideas [presented] are more akin to Sufi thought than philosophy"[199] and therefore unlikely to have been penned by Ṣadrā himself. Third, his critique is that "Ṣadrā is quoted by name with his works, a practice of self-reference in the third person that one does not find in other texts by him."[200]

With reference to the first criticism, Rizvi conflicts with another one of his earlier claims, where he acknowledges that most of the manuscripts of Ṣadrā's works date from the nineteenth century.[201] As for the second criticism, this judgment appears to be more informed by a reading of Ṣadrā that situates Ṣadrā's system of thought within a philosophical paradigm alone. After all, Ṣadrā is known for endorsing the Qūnawī approach to metaphysics in his other works, as he does in the *Īqāẓ*. Even in the case of the *Asfār*, a text written mostly along the lines of the Peripatetic school of thought, the profound influence of the school of Ibn al-'Arabī, as well as his students Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī and Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, are clearly recognizable. Ṣadrā references each of these three figures, 227, 14 and 13 times, respectively.[202] Indeed, these numbers, still, pale in contrast to the 767 times Ibn Sīnā is mentioned. However, the presence of Ibn

[195] Sadra, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 18.
[196] Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā*, 20.
[197] Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 87.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Rizvi, "Reconsidering the Life of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1641): Notes towards an Intellectual Biography," 182.
[202]Carl W. Ernst, "Sufism and Philosophy in Mullā Ṣadrā," *World Congress on the Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*, 1999, 6.

al-‘Arabī is not one that can be underestimated, especially considering the fact of Aristotle and Plato being mentioned 188 and 133 times, respectively.

Also worthy of mention here is the many sections of the *Īqāẓ* that are present, at times almost verbatim, in Ṣadrā’s other authenticated works, most notably the *Asfār*. For example, his statement of philosophical inquiry needing to meet the ultimate standard of awakening the soul towards seeking and yearning for arrival, for unless so, “it is not possible [for the seeker] to attain contentment in the heart, tranquility of the soul, comfort of the mind”[203] exists exactly as such in the first volume of the *Asfār.*[204] In addition, Ṣadrā’s discussion of the three categories of existence in the *Īqāẓ*, exists in the exact form in his *Kitāb al-Mashā’ir*.[205] Also, Ṣadrā’s discussion of spiritual death through a saying of Jesus is, similarly, this time present in his work *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*.[206] These are but a few examples and there are others, which I will refer to in the subsequent chapters of the thesis.

All this said, the fact that Ṣadrā’s own terms, such as, the primacy of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd)*, the gradation of existence (*tashkīk al-wujūd)*, or substantial motion (*al-ḥarakat al-jawhariyya)*, for example, never come up in the *Īqāẓ*, is undeniable. However, I would argue that this too is to be expected, for Ṣadrā openly writes in the introduction of the *Īqāẓ* that, unlike his previous works where he has followed the method and language of rational demonstration, this treatise will be one where he follows a mystical one.[207] It is also worthwhile to note here that the concepts Ṣadrā is renowned for having brought new meaning to and thereby made his own, are present in meaning throughout the *Īqāẓ*. For instance, instead of writing gradation of existence (*tashkīk al-wujūd)*, Ṣadrā uses Ibn al-‘Arabī’s term and extensively discusses unity in multiplicity (*al-waḥdat fi al-kathrah)*. While the language is clearly different, as Ṣadrā would say, the meaning is harmonious. Accordingly, it seems that this once again comes to support Ṣadrā in his great claim for the inherent unity and harmony between philosophical demonstration and mystical insight. From this perspective, the *Īqāẓ* can

[203] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā’imīn*, 7. See also: Al-Shirazi, *Al-Ḥikmat Al-Muta‘Āliyah Fi’l-Asfār Al-‘aqliyyah Al-Arba‘Ah*, I, 1, 11.
[204] Al-Shirazi, *Al-Ḥikmat Al-Muta‘Āliyah Fi’l-Asfār Al-‘aqliyyah Al-Arba‘Ah*, I, 9.
[205] Sadr al-Din Al-Shirazi, *The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations*, ed. Ibrahim Kalin (Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2014), 44.
[206] Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā*. [p]
[207] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā’imīn*, 7.

be considered as the ultimate testament to Ṣadrā's great project of language and meaning complementing one another as part of a single, unified and infinitely complex, shared reality.

As for the third critique, this possibility once again seems to be weak, for we find Ṣadrā referencing his other works by him in some of his other smaller treatises, such as the *al-Mashā'ir*. This need not indicate the *Īqāẓ* being inauthentic. Rather, it simply points to the fact of the *Īqāẓ* having been written after the completion of the *Asfār,* which is the case for, once again, many of Ṣadrā's other treatises. However, more critical here is that I have not found in the two critical editions of the *Īqāẓ*, the self-reference Rizvi mentions. There is reference to his primary work, the *Asfār* but not to himself in the third person. For, if Rizvi is correct in this respect, this would be a challenge to overcome and could very well mean that the *Īqāẓ* could have been written at a later period by a deeply devoted student. This would require much greater historical research into the works of the period, Ṣadrā's students' works, as well as biographical accounts.

Moreover, demonstrating and authenticating the *Īqāẓ* would require a separate, textual study where sections from the *Īqāẓ* are thoroughly cross referenced with his other works. Even then, however, it is important to remember that life, in general, and in particular for these great thinkers, does not *always* follow a linear line. Sometimes a thinker may strongly argue for a certain perspective at one point, only to much later on, argue as strongly for the exact opposite.[208] In such cases, the incongruencies within a thinker's writings should not be readily taken as grounds to question authenticity. Sometimes thinkers even fall short of fulfilling what they themselves have outlined at the beginning of a work. For instance, this is precisely what occurred in Ṣadrā's *al-Mashā'ir*. In the second part of paragraph 4, Ṣadrā provides a thorough outline of what he intends to achieve in the *Mashā'ir* and the exact order he intends on following in his writing. However, he does not follow this plan.[209] Hence, Ṣadrā may have adamantly followed a certain approach and used a certain kind of language in the *Asfār*

[208] For more on how great artists, painters, or thinkers sometimes, unlike the expected maturity, serenity, solidity and peace, can display great change, perhaps even opposition and unresolved contradiction in their later works, see: Edward W. Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007).
[209] Al-Shirazi, *The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations*, xxxii.

and in some of his other works only to adopt an entirely different approach and a different kind of language in the *Īqāẓ*. Thus, it would be fair to say that questions regarding the authenticity of the *Īqāẓ*, based on these three claims and the fact of Rizvi being alone in making them, cannot be deemed as being fixed.

Despite the concerns, it is also not possible to deny the *Īqāẓ* being a striking example for the many features Ṣadrā is most renowned for. As is the case in his other works, the *Īqāẓ*, similarly, stands as a towering example for Ṣadrā's at times eclectic and at others cohesive style, as he consistently weaves together the many strands of thought, for his poetic language, for its discussion of theological claims in tandem with philosophical arguments and mystical insights, not to mention his concept laden discussions. As in some of his other works, again, as a central element of transcendental philosophy, here in the *Īqāẓ,* we once again find Ṣadrā making a "systematic attempt to reconcile philosophy, mysticism, and theology."[210] As such, the inclusivity characteristic of him is, once again at play here, with "rational, gnostic, and religious elements naturally merg[ing] and help[ing] the growth of the whole."[211]

Translations and Critical Editions

Finally, regarding available translations, as of yet, this treatise has not been translated into English or any other Western language, though, according to Rizvi, there is a forthcoming French translation by Cécile Bonmariage.[212] However, since Rizvi wrote this in the year 2007, it seems unlikely that the translation is being continued. More recently, in 2019, it was translated by Fevzi Yiğit into Turkish, who was part of the team that translated Ṣadrā's *Kitāb al-Mashā'ir* into Turkish, along with Ahmet Kamil Cihan and Salih Yalın. This is an accurate and useful translation. As far as critical editions, there exist two: one by Dr. Muhsin Mu'ayyadī published in 1982 and one by Dr. Mohammed Khānsārī published in 2007. Although from an earlier date, the Persian introduction for the 1982 critical edition provides more information regarding the political and intellectual context of Ṣadrā's life as well as the authenticity of the *Īqāẓ*. In contrast, the Persian introduction for the critical edition published in 2007, serves

[210] Meisami, *Mulla Sadra*, 13.
[211] Ibid., 5.
[212] Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 87.

more as a summary of the content of the treatise. Partly because of the legibility issues of the manuscripts both needed to rely on, both editions still carry mistakes, at times in the text, at others, in the footnotes, though the mistakes are considerably less in the 2007 publication and more in the form of typos, rather than significant errors. As far as original manuscripts are concerned, there is not a single manuscript copy of the *Īqāẓ* in Turkey. That being said, a number of Ṣadrā's other works are available in manuscript form.[213]

[213] Here is a list of the manuscripts belonging to Mullā Ṣadrā that are available in libraries across Turkey based on the records of the Süleymaniye Library: *Ḥāshiya 'alā Ilāhiyyāt al-Shifā'*, *Sharḥ Hidāyat al-Ḥikma* (4), *al-Shawāhid al-Rubūbiyya* (4), *Ta'liqa ala al-Shifā'* (2), *al-Asfār al-Arba'a, Risāla fī al-Tashakhkhus* (3), *al-Risāla fī Ḥaqq al-'Amal* (4), *al-Risāla fī al-Ḥudūth* (2), *al-Risāla fī al-Wāridāt al-Qalbiyya* (2), *al-Risāla fī Sarayān al-Wujūd* (2), *Ta'līqāt 'alā al-Shifā'*, *al-Risāla Katabahā ilā Shams al-Ghaylānī* (2), *Tafsīr Sūrat al-'Alā* (2), *al-Risāla fī al-Ḥashr* (6), *al-Ḥikma al-'Arshiyya* (2), *al-Risāla fī al-Maẓāhir* (2), *Iksīr al-'Ārifīn* (2), *al-Risāla fī Sirr al-Nuqta* (2), *Asrār al-Āyāt* (2), *al-Mashā'ir* (2), *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, *al-Risāla fi Ittiṣāf al-māhiyyah bil Wujūd* (2), *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, *al-Risāla fī Ithbāt al-Bāri' Ta'ālā wa Ṣifātihī al-Ḥusnā*, *al-Risāla fī Taḥqīq Māhiyyat al-'Ilm 'alā Ra'y al-Ḥukamā*, *al-Masā'il al-Qudsiyya wa al-Ḳawā'id al-Malakūtiyya*, *Ajwiba 'an masā'il awrada 'alayhā ba'ḍ ikhwānihī, al-Risāla fī Ithbāt al-Wājib, al-Risāla fī Jawāb 'an Asilat al-Nāṣiriyya* (2), *al-Risāla fī al-Mabda' wa al-Ma'ād* (2), *al-Risāla fī al-Qaḍā' wa al-Qadar* (2), *Ḥāshiya 'alā Sharḥ al-Iṣfahānī 'alā al-Tajrīd.* I specified the number of manuscripts available for each text in parentheses. If there is no parenthesis, this means there is a single manuscript.

CHAPTER I

RE-ENGAGING THE UNITY OF BEING (*TAWḤĪD*): ṢADRĀ'S METAPHYSICS OF EXISTENCE (*WUJŪD*)

Ontology and metaphysics deal with the fundamental questions of "What is existence?" and "What is the nature of existence?" In everyday life, existential propositions do not pose epistemic problems because we can acknowledge their "reality" within the realm of concrete and detectable existence. For instance, we have an intuitive grasp when we say, "there is a tree in the garden" or "there are stars tonight." As such, from this level of thinking, a problem or challenge does not surface.[1] That being said, an attempt to explain the meaning of the words "is" and "exist", poses a great challenge.[2] In this respect, interestingly enough, "existence" (*wujūd*), as a philosophical concept and realm of inquiry, despite having its inspirational roots in the Greek tradition,[3] was not present as a distinct topic for philosophical reflection.[4] Instead, according to Charles Kahn, existence only became a central concept in philosophy in the period when Greek ontology was radically revised in light of a metaphysics of creation, under the influence of biblical religion. Even at that, however, he argues that "this development did not take place with Augustine or with the Greek

[1] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (Indiana: World Wisdom, 2007), 120–21.
[2] Ibrahim Kalin, "Mullā Ṣadrā's Realist Ontology of the Intelligibles and Theory of Knowledge," *The Muslim World* 7 (2004): 82.
[3] Nicholas Rescher, "A Ninth-Century Arabic Logician on: Is Existence a Predicate?"," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 21, no. 3 (Jul.-Sep., 1960): 430.
[4] While some suggest the presence of different technical terms (*hyparxis* and *hypostasis*) in Hellenistic and Neoplatonic thought, which might cast doubt on this claim, according to Kahn, a careful study of these terms will also reveal that "in their usage, there was no real equivalent to the concept of existence." Charles H. Kahn, *Essays on Being* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 62. In addition, the linguistics of Greek also made it difficult for them to conceive of existence as a fully established noun or concept that stood on its own. As Kalın explains, the Greeks did not have a distinct verb meaning "to exist" as a generic term. Instead, they used the verb "to be" in a predicative context, i.e. in relation to a particular being. In other words, it was always used in connection to something that was present in concrete reality. For this reason, they conceived of the tree, the stars, the sky, etc. as existing beings. Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, 91. Furthermore, this was especially the case in the classical period of Greek philosophy, down to Aristotle, who was chiefly concerned with essences that were really existent or existents that were real. As a consequence, in such a metaphysical system, existence as a philosophical problem was neither important nor significant since essences that did not exist were, from the outset, not considered, which made it so that existence, *wujūd* was always discussed in the context of being a secondary quality. Hence, while Aristotle did discuss existence *qua* existence – separate from all its accidental qualities or states, this aspect remained underdeveloped and Aristotle's impact lived on in his conception of fixed substances.

Church Fathers, who remained under the sway of classical ontology. [Rather,] the new metaphysics seems to have taken shape in Islamic philosophy."[5]

Furthermore, there were philosophical as well as theological considerations that made the study of *wujūd* gain such significance under the influence of revelation and within the Islamic experience in particular. From a philosophical point of view, as Izutsu so eloquently put, for the Muslim philosophers, *wujūd* was, "an unremitting search for something eternal and absolute beyond the world of relative and transient things."[6] As such, unlike Aristotle[7], Muslim philosophers thought that "existence" was far greater than the things that simply, already existed. Hence, the study of *wujūd* was utilized as an opportunity to unlock the mystery of the ontological origin of things and their inter-relatedness.[8] From a theological point of view, on the other hand, as Nasr explains, the centrality that the study of *wujūd* gained in Islamic thought had very much to do with the Islamic revelation itself[9] and its doctrine of creation, which introduced ontological contingency.[10] In this respect, the Qur'anic verse, "His Command when He desires a thing is only to say to it, 'Be' and it is!"[11] provided the essential material for the Muslim philosophers to reflect on God's creative act of bringing something into existence. From this vantage point, the world was not deemed synonymous with *wujūd*. Rather, in that God was always far greater than existence, the world was

[5] Kahn, *Essays on Being*, 63.
[6] Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence* (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1971), 2.
[7] Aristotle's metaphysics relies on fixed substances, referring to things that already exist as the foundation from which reality is conceived. As such, in Aristotle's universe there can be no place and occasion to speak about creation because the world is an eternally self-repeating world, in which all substances from the heavenly to the corporeal subsist in the eternity of the First, or God, who, for Aristotle, could ensure the permanence of substances only because He Himself is an eternally subsisting substance. He did not, however, create or cause substances to exist. It follows that from this point of view, the world could not *not* exist. Consequently, the existence of substances never posed a problem. Being and being a substance were one and the same thing. As a result, substances could exist in their own right and the question of the origin of the world and its end never arose, which constituted an ontological block that could not be broken. For more, see Megawati Moris, *Mullā Ṣadrā's Doctrine of the Primacy of Existence (Aṣālat Al-Wujūd)* (Kuala – Lampur: International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM), 2003), 17–18.
[8] In this respect, the ontological gap between Being and existents was a departure from Aristotelian philosophy. Ibid., 6, 23.
[9]Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Existence (Wujūd) and Quiddity (Māhiyyah) in Islamic Philosophy," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (1989): 409–28. Moris, *Mullā Ṣadrā's Doctrine of the Primacy of Existence (Aṣālat Al-Wujūd)*, 6.
[10] Whether it be through a process of emanation according to the Muslim Peripatetics or *creation ex nihilo* according to the theologians, or perpetual creation or "theophany" *(tajallī)* according to the Sufis, a diverse metaphysics of creation thrived in the Islamic intellectual tradition. Mullā Ṣadrā benefitted from these three intellectual currents deeply.
[11] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 1083. (Q 36:82)

envisioned in a state of ontological poverty (*faqr*) as *wujūd* was given by God, Who was the only abiding Reality, with all "other" existents coming into being and passing away.[12] Hence, the conceptual study of *wujūd*, within the Islamic intellectual context, far from being inconsequential, became key in understanding the nature of reality.

Needless to say, the different currents of Islamic thought dealt with this fundamental question through different perspectives, affirming certain aspects over others. In the case of the Peripatetic philosophers, this revealed itself in the distinction between existence (*wujūd*) and essence, or quiddity (*māhiyyah*)[13] and the relationship between the two, whereby one or the other was deemed primary. In the case of the Ishrāqī philosophers, this presented itself in the form of existence being conceived as light and gradation being applied to light, whereby an "extensive reality possess[ed] a state of complete perfection and purity [that] belong[ed] to God or the Necessary Being alone, as well as grades and states embracing the whole of existence."[14] These degrees were distinguished from each other through their degrees of intensity and weakness. In the case of the Sufis, this presented itself in the language of the doctrine of Unity (*tawḥīd*), the meaning of which stands at the core of Islamic revelation, where only God, the Divine is considered to "exist" and that all others that "appear to exist are [considered as being] nothing but theophonies (*tajalliyyāt*) of the One Being which alone Is."[15]

Furthermore, in the context of the *Īqāẓ*, we find Ṣadrā, through the fundamental and central concept of *wujūd*, engaging with each of these approaches and bringing them together under the perspective of the Sufis' doctrine of Unity (*tawḥīd*), writing in the introduction of the treatise, "Verily the deepest of all knowledge is the knowledge of Unity (*al-Tawḥīd*) and the highest of all stations is the attainment of the mysteries of unveilings."[16] Hence, unlike some of Ṣadrā's other works where the narrative is primarily informed by the Peripatetic approach to existence and its distinction from

[12] Nasr, "Existence (Wujūd) and Quiddity (Māhiyyah) in Islamic Philosophy."
[13] Traditional teachers of Islamic philosophy would always begin their teaching by instilling in the mind of the student a way of thinking based on the distinction between *wujūd* and *māhiyyah*. "The philosophical intuition underlying the distinction is that what something is (man, horse etc.) is different from the fact that it exists." In this respect, when man perceives the world, he asks two questions in trying to understand it. First, "Is it?" and second, "What is it?". In this regard, while the first question refers to *wujūd* or its opposite '*adam* (nonexistence) the latter refers to *māhiyyah* (from the word *mā huwa* or *mā hiya*, which is its feminine form). Ibid., 412.
[14] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought* (State University of New York Press, 1981), 176.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 3.

quiddity, or essences, in the *Īqāẓ*, we find Ṣadrā adopting the approach of the school of Ibn al-'Arabī and particularly the language of his closest disciple Sadr al-Din al-Qūnawī[17]. Moreover, a careful analysis of the ontology promulgated by the *Īqāẓ*, reveals Ṣadrā "achiev[ing] a synthesis of the views of the philosophers and the Sufis[18] on the doctrine of Unity (*tawḥīd*)."[19] Perhaps this should not be surprising given "the wedding between rigorous rational inquiry and the profoundest mystical experience being most evident in the discussion of Unity (*tawḥīd*),"[20] and this being central to the human person being able to attain perfection, which is at the center of the *Īqāẓ*.

As Kalın writes, "Mullā Ṣadrā's most important contribution to philosophy is the study of existence as the foundational principle and reality of things.[21] From this point of view, Ṣadrā was adamant that beings derived their reality and truth from their existence

[17] Sadr al-Din Qūnawī is often considered to be Ibn al-'Arabī's most influential disciple with Jāmi famously remarking, "Ibn al-'Arabī's teaching cannot be understood in terms consistent with Islamic principles and with rational speculation without the aid of al-Qūnawī's writings." P. Morewedge, ed., *Neoplatonism and Islamic Thought* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 180. As such, in Chittick's words, "the later intellectual tradition read Ibn al-'Arabi's works according to the interpretation of Kūnawī and his immediate disciples." William C. Chittick, "Ṣadr Al-Dīn Ḳūnawī (Qunawi)," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, 7*, 1995, 750. That being said, unlike his master, who rarely makes reference to philosophers in a positive light, Qūnawī is recognized for his clear respect for the philosophical tradition. In this respect, perhaps most relevant to our current concern, much like Ṣadrā, Qūnawī "was motivated to combine the results of philosophical demonstration (*burhān*) with those of "realized unveiling" (*kashf muḥaqqaq*) and "direct vision" (*'iyān*)." In this regard, the correspondence that took place between Sadr al-Din al-Qūnawī and Nasir al-Din al-Tūsi is particularly revealing. (For more on al-Qūnawī and his correspondence, see: William C. Chittick, "Mysticism Versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The Al-Ṭūsī, Al-Qūnawī Correspondence," *Religious Studies* 17 (1981): 87–104. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and M. Aminrazavi, eds., *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012). William C. Chittick, ""The Central Point": Qūnawī's Role in the School of Ibn ʿArabī," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society* 35 (2004): 25–45. William C. Chittick, "The Last Will and Testament of Ibn 'Arabi's Foremost Disciple, Sadr Al-Din Qunawi"," *Sophia Perennis* 4/1 (1978): 43–58. William C. Chittick, "Qunawi on the One Wujud," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 49 (2011): 117–27. William C. Chittick, "Ṣadr Al-Dīn Qūnawī on the Oneness of Being," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 21 (1981): 171–84.

[18] According to Chittick, the exchange between the two schools increased steadily, until "the two schools became integrated into the synthesis brought about by Mullā Ṣadrā more than 300 years later [after al-Qūnawī]." Chittick, "Mysticism Versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The Al-Ṭūsī, Al-Qūnawī Correspondence," 104.

[19] Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought*, 180. It is important to note here that "to say 'mysticism versus philosophy' in the context of the Islamic civilization means something far different from what it has come to signify in the West, where many philosophers have looked upon mysticism as the abandonment of any attempt to reconcile religious data with intelligent thought. Certainly, the Muslim mystics and philosophers sometimes display a certain mutual opposition and antagonism, but never does their relationship approach incompatibility. […] [Nonetheless], the Sufis did not accept everything the philosophers said, nor vice versa. The very fact that we speak of two independent schools of thought shows that the two groups offered different explanations of the nature of things." Chittick, "Mysticism Versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The Al-Ṭūsī, Al-Qūnawī Correspondence," 87–88. Furthermore, the two schools most notably differed in their responses to what the most reliable method for gaining knowledge concerning the nature of things and God was.

[20] Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought*, 174.

[21] Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā*, 80.

(*wujūd*) and held that "any proper philosophical analysis must start with existence and eventually end with it."[22] It follows that a proper ontological foundation is imperative in the quest for truth and certainty, for as Ṣadrā argues,

> Whoever is ignorant of the knowledge of *wujūd*, his ignorance runs through the most important of all subjects and the greatest among them; and he will become mindless of it and of the secrets of divine knowledge; and its inner meanings will become lost to him, and the science of the soul and its connections [with the whole of cosmology] and its return to the Origin of its origins and its final end. Therefore, we saw it that we begin with it [the question of *wujūd*].[23]

On this note, it is not surprising that Ṣadrā starts with and devotes nearly half of the *Īqāẓ* to providing a thorough expression of his metaphysical foundation. Accordingly, this first chapter will present Ṣadrā's metaphysical project within the context of the *Īqāẓ*. Whilst doing so, I will make reference to the theological concerns Ṣadrā addresses, whether that be in his defense of the Sufis against accusations of pantheism, in his argument for the Creative Act of God being single and continuous despite its many manifestations or in his attribution of evil to essences.

1.1 The Reality and Concept of Existence

The word *wujūd* (existence) comes from the Arabic root verb wa-ja-da/aw-ja-da, meaning "to find" and "to be found" among its derivations.[24] In this regard, as Kalin expresses, the three well-known words *wujūd* (existence), *wajd* (ecstasy), and *wijdān* (consciousness) all derive from the same root but mean different things while maintaining a conceptual-etymological connection.[25] Consequently, in light of Ṣadrā's philosophical corpus, *wujūd* cannot be rendered simply as existence. In fact, in the *Īqāẓ*, Ṣadrā writes that it corresponds to three different meanings; to Existence, existence and finally attainment or consciousness, each having a specific meaning in the context of Islamic metaphysics. First, it can mean "Existence" in the sense of Absolute Being, or the Being of God, and the *esse* of medieval philosophy. In this

[22] Ibid.
[23] Al-Shirazi, *The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations*, 4.
[24] Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, 185. William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), 214.
[25] Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, 228–29.

respect, it refers to the Absolute or Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*).[26] Second, it can mean "existence" as opposed to essence or quiddity (*māhiyyah*). In other words, this refers to the reality of all things other than the Necessary Being.[27] Third, it can mean "consciousness and attainment" (*al-nayl wa al-wijdān)*.[28]

Usually, in Islamic philosophy, terms are carefully defined, but in the case of *wujūd* it is impossible to define it. In this respect, when Ṣadrā approached "existence" from a logical stand point, he argued against the attempt to make existence known *(ta'rīf)* through logical definition *(hadd)* and description *(taṣwīr).* The reason for this was because logical definition was based on a genus (*jins*) and specific differentia *(faṣl).* For example, when we define man as a rational animal, his genus is that he is part of a general category of "animal" but his particular property, or differentia is that he is "rational." Therefore, a logical definition necessitates the inclusion of its kind and an exclusion of any others. Hence, as Ṣadrā explains in the "First Penetration," of his *Kitab al-Mashā'ir*, "It *(wujūd)* cannot be made known through definition because it has no genus and no specific difference. Thus, it has no logical definition."[29] Furthermore, every unknown is defined by that which is known. Hence, it is precisely for this reason that Ṣadrā argues that it cannot apply to existence. After all, Ṣadrā argued that there is nothing outside of existence (*wujūd*) and, in being the ground for all there is, there is nothing that it leaves out. As such, there is nothing more universally known than *wujūd* and therefore nothing else in terms of which *wujūd* can be defined.[30] This is why Ṣadrā's commentator Sabzawārī stated, "the notion of existence is one of the best-known things, but its deepest reality is in the extremity of hiddenness."[31] Put differently, while the concept of existence, in being most manifest, is the most universal and known of concepts, its Reality is the most inaccessible of all realities.[32] Furthermore, instead of defining *wujūd*, Islamic philosophers alluded to its meaning through such assertions as "*Wujūd* is that by virtue of which it is possible to give

[26] Iqaz, 19
[27] Nasr, *The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, 122.
[28] Iqaz 19
[29] Al-Shirazi, *The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations*, 7, 26.
[30]Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "'Existence (Wujūd) and Quiddity (Māhiyyah) in Islamic Philosophy,'" *International Philosophical Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (1989).
[31] Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, 87.
[32] Nasr, *The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, 126. Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 35.

knowledge about something" or " *Wujūd* is that which is the source of all effects."[33] In the *Īqāẓ*, we also find Ṣadrā, under the influence of al-Qūnawī's assertion of *wujūd* meaning the Real, as in "The Real Existence is Allah", many times write of *wujūd* and similarly directly mean the Real.[34] However, he also makes clear that *wujūd* is not a direct name for Allah, writing, "We say: *wujūd* is for understanding; it is not an actual name for Him."[35] Hence, this usage is merely to make that which is, by definition, beyond rational comprehension, more comprehendible.

Furthermore, based on the doctrine of Unity, Ṣadrā wrote that while the Real is the only One who exists, the mental study of existence has made it such that we can perceive things through the distinction between existence and essence, which essentially stands for the distinction between actual reality and our mental abstractions of it, or between the reality *(ḥaqīqah)* of something and the concept *(mafhūm)* of it. As Kalin explains, "as the human mind works with concepts and general and abstract terms, it turns existence, like everything else, into a concept. […] The 'reality of existence' (*ḥaqīqat al-wujūd*), however, remains beyond mental constructions and generalizations."[36] Perhaps what is of central importance here is to remind oneself that the distinction between existence and essence, or quiddity only takes place in the mind, at the level of rational analysis. As such, in the external world, existence and essence are not separate or independent from one another. To the contrary, they are one. Hence, as Rahman writes, "Reality is the proper place for existence, while the mind is the proper home of essences, concepts, and static notions."[37] In support of this, Ṣadrā writes that "What is witnessed is existence and what is comprehended is essence."[38] Moreover, the difference between reality and our understanding of it can also be understood as the difference between a picture and a scene. When we take a picture, we isolate a perspective; it is not imaginary, nor is it unreal. Nonetheless, it

[33] Nasr, "'Existence (Wujūd) and Quiddity (Māhiyyah) in Islamic Philosophy.'"
[34] As Demirli eloquently points out, this expression by al-Qūnawī led to a shift in the study of metaphysics, moving away from Ibn Sīnā's definition of metaphysics as the study of existence in so far as it is existence towards metaphysics being the study of God. For more, see: Ekrem Demirli, "'Varlık Olmak Bakımından Varlık' Ifadesinin Sûfîlerce Yeniden Yorumlanması ve Bu Yorumun Mezafizik Sonuçları," *Islâm Arastırmaları Dergisi*, no. 18 (2007): 27–47.
[35] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 20.
[36] Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā*, 83.
[37] Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā (Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Shīrāzī)*, 29. Alparslan Açikgenç, "Molla Sadrâ," in *TDV Islam Araştırmaları Ansiklopedisi* (TDV Islam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2005), 260.
[38] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 53. Hence, the multiplicity is a comprehended multiplicity, while the unity is in reality and thereby witnessed.

remains a picture of reality, not reality itself. Accordingly, "existence exists by itself and the actualization of existence in the external world takes place by itself, not by virtue of something else."[39] To further emphasize, *wujūd* particularizes all beings but remains undivided and unqualified by anything other than itself. Nonetheless, as Ṣadrā will come to demonstrate actual reality is always one step ahead of concepts.

1.2 The Degrees of Existence: The Relation Between God and the World of Creation

Against this backdrop, Ṣadrā starts the first chapter of the *Īqāẓ*, titled, "In Preparation" (*Tamhīd)*, explaining the different degrees of existence and the way in which each degree generates a specific ontological state. This discussion is able to provide an explanation to the philosophical problem of the relationship between the one and the many and thereby that between God and the world of creation. Furthermore, Ṣadrā writes, "Know, oh seeker of the mysteries of unity and the journeyer towards Allah through the footsteps of servanthood that things, in their existentiality (*mawjūdiyyah*), have three degrees."[40] He explains,

> the first degree is the existent (or Being) whose existence is not connected with anything other than Itself and whose existence is not delimited by any limitation either – hence He is called by the realized knowers (*'urafā'*) as 'The Unseen He-ness' (*al-hūwiyya al-ghaybiyya*) or 'the Unseen of He-ness' (*ghayb al-hūwiyya)*, or 'the Absolute Unseen' (*al-ghayb al-muṭlaq*) and the 'Essence of Unity' (*al-dhāt al-aḥadiyya*) – that is the Essence of the Real, the Transcendent, in terms of (His) indeterminability.[41]

This level of existence, which stands for the Divine Essence, has no name, no description and no quality. As such, "it is not a concept among others [that] is found in the mind or in apprehension."[42] Hence, as the Pure and Absolute Unknown,[43] it is the level of existence that remains beyond human perception, except by means of its concomitants and effects. Rustom likens this to the case of the sun, writing, "It is as if the sun as such never manifests itself but only its rays do. […] Such notions explicitly

[39] Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, 99.
[40] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 11. Al-Shirazi, *The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations*, 44.
[41] Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought*, 177–78.
[42] Ibid., 178.
[43] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 11.

ensure that this kind of metaphysics never amounts to a form of pantheism."[44] Here, Ṣadrā refers to al-Qūnawī's words from the *Tafsīr al-Fātiḥa,* and explains, "It is an intelligible entity, whose effects can be seen but whose essence cannot be witnessed."[45] Similarly, Ṣadrā described this in his treatise *al-Ḥikma al-'Arshiyya* by writing, "With Respect to Himself He is the most obvious and manifest of Beings. But because of the very excess of His manifestness (by which) He overwhelms and overpowers the senses and the (ordinary) minds, He has become veiled from (man's) understanding and vision."[46]

As for the second degree it is relative existence *(al-wujūd al-muqayyad),* "the existent or being whose existence is connected with something other than itself. It is the existent delimited by the limitations of the intellects, the souls, the heavens, the elements, as well as the components out of which the human, the animals, the trees, the inanimate bodies and all other specific existents are composed."[47] As such, this degree "refers to beings that have two ontological aspects: themselves and their source of existence. […] In regard to themselves, beings are relative, imperfect, shadowy, dependent, and so on. It is only in regard to their source that they can be properly said to exist."[48] After all, as Chittick explains, "all reality is rooted in the Ultimately Real […] To say that God is 'Alive' means that God alone is truly alive, and other things, to the extent that they can be considered alive, must have derived their life from Him."[49]

As for the third degree of existence, it is known as "Self-Expanding Existence" (*al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ*)[50] and among the realizers (*muḥaqqiqūn*) as the "The Breath of the

[44] Mohammed Rustom, "The Great Chain of Consciousness: Do All Things Possess Awareness?," *Renovatio*, 2017, 50.
[45] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 17.
[46] Morris, *The Wisdom of the Throne: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā*, 103.
[47] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 13. Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought*, 178. Here, I relied on the translation provided by Nasr.
[48] Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā*, 88–89.
[49] William C. Chittick, "The Circle of Life in Islamic Thought," in *Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology on the Perennial Issue of Microcosm and Macrocosm.*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2006), 207.
[50] Rustom translates this degree of existence as "being in its deployment." Rustom, "The Great Chain of Consciousness: Do All Things Possess Awareness?," 51.

Compassionate," (*Nafas al-Raḥmān*)[51], "The Dust Cloud" (*Habā'*) and "Anqā'."[52] Ṣadrā continues, writing that this third degree of existence is,

> the principle (source) of the Universe, the empyrean of life and, according to the Sufi tradition, the truth by which things are created and the reality of realities. And it becomes numerous by the variety of existents, and thus it becomes eternal along with the eternal, temporal along with the temporal, intelligible along with the intelligible and sensible along with the sensible. Although in this consideration it is presumed to be universal (*al-wujūd al-intizā'ī*) , it is not so.[53]

Furthermore, the Breath of the Compassionate stands for God breathing living and compassionate *wujūd* into the virtualities of all things, which are latent in the divine omniscience, thereby giving birth to the cosmos. As such, "this breath is simply the divine life, or the universal spirit, or the overflowing mercy of omniscient and omnipresent *wujūd.*"[54], this third degree of existence is the origin of all entifications,[55] or existents (*mansha' kāfat al-ta'ayyunāt*). Relying on the words of al-Qūnawī, Ṣadrā also refers to this creative act as "theophany diffusing into the reality of contingents" (*al-tajallī al-sārī*).[56]

All this said, while this third degree of existence applies to all existents, Ṣadrā is quick to make clear that this existence is different from the existence that has been abstracted as a general concept and also from the existence that has been mentally conceived as one of the secondary intelligibles and of the imaginatively accepted notions, as some of the great philosophers have explained. Rather,

> this 'Self-Expanding Existence' […] cannot be bound by any particular description or determined by any defined limits such as contingency and eternity, priority and posteriority, perfection and imperfection, cause and effect, substantiality and accidentality, separation from

[51] Ekrem Demirli, *Sadreddin Konevi'de Bilgi ve Varlık* (İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2015), 223. As Chittick explains, "Ibn al-Arabi points out that mercy is in fact the Koranic, and hence mythic, designation for what the philosophical tradition calls *wujūd*. As for "breath," it is universally recognized as the necessary concomitant of life. The symbolic resonance of the term breath, however, gives it the ability to convey (more directly than the Word life) the concrete, embodied reality that is at issue. Chittick, "The Circle of Life in Islamic Thought," 208.

[52] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 15. Some other names include, (*al-'Amā'*), the origin of which is a prophetic narration responding to the question of where the Lord was before He created the world of creation. Suad El-Hakim, *İbn Arabü'l Arabi Sözlüğü* (İstanbul: Kabalcı Yayınevi, 2004), 67. (*martabat al-jam'*), reality of all realities (*ḥaqīqat al-haqāiq*), (*ḥadrat aḥadiyyat al-jam')* as well as (*al-wāḥidiyya*). Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 18. Later on in the *Īqāẓ*, Ṣadrā also writes of this station as being known as the "Hidden Treasure" and then it manifest upon Himself, whereby "I loved to be known and I created the world of Creation." Ibid., 40.

[53] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 13–14.

[54] Chittick, "The Circle of Life in Islamic Thought," 208. (Q 6:156)

[55] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 18.

[56] Ibid., 16.

> matter and corporeality. Rather, according to the nature of its essence, without anything else being added to it, it possesses all the ontological determinations and objective modes of existence. In fact, objective forms of reality issue forth from the grades of its essence and the different modes of its determination and its different states of being.[57]

The relation between these three degrees of existence becomes most clear through Ṣadrā's referencing of 'Alā' al-Dawla al-Simnānī's (d. 1336)[58] commentary of Ibn al-'Arabī's *Futūḥāt*, where al-Simnānī explained that the first degree of existence stood for the Real, the True Existence (*al-wujūd al-Haqq*) who acts through Self-Expanding Existence in generating the effect, i.e., relative existence, in the form of contingent beings.[59] In this way, the world is envisaged as the articulation of the breath of the All-Merciful[60], whereby existents remain connected to the Divine principle. What this establishes according to Ṣadrā is that "each entification (*ta'ayyun*) displays to us the fundamental nature of Being, even though in itself that nature is unknowable."[61]

Furthermore, Ṣadrā adds that this self-expanding degree of existence which proceeds from the Necessary, Real existence according to the Sufis, is also the First emanation from the First Real that the philosophers speak of. In this respect, Ṣadrā affirms the stance of the philosophers who maintain that "Indeed only one proceeds from the One."[62] As such, it becomes clear that the Necessary and Real Existence (*al-wujūd al-Haqq al-Wājibī*) is the source of the First Emanation, which is the third degree of existence, the Self-Expanding Existence (*al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ)*, which generates the entities and essences. In this way, through his exposition of the three degrees of existence, relying upon the principle of *wujūd*, Ṣadrā demonstrates the ontological nature of the relationship between the One and the many, the Creator and the world of creation, concluding his discussion with the words, "In this way, the relation between the Creator and the world of creation is established."[63]

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[57] Ibid., 14. Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought*, 178–79.
[58] Fritz Meier, "'Alā' Al-Dawla Al-Simnānī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2012. For a detailed study of his views and criticisms of Ibn al-'Arabī, see the following PhD thesis: Kübra Zümrüt Orhan, "Alâüddevle Simnânî ve Tasavvufî Görüşleri / Alauddawla Simnani and His Sufi Thoughts" 2016.
[59] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 23.
[60] Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology*, 46.
[61] Chittick, "Ṣadr Al-Dīn Qūnawī on the Oneness of Being," 176.
[62] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 18.
[63] Ibid. Ṣadrā provides these three degrees of existence, in the same order in the *Mashā'ir* as well. In the *Mashā'ir*, however, this discussion follows Ṣadrā's demonstration for *wujūd* not simply being a

1.3 A Defense of the "Great Sufis": Responding to Accusations of Pantheism

Ṣadrā's account of the three degrees of existence, in addition to expounding the relationship between God and the world of creation, the One and the many, serves the purpose of being the foundation for Ṣadrā's defense of the Sufis against accusations of pantheism as well as an opportunity to overcome the seeming discord between Ibn al-'Arabī, his student Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī and the later commentator al-Simnānī. Ṣadrā admits that there are those "pseudo-Sufis" (*al-mutaṣawwifa*), who have "assumed, because of the weakness of their intellects and the deficiency in their faith that […] Allah Himself is the totality of the manifestations, no other (and not separate, or other)."[64] However, he continues, adding that "The attribution of such an abominable claim to the great Sufis is a sheer accusation and a grave slander, may He (God) keep their mysteries and hearts away from it!"[65]

According to Ṣadrā's explanation, the varying use of the expression, *al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*, by the school of Ibn al-'Arabī has contributed to this misreading as well the understanding of there being a discord among Ibn al-'Arabī's commentators.[66] Ṣadrā explains that, at times, this expression has been used to indicate the third degree of existence, or Self-Expanding Existence (*al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ*).[67] Once this is the case, the principle generating multiplicity has been understood to mean the Divine Essence, which would mean that the Divine is not one, but rather many, thereby attributing imperfection and weakness to the Divine Essence. Thus, in order to clarify, he writes that in the tradition of the Sufis,

> When they attribute the expression *al-wujūd al-muṭlaq* or *al-mawjūd al-muṭlaq* to the Necessary Real (*al-Haqq al-Wājib*) they mean existence in the first meaning, or that is, the reality *bi sharṭ lā shay'*[68],

secondary quality but rather the source for all there is and therefore primary. The difference in language is discernible. That being said, the meaning Ṣadrā conveys in both works is harmonious and presents no incongruencies. See: Al-Shirazi, *The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations*, 44.

[64] Ibid., 38. This would predicate multiplicity to the Divine Essence and thereby constitute pantheism.

[65] Ibid., 38.

[66] For instance, Ibn al-'Arabī used this expression to indicate Self-Expanding Existence (*al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ*), or the third degree of existence. His commentator, Simnānī, on the other hand, meant the Divine Essence, the first degree of existence, when he, too, wrote, *al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*.

[67] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 21.

[68] So does Attar and Rumi. Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 15, 21.

> not in this last meaning, [i.e., the third meaning of self-expanding existence]. If not, the ugly corruptions would necessarily follow.[69]

Thus, as this section makes clear, according to Ṣadrā the accusations of pantheism are the product of a failure to distinguish between the first and third degrees of existence, i.e. Absolute Existence (which is the unknowable Divine Essence) and Self-Expanding Existence (which is the Divine and continuous act of God). Put differently, it is failing to recognize that the self-disclosures of the Divine, occur through His manifest Being, not His Absolute, non-manifest Being. Ṣadrā concludes this discussion by relying on a statement of al-Simnānī, where he quotes, "It is the identity of all things in their manifestness but not the identity of things in their essences – Praise and Exaltation be upon Him – rather He is He and things are things."[70]

Ultimately, Ṣadrā affirms that the realizers (*'urafā*) do not have any doubt regarding God's transcendence and His being free from the attributes of all temporal beings and the features of all created existents[71] and that transcending the Essence of Allah from any degree of imperfection is an "established [practice] without any confusion [among them]."[72] The concern at hand here was that if one accepted immanence but did not also affirm transcendence, one would fall into heresy of pantheism. If, on the other hand, one would accept transcendence but, not, similarly, accept immanence, one would fall victim to deism. Ṣadrā was essentially trying to overcome this theological dilemma that was playing out in the judgement surrounding the Sufis.[73] The outcome of Ṣadrā's statements is that both poles, that of immanence and that of transcendence must be affirmed.[74]

Furthermore, in addition to correcting the misreading of Ibn al-'Arabī and his followers, Ṣadrā maintains that there is no conflict between Ibn al-'Arabī and his commentators in this usage and that the differences are merely in language and

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[69] Ibid., 15.
[70] Ibid., 24. Rustom similarly asserts that there is a clear distinction between "God in His non-manifest state and the things in existence" in Ibn al-'Arabī's ontology which leaves no room for pantheism. Mohammed Rustom, "Is Ibn Al-'Arabī's Ontology Pantheistic?," *Journal of Islamic Philosophy*, no. 2 (2006): 67.
[71] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 23.
[72] Ibid., 15, 23.
[73] Wolfgang Smith, *Cosmos and Transcendence: Breaking Through the Barrier of Scientistic Belief* (San Raael: Sophia Perennis, 2008), 40.
[74] Rustom, "Is Ibn Al-'Arabī's Ontology Pantheistic?"

conceptual preference, not in meaning.[75] After all, Ṣadrā thinks that "unity is for *wujūd*, [but] multiplicity and discernibility is for knowledge."[76] After all, existence, when considered in its one specific mode, involves meanings and numerous notions."[77] Here, Ṣadrā is also expresses that, since the knowledge of Unity (*tawḥīd*), which is exclusively for the elite among the people of Allah[78] is an issue that lies beyond the boundaries of reason (*'aql*),[79] it is difficult to express it in such a way that will correspond to the terminology of the people of theoretical reasoning and formal thinking (*arbāb al-nadhar wa al-fikr al-rasmī*).[80] For this reason, there have been disagreements int the outwards expressions of their discourses among Ibn al-'Arabī's commentators' statements. At this point, much like Morris expresses, Ṣadrā seems to be "attempting to […] direct his readers' attention beyond these often apparently conflicting languages, back to the common reality and form of experience to which they all refer."[81] In this regard, Ṣadrā continues in agreement with al-Qūnawī, writing that "the inevitable 'clash of opinions' between the followers of such schools is an expression both of the rational faculty's limitations and of the fact that its use is not, in reality, the wholly objective affair one might suppose it to be, influenced as it is by the nature and propensities of the individual."[82] Hence, Ṣadrā demonstrates that there is no conflict in the principle of *tawḥīd* between Ibn al-'Arabī, al-Qūnawī and al-Simnānī.

Last but not least, Ṣadrā also addresses those who have accused the gnostics with heresy for being interpreters (*mu'awwilūn*) of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. He explains that the realized knowers recognize the external, or literal meaning of the Qur'an and the Sunnah to be true and real, for, after all, if this had not been the case "there would

[75] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 22.
[76] Ibid., 26. Expanding on this point, Esots writes, "The manyness of knowledge is necessitated by manyness of the known entities (*ma'lūmāt*), while the oneness of *wujūd* (read: finding) results from the oneness of the found *(mawjūd)*. [These stand for] two different kinds of awareness: the discriminating (i.e., knowledge *('ilm)*) and the non-discriminating (i.e., finding (wujūd)) (or, if you like, conceptual *(taṣawwurī)* and assertive *(taṣdīqī)* awareness). Janis Ešots, "Mullā Ṣadrā's Teaching on Wujūd: A Synthesis of Musticism and Philosophy" (Tallinn University, 2007), 7.
[77] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 26., 26.
[78] Ibid., 25.
[79] "Verily, the Unity of Being is beyond what a created thing (*mukawwan*) can express." Ibid.
[80] Ṣadrā was referring to the philosophers and the theologians together. Caner K Dagli, "From Mysticism To Philosophy (And Back): An Ontological History Of The School Of The Oneness Of Being" (Princeton University, 2006).
[81] Morris, *The Wisdom of the Throne: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā*, 64.
[82] Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology*, 52.

have been no benefit […] [in it] being revealed to the entire creation and the entirety of mankind. Rather, its descent/revelation in such a way would have necessitated the bewilderment of creation and it falling astray."[83] Also, as Ṣadrā maintains, the Sufis have, in principle, disregarded any their findings through unveiling if and when they conflict with the text of the Qur'an.[84] That being said, Ṣadrā adds that, as the Qur'anic verse reveals, "Verily the Qur'an has an outward and an inward, a definite and indefinite [meaning]."[85] Hence, he also asserts the legitimacy of interpretation. Indeed, the gnostics accept and affirm the literal meaning of the Qur'an and the hadith. Nonetheless, they do not deem this to be in conflict with seeking the deeper meanings within the Divine Speech either. As such, while the Qur'an had the upper hand, unveiling was used to aid the understanding of revelation.[86] Here, we see an example for Ṣadrā's ambivalent response to the *akhbārī/uṣūlī* dispute which we had mentioned earlier in the introduction whilst exploring the intellectual and political context of Ṣadrā's time. The *Īqāẓ* exemplifies how Ṣadrā carefully negotiates between the merits of these two perspectives and without settling or advocating for one of them over the other elevates the conversation to move beyond mere polemics.

1.4 The Unity and Gradation of Existence

This account of the three degrees of existence goes to demonstrate the ontological relationship between God and the world of creation, between unity and multiplicity. That being said, it does not address how this source, *wujūd*, applies to individual entities all while maintaining its unity and simplicity . In Ṣadrā's system, as demonstrated in the *Īqāẓ*, this issue is resolved through the unity and gradation of existence. Arguing for the unity of existence, Ṣadrā reminds the reader of the

[83] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 31.
[84] Chittick, "Mysticism Versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The Al-Ṭūsī, Al-Qūnawī Correspondence," 90. Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 30–31.
[85] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 31. Here Ṣadrā groups people according to their understanding of the ambiguous verses of the Qur'an. The ambiguous verses referenced: "Whithersoever ye turn, there is the presence of Allah" (2:15) "And He is that Encompasseth all things." (4:126) He surrounds all the mysteries that are with them (72:28) He is Allah in the heavens and on earth (6:3) He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden (57:3) All things are perishing, save His Face (28:88) He is with you wheresoever you are (57:4) We are closer to him than His jugular vein (50:16) We are nearer to Him than ye, and yet see not (56:85) To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. (2:284) To Allah belongs the east and the West (2:115) To Allah belong the dominion of the heavens and the earth (Maida, 120) Is it not His to create and to govern (7:54) Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*.
[86] Chittick, "Ṣadr Al-Dīn Qūnawī on the Oneness of Being," 177.

ontological separation between the first and third degrees of existence, respectively, thereby demonstrating the source of *wujūd* being free and independent of its effects. He writes, "The multiplicity of manifestations and the dissimilarity in matters (of acts), does not impair the unity of the Divine Essence nor does the necessary perfection become defiled by it; nor does the established pre-eternal immutable existence change by it from what it was. On the contrary, now, too, it is exactly as it was."[87] Later on in the treatise, he continues, writing, "And it has become realized and clear that what is manifest in the external entities (*al-'ayān al-khārijiyyah*) is none other than the single, All-Prevailing (or Dominant) *wujūd*, and there is none other than Him in the abode of *wujūd*."[88] Following this assertion, Ṣadrā alludes to the verse "When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close to them [I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me: Let them also, with a will, listen to My call and believe in Me: Then they may walk in the right way]"[89] Then, similarly, "There is not a single pebble of the pebbles of the world that is not encompassed by the light of the Lights, All-Prevailing over it, close to it, closer than its existence to it."[90]

On a similar note, this time referencing al-Qūnawī's way of expressing the Divine Act of creation, Ṣadrā writes,

> the coming out/emergence of things from God's knowledge to external reality consists of the occurrence of the light of *wujūd* and its expansion on the forms of possible realities in proportion with their receptivity (*qābiliyyah*)[91] of the divine theophany, the One in *reality*, the many according to the multiplicity of its *appearances* and *manifestations*.[92]

Ṣadrā does not suffice with this philosophical demonstration, however. Rather, he also addresses the theological concerns that surface regarding God's act of creation. In this respect, he emphasizes that despite the multiplicity of manifestations, the Divine Self-Disclosure remains single, continuous and without repetition.[93] In his words,

> Verily the multiplicity and the repetition is in the manifestations and the mirrors, not in the Divine theophany and action. The action of the Divine Most High is a single light through which become manifest the

[87] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 40.
[88] Ibid., 50. El-Hakim, *İbn Arabü'l Arabi Sözlüğü*, 643.
[89] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 50. (Baqarah, 186)
[90] Ibid.
[91] This is a basic teaching of the school of Ibn al-Arabi. It denotes the extent to which an entity is able to act as a receptacle for the ontological perfections represented by the Divine Names. Chittick, "Ṣadr Al-Dīn Qūnawī on the Oneness of Being," 178.
[92] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 49.
[93] Ibid., 27.

> essences without any effect and change on them […] and it is through the multiplicity of the essences that this light multiplies, just as the light of the sun becomes multiple because of the multiplicity of the mirrors and the rays.[94]

Hence, the outcome of these sections is that existence, although one in reality, manifests in all things according to their degree. Finally, in Chittick's words, "the Real Being is One, and everything else is uniquely itself, different from the Real Being and from, every other thing. In each unique thing, the Real Being discloses a unique face of its infinite reality while remaining One and Unique in itself."[95]

Furthermore, what follows in the *Īqāẓ* is a description of there being a hierarchy within existence, developed in proportion to the ontological intensity of things or their lack thereof, which Kalın refers to as Ṣadrā's "gradational ontology."[96] As Ṣadrā explains, the hierarchy among the lights and existences corresponds to their descent from the Light of the lights. While *tashkīk* is not central for Ibn al-'Arabī or al-Qūnawī, it is one of Ṣadrā's most original contributions and though not mentioned by name in the *Īqāẓ*, we clearly see Ṣadrā building the argument for the notion of grades of intensity within a single reality in the *Īqāẓ* as well. In this respect, Açıkgenç explains the notion of the gradation of existence when he writes,

> Being is a common attribute which is predicated equivocally, not univocally of all things […] All beings have a common characteristic which they all exhibit; Being. But this notion is predicated of every being equivocally. This means that Being is "in" beings with different intensity and weakness, priority and posteriority. Being in reality, then, exhibits levels, stages of existing […] Ṣadrā's doctrine postulates that Being, as a common attribute of all things, is (the uniting) one; yet, being subject to a principle of intensification and attenuation, is also many.[97]

Hence, while existence applies to things univocally *(ḥaml bi'l-tawaṭi'),* Ṣadrā's understanding is that predication takes place at different degrees of intensity.

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[94] Ibid.
[95] Chittick, ""The Central Point": Qūnawī's Role in the School of Ibn ʿArabī," 28.
[96] The word *tashkīk* was used by other philosophers, earlier, mostly in logic, but it was never structured as well as Ṣadrā who applied it to his ontology, and thereby to all things that exist. The sense of *tashkīk* is quite clear in Ṣadrā's writings: it refers to the hierarchy and gradation of being in terms of existential intensification or diminution.
[97] Alparslan Açikgenç, *Being and Existence in Ṣadrā and Heidegger* (Malaysia: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1993), 48.

Accordingly, "Ṣadrā relegate[s] all existential attributes, properties, and qualifications to the self-subsistent and all-inclusive reality of *wujūd*"[98] writing in the *Īqāẓ*, "The difference among essences is according to their existence; and among existents, according to strength and weakness, priority and posteriority, highness and lowness."[99] In other words, *wujūd* despite the unity of its existential reality, manifests in all things according to their own nature.[100] Furthermore, to exemplify the "gradation of existence" *(tashkīk al-wujūd)*, Ṣadrā utilizes several different analogies and metaphors[101]. For example, he explains, "Look at the ranks of the lights of the Sun, which is the parable of Allah, as it has authority and sway over all that is in the sensory world. How come it (the Sun) appears colored by the effect of the colors of the glasses, though it has no color in itself and nor any difference in its light except in the intensity and weakness of its luminosity!"[102] Hence, while the sun is one, it becomes many through its rays of light and while light is colorless in itself, it becomes colorful through the many different colors of glass. On another occasion, Ṣadrā likens the gradational nature of reality to water, writing that, despite being one body, it appears in different places, differently.

Hence, according to Ṣadrā, *tashkīk* as a principle of commonality and differentiation makes it so that things exist in degrees.[103] That is not all, however. Ṣadrā uniquely applies the concept of gradation to the entire spectrum of existence whereby this system of anteriority and posteriority introduces a hierarchical order of things that extends from physical beings to spiritual beings.[104] Relying on Suhrawardī's terminology of light, Ṣadrā provides the case of the sun and its rays of light. He explains how light is present in the sun, the moon and the candle, all of which carry the quality of luminosity and brightness. However, each of them reflects different

[98] Al-Shirazi, *The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations*, 87.
[99] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 56, 97.
[100] i.e. *qābiliyyah*.
[101] The frequent use of metaphors in metaphysics is one of the characteristic parts of Islamic philosophy. The purpose for doing so is far greater than simply being a poetic ornament. Instead, metaphors serve a cognitive function. It is through metaphors that the human being can discover the subtle features in the metaphysical structure of Reality, an aspect which, no matter how self-evident it may be as a fact of transcendental Awareness, is so subtle and evasive at the level of discursive thinking that the human intellect, otherwise, would not be able to take hold of it. Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence*, 16.
[102] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 44.Ibid., 44, 56.
[103] Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Mulla Sadra and Metaphysics: Modulation of Being," n.d., 68.
[104] Al-Shirazi, *The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations*, 86.

degrees of intensity; the sun greater than the moon, the moon greater than the candle, the candle greater than its reflection, etc. Thus,

> by the same token, existence is predicated univocally of necessary and contingent beings. Their share of existence, however, is not the same because a necessary being, say God, is ontologically prior and superior to contingent beings. Having the most intense state of existence, God has more 'existence' than other things.[105]

Furthermore, this gradation is not only quantitative in nature but also qualitative, thereby becoming grounds for a hierarchy[106] where the more the existential quality one possesses, the higher is one's existential value.[107] Ultimately, the modes of being are identical in their inner reality but different in terms of intensity and diminution, strength and weakness, priority and posteriority, perfection and imperfection.[108]

1.5 The Primacy of Existence Over Essence

The previous section put forth existence being one and graded through its reference to the different ontological states and their inter-relatedness. In turn, the unity and gradation of existence become Ṣadrā's foundation in making his claim for the primacy of existence (aṣālat al-*wujūd*) over essence, for after all, according to Ṣadrā, degrees and shades are features of *wujūd* and not of *māhiyyah*.[109] Accordingly, he explains,

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[105] Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, 101.

[106] The most common example Ṣadrā provides in this regard, is the relationship between plants, animals and human beings. The existential property of plants, for example, is their vitality and ability to reproduce. Animals, on the other hand, in addition to possessing vitality, have the distinguishing feature of motion. As such, human beings, in having both distinguishing features (vitality and motion) as well as the gift of reason are ontologically higher, embodying different degrees of reality, without inconsistencies or breaks in existence. "The same ontology holds true for cause and effect since cause, by definition, precedes effect in the chain of causation: it causes the effect to be what it is, and this imparts on it a higher ontological status. Ṣadrā calls this 'predication by equivocality' *(ḥaml bi'l-tashkīk).*" Kalin, "Mullā Ṣadrā's Realist Ontology of the Intelligibles and Theory of Knowledge," 88.

[107] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 110.

[108] Muhammad Kamal, "Mulla Sadra's Transcendent Philosophy," *Mulla Sadra's Transcendent Philosophy*, 2013, 8.

[109] Rizvi, "Mulla Sadra and Metaphysics: Modulation of Being," 68. Understanding the Greek philosophical problem regarding motion becomes essential in being able to sufficiently understand Ṣadrā's unique contribution with reference to gradation of being. Heraclitus, unlike Parmenides who advocated for things being stable in their substance, held that all things were in never ending flux. However, this created an epistemic problem, for, if there was constant change, then nothing could be known. In order to overcome this problem, Aristotle argued that for knowledge to be possible, while some things could be in a state of change, i.e., accidents, there must be some things that remain stable with stable natures, i.e., substances. Plato, on the other hand, tried to overcome this problem by proposing the archetypes. Ṣadrā, however, argued that substantial change was not only happening, but happening all the time. For example, a human being, he wrote, started in the form of a seed, moved to

> At every level of manifestation and effusion Existence (or Being) appears with a specific attribute and a defined quality. And these essential attributes and qualities that are extracted from existence in correspondence with the level of (its) descent are called 'essences' (or quiddities) by the philosophers and 'immutable entities' by the realized knowers.[110]

As a matter of fact, "their existentiality [i.e. that of essences] is a consequence of their being colored by the light of Existence (or Being)."[111] This shows that, far from being a quality or description for essence, existence is the very source from which proceeds the essences. Hence, as Ṣadrā explains,

> Real existence is manifest by itself in all modes of manifestness; it is manifest for other than itself. Essences become manifest by it; as manifestness is (only unique) for it (i.e. existence), together with it, in it, and from it. If it were not manifest in the essences of beings and if its manifestation for itself were not by its own essence and for beings by accident, then essences would not have become existent in any way at all; rather they would have remained in the veil of nonexistence and the darkness of hiddenness. For it is indeed known that in terms of its own essence and its limitation in itself, it [i.e. essences] is devoid of existence and manifestness. Then manifestness and existence would descend upon it from something other than itself. Moreover, in its limitation it is considered as one of the perishing essences and false realities in pre-eternity and forever.[112]

At this point, interestingly enough, instead of delving into this distinction from a philosophical point of view,[113] Ṣadrā chooses to explore the primacy of existence through the Qur'anic verse "All things perish, save His Face."[114] That being said, before establishing Ṣadrā's argument for the primacy of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*) as such, it would be useful to provide the context for the dominant claim maintaining the primacy of essence which he departed from.

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become an embryo, then a baby, an infant, until becoming an adult and continuing to change and evolve afterwards. However, because the substantial change is gradual, he argued, we overlook it. [109] Hence, for Ṣadrā, transformation was gradual but certainly not stagnated. Furthermore, for Ṣadrā things were one and continuous, through various degrees of intensity and weakness and it was the human mind that imposed the clear boundaries. For example, in the case of a color spectrum, Ṣadrā's argument would be that there are many grays, each one a certain shade of grey, yet also the shade of grey the subsequent shade of grey will require.

[110] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 56.

[111] Ibid., 26.

[112] Ibid., 42.

[113] For those who are looking for the philosophical exposition, Ṣadrā openly directs them to reading the relevant sections of the *Asfār*. Ibid., 30.

[114] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 966. (Q 28:88)

1.6 The Existence vs. Essence Distinction Among Muslim Philosophers

This discussion regarding the fundamental distinction between existence and essence divided Islamic philosophers into two schools, one arguing for the primacy of existence (*aṣālat al-wujūd*) and the other arguing for the primacy of essence (*aṣālat al-māhiyyah*). As such, while for the first group the distinction could only take place conceptually, as they remained extra mentally identical, for the second group, the distinction between essence and existence was actually real.[115] In order to provide a context for Ṣadrā's argument for the primacy of existence, it is important to become more familiar with the views of the thinkers preceding him, namely the Peripatetic philosophers al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, whose views were shared by the theologians, and most notably al-Suhrawardī, the founder of the Ishrāqī school of thought, most widely renowned for his robust defense of the primacy of essence. These different intellectual currents are worthy of mention not only because they represent the foundation from which Ṣadrā developed his own views but also because they make clearer the originality of Ṣadrā's thoughts in comparison.

The Peripatetics, who primarily relied on Aristotle's metaphysics of fixed substances, considered existence to be a secondary intelligible that was insignificant compared to essence. In this respect, al-Fārābī was the first Muslim philosopher to discuss the distinction between *wujūd* and *māhiyyah*. His understanding of the distinction was formulated with reference to the predication of existence. The outcome of his views was that when existence was used as the predicate, as in the case of "The butterfly is" for example, from an ontological point of view existence would become a secondary quality because in uttering "The butterfly" one would already acknowledge its existence which would make this statement tautological.[116] Since the predicate did not

[115] Fedor Benevich, "The Essence-Existence Distinction: Four Elements of the Post-Avicennan Metaphysical Dispute (11-13th Centuries)," *ORIENS* 45 (2017): 204.

[116] Rizvi explains, "For Ṣadrā, existential propositions are not analytic. […] If in the proposition 'man exists' we took 'man' and 'exists' to be synonymous, then, it would be equivalent to stating that 'man is man', a tautology that does not benefit us. In 'man exists', 'man' refers to a universal 'humanity'. But 'exists' does have reference contrary to those who deny reference to existence, taking it as a purely mental concept. The referent in the predication of the proposition 'Zayd exists' is the very ipseity (*hūwiyya*) of Zayd, that is his being (*wujūd*)." Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā and Metaphysics*, 65.

provide any new information about what existed, it followed that existence was insignificant from an ontological point of view.

Ibn Sīnā, who has been called the "philosopher of being,"[117] developed this distinction even further, providing a more precise definition of existence, separate from secondary qualities. This development took two forms. First, in an effort to distinguish between existence and essence, Ibn Sīnā declared that "existence" was an accident (*'araḍ*) of essence (*māhiyyah*).[118] However, as Rahman states "most of the philosophers who have written about Ibn Sīnā's ontology have confused the logical and metaphysical meanings which Ibn Sīnā attributes to the term *'araḍ*.[119] As such, in light of this misinterpretation, Ibn Sīnā was viewed as an advocate of the position of the primacy of quiddity when, in fact, he argued the accidentality of existence only on the level of logical or grammatical analysis. Despite emphasizing that although the existence of a thing is added to its essence, he maintained that it is existence which gives each essence or quiddity, its reality and therefore principal. Nonetheless, by not clarifying the structure of the extra-mental, objective reality which is found beyond what is meant by the logical proposition, Ibn Sīnā essentially left the problem to posterity.[120]

Second, Ibn Sīnā applied the distinction between existence and essence to his original formulation of the ontological categories of necessity (*wujūb*), contingency (*imkān*) and impossibility (*mumtani'*), which were both of philosophical and theological significance. When reflected upon through this tripartite model, based on the three

[117] Moris, *Mullā Ṣadrā's Doctrine of the Primacy of Existence (Aṣālat Al-Wujūd)*, 1.
[118] Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence*, 3.
[119] Fazlur Rahman, "Essence and Existence in Avicenna," *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* iv (1958): 2.
[120] Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence*, 4. In addition to Muslim thinkers, including Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210) and Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardī, the metaphysical "misreading" also lived on among Christian philosophers. In this respect, Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) was among those who misunderstood the Avicennan thesis. Interestingly enough, Ibn Rushd (d. 1198) was the reason for this misunderstanding as he condemned Ibn Sīnā for thinking existence to be one of the attributes of essence. Consequently, they thought that 'existence' in the thought of Ibn Sīnā must be a property inhering in a substance, not only at the level of logical or grammatical analysis of reality but in terms of the very structure of the objective, external reality. The absurdity this leads to, which is basically the criticism Ibn Rushd and Aquinas make, has to do with the fact that, if taken to mean so, namely, the table would have to exist before it becomes existent, just as the table must exist before it can be brown, black, etc. Understandably, this conclusion would be also absurd. Kalin, "Mullā Ṣadrā's Realist Ontology of the Intelligibles and Theory of Knowledge," 85. Moris, *Mullā Ṣadrā's Doctrine of the Primacy of Existence (Aṣālat Al-Wujūd)*, 25.

modes of existence, it becomes evident that Ibn Sīnā's primary concern was to show that everything other than the Necessary Being was contingent. As such, there must have been a Cause, a preponderant cause that would necessitate its existence. From this perspective, he argued that existence was a borrowed quality. As Rahman explains, "Ibn Sīnā declared existence to be the sole nature or reality of God, while in contingent beings he regarded existence to be derived or "borrowed" from God."[121] This is significant because, it was in this respect that existence, according to Ibn Sīnā, ontologically speaking, could be a secondary quality. After all, all existents in borrowing their existence from the Necessary Being were "secondary" compared to Him. Consequently, in this context, as far as the relationship between the Necessary and the contingent beings is concerned, existence is not a self-sufficient reality. Even so, however, it is important to note that both al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā's distinctions between existence and quiddity, were conceptual and not real. Furthermore, both, remained under the influence of Aristotelian metaphysics of fixed substances, and therefore were subjecting concrete existence to conceptual analysis.

Later on, based on Ibn Sīnā's distinction, Suhrawardī, whom Ṣadrā once called the "Divine Master" *(al-shaykh al-ilāhī)* and the "possessor of lights"[122], argued that quiddity is the sole reality and that existence is only a mental concept or secondary intelligible (*al-ma'qūl al-thānī*). Suhrawardī had understood Ibn Sīnā's distinction to be a real distinction occurring in concrete reality and not a conceptual distinction happening merely in the mind. Accordingly, he maintained that existence was a secondary intelligible and that existence did not add anything to our knowledge of things. Hence, it was our essences that truly defined our knowledge; not *wujūd*. From this perspective, Suhrawardī viewed the concrete objects in the external world as being quiddities that were actualized, entirely separate from existence. Accordingly, only individual essences truly existed while existence (*wujūd*) as such was only a mental construct with no authenticity. Moreover, since two essences cannot become one, a philosophical principle that is accepted by all Islamic philosophers, quiddity had to be primary and it was the analytical study of quiddity that produced the concept of

[121] Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā (Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Shīrāzī)*, 27.
[122] Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, 99.

existence. If the other way around, and existence was primary, Suhrawardī raised two objections.

First, he argued that if existence was taken as the real constituent of reality, as the very thing that creates or makes things real in the extra-mental world, it would have to exist before being a constituent. As such, then "existence will have to exist and this second existence will, in turn, have to exist, and so on *ad infinitum.*"[123] From this perspective, as a general principle, Suhrawardī held 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 would lead to infinite regress. Consequently, it would need to exist only in the mind and not in external reality. Furthermore, much like the theologians who also operated by an abstract notion of existence, Suhrawardī maintained that existence was an empty concept, a secondary intelligible which did not correspond to anything in concrete reality. Ṣadrā would respond to this claim of infinite regression by affirming the distinction between the concept and reality of existence, highlighting it being the product of rational consideration. In the *Mashā'ir*, he writes, "This kind of infinite regression is broken as soon as rational consideration is removed."[124] As such, when we say, "A tree exists," it is not the case that there are two things: *wujūd* on the one hand and the tree on the other. Rather, as Kalın explains, "in the case of an existing tree, *wujūd* exists 'as a tree,' and the tree is a particular modality of *wujūd*. In contrast to Suhrawardī and his followers, this peculiar relationship between *wujūd* and its particularizations prevents any regression and vicious circle."[125] Furthermore, while the argument for infinite regression would hold against the argument of anyone who considered existence as being separate from essence, it couldn't hold against Ṣadrā's thesis of Existence being the sole Reality.[126] In fact, as Ṣadrā would come to explain, which we will discuss shortly, *wujūd* is the principal reality from which essences, or quiddities are derived.

[123] Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā (Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Shīrāzī)*, 27.
[124] Al-Shirazi, *The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations*, 27.
[125] Ibid., 84.
[126] Moris, *Mullā Ṣadrā's Doctrine of the Primacy of Existence (Aṣālat Al-Wujūd)*, 35.

Second, Suhrawardī argued that if one were to take existence as a real attribute of essence, then, essence, in order to have this attribute, existence, would have to exist prior to existence. In this case, existence would be a quality of something that already exists. Put differently, if existence were to be the essence, the real attribute of a tree, in that case, since the tree already exists, existence would end up being a secondary quality. Hence, if existence is a real attribute of the tree, then existence is a secondary quality. As such, essence would need to be primary.

Despite Ṣadrā's great indebtedness to Ibn Sīnā and Suhrawardī's theories in formulating his own, his theory distinguishes itself with its ontological approach where *wujūd* as an all-encompassing concept is not one among many other things that exist. Accordingly, Ṣadrā doesn't say *wujūd* is something that has existence, just as we don't say whiteness is that which has whiteness in it. Rather, according to Ṣadrā, all things exist, thanks to *wujūd*. It is not simply a secondary quality. Instead, it is that which gives reality to all things. For this reason, Ṣadrā contends that treating *wujūd* as a quality, like a horse or a tree, or a mountain for that matter, as Suhrawardī does in the case above, constitutes a categorical mistake. In fact, according to Ṣadrā, Suhrawardī was false in his conclusion because of his inability to distinguish between the concept and reality of existence. Hence, it is possible to say that Ṣadrā and Suhrawardī differ from one another because of their adherence to different ontologies. According to Ṣadrā, quiddities give identity and difference and generate diversity and multiplicity, but they are nothing more than mental abstractions. Suhrawardī, on the other hand, considers existence to be mentally posited. Furthermore, despite Suhrawardī's metaphysics of light, where he writes of light (*al-nūr*) in terms that would make it synonymous to being certain aspects of which would be an aspect Ṣadrā incorporated into his thinking, the primacy of existence versus essence remains a fundamental point of difference among the two philosophers.[127]

Moreover, referencing the dominant philosophical claim for the primacy of essence, Ṣadrā continues, arguing the exact opposite. He explains that the existence of essences is not in such a way where existence becomes an attribute of it; rather essences make

[127] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 41.

existence comprehendible. As such, what is witnessed becomes existence and what is comprehended becomes essence. Hence, existence is not an attribute of essence; on the contrary, it is the other way around.[128] In another section, Ṣadrā defends the same claim, writing this time,

> Just as the colors witnessed in the mirror are not a quality of it (the mirror) essentially, but rather, metaphorically, so is the case of the existentiality of essences. […] As you know, essences become existent without existence becoming a quality for them, but rather becomes manifest in them in accordance with their purity, receptivity, as well as their degree of proximity and distance from the Light of lights.[129]

On yet another occasion, he also writes, "The acceptance of [essences] of the Necessary Command and the Divine Effusion consists of the manifestations of its existential concomitants (*aḥkāmihā*) through the Light of existence, not its attribution with it [existence] as has been said time and time again."[130] Accordingly, with references to the essences, Ṣadrā elaborates, writing,

> They have not smelled the fragrance of existence because the possible entities are knowable forms permanently fixed in (God's) Knowledge but are nonexistent in the external world. […] In the external world, there is none other than existence and the entities, in their (original) states, are in God's knowledge, nonexistent in the external world, not having smelled the fragrance of *wujūd*. This is the expression of the unifier who is overtaken by the Real (God).[131]

Hence, existence is primary because it has an external reality, i.e. it is Being which bestows reality upon things and the quiddities are only mental abstractions of the limitations of a particular act of Being and, hence are inconsequential in themselves.[132] As such, all things are really acts of Being and not objects that exist (*mawjūdat*).[133] In contrast to the primacy of essence it is *wujūd* that gives reality, constitution and meaning. Therefore, what we perceive as individual objects having their own independent existence and reality are, in fact, according to Ṣadrā, only the delimitations of the act of Being manifesting Itself in particular forms.[134] It follows that everything is a modification of existence, concealing and revealing the Truth, to

[128] Ibid., 53. Demirli, *Sadreddin Konevi'de Bilgi ve Varlık*, 229, 230, 231, 299.
[129] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 48, 53.
[130] Ibid., 53.
[131] Ibid., 49.
[132] Moris, *Mullā Ṣadrā's Doctrine of the Primacy of Existence (Aṣālat Al-Wujūd)*, x.
[133] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 26.
[134] Moris, *Mullā Ṣadrā's Doctrine of the Primacy of Existence (Aṣālat Al-Wujūd)*, 8.

some degree. Ultimately, “all the so-called ‘essences,’ like being-a-table, being-a-flower, etc. are in external reality nothing but “accidents” that modify and delimit the single reality called ‘existence’ into innumerable things.”[135] At this point, one can’t help but wonder why the primacy of existence was as important of a notion as it was for Ṣadrā. On this note, perhaps a real concern would be for our mental constructions to, at some point, become far more important than real existence, even perhaps to the point of becoming a substitute for concrete real existence, which would come to have “real” repercussions across the board, most importantly in ethical terms.

1.7 Are Essences Irrelevant?

Thus far, Ṣadrā’s argument for the primacy of existence has shown that "quiddities are nothing but various modes and particularizations of existence.[136] However, one wonders, are essences merely illusions? In what sense and to what degree is the phenomenal world real? In this respect, Ṣadrā does not deny essences having a degree of reality. In fact, he writes, “phenomenal things, although they are of a shadowy nature in themselves, are not wholly devoid of reality either. On the contrary, they are real [when] they are considered in relation to their metaphysical source […] nothing is wholly unreal.”[137] Açıkgenç makes this even clearer when he writes, “This does not involve the denial of mental existence. On the contrary, he [Ṣadrā] affirmed that there is an abstract concept of Being to which nothing corresponds in reality. But this abstract and mental connotation of Being cannot be the primary signification of reality.”[138] Indeed, here, Ṣadrā was not simply trying to assert that the world of reality as we perceive it in our daily, waking experiences was unreal. Instead, the only distinction worth making was that the structure of reality which corresponds to these experiences are entirely different from objective reality. As a result, essences must be recognized as something of the nature of a mirage when compared to the ultimate ground of reality. It follows that the problem is when the phenomenal level of reality is taken as something ultimate and self-subsistent, when, in reality, the phenomenal

[135] Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence*, 4.
[136] Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, 94.
[137] Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence*, 7.
[138] Alparslan Açikgenç, *Being and Existence in Ṣadrā and Heidegger*, 3.

world is the realm of relativity, where nothing is absolute, where all things are observed to be impermanent, transient, and constantly changing.

In the *Īqāẓ*, Ṣadrā expands on the relevance of acknowledging "essences" by emphasizing the role they play in revealing the Divine, the Real. Quoting from al-Simnānī, Ṣadrā writes, "Were it not for the veil, the Real would not have manifested. He remained as a Hidden Treasure for the purpose of His manifestation. This is a great mystery which can only be comprehended by the trustees of God."[139] Izutsu makes a similar point when he metaphorically asserts that just like the sea, which cannot, as long as it is the sea, separate itself from the waves; nor can the Absolute dispense with the phenomenal world.[140] It goes without saying as we have demonstrated thus far that, the waves cannot subsist independently of the sea either. Furthermore, likening the dynamic between the Real and essences to that which is present in the case of the sun and the clouds, Ṣadrā explains that essences are revealing of the Real in one respect and veiling in another. He maintains that what matters most is that essences, whether they be spiritual luminaries (*laṭāif*), or physical densities, are approached as veils through which the Real manifests. Hence, in keeping with Ibn al-'Arabī, according to Ṣadrā the world is none other than the Divine Presence manifesting Himself (*tajallīhī*) within the forms of their immutable entities, or essences. It follows that these essences are devoid of reality on their own and have a portion of existence only through their reliance and connection with the Real. From this perspective, as Todd explains, "all that is generally thought of as "creation" is, in reality, the manifestation of a portion, albeit an infinitesimally small one – of the "treasures" (*kunūz*) hidden in the Divine Essence."[141] Furthermore, the divine affairs are seen as forming the underlying reality of contingent beings (*haqāiq al-mumkināt*). In fact, it is through this conviction that Ṣadrā writes, "There is not a single thing in the world except that its origin is of Divine reality, bearing a divine mystery (*sirr rabbānī*)"[142] for "the Divine Self-disclosure pervades all things."[143]

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[139] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 46.
[140] Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence*, 22.
[141] For more on the notion of the veil, see: William C. Chittick, "The Paradox of the Veil in Sufism," in *Rending the Veil: Concealment and Secrecy in the History of Religions*, ed. Elliot R. Wolfson (Chappaqua: Seven Bridges Press, 1999), 59–85.
[142] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 35.
[143] Ibid., 37. For more on how this impacts our relation with nature, see: Ekrem Demirli, "Sufilerin Alem ve Tabiat Görüşü: Her Şey Tanrı'ya İşaret Eden Canlı Bir Ayettir," in *INTERNATIONAL*

Later on in the treatise, when Ṣadrā defines the nature of knowing through the unity of the knower and the known, he will describe ignorance as case of when one is not able to move through and past those things that "distinguish and separate one from the object of one's knowledge," i. e. the veil of essences. He writes,

> The occurrence of the knowledge of a thing and the perfection of its acquaintance depends on the unification with the known (i.e. the object of the known), and the unification with a thing in turn depends on the disappearance of all that by which the knower is distinguished from the known. Indeed, there is nothing in existence, save that there is a real divine entity between it (i.e. existence) and all (other) things, demanding (its) participation without changing. And all other entities demand the differentiation of this thing from all other than itself. This is so in terms of attributes, places (or habitats) and origins. You should know that the cause of a person's ignorance of an existent thing results from the domination of a judgement of that by which they are distinguished.[144]

Moreover, in support of this understanding, in the *Mashā'ir*, Ṣadrā adds, "knowledge is nothing other than the presence of *wujūd* without any veil. Every perception is produced by a mode of disengaging from matter and its veils, because matter is the source of nonexistence and absence."[145] On a similar note, Ṣadrā writes in the *'Arshiyya*, that "the true meaning and reality of […] 'expanding' is revealed to none but those who possess luminous inner vision, whose essences have been freed from the chains of physical nature and the bonds of time and space."[146] Ṣadrā will provide a number of different descriptions for how one can achieve doing so later on in the treatise, when the focus shifts to man and the practices that contribute to his spiritual and ethical cultivation and ultimate perfection.

The relative degree of existence that essences possessed was not only a philosophical concern however. Rather, there were theological concerns associated with it as well. In this regard, a question that has surfaced time and time again with regard to the source of evil has been how a perfect God, the Source of Absolute Goodness, could create a

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SYMPOSIUM ON ENVIRONMENT AND RELIGION, ed. Fahri Kayadibi (İstanbul: Yalın Yayıncılık, 2008), 67–72. William C. Chittick, "God Surrounds All Things–An Islamic Perspective on the Environment," *The World* 1, no. 6 (1986): 671–78.

[144] Following Prof. Bilal Kuşpınar's suggestion, instead of translating *ḥuṣūl* as acquiring, I translated it as "the occurrence of knowledge" so as to ensure it being in greater harmony with Ṣadrā's understanding of knowledge in the form of unveiling and presential witnessing. Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 36–37.

[145] Al-Shirazi, *The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations*, 55.

[146] Morris, *The Wisdom of the Throne: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā*, 191.

world that carried evil. Or, put differently, how the Necessary Being could give rise to imperfection all while remaining unaffected. In the *Īqāẓ*, Ṣadrā pays particular attention to the source of evil in this world and the fact that it proceeds from lack of existence.[147] Utilizing Suhrawardī's terminology of light Ṣadrā writes, "Existence is a synonym of light, whose meaning is traceable to 'manifestness' (or being manifest) and its degrees. [As for] darkness, it consists of the lack of light. Light is the very existence itself, as you have learned and nonexistence is a synonym of darkness."[148] From this perspective, Ṣadrā continues by explaining that real darkness, which is also real nonexistence corresponds to impossible existence (*mumtani' al-wujūd*), while relative nonexistence (*al-'adamāt al-iḍāfiyya*), which is accidental darkness consists of the degrees of imperfection in *wujūd*, as well as the gradations of deficiencies of its actuality and manifestness.[149] In other words, "sheer evil has no existence on its own; rather, every existent in the aspect of its existence is pure good."[150] Hence, there is only truth to accidental darkness which is the absence of light and which, therefore, is imperfect. It follows that while *wujūd* is the source of all perfection, beauty, and goodness, essence, in being the embodiment of separation from existence, becomes the source of imperfection, disproportion and evil. From this point of view, Ṣadrā's writes,

> Among the things that must be known is that essences and the immutable entities, despite being nonexistent in themselves [..] perishing [being] the mode of its act of existing – they are in relation to their own existence in themselves and in their distinction from existence through mental analysis, the source of the existential concomitants of multiplicity (*aḥkām al-kathrah*) and imperfections, badness and all evil and calamities which are among the necessary concomitants of essences are able to protect the Real from being attributed with imperfections.

[147] For more on Ṣadrā's response to the problem of evil, see: Ibrahim Kalin, "Why Do Animals Eat Other Animals? Mullā Ṣadrā on Theodicy and the Best of All Possible Worlds," *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 12 (2004): 55–74. Mohammed Rustom, "On Listening: Hearing God's Voice in the Face of Suffering," *Sacred Web* 45 (2020): 36–43. Also, in his *Tafsīr Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*, Ṣadrā delves into the implications of God's mercy for all. Would this mean there is no Hell? Unlike Ibn Taymiyya, while Ṣadrā is careful to not dismiss the reality of Hell, he considers even Hell as a locus for the disclosure of God's mercy. For more on Ṣadrā's views, see: Rustom, *Triumph Mercy Philos. Scr. Mulla Sadra*. For more on Ibn Taymiyya's views on the issue of salvation, see Chapter 3 from: Mohammad Hassan Khalil, *Islam and the Fate of Others: The Salvation Question* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[148] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 41.

[149] In this regard, while complete darkness can be understood as the lack of the source of light (i.e. nonexistence, for everything is being and nothing else is), the shadow is the lack of wujūd in completeness and perfection.

[150] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 60.

> Hence, the lack of acknowledging the existents and essences in itself is the source of misguidance, bewilderment and corruption.[151]

Then, again, later on, he explains "they [essences] are in themselves nonexistent and hence every imperfection, calamities and evil eventually return to them."[152] Similarly, "As a result, deficiencies and blames in the existence of contingents (or possible entities) revert to the places and the receptacles, not to existence insofar as it is existence.."[153] In support of this point, Ṣadrā also writes in the *Mashā'ir*,

> Deficiency and poverty are not things that are postulated by the reality of *wujūd* itself. If this were so, there would be no Necessary Being. The consequent is false, as was established;[154] the antecedent must therefore be false also. It is therefore evident that the reality of *wujūd* is, in itself, complete and perfect, infinite in power and intensity. Deficiency, shortcomings, contingency, and the like come only from what is secondary and caused. Inevitably, the caused is not equal to the cause, and the emanated is not equal to the source of emanation. It is thereby evident that the Necessary Being is the plenary perfection of all things; it is the *wujūd* of all existences and the light of all lights.[155]

Thus, based on what Ṣadrā has just demonstrated above, it is clear that Ṣadrā's response and assertion would be that this stems from the world of creation being confused with God. After all, ontologically, the world of creation, by definition stood for an ontological separation from the Divine. As such, the only possible outcome was for it to carry evil. Hence, instead, as Nasr suggests, Ṣadrā would pose a different question, not why God created evil but rather why God created at all. In responding to this question, we will come full circle, for as Ṣadrā explained earlier, relying on the Sufi understanding, the Divine Essence was a Hidden Treasure, He loved to be known and hence Manifested. In doing so, not only are we indebted to Him for giving us existence but we are also indebted to him for making it so that all created beings were thus deemed "deserving of the journey from potentiality to actuality."[156]

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[151] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*.
[152] Ibid., 33.
[153] Ibid., 58.
[154] Morris, *The Wisdom of the Throne: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā*, 95.
[155] Al-Shirazi, *The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations*, 54. This is also, though in contrast to the *Īqāẓ*, in a language and approach more akin to the Peripatetics, another example for Ṣadrā's defense against pantheism, this time in the *Mashā'ir.* As mentioned earlier on in the chapter, Ṣadrā similarly argued against claims of pantheism through a language and approach more akin to the Sufis by emphasizing the three degrees of existence and their relevant ontological states.
[156] Morris, *The Wisdom of the Throne: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā*, 238.

1.8 The Mystery of Existence: Looking with Two-Eyes

As has been established thus far, Ṣadrā argued that existence was one, primary and graded. The previous section also explored the relevance of essences, whereby the acknowledgement of their relative degree of existence was paramount in unlocking the divine mystery within things, not to mention protecting the Divine from attribution with any and all kinds of imperfection, evil in particular. In this respect, Ṣadrā pays close attention to how we are meant to be engaging with essences. This study of existent entities, or essences reveals a central theme that comes to directly inform some of his epistemological views, setting the grounds for unveiling (*kashf*) being not only a legitimate but also a superior mode of knowledge. This theme, which is also inspired by al-Qūnawī, is the notion of twoness, or duality. As Chittick explains, "Twoness is an especially important notion in cosmological thinking, because it allows us to conceive of a world along with the Supreme One. [This duality] colors all relationships between the One and the many and has repercussions throughout the cosmos."[157] In this respect, in the *Īqāẓ*, we find Ṣadrā strongly emphasize recognizing all things as being composed of "two faces" and therefore the need to engage with them through the use of "two eyes," both of which I will elaborate on shortly. Earlier, this revealed itself in the mental study of existent entities carrying two aspects, that of existence and that of essence.[158] Now, starting with God, Ṣadrā will apply this principle across the spectrum which will lead to many epistemological as well as theological outcomes.

Ṣadrā writes that all things are composed of two faces[159]; one in relation to themselves and one in relation to their Source. However, before studying this idea of two complementary aspects, as part of a unified whole, across the spectrum of existence, Ṣadrā first applies this idea to the Divine Himself. Ṣadrā writes that while some of the Qur'anic verses declare that God transcends any attribute or quality possessed by His creature, others affirm that a certain similarity can be found between God and creation. In the theological language, these two aspects came to represent the concepts of *tanzīh*,

[157] William C. Chittick, *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2007), 91.
[158] Ṣadrā writes that thingness is composed of a pair of faces; the thingness of existence and the thingness of essence. However, this is different for the Real. "There is nothing onto the Real except the effusion of existence upon essences. And to Him is all praise and gratitude for His bestowal/effusion of goodness upon things." Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 57.
[159] Ibid., 33.

deriving from the root *n.z.h.*, meaning to be far away and free from, and *tashbīh*, deriving from the root *sh.b.h.*, meaning to be similar and comparable, respectively. On the one hand, the affirmation was in negating anything that appeared to be inappropriate to God's definition of Divinity. On the other hand, the affirmation was in trying to establish a closeness and affinity with the Divine. As Chittick explains, in the first case, God is uniquely and utterly one and real and in the second, everything is embraced by God's oneness and displays His attributes.[160] According to Ṣadrā, being on either side of the spectrum, alone, was falling off the path of balance (*'itidāl*), for neither transcendence nor immanence by itself could do justice to the nature of God.[161]After all, according to Ṣadrā, God's immanence could be understood as the greatest testimony of His transcendence, for "He is the only true Reality, the Source of all existence and attributes."[162] Hence, while acknowledging the many Qur'anic verses that in appearance seem to be inherently contradictory[163], Ṣadrā argued that this seeming contradiction could be overcome within the unity of the Divine when seen through the use of "two eyes.". Thus, Ṣadrā proposed the true believer to see God and everything else with "two eyes" *(dhū 'aynayn).*

Accordingly, when applied to the case of the Divine, with one eye, one would see God as utterly transcendent, remote, sublime and dissimilar. "At this level, God [would be] the *mysterium tremendum* and beyond all utterance and description. Here He is the Lord to be worshipped. The same believer [would see] God with his other eye as here and now, always present and intimate. Here, He [would be] the supreme friend, the Beloved of all lovers, the center toward which all things move."[164] As such, Ṣadrā wrote that one must affirm that "Nothing is like Him" while at the same time affirming that "God has created Adam with His own hands."[165] Ultimately, both eyes would work together in providing a single, whole image. Hence, since the ontological separation has been established and the multiplicity has been accounted for through gradation (*tashkīk*), it does not follow that there are two different Beings, but rather a

[160] Chittick, *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul*, 101–2.
[161] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*.
[162] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 69.
[163] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 34–35.
[164] Ibrahim Kalin, "Molla Sadra, Heidegger ve Derrida: Tefekkür Üzerine," in *Akıl ve Erdem: Türkiye'nin Toplumsal Muhayyilesi* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2013), 331.
[165] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 35.

single all-encompassing Reality.[166] Rather, they are the two faces, or aspects of a single reality.

Needless to say, according to Ṣadrā, the cost of failing to do so was grave, as those who failed would bear the burden of not " know[ing] God as He ought to be known."[167] Indeed, both perspectives are invaluable. Without a firm affirmation of the unity, simplicity of reality, the logically necessary order of the world falls apart, not to mention clearly contradicting God's Speech and revelation. However, on the other hand, without a firm affirmation of similarity, God becomes an abstract, remote, seemingly careless, philosophical principle, as the First Cause, the Unmoved Mover. After all, were it not for the purpose for creation being God's love to be known, he would not have chosen to speak to man, nor would He have intimately proclaimed, ""Call on Me; I will answer your (Prayer)"[168] This verse makes the difference between approaching God as a purely philosophical principle and as the Creator of the worlds clear. In this respect, God is God for the fact that He is God to the created world and He is God inasmuch as He is available to be connected and engaged with. A careless, deist conception of God is not only clearly in conflict with the spirit of revelation and the Divine Speech but also the teleology woven into the universe.

Moreover, in the *Īqāẓ*, Ṣadrā continues his emphasis on the notion of two faces and seeing through two eyes[169] by, this time, applying it to existents, writing that all things have two faces; one that turns to the Real, and another that turns to the world of creation. He explains,

> The perfected one in knowledge and witnessing knows that each and every possible existent is composed of two faces. With the right eye he looks at the Real and knows that He is the Effuser upon all things and is that which is Manifest in all things, to Whom all Goodness, perfection and virtue return. With the left eye, he looks at creation and knows that it has no power or strength, except through God the Most High, the

[166] Ibid., 49–50.
[167] Ibid., 35.
[168] (40:60) Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*.
[169] This is an element that is strongly present within al-Qūnawī's works as well. According to him, this is precisely where the success of the verifiers lay. The philosophers were skeptical and argued against this notion, "asserting instead that there can be no link between the True and the existents save through the occasions (*asbāb*) and causal intermediaries." Qūnawī was adamant, however, asserting, "they are wrong to judge so, for their failure to perceive this face does not mean that is has no reality. After all, absence of consciousness (wijdān) does not equate absence of existence." Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology*, 58.

> Mighty[170] and it has no act on its own but that of receptivity of (divine) actions and divine disclosures.[171]

Once again, he writes that, "the realized knower (*al-'ārif al-muḥaqqiq*) […] witnesses both mirrors: the mirror of the [immutable] entities (*al-'ayān*) and the mirror of the Real (*al-Haqq*), and the images (*al-ṣuwar*) in both (of the mirrors) are (witnessed) together without separation and distinction."[172] What is perhaps most thought provoking here, however, is the attention Ṣadrā pays to that face which turns towards the Creator. Ṣadrā explains, borrowing al-Qūnawī's vocabulary, "All things, as mentioned, have a specific face (*wajh khāṣ*) towards Allah, the Lord of the lords and the Cause of all causes – by virtue of which it glorifies Him, praises Him and declares Him to be Transcendent (i.e., absolutely free from all imperfections)."[173] The reasons for this emphasis are perhaps not that difficult to discern, for as Todd explains, if "all beings possess this 'face of necessity' (*wajh khāṣ*), by which they participate directly in the nature of their divine principle, it follows that, were they to become conscious of this face, they would not only be able to 'take [knowledge] straight from the [Real] but would also be liberated from the 'sway of contingency' (*ḥukm al-imkān*) pertaining to the existential causes and effects."[174] Ultimately, this notion will have crucial implications with regard to the possibilities both of intellectual intuition (*kashf*) and of spiritual realization (*taḥqīq*)[175] as will come to explored in detail in the upcoming chapter.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter, dedicated to the metaphysical foundation Ṣadrā puts forth in the *Īqāẓ,* showed how Ṣadrā announced the reality of the Absolute One, the only reality that is truly real and the way in which it, through the principle of *wujūd*, generated the world of creation, while remaining ontologically separate from it on the one hand and close to it on the other. Relying upon the distinction between the reality and concept of existence, Ṣadrā argued that, unlike the convictions of the philosophers preceding him

[170] Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God*, ed. David B. Burrell and Nazih Daher (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2007), 197.
[171] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 33.
[172] Ibid., 50.
[173] Ibid., 59.
[174] Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology*, 58.
[175] Ibid., 57.

who had maintained that existence was merely a secondary intelligible, existence was the source and sustainer of all that is; it was one, primary and graded, manifesting itself in each and every thing in keeping with that thing's own preparedness. Borrowing from Imām al-Ghazālī, Ṣadrā also wrote about how things were composed of two faces, one in relation to themselves and one in relation to the Divine, whereby all beings remain indirectly connected to their divine principle. From a theological point of view, Ṣadrā addressed many issues as well, namely, the accusations of pantheism waged against the Sufis, the source of evil, the unity of God's Creative Act and the interpretation of the ambiguous verses.

Furthermore, the principals constituting Ṣadrā's metaphysics of existence, will come to have vast epistemological implications, which will be the subject matter of the upcoming chapter. In being the ground for everything, knowledge will be understood as a mode of existence, carrying all the relevant features of existence, namely, unity, primacy, gradation and simplicity. On this note, the primacy of existence will set the grounds for the possibility of supra-rational, spiritual modes of knowing, for after all, the reality of existence, as Ṣadrā has emphasized on many different occasions thus far, remains beyond the confines of conceptual comprehension, rather, only unveiling itself to be witnessed by those who have reasonable minds and purified hearts. The unity and gradation of existence, on the other hand, will go to demonstrate how, unlike the modern mind would like to assert, the differing modes of perception are able to stand for individual and varying degrees of existence, ordered hierarchically, all while remaining characterized by the presence of an underlying harmony and unity. Its simplicity will make it so that the higher the kind of knowledge, the more inclusive it will be, subsuming within it all the lower levels. As for the notion of there being two faces to all things, this will make it so that the two seemingly contradictory modes of understanding in the case of the human self, namely *'aql* and *qalb*, will be deemed as being two aspects of the same, "single" coin, complementarily working together in achieving a holistic and unified understanding of truth

CHAPTER II
KNOWLEDGE OF GOD: SETTING THE GROUNDS FOR SPIRITUAL JOURNEYING

There is no knowledge without ontology. As such, Ṣadrā is adamant that unless one acknowledges existence (*wujūd*), which precedes everything else, one runs the risk of being unable to engage with it. The implications of Ṣadrā's wujūd centered metaphysics which expresses itself in the form of a metaphysics of unity in this treatise, as explored in the previous chapter, are vast, for, by bringing everything back to the fundamental and central reality of existence, Ṣadrā makes it so that the meaning we attribute to anything is determined by its ontological and cosmological significance. Since existence is simple and graded for example, similarly, knowledge along with everything else comes to be considered as corresponding to a certain degree, or mode of existence and therefore consciousness. Hence, once we establish existence as the ground of all meaning and reality, then we realize, as Kalin writes, "that knowing is nothing but a cognitive interaction with existence that reveals itself in countless modalities, forms, shapes and colors. As such, in knowing things, we [essentially] unveil and decipher an aspect of existence."[1]

Furthermore, what is clearly evident in the *Īqāẓ* with reference to approaching knowledge as a mode of existence, rather than merely as a realm of abstract analysis, is the deliberate effort Ṣadrā makes in trying to awaken the reader to its spiritually transformative dimension. In this effort, Ṣadrā echoes Socrates' claim that "all virtues come into being only through knowledge *(ma'rifah),*"[2] when he writes, "Praise cannot be conceived in the absence of knowledge."[3] Thus, we consistently find, in the case of Ṣadrā, knowledge becoming the foundation through which praise, true servanthood and thereby realization and perfection can take place. From this perspective, knowledge is the source of inspiration and sustenance for the seeker and wayfarer and, essentially, it is by knowing that one travels from one state of existence to another,

[1] Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, xv.
[2] Ibid., 215.
[3] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 78.

discovering and thereby growing closer in proximity to one's divine origin before ultimately achieving perfection.

2.1 Knowledge as a "Mode of Existence" (*naḥw al-wujūd*) and Intrinsic Intelligibility

Like existence, knowledge is not easily definable, for each time one attempts to do so, knowledge becomes impossible to exclude from the definition. As such, "Ṣadrā points to a strong parallel between knowledge considered from this point of view and existence that defies definition."[4] That being said, as Acar asserts, the fact that one cannot construct a complete definition for something does not mean that one cannot say anything about it either.[5] Furthermore, this understanding that conceives of existence and knowledge being "two names for the same reality"[6] not only stands in stark contrast with modern Western conceptions "which do not go beyond theoretical knowledge and artificially oppose 'knowledge' to 'being'"[7] but also, according to Kalin, represents a new perspective within the Islamic intellectual tradition. In fact, as Kalın continues, this is the first step Ṣadrā takes towards constructing knowledge as a "mode of existence" (*naḥw al-wujūd*)

Unlike his predecessors, according to Ṣadrā, knowledge is not that which occurred through abstraction (*tajarrud*), impression, relation (*iḍāfah*), or accident (*'araḍ*)."[8]

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[4] Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, 103.
[5] Rahim Acar, "Molla Sadra'nın Bilgi Anlayışı" (Marmara University, 1992), 15.
[6] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 91.
[7] René Guénon, *The Multiple States of the Being*, ed. Samuel D. Fohr (New York: Sophia Perennis, 2001), 79.
[8] As Kalın explains in his book *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy*, Ṣadrā rejects the four major theories of knowledge before him and is critical of them not only for their subjectivist tendencies but also because they reduce knowledge to being merely an instrument rather than a substantive realm, one and the same with existence. The first theory he rejects is the Peripatetic concept of knowledge as abstraction *(tajarrud)* citing that it reduces cognition to a negative affair *(amr salbī)*. Accordingly, Ṣadrā disagrees with the idea that "when intelligible forms are 'disengaged' from their material properties, they are *deprived* of certain qualities and become abstract notions in the mind." Instead, unlike the view of the Peripatetics who maintain that knowledge turns things into something less than the actual object *(ma'lūm)*, Ṣadrā argues that knowledge "is to know things *as they are*, i.e., as concrete, unique individual beings with universal meaning-properties." The second theory Ṣadrā rejects is the representational theory of knowledge which defines knowledge as a mental impression. This theory was based on a subject-object bifurcation, often attributed to Ibn Sīnā. In this respect, Ṣadrā opposed it

Rather, as Ṣadrā explains in the *Īqāẓ* "all forms of perception, is none other than the perception of the [mode of] existence of that very thing, whether it be sensate, imaginary, or intellectual and whether it be attained through rational inquiry or presential knowledge"[9] which occurs through the unity of the subject and the object (*ittiḥād al-āqil wa al-ma'qūl*).[10] This emphasis in the *Īqāẓ* makes abundantly clear that for Ṣadrā knowledge is not merely a mental construct but rather grounded in and connected with the ultimate source of reality. From this point of view, meaning is conceived as being inherent in existence, waiting to be uncovered by those seeking to discover that which is beyond what their subjectivist tendencies of creation and generation can offer them. Hence, the meaning of *wujūd* is grounded in these concerns, literally meaning "to find" or "to be found."[11] This assertion makes abundantly clear that for Ṣadrā, unless knowledge was acknowledged as a mode of existence, it could be reduced to being merely an instrumental term, as was the case in the four theories of knowledge he rejected.[12] Instead, for Ṣadrā, knowledge was a substantive term, one with reality itself and thereby imbued with transformative dimensions. Given his strong assertions, it seems clear that the possibility of our mental constructions and apprehensions becoming more important than the dynamic, all-pervasive, ultimate ground of reality was a real concern for Ṣadrā.

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because it fails to explain the "essential unity of subject and object in knowledge." Whilst doing so, he also attempts to correct this misreading, writing that those who came to this conclusion regarding Ibn Sīnā's views had misunderstood because they had not read his later works. Furthermore, the third theory that Ṣadrā critiques is the concept of knowledge being conceived as a relation or attribution *(iḍāfah)* between subject and object. This view, mainly attributed to the theologians, has led to the inevitable conclusion that intelligibility could not be conceived in the absence of a knower. This dependency on the cognitive act of the knower stood in clear conflict with Ṣadrā's principle that intelligibility, "as the proper basis for all meaningful statements [that had] an existence of its own [did] not impart any privileged position to the knower." Similarly, he also opposes to it because this would situate knowledge in such a way that it would be a property of the knower or what Ṣadrā calls a "quality of the soul" *(kayfiyyah nafsāniyyah).* Moreover, in contrast, Ṣadrā maintains that knowledge and intelligibility are interchangeable, and the content of what is known precedes the knower. In fact, this is how, unlike the Cartesian philosophy that saw things from the perspective of a "word-less subject", the kind of epistemology Ṣadrā formulated was built on the notion of a self that was engaged in a larger context of ontological relations. The final theory Ṣadrā addresses is the idea of knowledge as an accident *('araḍ)* that resides in the mind. With reference to this theory, Ṣadrā refuses it, once again, because it makes knowledge dependent on the act of the knower and reduces it to being a property as such. Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, 119, 120, 123, 125.

[9] Or, "the mode of existence of that very thing." Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 75. Al-Shirazi, *Kalbin Uyanışı*, 93.

[10] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 36.

[11] Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, 185. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 214.

[12] Kalin, *Knowledge in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Ṣadrā on Existence, Intellect, and Intuition*, 135.

2.2 Knowledge of God: Recognizing the Innate Human Capacity

The necessary and groundbreaking implication of existence being one and primary and thereby knowledge being a mode of existence was that intelligibility became intrinsic to all things, with each degree of existence witnessing according to the awareness its station made possible. As such, after deeming everything to be a subject as well as medium for praise, Ṣadrā makes knowledge of the Source, or knowledge of God a necessary component for true servanthood.[13] In fact, Ibn al-'Arabī affirms this being the case in the famous epistle he addressed to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, where he writes, "The only science (that serves perfection and moves along with him) is the knowledge of God obtained as a gift and derived from direct witnessing (*mushāhadah*)."[14] In building his argument for intelligibility being present within all things, Ṣadrā first refers to two Qur'anic verses before furthering the discussion through philosophically demonstrative means. He cites, "The seven heavens, and the earth, and whosoever is in them Glorify Him. And there is no thing, save that it hymns His praise, though you do not understand their praise."[15] and "His Command when He desires a thing is only to say to it , 'Be!' and it is."[16] Moreover, since "glorifying Him and rendering Him most Holy cannot be conceived in the absence of self-experiential knowledge of Him"[17] according to Ṣadrā these two verses are "clear proofs" for all existents being intelligible, intellecting of their Lord, knowing of their Originator, and hearing of His Speech. After all, as Ṣadrā reminds, the presence of the Command presupposes each existent having the ability to hear and respond to this call in keeping with its potential. Hence, Ṣadrā concludes, given this source and their reliance upon the Single Real, "All existents […] [are] intellecting in this sense, knowing of his Lord, knowing of His Originator, witnessing of His Beauty and hearing of His Speech."[18] However, what is groundbreaking here is that this intelligibility applies to all existents, across the entire

[13] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 66.
[14] Franz Rosenthal, "Ibn 'Arabī between 'Philosophy' and 'Mysticism': 'Sūfism and Philosophy Are Neighbors and Visit Each Other'. Fa-Inna at-Taṣawwuf Wa-t-Tafalsuf Yatajāwarāni Wa-Yatazāwarāni," *Oriens* 31 (1988): 21–22.
[15] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 707. (Q 17:44)
[16] Ibid., 1083. (Q 36:82)
[17] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 78.
[18] Ibid., 77.

spectrum of existence, including even inanimate objects.[19] Thus, as Ṣadrā maintains, "there is no property in the cosmos without a divine support and a lordly attribute."[20]

Furthermore, as was explained in the previous section, the Source of existence is the existence of the Real. As such, the Source of knowledge is knowledge of the Real. Ṣadrā explains this in his own words, writing, "Just as the external existence of all existents generates from the existence of the Real, so does its mental existence and its presential witnessing come out from the witnessing of the Real."[21] Hence, Ṣadrā envisions knowledge as the realm through which all connections are established, where each and every existent is considered as a manifestation of the Divine, reflective of the divine relationship from which it has become manifest.[22] To this effect, Ṣadrā explains,

> the existence of each thing is the mode of its relation/connection with the First Real and the foundation of judgement when it comes to anything regarding existence is that it is relative and dependent on the First Real Existence. […] As such, the perception of each and every thing is none other than the perception of that thing in the way in which it is connected and related by the Necessary Being from this face.[23]

For this reason, whoever perceives with whatever perceptive faculty this may be has, in all actuality, perceived the Originator *(Bāri')*, even if only the Perfect Humans are aware of this being the case.[24] In other words, since God is the existence within all existents, any time anything "knows" anything, they have essentially known God. Accordingly, Ṣadrā writes the Perfect Humans know that "those things known by

[19] This intelligibility can also be understood as an ontological state of submission. The Sūrat al-Raḥmān, writes of the star and the tree being in a state of prostration, affirming the Real, the Creator and His worthiness of veneration. From this perspective, the world of creation can also be envisioned as a place of prostration, where intelligibility, at the deepest, ontological level standing for a state of submission and prostration to the Divine. This same description is present in Ibn al-'Arabī's *Futūḥāt* where Ibn Arabi in response to Tirmidhi's question of "What is prostration (sujūd)?" discusses prostration as being a symbolic act of bearing withness to ones's root. Furthermore, the reason why there is no nobler state than the state of prostration is because "it is the state of attainment to the knowledge of the roots. And there is no attribute more noble than knowledge, since it yields felicity in the two worlds and ease in the two stations." Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 152–53. For more on the intelligibility of inanimate objects, see: Rustom, "The Great Chain of Consciousness: Do All Things Possess Awareness?"

[20] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 38. Ṣadrā expresses this in the *Īqāẓ*, writing, "Existence in each station among the stations of the theophonies and the effusions reveals/manifests through a special attribute and specific description." Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 56.

[21] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 76.

[23] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 75.

[24] Ibid., 76.

essence in all forms of perception – intellectual or sensate – verily is the Real the Thabit eternally and forever (*azalan wa abadan*), [and] all others are known by accident."[25] Imām al-Ghazālī mirrors this statement when he asserts in his *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, "All things are His Light. In fact, there is not a single essence except Him except metaphorically, (*bil majāz*) and all things only point to Him."[26] In this respect, it can also be understood as Chittick expresses, "knowledge concerns itself chiefly with knowledge of God and knowledge of "other than God" comes into the picture insofar as it contributes to the knowledge of God."[27] Similarly, Ṣadrā explains, "knowledge of any mode of existence among the modes of the existence of entities, the created world, is not possible except through the knowledge of its Originator (*al-Mubdi'*) and Creator (*al-Khāliq*)[28], because the existence of all things is none other than [sharing] in a single mode."[29] He continues, "the perception of all things is none other than becoming aware of that thing in so far as it is connected and related to the Necessary Being […] and this is not possible except through knowing the Real, because His Divine Essence is the Source of all existents and the purpose/goal of all concomitants (*ta'alluqāt*)."[30] As a result, knowledge becomes the means through which all things are able to connect with their Source, the Bestower and Sustainer of existence.

From this perspective, according to Ṣadrā, the aim of all intellectual and spiritual inquiry must be, essentially, "attaining knowledge of their connection or relation to the Source of Divine Effusion."[31] As the earlier chapter demonstrated, God alone is Real. As such, according to Ṣadrā, true knowledge is knowing one's station in relation to the Divine. "Knowledge of the station of the Divine and its concomitants are attained by the human person through knowledge of his relevant station in relation to the station of the Real."[32] Furthermore, it seems clear that for Ṣadrā it is knowledge of

[25] Ibid., 75.
[26] Ibid., 76.
[27] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 147.
[28] Sadra explains this being the case elsewehere, this time referencing the thoughts of the philosophers while doing so. He writes, "It has been realized and made clear/abundantly clear by the Realized ones from the Mutaallih of the philosophers that the existence of each and every thing [is none other than] its mode of connection with the First Real."
[29] Since there is no repetition in God's divine self-disclosure. Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 66.
[30] Ibid., 75–76.
[31] Ibid., 75.
[32] Ibid., 37.

God that constitutes true knowledge and thereby knowledge of things "as they really are." (*haqāiq al-ashyā' kamā hiya*). This indicates a shift in the metaphysical system established among the philosophers, moving from seeking knowledge of things as they are in themselves to the reality of things in so far as they are being conceived as manifestations of the Divine.[33] Before ending the section dedicated to this discussion, Ṣadrā reiterates this notion, but, this time by referencing a famous assertion of the philosophers, rather than Qur'anic verses. Ṣadrā writes, "the philosophers [i.e. the Peripatetics] were right when they said, complete knowledge of entities, the essences of which have causes, is not attained except through knowledge of its causes and purposes."[34] At this point, the impending question becomes: How do the existents embark on this journey of discovering their Source, or attaining knowledge of God?

2.3 Seeking God: A Journey of Rational Inquiry and/or Spiritual Unveiling?

The previous section demonstrated how grounding everything in existence (*wujūd*) led to knowledge being considered as a mode of existence and thereby all things becoming intrinsically intelligible. To recap, Ṣadrā explained, "verily all things that travel on this

[33] In other words, according to the Sufis the realities one witnesses are no different than the way in which they are present in God's knowledge, for unless so, this would mean repetition or change in God's self-disclosure. This transitions into Ṣadrā's view concerning God's knowledge of particulars where he departs from the common notion of the Peripatetics denying God's knowledge of particulars. Ṣadrā's position demands that He know all things, for, otherwise, it would mean ignorance in one respect. Morris, *The Wisdom of the Throne: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā*, 104. Here Ṣadrā explains, "God's knowledge does not pertain to anything other than the external existents as has been clarified by the Illuminationists." Furthermore, he also confronts the debate regarding God's knowledge of particulars, writing, "The levels (degrees) of the Almighty's Knowledge of things pertain in themselves (or in their very realities) to the layers of the manifestations of the Being, even encompassing (or eventually leading to) the knowledge of things in a particular sense (i.e. in their individuality or particularity), which involves in its reality (the knowledge of) the existence of physical sensibles (i.e. material objects) successive of the Being." Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 51–52. Even further, he also makes room for how the existents are present to God, writing, "As for the comparison of (their) presence in their Originator and (their) representation (or similitude) during their contemplation (or witnessing) by their Creator (Existentiation), they (all) stand at one (and the same) level without (or beyond the consideration of) renewal, succession, presence and absence (all) occurring (only) to the creation (or created beings) as they are associated with time and space." Ibid., 52. This is because of His All-Encompassing quality with respect to all stations of existents. Ṣadrā applies his argument of all knowledge being self-knowledge to God as well, maintaining that God knows everything because they are immediately present to him. How? This essentially is the natural outcome of the fact that everything is a manifestation of God and since He is the all-encompassing, simple and Highest principle, everything is already present within, thereby knowledge of things being identical with Him. For more on Ṣadrā's argument for God's knowledge of particulars and how it compares to that upheld by the Peripatetics and the Illuminationists, see: Bilal Kuşpınar, "Mulla Sadra's Criticism of Ibn Sina and Al-Suhrawardi on the Problem of God's Knowledge," *Jorunal of Islamic Research* 5, no. 1 (1991).

[34] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 66.

earth seek in their movement and intentions/desires the Real [even if] unconsciously. He is who is witnessed in all that is witnessed and [He is] what is sought in all [that is] sought and journeyed towards."[35] Drawing from this perspective, it follows that everything in the cosmos, whether that be matter, plants, or animals, had knowledge of the Source in an inborn manner and acted in harmony with the demands of this Truth. That being said, the human person's potential when it comes to this quest as well as his struggle in being successful at doing so or not, was deemed to be unique.

Unlike the case for all other existents, whose souls are delivered through the agency of angels, as Ṣadrā writes, the spiritual self of the human person is directly delivered through the Divine. In this regard, God blowing into him of His own spirit[36] distinguishes the human person and elevates him above all others. In fact, as Ṣadrā explains, it was this spiritual essence, inextricably linked with the Divine, that made the human person worthy of the prostration of angels. Furthermore, created in the image of God[37] and taught all the names by God,[38] as the hadith and Qur'anic verse, respectively allude to, "they alone among all things in the cosmos have the potential to experience the full self-disclosure of wujūd,"[39] or "recognize and realize the *haqq* of everything in existence."[40] As such, this elevated nature of the human person makes him uniquely qualified in his capacity to discover and know God[41] and thereby come to "reflect Divine attributes."[42] All this said, it is also in human nature to forget; in

[35] Ibid., 75.
[36] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 646. (15:29)
[37] William C. Chittick, "Between the Yes and the No – Ibn Al-'Arabī on Wujūd and the Innate Capacity," in *The Innate Capacity: Mysticism, Psychology, and Philosophy*, ed. Robert K. C. Forman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 108. In another one of his works, Chittick, similarly, writes, "Only human beings can know God in the fulness of His divinity, because only they were created in His total image." William C. Chittick, "On the Cosmology of Dhikr," in *Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East.*, ed. James S. Cutsinger (Bloomington: World Wisdom Books, 2002), 58.
[38] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 22. "He taught Adam the names, all of them." (Q 2:31)
[39] Chittick, "Between the Yes and the No – Ibn Al-'Arabī on Wujūd and the Innate Capacity," 108. Ṣadrā adds, "The perfect ones among the realizers have likened the Perfect Human who is the noblest part of the great world with the person of the eye from the smaller human world whereby the person is able to look at things and it is referred to as (sight) and it is for this reason that the human being (*al-insān*) was named "human being" (*insān*) taken from (*ānastu*) i.e., *abṣartu* (meaning, I saw). For it was through him that the Real looked upon his creation and had mercy on them." Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 83.
[40] William C. Chittick, "Ibn 'Arabi on the Benefit of Knowledge," in *The Essential Sophia*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Katherine O'Brien (Indiana: World Wisdom, Inc., 2006), 138.
[41] Cennet Ceren Çavuş, "İmam Gazzâlî'nin İhyâ'sında Akıl ve Kalp" (Marmara Üniversitesi, 2014), 84.
[42] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 78.

fact, Adam's fundamental shortcoming was that "He forgot."[43] For this reason, though embodying this innate capacity, due to forgetfulness (*nisyān*), the human person, unlike other existing beings, needs to seek God in order to discover Him and he has to choose to either live a life in harmony with His commands or not.[44] If he is successful in this effort, through right knowledge and right practice, he can became worthy of upholding and fulfilling the vicegerency of the Divine.[45]

Another distinguishing aspect of the human being Ṣadrā focuses on is that he is,

> unlike the angels and the intelligibles, all of which had fixed, known stations from which they could not progress beyond, the perfect, human nature [can] move from one station to another, from imperfection, to perfection, and transform among the different states [before becoming] […] inclusive of all realities, high and low because his essence becomes enlightened by the light of the Divine and he comes to see things as they are in their universalities and particularities.[46]

Furthermore, in this quest, Ṣadrā writes that people are separated into two groups, those who have a "simple, general perception" (*al-idrāk al-baṣīṭ al-mujmal*)[47] of the Real and those who have the potential to attain what Ṣadrā refers to as "complex perception" (*al-idrāk al-murakkab)*.[48] While the first is attained among all of His servants, the second remains accessible to and attainable by an elect group of people, who can only be on its receiving end by the grace (*'ināyah*) of the Divine. According to Ṣadrā, the second group of people seek knowledge of God, who is, in Ṣadrā's words "the First Love and the most important Purpose for the human being" (*al-Maḥbūb al-Awwal wa al-Maqṣūd al-Ahamm lil insān*)[49], in one of two ways; through philosophical demonstration (*al-'ilm al-istidlālī*) as is the case for the rational thinkers (*al-'uqalā' al-mutafakkirīn*) and through spiritual unveiling (*kashf*) and witnessing (*shuhūd*) as is the case for the saints and realizers (*al-'urafā' wa al-muḥaqqiqūn*).[50]

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[43] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 805. (Q 2:115)
[44] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 161.
[45] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 78.
[46] Ibid., 79. In this regard, in keeping with his doctrine of subnational motion (*al-ḥarakat al-jawhariyya*), Ṣadrā pays close attention in the *Īqāẓ* to the fact that the human being is in a state of constant change and flux. In the Īqāẓ Ṣadrā writes of the different stages the human person goes through before reaching perfection, describing the movement from each stage as a form of dying to the lower in the works of attaining the higher.
[47] Ibid., 76.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., 77.
[50] Ibid., 27–28, 76. Ṣadrā refers to the individual groups as *ahl kashf wa al-shuhūd* and then *aṣḥāb al-'ulūm al-naẓariyya*

These two approaches essentially stand for the methods espoused by the Peripatetic philosophers and the Sufis, respectively. As is well known, this also happens to refer to the primary issue that has divided[51] those from these respective currents of thought over the course of Islamic intellectual history, i.e., the most reliable method or means by which true knowledge can be attained, which the philosophers referred to as attaining knowledge of things "as they really are in themselves" and the Sufis referred to as "knowledge of God."[52]

In this regard, the Peripatetic philosophers maintained that knowledge of things as they are in themselves could be achieved through rational inquiry *alone*, unaided by revelation or mystical 'unveiling' (*kashf*).[53] However, Ṣadrā is strongly critical of them in the *Īqāẓ* for not considering revelation and for overindulging in disputations merely for the sake of disputation.[54] Referring to them as "possessors of consideration" (*ahl al-naẓar*),[55] "people of reflection" (*aṣḥāb al-fikr*), "people of rational faculties" (*ahl al-'uqūl*) and the "rational thinkers" (*al-'uqalā'*), in one of his statements he goes as far as saying, "The Perfect ones know the realities in such a way that no suspicion befalls them. They are the servants of the Compassionate, the Merciful, walking on the grounds of realities. [While] the people of rational demonstration are servants of their thoughts that emerge from themselves [i.e., their own mental constructions]"[56]. Right after this bold statement, he alludes to the verse, "Verily ye (unbelievers) and

[51] It is important to note here that the division between philosophy and mysticism in the context of the Islamic civilization, as Chittick explains, "means something far different from what it has come to signify in the West, where many philosophers have looked upon mysticism as the abandonment of any attempt to reconcile religious data with intelligent thought. Certainly, the Muslim mystics and philosophers sometimes display a certain mutual opposition and antagonism, but never does their relationship even approach incompatibility. […] [Nonetheless,] the Sufis did not accept everything the philosophers said and vice versa." Chittick, "Mysticism Versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The Al-Ṭūsī, Al-Qūnawī Correspondence," 87.

[52] We already mentioned the roots of this separation being directly linked with the differing conceptions of what constitutes the object and study of metaphysics. For more, see: Demirli, "'Varlık Olmak Bakımından Varlık' Ifadesinin Sûfîlerce Yeniden Yorumlanması ve Bu Yorumun Mezafizik Sonuçları."

[53] Here, there is also a reference to the fact of revelation occurring through unveiling. Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 112.

[54] Much like Ibn al-'Arabī, Ṣadrā is critical of the learned classes for engaging in a certain kind of sophisticated rational thinking that had forgotten the original goal it must serve. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 165.

[55] Or, speculative thinkers.

[56] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 69. Rosenthal, "Ibn 'Arabī between 'Philosophy' and 'Mysticism': 'Sūfism and Philosophy Are Neighbors and Visit Each Other'. Fa-Inna at-Taṣawwuf Wa-t-Tafalsuf Yatajāwarāni Wa-Yatazāwarāni," 8.

the (false) gods ye worship besides Allah, are (but) fuel for Hell! To it will ye surely come."[57] which is a rather heavy statement to make, for in this context, it insinuates that the rational considerations of the philosophers will not actually lead them to felicity in the gardens of paradise bur rather to wretchedness in the fires of hell. However, he quickly clarifies, writing that what he means by hell is the "hell" of distance and of being denied the comprehension of realities and their lights because they do not accept anything other than what their reason provides them.[58] Nonetheless, it is not that this is any less of a burden compared to one's destination in the Afterlife; in fact, it seems that for Ṣadrā, there could be no heavier burden than being denied proximity and closeness to the Divine.

In contrast to the established method of the philosophers, in the *Īqāẓ*, Ṣadrā writes that knowledge of God *cannot* be attained through rational means, *alone*. Rather, he writes that it occurs through unveiling (*kashf*) and witnessing (*shuhūd*), which is not the necessary outcome of rational demonstration but rather the product of subordinating reason to revelation and following the path trodden by the prophets and the saints.[59] Furthermore, only after doing so can the wayfarers hope to be deemed worthy of true knowledge and to be on the receiving end of God's grace ('*ināyah*). In this respect, he writes,

> What is sought is not unveiled to the eyes of the seeker purely through rational inquiry/philosophical thinking, and hence revelation through the vehicle of the angel. […] And seeing does not occur without the light of unveiling; and this seeing is the seeing of those who have hearts (*albāb*)[60] who have ascended to the highest horizon […] and here they see things as they really are.[61]

[57] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 69. Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 827. (21:98)
[58] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 69. This also reminds us of Ṣadrā's view that those who have not actualized their potential in this life will run the risk of mortality, unable to enjoy the immortality of the soul. Here, the criticism is for the philosophers in having forgotten the original purpose of philosophy. For more on Ṣadrā's viewsregarding death, awakening and the role of the imagination in the Afterlife, see: Mohammed Rustom, "Psychology, Eschatology, and Imagination in Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī's Commentary on the Hadith of Awakening," *Islam & Science* 5, no. 1 (2007).
[59] William C. Chittick, "The Soul as the Mirror Image of God," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2002, 2.
[60] The translation of this word is quite difficult and Nasr offers the words intellect and understanding along with the choice of the heart.
[61] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 115.

In support of this, Ṣadrā also alludes to the verse, "The heart lied not in what it saw."[62] As such, according to Ṣadrā, even the greatest of philosophers who have carried their rational efforts to the greatest extents have, ultimately, admitted and recognized their incapacity to attain knowledge of God and thereby certainty."[63]

Moreover, Ṣadrā maintains true knowledge, or knowledge of God is beyond the discursive reasoning of the Peripatetics and the Illuminationists in other works as well.[64] For example, in the introduction of his *Commentary on Surat al-Wāqi'a*, he writes,

> I exerted great effort and devotion consistently and carefully to the study of the rational philosophers (*al-ḥukamā' al-nuẓẓār*) until I began to think that I was something. But when my [spiritual] insight opened up a little and I looked at my state, I saw myself…far removed from the knowledge of reality and true visible realities, which can only be perceived by experience and ecstasy and are reported in the Scripture and the Sunna concerning the knowledge of God, His attributes, His names, His scriptures, His prophets, and knowledge of the soul and its states from the grave of resurrection…which one can only know from divine teachings and which can only be revealed by the light of prophecy and sainthood (*bi nūr al-nubuwwah wa al-walāyah*).[65]

Ṣadrā goes as far as to affirm Ibn al-'Arabī's renowned statement, "He who has no unveiling, has no knowledge."[66] In this respect, Ṣadrā writes that the one who knows in theory and the one who knows through experience are vastly different. As an example, he writes that he who knows what love is meant to be in theory pales in comparison to the one who has actually experienced love and the hurt that is most often inextricably coupled with it.[67] Once again, Ṣadrā supports this view in another one of his works, titled *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb (Keys to the Unseen)*, where he writes,

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[62] Ibid. Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 1291. (Q 53:11)
[63] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 114.
[64] All this said, as Chittick notes, "These rationalists need to be understood in a completely different light than what it indicates in the modern sense of the term." To this effect, Chittick explains, "in no sense were they [Peripatetic philosophers] 'rationalists' in the modern sense, since they ascribed the traditional cosmology, in which man's intellect is the potential source of knowledge above what can be attained through merely rationalistic argumentation." Chittick, "Mysticism Versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The Al-Ṭūsī, Al-Qūnawī Correspondence," 94.
[65] Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 7.
[66] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 99.
[67] In the Asfār, he writes, "The difference between the sciences based on theory and the sciences based on vision, is like the difference between someone who knows the definition of sweetness and someone who has actually tasted sweetness; and someone who understands the definition of health and power and someone who is actually healthy and powerful." Ibrahim Kalin, *Reason and Rationality in the Qur'an* (Amman: The Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2012), 16.

"Know, may God guide you, that many of those involved in [the pursuit of] knowledge deny that knowledge, which comes from the Unseen, upon which the mystics and gnostics rely, yet it is more powerful and a better foundation for judgement than all other [types of] knowledge."[68] In this respect, it is clear that, according to Ṣadrā, "sound knowledge is not given by reflection, nor by what the rational thinkers establish by means of their reflective powers. Sound knowledge is only that which God throws into the heart of the knower. It is a divine light for which God singles out any of His servants whom He will, whether angel, messenger, prophet, friend, or person of faith."[69] Hence, as Chittick explains, "the only way to know God is for God to give it knowledge."[70]

All in all, each of these statements made by Ṣadrā in the *Īqāẓ* and his other works established the superiority of "unveiling" (*kashf*) over rational demonstration in his system of thought.[71] That being said, at this point, before continuing further, it is imperative that we devote closer attention to the modes and grades of perception that are at hand when it comes to these two, seemingly contradictory methods, for unless this is done, it is not possible to adequately understand Ṣadrā's grand attempt to build a single, unified epistemology.

2.4 A Critique of Rational Inquiry

As Ṣadrā explains, reason *('aql)* is the faculty that comprehends by means of logic and demonstration.[72] Accordingly, through its demonstrative abilities, it orders premises, builds analogies and thereby understands concepts in a universal manner (*al-mafhūmāt al-kulliyyah*). "Rational inquiry is grounded in the employment of definition and

[68] Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Reconsidering the Life of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1641): Notes towards an Intellectual Biography," *Iran* 40 (2002): 182.
[69] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 170.
[70] Ibid., 163.
[71] Sadra is clearly following in the footsteps of Ibn Arabi here, who famously wrote to the pre-eminent speculative theologian of the time, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, advising him that certitude (*yaqīn*) in matters of divine science may be gained through supra-rational unveiling (*kashf*). Rosenthal, "Ibn 'Arabī between 'Philosophy' and 'Mysticism': 'Sūfism and Philosophy Are Neighbors and Visit Each Other'. Fa-Inna at-Taṣawwuf Wa-t-Tafalsuf Yatajāwarāni Wa-Yatazāwarāni," 51.
[72] William C. Chittick, *The Heart of Islamic Philosophy : The Quest for Self Knowledge in the Teachings of Afdal Al-Dīn Al-Kāshānī* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 18.

limitation, as indicated by the root meaning of *'aql* meaning "to tie" and "to bind".[73] By contrast, the Real is understood as that which is eternally free from all forms of constraints. So, the nature of the Real remains beyond the confines of that which can be captured by rational inquiry. On this note, Todd explains, reason "cannot […] lead to any positive knowledge of the nature of [..] things as they really are in themselves."[74] In this respect, Ṣadrā similarly asserts, "the Real becomes manifest only in the disappearance (*iḍmiḥlāl*) of the descriptions. (*al-rusūm*)"[75] Later on, he similarly maintains, "It is not possible for reason to know anything of the realities. [rather], it is only useful in relation to the mental concepts and those things which are outside the domains of existential generations."[76] Moreover, when it comes to metaphysical realms of inquiry, according to Ṣadrā, the furthest point reason can come is to "lead man to the understanding that he cannot reach knowledge of God through his own resources,"[77] for whenever reason turns to perceiving the realities as they are without purifying its state from the ugliness that results from a preoccupation with the world,[78] it becomes perplexed and acts haphazardly. This point, which Ṣadrā refers to as bewilderment (*ḥayra*) is what makes it so that it is never able to be free from obfuscation. Hence, instead, reason, in order to be sound, must acknowledge its limits when it comes to metaphysical questions. At a later section in the *Īqāẓ*, towards furthering this very point, Ṣadrā refers to Abu Bakr's famous expression, "Incapacity to attain comprehension is itself comprehension."[79] writing the most knowledgeable of the knowers being those who can recognize that which they can know and that which they cannot. This reminds one of the Socratic maxim "I know that I do not

[73] Chittick, "Mysticism Versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The Al-Ṭūsī, Al-Qūnawī Correspondence," 90. Süleyman Hayri Bolay, "Akıl," in *TDV Islam Araştırmaları Ansiklopedisi*, 1989, 238.
[74] Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology*, 52–53.
[75] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 103.
[76] Ibid., 113.
[77] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 163. Süleyman Uludağ, "Akıl," in *TDV Islam Araştırmaları Ansiklopedisi*, 1989, 246.
[78] For they take engendered things as their object. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 111. It is for this reason that it can go a limited distance. For, as Rosenthal explains "based as it is on physical means of cognitions [it] is led astray by its concern with widely changeable details and a neglect of the basic principles." Rosenthal, "Ibn 'Arabī between 'Philosophy' and 'Mysticism': 'Sūfism and Philosophy Are Neighbors and Visit Each Other'. Fa-Inna at-Taṣawwuf Wa-t-Tafalsuf Yatajāwarāni Wa-Yatazāwarāni," 10.
[79] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 155–56.

know."[80] which is approvingly quoted by Ibn al-'Arabī who expounds on this notion in the *Futūḥāt* by writing that true knowledge is, in fact, ignorance.

Furthermore, as Ṣadrā continues, "the perception of the Necessary Being is beyond the station of reason, in addition to the stations of estimation, imagination and senses."[81] All this said, what we encounter in the case of Ṣadrā's statements is not a dismissal of the validity of rational inquiry all together but rather an emphasis on its natural limitations as pertaining to metaphysical questions. Moreover, while reason cannot come up with any affirmative knowledge, Ṣadrā maintains that it is "perfectly capable of deducing the existence of supra-sensible realities such as the human soul, the immaterial spirits and the First Cause."[82] Thus, if sound (*salīm*),[83] it has the ability to accept them. Hence, according to Ṣadrā, reason's affirmative function is to accept that "it has a Lord who is transcendent, free from created attributes [and that by nature] it [is] veiled from the witnessing of the Real and from witnessing His theophonies and appearances/manifestations in detail/at length (*mufaṣṣalan*) and the penetration of His light within them."[84]

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[80] Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Mysticism and Philosophy: Ibn 'Arabī and Mullā Ṣadrā," in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 240.

[81] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 75. In the *Īqāẓ*, Ṣadrā pays close attention to each faculty of human perception. He writes that the first level of knowing is sense-perception (hiss) and explains that the senses, "can comprehend the appearances and shapes of things/entities [making them up] and only events generally and through what makes them up" as in Aristotelian accidents, such as its quantity, quality, time, place and situation. Ibid., 113. However, while all the essences and all possible existents are manifestations of the existence of the Real, "the senses, because of their external concomitants/superficialities are not able to account for the Real." Ibid. For this reason, they have "no way of comprehending the interior of things and their mysteries [as they truly are]." The second level of knowing is imagination (*khayāl*). At this level, one perceives all the qualities of a thing, as in the case of sense perception, except, this time, one perceives despite them being absent to the senses. Furthermore, the third level of perception is estimation (*wahm*), or sense-intuition as Chittick chooses to refer to it. William C. Chittick, "On the Teleology of Perception," *Transcendent Philosophy* 1, no. 1 (2000): 3. On this point, he explains, "through this potency there is an awareness of a non-sensory state deriving from sensory things, such that the sense and imagination could not have become aware of it – whether in the presence of those things to sensation or, in the state of their absence. [Such states are] like animosity, truthfulness, hostility and friendliness […] From it arise the fear and craving of the animal soul." Chittick, *The Heart of Islamic Philosophy : The Quest for Self Knowledge in the Teachings of Afdal Al-Dīn Al-Kāshānī*, 86. At this stage the knower perceives "an intelligible meaning while attributing the meaning to a particular sensory thing. Hence, in the case of estimation [or sense-intuition], the soul perceived the universal, but within a particular, rather than in the universal itself." Chittick, "On the Teleology of Perception," 3.

[82] Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology*, 52–53.

[83] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 169.

[84] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 68.

In addition, Ṣadrā pays close attention to the affirmative role reason has on a more operative, moral level through its ability to "oppose natural desires threatening to take control of the soul."[85] Accordingly, a healthy and sound rational faculty which can comprehend its limitations and function within them is the one that accepts the truth of revelation and ensures that the person leads a life in harmony with it. In this respect, the judgments and convictions of the mind are very important because then it is able to act decisively and order the lower levels to act in harmony with divine principles.[86] Hence, reason has a positive role to play insofar as it ensures that one does not fall victim to the dictates of the lower levels, including the doubts of estimation and the desires of the senses. In this effort, as Ibn al-ʿArabī explains, "reason delimits its possessor, not allowing him to enter into that which is improper. That is why it is called 'reason,' from 'fetter'."[87] Thus, if reason accepted its limitations and became subordinate to revelation, it would be an aid rather than possibly a hindrance to those on the journey of realization and perfection. After all, only through reason could one overcome passion and caprice, leading man to the path of his felicity, which is the path of the Law.

Furthermore, Ṣadrā is openly critical of the Peripatetic philosophers for having forgotten the ultimate goal philosophy must serve,[88] which is growing in proximity to the Divine through practice. In this respect, Ṣadrā seems to be very much in line with Hadot's expression of "philosophy as a way of life."[89] "Philosophy was not [meant to be] […] simply a rational technique or an investigative tool; it was [meant to be] a spiritual discipline that aimed at illumination, awakening, and self-transformation."[90] Accordingly, Ṣadrā writes that the first philosophers (*al-ḥukamā' al-awwalūn*) were

[85] Rosenthal, "Ibn 'Arabī between 'Philosophy' and 'Mysticism': 'Sūfism and Philosophy Are Neighbors and Visit Each Other'. Fa-Inna at-Taṣawwuf Wa-t-Tafalsuf Yatajāwarāni Wa-Yatazāwarāni," 24.
[86] Ibrahim Kalin, *Açık Ufuk: İyi, Doğru ve Güzel Düşünmek Üzerine* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2021), 42–43.
[87] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 161.
[88] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 96.
[89] For more on Hadot's reading of Mullā Ṣadrā, see: Sajjad H. Rizvi, "Philosophy as a Way of Life in the World of Islam: Applying Hadot to the Study of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1635)," *Bulletin of SOAS* 75, no. 1 (2012): 33–45. For more on philosophy existing as a way of life from the ancients leading up to the modern period, see: Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995).
[90] William C. Chittick, "Reason, Intellect, and Consciousness in Islamic Thought," in *Reason, Spirit and the Sacral in the New Enlightenment Islamic Metaphysics Revived and Recent Phenomenology of Life*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (New York: Springer, 2011), 12.

people who would free themselves of their physical attachments and this quality was most prevalent among them. In support of this being the case, Ṣadrā asserts,

> A person is not considered or deemed among the ḥukamā' as long as he has not become aware of his spiritual aspect, […] [and] as long as he has not attained the skill of removing the garment of the physical body, until the body becomes in relation to him much like a shirt which he wears and removes from time to time.[91]

It is not a surprise then, when Ṣadrā a few pages later in the treatise laments of the state the field of philosophy has come to, stripped of all forms of spiritual and ascetic practice that make unveiling possible.[92] Moreover, reason is fundamental to the very component that makes unveiling possible, living a life in harmony with the Divine Command, the Law. Ṣadrā beautifully summarizes this imperative role that must be fulfilled by reason when he writes,

> The purpose of philosophical inquiry is to purely prepare the one on the path for an encounter with the horizon of the sacred land and that is the open horizon; and it will be as though it has knocked on the door of the unknown so that that which is sought may be effused upon the heart of the seeker.[93]

Hence, on the one hand Ṣadrā was aiming to situate reason and its limitations within a broader spectrum of knowing. On the other hand, he was aiming to re-emphasize the ultimate standard rational inquiry must strive for.

All this said, if we were to refer back to true knowledge, it is not that reason cannot attain *any* degree of knowledge of God either; reason simply cannot lead to any positive knowledge of this kind. As such, instead, it is able to provide one with the knowledge of what God is not. Hence, through reason we are able to understand God's incomparability as the utterly transcendent Real. In contrast, it is the imagination (*al-khayāl*) that makes it possible for the human being to feel a sense of affinity, closeness and likeness between himself and his Creator. This is because, unlike reason which demands to know the exact relationships, the imagination is well aware that the divine self-disclosure cannot be known with precision. After all, God can be thought of as

[91] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 92.
[92] Ibid., 96.
[93] Ibid., 114–15.

being both "x" and "not x", and neither "x" nor "not x."[94] As such, for the rational mind that aims to find a solution by settling for a given approach as the accurate representation of truth, this is insoluble. Hence, while one allows one to grasp God's transcendence, the other allows one to perceive through the multiplicity of His manifestations His immanence and closeness with the world of creation. On the one hand, His Unity is protected, on the other, a deist conception of Him is avoided. As such, for Ṣadrā, an awareness of what each faculty can and cannot offer allows one to essentially strike the balance between the two poles of *tanzīh* and *tashbīh*, recognizing God as incomparable in the place of incomparability and similar in the place of similarity. Furthermore, true knowledge comes forth when reason and imagination are able to inform one another without falling victim to claiming knowledge beyond their capabilities. It is at this point that the heart (*qalb*) comes to be explored as a higher epistemic tool, "beyond the stage of reason."[95]

2.5 The Supra-Rational Heart: Home of the Divine Presence

In demonstrating the superiority of the heart, Ṣadrā relies on a rather interesting quote attributed to Aristotle that is quite revealing of his reading of intellectual history. He writes,

> Beyond the domain of reason there is another domain, but it is for none other than the people of the end of time (*ākhir al-zamān*). […] The domain of senses was for the people of the beginning of time (*al-awā'il*) and their prophet was Idrīs and they contemplated with their senses on that which was in the skies, of the lights, of the planets, and the forms of the stars. Then there is the domain of estimation (*al-wahm*) and (*al-himmah*), and their prophet was Moses – peace be upon him- and when he was persecuted by the people, all of a sudden all seventy thousand of them were utterly destroyed. Then, the domain of reason (*al-'aql*) became dominant and this (corresponds) to our time. Then, there is a domain beyond the domain of reason which will be for the people of the end of time (*ākhir al-zamān*).[96]

Right afterwards, Ṣadrā adds, "Then, later on, those who came after him [i.e., Aristotle] among the philosophers said: "Aristotle was right and the prophet of these people [i.e.,

[94] Saad Ismail, "The God Beyond Grasp: Theology Lessons From A Popular Qawwali," *Ta'seel Commons Contextualizing Islam(S)*, n.d.
[95] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 111.
[96] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 72.

the people of the end of time] is Muhammad the son of Abdullah the Arab – may peace and blessings be upon him and his family – verily he comprehended matters none other before him had."[97] In what follows, Ṣadrā proceeds to add that the Prophet was someone who carried all potencies, perceptive (*idrākiyyah*) and physical (*taḥrīkiyyah*) in perfection.[98] While I was unable to find a reliable source confirming the authenticity of this reference, it seems more important to focus on why Ṣadrā chose to use it. In this respect, three realizations draw forth. First, it seems Ṣadrā draws a link between the Ancient Greek philosophers and the Sufis of the Islamic intellectual tradition. Second, Ṣadrā trying to demonstrate the superiority of unveiling, which is the mode of knowing of the heart, through the words of Aristotle is telling as far as how important it was to Ṣadrā in bringing the philosophers, through their own references, closer to the Sufis. Finally, this long quote by Aristotle is also revealing when it comes to Islam, as the final religion, being inclusive of all that came before it. Similarly, the heart, as the higher epistemic tool, needs to be inclusive of all that was lower.

Furthermore, in contrast to the delimiting and constraining nature of reason, the heart possesses the meaning of acceptance and receptivity, as in *qabūl* or *qābil*, not to mention the power of transformation, as in *taqallub*.[99] In this respect, according to Ṣadrā, the heart (*qalb*) "is limited neither by reason nor by imagination, neither by rational thought nor by the perception of forms. The heart represents the dimension of the human reality that brings together both kinds of perception in harmony, and since these cannot be maintained simultaneously, the heart 'fluctuates' from one vision to the next."[100] As such, the heart is able to bring together non-delimitation with delimitation and incomparability with similarity. Hence, "the heart's level of

[97] Ibid.
[98] He describes the perfection of the internal as well as external qualities of the Prophet. Ibid., 73–74.
[99] As Nasr explains, the Qur'an associates knowledge and understanding with the heart, though it is mentioned on various levels of its reality, including the terms *fu'ād*, *sirr*, and *lubb*, all of which are used by Ṣadrā in the Īqāẓ. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Heart of the Faithful Is the Throne of the All-Merciful," in *Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East.*, ed. James S. Cutsinger (Bloomington: World Wisdom, Inc., 2004), 34,35. Süleyman Uludağ, "Kalb," in *TDV Islam Araştırmaları Ansiklopedisi*, 2001, 230.
[100] William C. Chittick, "On Sufi Psychology: A Debate between the Soul and the Spirit," in *Consciousness and Reality: Studies in Memory of Toshihiko Izutsu*, ed. S.J. Ashtiyani et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 359.

consciousness involves awareness of all meaning, not simply those that pertain to one standpoint or the other."[101]

In asserting this, Ṣadrā turns to the famous ḥadīth qudsī where God says, "My heavens and My earth embrace Me not, but the heart of My faithful servant does embrace Me."[102] Thus, as the unlimited realm of human consciousness and awareness,[103] Ṣadrā approaches the heart as being home to the Divine Presence. To illustrate this, Ṣadrā draws a beautiful likeness between the heart, which is at the center of the human microcosm, and the Ka'ba which is at the very center of people's worship of the Divine. Similarly, he explains that, much like the Ka'ba which was the first place of worship designated for human beings, the heart as the center of the spiritual aspect of the person is the first thing to move within the person and the last to be still.[104] Ṣadrā continues, writing that the heart is the "place of peace and light guiding [the self] to Allah." He adds, "Whomever among the wayfarers who have become perplexed at the hands of ignorance will become safe from the misguidance of imaginary devils and other [obfuscating] occurrences within the self [as in] […] the demands of the carnal soul."[105] One of the most interesting components of this metaphor however is the way in which Ṣadrā utilizes it to reveal the dynamic between reason and the heart. He writes that while the heart is the Ka'ba, reason is the Station of Abraham (*Maqām Ibrāhīm*). This is rather poignant because it reminds us of the famous narration regarding the building of the Ka'ba. In this regard, when Abraham was no longer able to reach the top of the Ka'ba to continue building it, we know that he positioned a large stone on top of which he could stand so that he could reach to the top of the Ka'ba. To this, the point from which he did this is known as the Station of Abraham. However, when we refer back to this being used by Ṣadrā as an analogy to indicate the relationship between reason and the heart, we find there to be a harmonious dynamic, far from the dichotomies informing Western philosophy where the heart is many a times reduced to a sentimental, romantic aspect of the human self, as reason is reduced to the

[101] Ibid., 360.
[102] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 105. Later on, Ṣadrā will write that the expansiveness of the heart comes through turning completely to Allah and embodying the station of servanthood. (al-ubūdiyyah).
[103] Chittick, "On the Cosmology of Dhikr," 62.
[104] In fact, as Nasr explains, this is why Rumi in his reference to this inner identification between the *qalb* and the Ka'ba, builds yet another connection, this time with the *qiblah*, which is also the supreme goal of pilgrimage to Mecca. Nasr, "The Heart of the Faithful Is the Throne of the All-Merciful," 35.
[105] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 80.

cognitive generations of the mind relying on material phenomena. By contrast, much like what Abraham did at this station, reason is meant to be the solid ground from which the heart can hope to reach the unlimited potential it was created with. This allows us to the further clarify the relationship between reason and the heart as the means by which Peripatetic philosophers and the Sufis respectively argued for the achievement of certainty.

Regarding reason, an important note to make here is that while Ṣadrā mostly uses the word *ʿaql* to indicate the faculty of reason, at times, he uses the same word in a way that suggests it has transcended its limitations. In such cases, it can be understood to mean the "intellect". When used to mean the intellect, we find Ṣadrā using it synonymously with the heart (*qalb*), which, as has become clear by now, is the superior mode of knowing the human relies on in the case of spiritual unveiling. In this regard, the use of *ʿaql*, as in the meaning of "the intellect" and the heart (*qalb*) synonymously is perhaps most clearly discernible in Ṣadrā's reference to them as "guiding lights." He writes, "[the heart] is a guidance and light, through which one is guided to the Real."[106] Similarly, he writes, "The intellect is the light of God, that which is not light does not guide [one] to light."[107] Another clear example of Ṣadrā using them interchangeably is when he mentions the journey of the intellect moving towards perfection in the language of the Peripatetic philosophers, before moving on to, right afterwards, write about the stages of the heart on the path to self-annihilation in greater detail. However, in this respect, one wonders why he would abandon the usage of the single word *ʿaql*, when it can indicate both modes of knowing. In this regard, Chittick suggests that Ṣadrā, who follows in the approach of the Sufis in this respect, perhaps, like them, preferred using the heart (*qalb*) and the mode of knowing it offered, unveiling (*kashf*), in "order to avoid confusion between the two senses of one term."[108]

[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid., 100. It is worth noting here that they are used interchangeably in the Qur'an as well, as in the verses. (Q 50:37) and (Q 22:46) Çavuş, "İmam Gazzâlî'nin İhyâ'sında Akıl ve Kalp," 27.
[108] Chittick, "Mysticism Versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The Al-Ṭūsī, Al-Qūnawī Correspondence," 91.

2.6 Gradation in Knowing: Overcoming the Conflict of Methods

In the *Īqāẓ*, Ṣadrā adopts the approach of the Sufis and maintains that "knowledge of the Real from the Real comes only through the heart, not reason."[109] In this regard, Ṣadrā's pronounced criticism of rational inquiry and subsequent assertion of the higher degree of knowing being in the form of unveiling and witnessing, the locus of which is the heart, makes it easy to assume that the two modes are in conflict or that Ṣadrā was trying to advocate for one method at the denial or abandonment of the other. However, what we find is a far more subtle and intricate exposition for the multi-layered and dynamic nature of knowledge. Here, we find that Ṣadrā's goal was to situate each function in its proper place across the one, graded and dynamic spectrum of existence whereby each could seek the highest potential for itself, all while knowing when to self-limit.

On this note, alluding to the Qur'anic verse, Ṣadrā proclaims, "For each potential there is an ordained lot/portion of authority."[110] As such, while each potency offers a set of opportunities, each is also characterized by a set of limitations. According to Ṣadrā, with respect to recognizing these limitations, the case of the five senses contrasts with that of the four internal faculties on three counts.[111] On the one hand, the five senses do not have any free choosing and therefore are compelled to act within the boundaries already set for them. For example, eyesight cannot see black as white. Second, the five senses not only do not transgress their bounds but they also remain incapable of the each other's acts. As Ṣadrā explains, for example, "Eyesight does not hear, and hearing does not see."[112] Similarly, hearing does not claim to be capable of smelling. Third, each of the five senses does not deliver its message over the other. As such, hearing does not deliver its message to eyesight, for example. Ṣadrā uses the analogy of a messenger to describe what he means here. He writes that the five external potencies, much like messengers, deliver their message but have no understanding for that which

[109] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 112.
[110] Seyyed Hossein Nasr et al., eds., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2017), Najm 53:23.
[111] According to Ṣadrā, the human person's potencies are restricted to nine in number, five of them being external and four of them being internal. While the external ones are: hearing, eyesight, smell, taste and touch, the internal ones are: sense-conception (*hiss*), imagination (*khayal*), estimation (*wahm*) and intellect (*'aql*). Sadr al-Din Al-Shirazi, *The Elixir of the Gnostics* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2003), 23.
[112] Al-Shirazi, *The Elixir of the Gnostics*, 23.

they are carrying.[113] In contrast, the remaining four internal potencies act freely and are able to deliver their messages to one another, aware of their meaning. "Each of them informs of the report, understands it, and returns with the response."[114] Accordingly, "reflective thought delivers the forms that it cogitates over to sense-intuition, sense-intuition [delivers them] over to memory, and the remembering [potency] recalls them to the intellective potency.[115] As we mentioned earlier, however, the internal senses are similarly marked by certain limitations. Ṣadrā's discussion in this regard reveals his attempt to situate each potency in its proper place, all while motivating it to seek the highest possibilities for itself.

Ṣadrā admits that it is not intrinsic for the internal faculties to accept limitation and to recognize the superiority of another, for, after all, each potential is veiled in itself. In this regard, he explains, "Each potency among the potencies, whether it be intelligible, soulish or estimative from among the divine theophonies accepts that which is fitting and suitable for its state; and denies that which conflicts with it and is not provided for it by its nature/potency."[116] Thus, unable to see and comprehend that which is beyond what its nature provides, "much like the case of the angels contesting among themselves with regard to Adam, the faculties content between themselves for authority."[117] This is what becomes the case between the intellect and estimation as well, as Ṣadrā writes,

> the intellect and the estimative faculty, indeed both of them claim authority and do not accept the authority of the other. In this respect, the intellect claims that through its theoretical faculty it can comprehend the realities (i.e., by relying upon its demonstrative abilities); and it is not so; for the intellect can only comprehend the universal concepts and the necessary concomitants of existents. […] Similarly, the estimative faculty claims its own authority, and denies the intellect with regard to all falls outside of its domain.[118]

This discord among the perceptive faculties is of particular importance to Ṣadrā because it is only through an awareness of the function of each that the seeker can hope to achieve knowledge of God. In this respect, much like the playing of an instrument,

[113] Ibid., 24.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 67.
[117] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 68.
[118] Ibid., 67–68.

while any way of playing it will certainly generate sound, it is only the correct alignment, proportion and proper interplay among the relevant components that generates music. The case of the human being is quite similar from this perspective. Indeed, all human beings perform various functions but not all are able to make "music" in the real sense of the term, not all will be able to attain certainty and perfection, through the proper use of each faculty. Furthermore, the secret to what makes it possible for each potency to serve its role without becoming a hindrance to another is hidden within a correct ordering between them and a clear acknowledgement for there being a hierarchy. Ṣadrā seems to be echoing Ibn Arabi here, who similarly explains, "Each faculty in man has a playing field in which it roams and beyond which it should not step. If it goes beyond its field, it falls into error and makes mistakes and is described as having deviated from its straight way."[119]

In this respect, while Ṣadrā situates unveiling and witnessing as a superior form of knowledge compared to rational inquiry, he asserts that rational inquiry and spiritual unveiling are not mutually exclusive, nor necessarily in conflict. After all, as Kalin explains, "what is beyond reason, does not mean anti-reason; it means supra-rational, that which transcends the cognitive competencies of the human."[120] As such, relying on the principle of unity and gradation, Ṣadrā maintains that supra-rational, spiritual unveiling, cannot be in conflict with sound reason. Hence, the role of rational inquiry needs to be approached as a preparatory tool and not an end in itself. As such, on the one hand, Ṣadrā deems a theoretical foundation a requirement for spiritual unveiling. On the other hand, he deemed remaining with theoretical (rational) knowledge as a failure to rise to the occasion of meeting the ultimate standard set for knowledge.[121]

What is striking in this notion is that, each potency, even with its limitations, is not considered as being independent of the Source from which it has become manifest. According to Ṣadrā, in proceeding from the same source, the heart cannot be considered as being devoid of intellectual content, nor can reason be considered as being devoid of any spiritual content.[122] As such, it is not possible for true unveiling

[119] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 165.
[120] Kalin, *Reason and Rationality in the Qur'an*, 16.
[121] Acar, "Molla Sadra'nın Bilgi Anlayışı," 9.
[122] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 108.Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mulla Ṣadrā (Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Shīrāzī)*, 5.

and witnessing to be unreasonable. This way, Ṣadrā argues for a unified approach where rational inquiry and spiritual unveiling and witnessing inform one another. This can be observed in his reference of al-Suhrawardī's work *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* as well, where he quotes, "Just as the wayfarer, if he does not have demonstrative potential, he is incomplete/imperfect; so is the rationalist, if he doesn't have with him the witnessing of the signs […], he too is incomplete, irreputable and without knowledge of the Divine."[123] In fact, it is in this regard that Ṣadrā is harshly critical of the pseudo-Sufis in his other treatise, *Kasr aṣnām al-Jāhiliyya*, where he "admonishes them [pretentious ascetics] for giving up sapiential knowledge in the name of pure asceticism. Without the knowledge of the truth, Ṣadrā held, no ascetic ritual has meaning."[124]

All in all, while one would like to draw clear lines between these modes of knowing, namely reason and heart, what we find in the *Īqāẓ* is that Ṣadrā approaches perception in a more fluid and holistic manner. As such, much like the gradation in existence, knowledge is constructed as being graded as well, with the human engaging with reality in a variety of modes. Ṣadrā writes, "while the Divine self-disclosure (*tajallī*) is one and His manifestation over things is one, in terms of the multiplicity of appearances and the plurality of manifestations, He reveals Himself in all things in keeping with that thing's degree."[125] Hence, it follows, each human faculty, whether it be the senses, estimation, imagination or reason, corresponds to a certain degree of consciousness and it is in acknowledging the function of each faculty and the level of perception it provides that the wayfarer is able to become aware of their interplay and thereby make true headway. Here, we clearly find that the simplicity of existence (*baṣīṭ al-ḥaqīqah*) makes it so that each station of existence, as it proceeds higher and higher, comes to carry the levels of meaning provided by lower faculties in a simpler manner. Hence, the higher the epistemic tool, the more one is able to find the lower levels carried within it. It follows that as one grows deeper and higher in one's ability to "know" once one comes to carry and rely upon all the lower levels as well. This, once again, demonstrates an inherent interplay between the faculties and their complementary workings. Hence, it is not at the expense of abandoning or denying

[123] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 95–96.
[124] Kalin, *Mullā Ṣadrā*, 16.
[125] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 61.

lower levels of perception that one can earn higher stations but rather through their integration in serving the ultimate goal.

2.7 Modes of Knowledge Ranked in Degrees

Ṣadrā brings attention to the correlation between knowledge and the degrees one can attain by referring to the way in which beginnings inform ends. He writes, *"*If you have come to know the ranking of people according to their knowledge of the Real, you have come to know their degree in arrival *(wuṣūl)*, for *v*erily the beginning informs the end and the agent is one with the aim."[126] Accordingly, the way in which a person seeks and acts is based on the knowledge he beholds. He continues by explaining that we become that which we dedicate our intelligence and knowledge to. If we pursue physical and sensate things, what we arrive at and achieve, once again is of that kind and order. However, if we dedicate ourselves to those things that are spiritual and divine, as in the case of complete servanthood and turning to none other than Allah, once again, what we attain will be of this kind. As such, what Ṣadrā's description goes to show is that there are no breaks between our inner and outer worlds. We may like to think that they can both remain separate and compartmentalized from one another. However, in fact, what we think comes to decide on how we act and our actions. So, they are imbued with a certain degree and kind of consciousness, that once again impacts those of others. "The beginning of knowing is the end of action. The beginning of the purpose is the end of arrival."[127] This will have even greater significance in the upcoming chapter as we explore the way in which the purity of one's intention impacts what one can come to attain through spiritual practice.

Furthermore, just as there is a hierarchy among the degrees of knowledge, so is there among the seekers. In this respect, Ṣadrā writes that there are four kinds of knowledge and he ranks them in ascending order, name and form (*ism wa rasm*), knowledge (*'ilm*), witnessing (*'ayn*) and truth (*ḥaqq*), respectively. Ṣadrā explains,

[126] Ibid., 109.
[127] Ibid.

> The name and the form are for the exoteric ulama (*al-'ulamā' al-dhahiriyyūn*) and for this reason they have been named as the literalist scholars, for their command of the forms. [As for] knowledge, it is for the elite scholars […] and, witnessing is for the elite among the saints. [Finally], the truth is for the elite among the elite of the saints and the prophets – peace and blessings be upon all of them. God has blessed us with the guidance of their lights and by taking as example their legacies.[128]

Lastly, it is also worth mentioning here that, once again, much like the simplicity of existence, whereby the highest level of existence comes to subsume all the lower levels of existence in simpler form, here, the highest level among the seekers of knowledge carries those who succeed in combining within themselves all the lower levels of understanding. Hence, they are the ones who succeed in bringing together the means of rational inquiry (*al-baḥth*) with spiritual unveiling (*kashf*) and mystical experience (*dhawq*) through the grace of the Divine. After all, as Ṣadrā, time and time again asserts, only the full realization of a given station provides the foundation for the possibility of attaining that which is higher.[129] Hence, for Ṣadrā, there is no fast track to knowledge of God and thereby the realities of things "as they are" and one must bear the labor pains of growth at each and every step as they become more conscious and aware of their origin as well as return.

2.8 Conclusion

This second chapter showed how in grounding everything in the Real, in *wujūd*, Ṣadrā's core epistemological concern became knowledge of God. Thus, Ṣadrā maintained that knowledge was not a mental act of representation but rather a true engagement with Reality in the form of unveiling and witnessing. In this effort, he put forth a critique of rational inquiry, writing that only the purified heart could become a locus for the self-disclosure of the Divine. Through the principle of unity and gradation, Ṣadrā held the view that there are different modes of knowledge with each standing for a certain degree of engagement with existence. As such, each was essential. That being said, bringing the different currents under the rubric of the Sufis,

[128] Ibid., 93.
[129] Ibid., 110–11.

he maintained that, though complementary, these modes could not be deemed equal, since the source of knowledge each referred to, by definition, pertained to a separate station. Hence, within the hierarchy he established, it was essential for the lower levels to recognize their limits, as it was the responsibility of the higher levels to recognize their need to integrate lower levels in attaining that which lay further and beyond. Hence, supra-rational unveiling could not be attained without an intellectual foundation and could not, by definition, be unreasonable.

Nonetheless, ultimately, according to Ṣadrā, without practice the veils that prevent the seeker from "seeing" are not lifted. As such, while the philosophers' purely philosophical expositions provided a view of reality that was in complete harmony with faith in God and the practice of religion, as Chittick admits, "belief and practice in Islam was not a necessary part of their perspective."[130] In other words, Peripatetic philosophy did not demand that one follow the Law or the Way. Unlike the philosophers, according to Ṣadrā, for one to attain a personal, direct understanding of God through unveiling, one needed to practice the *Sharī'ah* or exoteric Law while also following a spiritual way, through the friendship and guidance of one who had already trod the path, knew of its dangers, had overcome them and knew how to guide others along the path. This reminds us very much of Plato's cave. Once again, only those who have actually seen what is beyond and realized the images in the cave to be mere shadows of the true light can guide the way.[131] Hence, just as there could be no practice or praise in the absence of knowledge, which this chapter put forth, there couldn't be true knowledge in the absence of practice, which will be the subject matter of the upcoming and final chapter. Furthermore, without good deeds (*'amal ṣāliḥ*), righteousness (*taqwā*), and the acts of obedience and servanthood, the heart could not become purified and thereby serve as a locus for God's presence. As such, the upcoming chapter will be dedicated to exploring questions that pertain to the nature of this spiritual journey that awaits wayfarers as they try to attain perfection.

[130] Chittick, "Mysticism Versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: The Al-Ṭūsī, Al-Qūnawī Correspondence," 90.
[131] Kalin, *Açık Ufuk: İyi, Doğru ve Güzel Düşünmek Üzerine*, 35.

CHAPTER III
THE PRACTICE OF 'AS IF SEEING': SERVANTHOOD AS THE GREATEST STATION OF PRAISE

The previous chapter demonstrated that knowledge of God was the foundation upon which the seeker could embark on the tough terrain of spiritual discoveries. This knowledge, in having as its goal and object the Real Himself, was beyond the bounds of theoretical thinking and for this reason, Ṣadrā maintained that it could not be attained through rational means alone, but rather required unveiling (*kashf*) and presential witnessing (*shuhūd*). In addition, Ṣadrā held that this direct form of knowing could not take place without following the example of the Prophet[1] and the grace (*'ināyah*) of God.[2] Furthermore, unveiling, as Ṣadrā put forth earlier, took place through the removal of veils, of darkness and light.[3] This exposition provided greater insight into Ṣadrā's claims for the validity of a Sufi epistemology or mystical epistemology on the one hand and the need for there to be an intellectual foundation to spiritual journeying on the other. After all, it is important to remember that even the most perfect among the perfect human beings, Prophet Muhammad was commanded by God to say, "'My Lord! Increase me in knowledge!'"[4] In fact, Ibn al-'Arabī, relying upon this verse elaborates at length on the eminence and rank of knowledge, as well as its quality to deliver the seeker from error.[5] Furthermore, from this vantage point, relying upon al-Suhrawardī's famous assertion, Ṣadrā maintained that those who seek purely through ascetic means as well as those who seek purely through rational or demonstrative means were both imperfect. Hence, there could not be complete spiritual insight at the highest level in the absence of an intellectual foundation, nor could intellectual growth meet its potential at the avoidance of abiding by the Law towards attaining that which surpassed it. It was in this light that Ṣadrā asserted, "Just as the wayfarer, if he does not have demonstrative potential, he is incomplete/imperfect; so is the rationalist, if he doesn't have with him the witnessing

[1] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn,* 70.
[2] Chittick, "Ibn 'Arabi on the Benefit of Knowledge," 132.
[3] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn,* 101,111.
[4] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 805. (Q 20:114)
[5] Chittick, "Ibn 'Arabi on the Benefit of Knowledge," 127.

of the signs of God's spiritual kingdom (*malakūt*); he too is incomplete, irreputable and without knowledge of the Divine."[6]

However, one wonders at this point, how, in fact, these veils can be removed towards making this direct and true form of knowing possible. As such, this third chapter will focus exactly on the response Ṣadrā provides in the *Īqāẓ* to this object of inquiry. In this respect, according to Ṣadrā, it is true practice that makes possible the removal of the veils. He writes,

> Among the things you must know, my dear, may Allah guide you to the reality of His knowledge and effuse upon you the lights of His mercy, these high stations and great degrees are not attained *purely* through the reading of the contents of books, without treading the path of the Real/wayfaring and turning away from the world of creation and disciplining the soul and spiritually struggling with the potencies.[7]

In support of this, Ṣadrā contrasts those who know with those who actually become, writing about there being a great difference between the two by relying upon a poem describing love and contrasting the one who can attempt a theoretical description of it and the one who actually is experiencing it.[8] Furthermore, according to Ṣadrā, engaging in right activity towards purifying the heart so that it may become a locus for the self-disclosure of the Divine is living a life in complete harmony with the Divine Command, which he refers to as ascetic discipline of the Law (*al-riyāḍah al-shar'iyyah*) with purity of intention (*al-nīyyah al-khāliṣah*) and righteousness (*taqwā*). In what follows, I will elaborate on the way in which Ṣadrā conceives of philosophy very much as a way of life in this respect and the stages he foresees over the course of the spiritual growth of the person.

3.1 Clouded by Forgetfulness: In Need of Awakening

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the human person is unique in his capacity to know God, both as a being created in His Image and as a being with an undetermined station, which makes him capable of moving freely between stations, leading up to perfection. However, as Ṣadrā so strikingly expresses, the truth of the matter is that the human person, though embodying such potential at varying degrees, also happens to

[6] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 95–96.
[7] Ibid., 94–95.
[8] Ibid., 93.

be "buried under the veils of darkness concealing the Real, held captive in the hands of multiplicity and by the desires/passions, sleeping/unconscious of the world of unity, in the resting place of ignorance."[9] Thus, Ṣadrā is quick to admit that, coupled with this unique potential to attain to the greatest heights in proximity to the Divine, the human person also has the greatest weakness to fall to stations even lower than the most denigrate of animals. In this regard, Ṣadrā explains,

> This human reality, the perfection and nobility of which you have learned, if not perfected through knowledge and practice, can perhaps lead to one becoming even lower than the lowest and most denigrate of animals, through the following of the desires and the devil and his attribution with falsity in knowledge and the practice of disbelief.[10]

In support of this being the case, Ṣadrā also alludes to the verse, "they have hearts with which they understand not; they have eyes with which they see not; and they have ears with which they hear not. Such as these are like cattle. Nay, they are even further astray. It is they who are heedless."[11] Ṣadrā then elaborates even further, asserting that indeed what is meant by understanding, seeing and hearing here is not that which is present in any complete animal or as in the physical tools and faculties, rather it is what pertains to the substance of the "thinking/rational soul and real heart."[12] (*al-nafs al-nuṭqī wa al-qalb al-ḥaqīqī*) To make this point clearer, he turns to the verse, "Truly it is not the eyes that go blind, but it is hearts within breasts that go blind."[13] Hence, the coupling of knowledge with practice is imperative for the human to be freed from the shackles of imperfection, limitation, ignorance and privation, capable of seeking perfection.

From this perspective, his divine image clouded by forgetfulness, far from the development of perfection attributes, the human person was fundamentally in need to be awakened. In fact, this was the case for Adam as well. After all, his weakness had been "to forget" and the cure indicated by the Qur'an was for him "to remember" (*dhikr*). In this respect, much like the case in the Qur'an where the same word used for remembrance (*dhikr*) is that which is used for prophetic messages, though in such cases it is translated as "reminder, we find Ṣadrā putting the burden and responsibility of

[9] Ibid., 87.
[10] Ibid., 84..
[11] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 471–72. (Q 7:179)
[12] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 84.
[13] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 841. (Q 22:46)

being a reminder, or an awakener on the shoulders of those who have, to varying degrees, been on the receiving end of God's grace and knowledge. In this respect, he writes that the reminders and awakeners are, in order,

> the prophets [1]– peace and blessings be upon them – then the imams and the saints, [2]- peace be upon them – then the knowers of Allah with certainty who are witnessing of Him and who have reached Him in reality and have inherited from Him, [3] and finally the exoterists among the knowers through the rules prescribed by the prophets and the saints. [4][14]

Ṣadrā is also explicit regarding the nature of this awakening. He writes, "The knowers awaken the people from the trappings of forgetfulness and the sleep of ignorance by reminding them of the Real and His Unity, the nature of their beginning and their end, the reality of all that has been brought down by the prophets in the form of divine rulings, among others."[15] Moreover, referring to the possible occurrence of such an awakening as the wayfarer being "met by a ray among the rays of God's Mercy," we find Ṣadrā approaching the notion of remembrance, on the one hand, as that which can only come from God, while, on the other hand, as being possible to realize on the condition that the human person responds to the Divine calling. It is at this point that Ṣadrā turns to the nature of the "response" that is incumbent upon the seeker.

3.2 Voluntary Death (*al-mawt al-irādī*) and Spiritual Birth (*al-wilādah al-ma'nawiyyah*)

Ṣadrā proclaims, "As long as the human person remains at the level of animals in appearance and in origin/source, the origin of the lowly world, he cannot be reborn into the spiritual life."[16] In this regard, Ṣadrā asserts that becoming truly conscious of one's innate spiritual capacity and actualizing the divine image towards fulfilling the role of being His vicegerent on earth[17] is dependent upon what he refers to in the *Īqāẓ* as, "voluntary death" (*al-mawt al-irādī*).[18] Although seemingly paradoxical, what Ṣadrā means by dying here as a condition for awakening is, essentially, dying to the state of forgetfulness (*nisyān*) and heedlessness (*ghaflah*),[19] which for Ṣadrā is dying

[14] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 87.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid., 85.
[17] Chittick, "The Soul as the Mirror Image of God," 2.
[18] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 85, 91, 110.
[19] William C. Chittick, "Slumber Seizes Him Not," *Parabola* 30, no. 1 (2005): 38.

to the "desiring, angering and pleasurable potencies"[20] within oneself. However, the way in which Ṣadrā conceives of this "death" requires further elaboration, for unless successful in this effort, one cannot become aware of one's "spiritual aspect" (*al-jiha al-muqaddasa*) whereby the veils preventing the seeker from attaining true knowledge of Divine, which is the ultimate goal of true knowledge, cannot be attained.

As is part of Islamic faith, all Muslims proclaim the fact of there being a return to God (*maʿād*), as alluded to in the Qur'anic verse, "Every soul shall taste death."[21] Given physical death is a certainty on the horizon and an unavoidable reality shaping the human condition, the Sufis chose to refer to it as "compulsory death."[22] A particular verse of the Qur'an has been most relevant in this regard. In it God addresses the soul that has just died, saying "You were heedless of this. Now, We have *removed* from you your cover; so today your sight is piercing."[23] This removal, or unveiling occurs at the moment of physical death.[24] In response, Ṣadrā puts considerable emphasis on a notion which he refers to as "voluntary death" (*al-mawt al-irādī*). He explains that in order for one to be "born into" their spiritual aspect, which the Sufis expressed as being "*fatḥ*," or opening, they have to, essentially choose to freely return to God, here and now, before meeting the ultimate end of physical death. Ṣadrā mentions that this spiritual birth is also referred to as unity, (al-*tawḥīd*), the middle resurrection (*al-qiyāmah al-wusṭā*), or the annihilation of the face of servanthood in the face of the Lordship. As such, the *Īqāẓ* emphasizes the quest for the voluntary death that will yield the lifting of the veil already in this life. In support of this notion, Ṣadrā refers to two hadiths of the Prophet, namely, "Die before your Death."[25] And "Whoever wants to see a walking dead, let him look at me."[26] In the *Īqāẓ*, Ṣadrā also utilizes a saying attributed to Jesus from the Gospel saying, "No one will enter the sovereignty of the heavens until he is born twice."[27]

[20] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 85.
[21] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 182. (Q 3:185)
[22] Chittick, "On the Cosmology of Dhikr," 50.
[23] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 1268. (Q 50:22)
[24] However, there is quite an extensive literature regarding whether or not one will actually have sight of the Real and if so, in what way. For more on a review of the varying interpretations, see: Michel Chodkiewicz, "The Vision of God," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society* XIV (1993).
[25] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 85.
[26] Ibid., 92.
[27] Chittick, "The Paradox of the Veil in Sufism," 61. (John 3:3)

Moreover, Ṣadrā writes that people are disillusioned when they think of this world as being an end or possessing reality in and of itself. On this note, Ṣadrā writes, relying on Qur'anic phrases, that "the life of this world is naught but diversion and play. And surely the Abode of the Hereafter is life indeed, if they but knew."[28] As such, Ṣadrā maintains that unless a person "dies" to the trappings and desires that come of this world and he is unable to earn the beautiful life that comes through voluntary death and spiritual birth, he will not be able to earn a station before the Divine in the Afterlife. Furthermore, unless the human person disengages (*yatajarrad*) his essence (*dhātahu*) from all the veils (*ughshiyah*) and garments (*lubūsāt*) of possibility and imperfection, Ṣadrā explains, he will not be able to come to look upon "his spiritual/sacred aspect and the Divine Essence, the lights of the unknown and the secrets/mysteries of unity, will not become manifest to him."[29] Moreover, Ṣadrā maintains that the only way in which this second birth and the spiritual life (i.e., *al-wilādah al-thāniyah* or *al-ḥayāt al-ma'nawiyyah*) can come about is through having knowledge (*iqtinā' al-'ulūm*) and abiding by the Law (*ādāb shar'iyyah*).[30] Shortly after, Ṣadrā elaborates, writing, "Some realizers have said […] that spiritual birth […] depends on [the fulfillment] of four requirements, under which come all religious and intellectual commands (*ādāb shar'iyyah and aqliyyah*); and they are, faith (*al-īmān*), repentance (*al-tawbah*), ascetic practice (*al-zuhd*), and servanthood (*al-'ibādah*)."[31] While Ṣadrā quips right after these words that the details to each of these requirements cannot be explored here, his following description of the stages that come on the journey of the seeker appear to correspond to each of these four requirements.

3.3 On the Path to Self-Annihilation

Once the seeker has been reminded of his source of origin and the destination to which he will return, along with the prophetic guidance he will need in getting there, "he will be internally enlightened through the light of faith first and then by the lights of the religious rulings in the form of religious practice, because for each [practice] there is a light specific to it through which the veils of darkness are uplifted and the carnal

[28] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 982. (Q 29:64)
[29] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 110.
[30] Ibid., 85, 87.
[31] Ibid., 87.

desires, expressed as sins and misdeeds [prevented]."[32] The stage that will follow this initial step of faith is an awareness for the fact the physical world is transient and temporary and not an end in itself. He explains that, "if he awakens from the sleep of heedlessness (*ghaflah*) and becomes aware that beyond these physical and therefore temporary pleasures are greater, more enduring ones and that beyond these stations are stations higher, he will ask for forgiveness for his preoccupation with those things that are prohibited by the religion and he will take it upon himself to turn fully to the Divine." [33] In doing so, Ṣadrā writes that the person will be able to move past "his worldly curiosities and become desiring of the perfections for the hereafter."[34]

After the initial steps of faith, followed by repentance, Ṣadrā admits that the seeker who has embarked on this journey[35] of letting go of his lowly self and turning to the Divine, will find himself as a stranger in a foreign land and will need a guide and friend who has already tread the same path. He explains, "The seeker must have a friend to befriend him and a guide who can guide him on the path. Therefore, he will be befriended by he who has this orientation and knowledge of the path, and he is the *shaykh*."[36] Interestingly enough, Ṣadrā goes as far as to say that unless the seeker has faith in the knowledge of the *shaykh* and his practice, it is not possible for him to reap any benefit. Thus, the seeker must have full confidence and faith in his guide and be, in Ṣadrā's words, "as the dead is in the hands of the person washing his body."[37] As for the one who has attained to these highest stations, when teaching, it is his responsibility to perceive the station of the student before him, for as Ṣadrā makes clear, "communicating with he who has not tasted is a veil and disclosing to he who has not found is concealment."[38] As such, it is the responsibility of those who have attained direct knowledge to not disclose or reveal what they have received except for those who have, similarly, gone to such heights and been on the receiving end of the grace of the Divine.

[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., 87–88.
[34] Ibid., 88.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., 93–94, 99.Kalin, *Açık Ufuk: İyi, Doğru ve Güzel Düşünmek Üzerine*, 57–58.

Furthermore, once on the path, Ṣadrā writes that the seeker must free himself from the pleasures of this world and each and everything that will divert him from his goal. Alluding to the famous hadith narration where Gabriel, the angel of revelation, makes mention of the number of veils that had remained between him and his Lord at the point when he came in closest proximity to Him, Ṣadrā writes, "God has seventy thousand veils of light and darkness; were He to remove them, the glories of His Face would burn away everything perceived by the sight of His creatures."[39] Furthermore, when the Prophet asked, "O Gabriel! How close were you to Allah?" he responded, "I came to the point where there didn't remain between me and the Real more than seventy thousand veils […] [and] I had never been closer to Allah than as I was on this day."[40] Ṣadrā writes that if the veils between God and the teacher of the prophets (*mu'allim al-anbiyā'*) in closest proximity are as many as seventy thousand, "How will it be for the likes of me and you and the Lord Almighty?" From this point, Ṣadrā transitions into expressing that sacrificing one's "animality" (*ḥaywāniyyah*) in hopes of growing in proximity to the Divine constitutes the very first step of the real Islam (*al-islām al-ḥaqīqī*).

In this respect, Ṣadrā writes that the wayfarer will come to embrace three things, each of which appears to stand for a stage in the spiritual development of the seeker as part of meeting the third requirement of asceticism (*al-zuhd*).[41] He explains, "First, he must let go of paying attention to anything other than the Real/ turn his full attention to the Real. He must deny anything that deviates his heart from the Real and he must take on the attributes of piety (*al-war'*), righteousness (*al-taqwā*) and asceticism (*al-zuhd*)."[42] That being said, it is important to note here that, according to Ṣadrā, this does not mean a denial of the physical world to the point of pure asceticism. Rather, Ṣadrā writes that those who want to follow the way of the Prophet, who has a comprehensive source (*al-nasha' al-jāmi'ah*),[43] are able to "bring together treading the path of the Real through disengagement, asceticism, fasting, waking up for prayer at night with being together with the community, whether that be in the form of going to Friday prayers, attending wedding ceremonies, visiting the ill, participating in burials or helping in the

[39] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 101; Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 364.
[40] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 101.
[41] Semih Ceyhan, "Zühd," in *TDV Islam Araştırmaları Ansiklopedisi*, 2013.
[42] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 88-89.
[43] Ibid., 70.

preparation of the soldiers."[44] Though the examples are reflective of his time, the principle is clear; the perfected ones are able to harmoniously embody seemingly contradictory qualities. Spiritual practice is not meant to come at the expense of communal presence and activity. On a similar note, in commentary on the hadith of awakening, Ṣadrā writes, "None of the world's affairs occupy them, and no station veils them, *nor does buying or selling divert them from God's remembrance*."[45] This reminds us of Ṣadrā's assertion at the very beginning of the treatise when, with regard to the nature of the Divine, Ṣadrā had written that He was the Ultimate reflection of bringing together seeming contradictions. As such, those who attain the greatest heights as human beings come to be, much like the Divine, encompassing. On this note, Ṣadrā continues by providing Imam Ali as the ultimate example for someone, other than the Prophet, to have successfully come to embody attributes that were, in appearance, contradictory.[46] Another way of phrasing sacrificing one's animality is essentially acting from a place of constant consciousness and awareness of the Divine.

Accordingly, this first stage is simply acknowledging the fact that a preoccupation with the world, coupled with a lack of consciousness around its ontological origin, will simply result in one becoming even more overcome by darkness. As a consequence, this will "be[come] the greatest veil on the path to God,"[47] preventing one from being able to see things as they really are. Since the only real knowledge is knowledge of the Real, this is to assert that all other endeavors must be subservient to it. When Ṣadrā writes that the realities of things as they are in themselves are not unveiled, except for those who have understanding, he also goes on to express what he means by the people of understanding, explaining, "The people of understanding, they are in actuality the ascetics in this world and those who desire the Hereafter."[48] Once again, it is important to recognize here that Ṣadrā does not mean a denial of the affairs of this world. On the contrary, as Chittick explains, "certainly the affairs of this world need[ed] to be taken care of."[49] That being said, what is most important to recognize here is having the full

[44] Ibid., 71.
[45] Rustom, "Psychology, Eschatology, and Imagination in Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī's Commentary on the Hadith of Awakening," 16.
[46] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 71.
[47] Chittick, "Ibn 'Arabi on the Benefit of Knowledge," 131.
[48] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 98.
[49] Chittick, *The Heart of Islamic Philosophy : The Quest for Self Knowledge in the Teachings of Afdal Al-Dīn Al-Kāshānī*, 33.

awareness of the fact that while the body will disappear, it is the soul that will subsist.[50] Hence, the affairs of this world are valuable in as much as they contribute to the soul's growth and in preparation of one's journey to one's eventual, final destination.

Second, Ṣadrā writes that the seeker must use his potencies in keeping with the purpose for which they have been created and engage them in seeking a life that is in harmony with the Divine commands. Ṣadrā explains that achieving this requires practicing the Divine commands with pure intention, not from a place of desire or fear for any given outcome. Instead, one must remind oneself to be grateful for having been bestowed existence and thereby the ability to move from potentiality to actuality. Also, one must find pride and honor in associating with the Divine through servanthood. In this regard, Ṣadrā writes that listening to the counsel and speeches of the theosophers is far more beneficial in inspiring, encouraging and warning seekers than providing rational demonstrations. Here, interestingly enough, Ṣadrā even sights singing and the use of musical instruments as being particularly useful in internally motivating the seeker to act righteously.

Third, Ṣadrā writes that in order for the soul to become a mirror for the reflection of the Divine and a locus for His self-disclosures, the "mystery" (*al-sirr*) within must be purified. After all, as Ṣadrā writes, the clearer a mirror, the clearer and more perfect the image it can reflect. Thus, the dimmer or darker the mirror, the more unclear the image it reflects. Accordingly, when the heart is veiled by the screens of rust, lust and strong worldly temptation, the screens prevent one from being able to see the unseen world. In this respect, Ṣadrā writes that the seeker must question and hold accountable his soul constantly for the words and actions it commands. Towards this cause, Ṣadrā urges the seeker to question himself and his motives, even if that which it was directing oneself towards was an obligatory act in accordance with the prescriptive command. Here, Ṣadrā seems to indicate that the highest possibilities available to the human person are not within reach unless one is keenly attuned to and aware of one's limitations and shortcomings, for, as Ṣadrā writes, it is in the nature of the soul to love and be attached to the outcomes of its desires. Hence, Ṣadrā writes, one must show doubt, caution and constraint when it comes to its demands and not show trust

[50] Ibid., 34.

implicitly. Ṣadrā adds, "If the [seeker] becomes free of the soul [and its demands] and purifies his time and beautifies his life through the tastes he finds along the path of the Beloved, he will become internally enlightened."[51] Only then, Ṣadrā continues, can the lights of the unknown become manifest to the seeker. At this point, "if he tastes something of them, he will come to desire isolation, … and remembrance and become fully dedicated to complete cleanliness and ablution and servanthood and in a state of complete awareness when it comes to God's supervision (*murāqabah*) and (*muḥāsabah*)."[52] Each of these deliberate efforts attune one to a level of consciousness where one never loses sight of His presence. Rizvi expresses these efforts as informing the daily regimen of the wayfarers, writing, "at dawn, when the Sufi awoke, he would make a compact (*mu'āhada*) with himself that he would avoid both the temptations of the soul and body and would avoid all that distracted from the contemplation of the ultimate reality. Continual watchfulness over the self during the day was termed *murāqaba*. Finally, before sleeping, or generally at times of introspection, the Sufi would judge and consider his actions, both physical and mental, a process known as *muḥāsaba*."[53]

Moreover, "he will come to turn away from sensate business and the heart will become empty of love for it and he will internally [wish to] turn towards Allah the Real in totality. [Thereby] he will attain ecstasy (*wajd*), intoxication (*sakr*), eagerness (*shawq*), love (*maḥabbah*), *hayamān* and '*ashq*, and he will become annihilated each time before becoming fully annihilated from his self."[54] In this rather dense section, Ṣadrā essentially covers the number of spiritual stations one will realize on the path to self-annihilation (*al-fanā'*), at which point one will come to "witness heart meanings and hidden realities and spiritual lights of divine mysteries […] will be revealed to him."[55] Ṣadrā then says that at this final station the essence of the person becoming annihilated in the essence of the Divine Existence is referred to as "the station of unification" and

[51] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 90.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Rizvi, "Mysticism and Philosophy: Ibn 'Arabī and Mullā Ṣadrā," 229. Rizvi also moves on to build a connection between the term *prosokhê* used by the Stoics to refer to the philosophical vigilance and supervision of the soul and the three mentioned above belonging to the Sufi tradition that Mullā Ṣadrā inherited from Ibn al-'Arabī used, once again, for the supervision of the soul towards avoiding sins, temptations and false beliefs.
[54] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 90.
[55] Ibid.

"the station of unity" (*maqām al-jam' wa al-tawḥīd*).[56] In order to elucidate, Ṣadrā, as is usual of him, relies on metaphors and in this case writes that the human self at this point is much like a drop of water that has fallen into a river or a piece of ice that has melted away in the warmth of the rays of the sun.[57] In Chittick's words, this station of self-annihilation stands for the point where one has essentially "return[ed] to their original state of nonexistence as an immutable entity." As for Chodkiewicz, he expresses it in another rather striking way, writing that this is the point where "that which never was disappears and that which has never ceased to be remains."[58]

Following the seekers struggle to free themselves of human limitations and shortcomings towards adopting divine attributes at each step, the Divine manifests Himself through the seeker. Hence the famous hadith expressing, "I [the Real] love him. Then, when I love him, I am his hearing through which he hears, his sight through which he sees, his hand through which he grasps, and his foot through which he walks."[59] In this respect, addressing the seeker who has "freed his heart from the colors of this world"[60] and the Face of God having manifested Himself "like the rays of the sun upon the dark soil,"[61] Ṣadrā directly proclaims, "you will look without yourself at His Essence with His Essence. And for this reason, they have said: None knows Allah except Allah. And some [others] have said: If complete poverty has been attained, the light of Allah will become manifest."[62] At this point, in our subjectivist tendencies we

[56] However, Ṣadrā is well aware that these statements are open for criticism and he is quick to jump to the defense of the Sufis in order to avoid the occurrence of possible misunderstandings and false accusations. Ṣadrā explains, "Once you have learned the meaning of attainment (al-wuṣūl) and proximity to the Real and connected with Him by way of the servant purifying his essence and correcting his face towards becoming a mirror for the knowledge of God and His names and attributes and lights […] you will have come to know that this [self-annihilation] is not through *imtizāj*, *ittiṣāl*, *ḥulūl* or *ittiḥād*; it is through complete orientation (*al-tawajjuh al-istighrāqī*) and a relation of disappearance (*'alāqah iḍmiḥlāliyyah*) and complete servanthood […] which denies/prevents turning to any other than the Real – any other that may be – even if it was the essence of the realizer, or his knowledge in so far as it is his knowledge – for [even in that] there is [even if slight] a degree of heresy and the claim of another and unity (*tawḥīd*) denies this." Hence, he writes that the one who is self-annihilated (*al-fāni al-muḍmaḥil*) is the one who sees that only the Real is existing and that all the essences are merely shadows, existing metaphorically. Accordingly, the perfect one is able to witness all the manifestations of the Divine and the boundless multiplicity this reveals itself in without having to compromise the unity of the Divine Essence. Ibid., 97–98, 106. Ultimately, as the servants of Allah, Ṣadrā writes that they are the ones who are fully conscious and aware of the ontological origin of all things, most importantly, their own.

[57] Ibid., 91.

[58] Michel Chodkiewicz, "The Vision of God," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society*, XIV (1993).

[59] Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 321.

[60] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 103.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

find ourselves confronted with a rather unexpected outcome, for we thought that God would become unveiled to us and *we* would come to *witness* Him. So far, we have been discussing the means whereby the human person can actualize his potential and become perfected. We demonstrated that this was based on the foundation of knowledge of God which could only be in the form of unveiling to the eyes of the seeker through right practice in obligatory and supererogatory forms. However, all of a sudden, we realize that we cannot actually attain knowledge of the Divine Essence and are reminded of Ṣadrā's assertion in this respect present at the very beginning of the treatise.[63] What Ṣadrā makes clear is that, ultimately, in the state of complete annihilation, it is "God's look which reaches God and sees Him."[64] As such, "He is the One who sees, He is who is seen and that by which He is seen."[65] Hence, only when we have lost everything and our contemplative efforts are free from all forms is one given vision through God's eye. This reminds us of the Qur'anic verse, "You shall not see me!" as God's response to Moses when he requested to see Him.[66] As well as "The looks do not reach Him but it is He who reaches the looks."[67]

At this point, we are also reminded of all the verses that indicate the constant presence of the Divine as in, "Wheresoever you turn, there is the Face of God."[68] "He is with you wheresoever you are, and God sees whatsoever you do."[69] "We are nearer to him than his jugular vein"[70] "We are nearer to him than you, though you see not"[71] "When my servant ask thee about Me, truly I am near. I answer the call of the caller when he calls Me. So let them respond to Me and believe in Me, that they may be led a right."[72] These verses make us wonder how it is that we seek something we accept, something that is already near. Nonetheless, the point here is that, we, as Ṣadrā asserted, remain heedless of His presence and it is only the Perfected ones among us who are able to witness this being the case. As such, Ṣadrā seems to be trying to reflect to the reader that ultimately the idea is in acting as if He is there, allowing Him to take over all our

[63] Ibid., 11.
[64] Chodkiewicz, "The Vision of God."
[65] Ibid.
[66] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 453. (Q 7:143)
[67] Ibid., 378. (Q. 6:103)
[68] Ibid., 53–54. (Q 2:115)
[69] Ibid., 1331–32. (Q 57:4)
[70] Ibid., 1267. (Q 50:16)
[71] Ibid., 1328. (Q 56:85)
[72] Ibid., 81–82. (Q 2:186)

awareness by acting in complete harmony with His Divine commands until, if met by God's grace, we are ultimately able to be a conscious locus for His disclosure. Hence, the goal is perhaps not so much about seeing Him but attaining His self-disclosures within us.[73] And, this, as the verse above alluded to is when we "call the Divine", a call that is only possible through servanthood, at whatever station that may be.

3.4 Servanthood as the Greatest Station of Praise

Following his exposition of the journey the wayfarer embarks on and the stages of progression that it will entail, Ṣadrā turns to the very final requirement and station, referring to it as the noblest[74] among them all, namely "servanthood" (*al-ʻubūdiyyah*). In fact, referencing the commentary of Nīsābūrī, Ṣadrā goes so far as to write that servanthood, as a station, is even nobler than prophethood. After all, as he writes, it precedes prophethood in the proclamation of faith; "I bear witness that there is no God but God and that Muhammed is His servant and messenger, prophet."[75] Furthermore, this also is the way in which Allah praised the Prophet, as alluded to in the verse, "Glory be to Him Who carried His servant by night …"[76] Similarly, in response, we find Jesus uttering, as his first words, "Truly I am a servant of God. He has given me the Book and made me a prophet."[77] Regarding the nobility of servanthood, in keeping with the style of the treatise, we find Ṣadrā turning to Ali as an exemplary figure once again, relaying one of Ali's beautiful prayers where he proclaims, "It suffices me in pride and honor that I am a servant to you and it suffices me in nobility that you are my Lord. O my Lord, verily, I have found you to be the Lord of my wishes, make me the servant of Yours."[78] Ultimately, Ṣadrā writes that those who have attained to the highest station of self-annihilation are, in fact, the greatest servants of Allah for, as Chodkiewicz explains "it is only by complete conformity to his ʻubūda, to his original status of servitude, that man attains to the depths of the divine mystery"[79] and comes

[73] "Presence with God," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society* 20 (1996): 31. Kalin, *Açık Ufuk: İyi, Doğru ve Güzel Düşünmek Üzerine*, 50.
[74] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 105.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 694. (Q 17:1) Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 105.
[77] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 771. (Q 19:30) Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 105.
[78] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 105.
[79] Michel Chodkiewicz, "The Paradox of the Ka'ba," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society* 57 (2015).

to embody the purest abandonment one is capable of, which, in Chodkiewicz's words, is "radical ontological poverty."[80]

Thus, in Ṣadrā's words, the Perfect Human is "he who accepts the Real and is guided by His light in all his self-disclosures and worships/serves Him; And he is the true servant of Allah."[81] What is of greatest significance for Ṣadrā when it comes to the notion of servanthood is that while it is the noblest and highest of stations, it also stands to inform each and every step taken by the wayfarer, starting with the very first. As such, Ṣadrā focuses on the purity of intention that must be present in each act of servanthood. It is from this perspective that he proclaims, "Knowledge of the Hereafter […] is not learned except in the madrasa of righteousness (*taqwā*)."[82] Furthermore, Ṣadrā writes that true servanthood is when one worships the Divine, not because of an attribute of His, but rather because only He is in actuality worthy of praise. If not, Ṣadrā writes that one will not have served Him, but rather his own desires and expectations. He writes that true servanthood is when the person worships "Allah for His Divinity and His Essence [alone]."[83] In support of this purity of intention, Ṣadrā makes reference to a saying of Imam Ali, writing "I did not worship you out of fear of Your fire, nor out of desire for Your paradise; rather I found you worthy of worship and I worshipped you."[84] Ṣadrā continues by asserting "Verily the person who worships his Lord in these respects/qualities – not absolutely (*muṭlaqan*), certainly he is the servant of his desires and a captive of his [own] self."[85] Those who love the Essence of the Divine are able to experience all that comes their way "whether it be of His Grace or Wrath, or of Mercy or Punishment, Elevation or bringing down" as being beautiful, for, after all, "All that the Beloved does is beloved."[86] The realizers are the servants of Allah, they are the unifiers, and they know that only He is ultimately Real and for this reason all they do, in activity and repose becomes with Allah, from Allah, to Allah and for Allah.[87]

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[80] Michel Chodkiewicz, "The Endless Voyage," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society* XIX (1996).
[81] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 68.
[82] Ibid., 98.
[83] Ibid., 107.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid., 108.
[87] Ibid., 106.

Furthermore, though perhaps counterintuitive, as one would think that one's supererogatory acts would bring one closer to God, it is completely fulfilling the prescribed acts, specified by the Divine, that pleases the Divine most. In fact, this is what the ḥadīth qudsī indicates 'He does not approach Me through something which I love more *than with the acts that I have prescribed for him.'* The ritual of prayer, which, as the Prophet referred to it is *mi'rāj al-mu'min* (the spiritual ascent of the believer), holds particular significance in this regard for it provides for an occasion when the servant is able to, essentially, engage and take part in the Divine Will. In this respect, Ṣadrā discusses prayer as a venue of change in the cosmos, accommodating both the absolute power of the Creator and the relative, yet influential, force of human agency.[88] According to Meisami, given its theological implications, Ṣadrā primarily discusses prayer in terms of its impact on the sensible world. In this respect, Ṣadrā defends the human soul being capable of impacting the phenomenal world, through miracles or the answering of prayers, as long as God finds it in agreement with the cosmic order.[89] In addition to its mediation between Divine and human agency, however, Ṣadrā also writes of the spiritual impact of prayer.[90] Relying on his doctrine of substantial motion (*al-ḥarakat al-jawhariyya*), whereby the whole world in both substances and accidents is in a movement toward perfection, Ṣadrā writes of the transforming effect prayer has on the soul, leading to a higher degree of spirituality by accepting one's dependence and need. In this sense, according to Ṣadrā, the act of praying, in keeping with God's words "Call unto me and I will answer to you"[91], far from being a deviation from the providence, is rather part of the divine wisdom to "keep the servant suspended between fear and hope."[92] Hence, Ṣadrā is able to strike a balance between God, as the All-Knowing, All-Powerful Creator and God as the very Creator who invites us to his presence every day, as we seek His acceptance, comfort and guidance.

[88] Sayeh Meisami, "Mulla Sadra on the Efficacy of Prayer (Du.A)," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 4, no. 1–2 (2015): 60–61, doi:10.1163/22105956-12341276.
[89] Ibid., 72.
[90] Ṣadrā was deeply influenced by Ibn al-'Arabī in developing his philosophical system, but especially in his view of prayer.
[91] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 1153–54. (Q 40:60)
[92] Meisami, "Mulla Sadra on the Efficacy of Prayer (Du.A)," 75.

3.5 Seekers of Knowledge Ranked in Degrees

Much like there being gradation in knowledge and thereby spiritual evolution, we find Ṣadrā presenting a hierarchy among the seekers of knowledge as well. In this regard, Ṣadrā writes, "true knowledge [is] hierarchically arranged and the rank of a person [is] dependent upon their level of knowledge and the gift of divine grace."[93]Accordingly, Ṣadrā maintains, "Know that the degrees of people in their servanthood in terms of the purity of their intentions depends on the station of their knowledge of the Real. The degree to which they attain depends on their degree in knowledge which is the seed of servanthood."[94] Thus, in descending order, he writes of there being five different levels of people. The first level is comprised of the people of unveiling (*aṣḥāb al-mukāshafah*), who "know the Real by forsaking themselves and negating their being. […] They continuously witness His divine signs."[95] The second level is comprised of the excellent philosophers (*afāḍil al-ḥukamā'*) "who perceive the Real in a purely noetic sense […] Their intellection fashions forms in their imagination appropriate to actual intelligible forms, but they know that those actual forms are far superior to the imaginal forms that they construct in themselves."[96] The third level carries the general folk of faith who are incapable of a higher level and the most they are capable of is generating conjectural forms of the Real in keeping with what their own nature provides.[97] Nonetheless, they transcend the Real from all material and imaginary attributions.[98] The fourth level carries the people of submission and they are incapable of conjecture, let alone imagination. They have a purely material conception of the Real. Nevertheless, they too transcend Him of any imperfection. As for the final and fifth level of seekers, they are those "who merely rely upon physical manifestations"[99] towards understanding the Real. In order to further elucidate what he means, Ṣadrā provides the reader with a metaphor. Those at the highest level witness the essence of a person, the second highest, his existence (*ḥaqīqatuhu*) and essence (*māhiyyatuhu*)[100],

[93] Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 27.
[94] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 108.
[95] Ibid.Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 27.
[96] Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 27; Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 108.
[97] Rizvi, *Mulla Ṣadrā Shirazi: His Life and Works and the Sources for Safavid Philosophy*, 28.
[98] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 109.
[99] Ibid.
[100] What he means here is a rational understanding of the thing, which, as explained in Chapter I, occurs the mind making a distinction between existence (*wujūd*) and essence (*māhiyyah*) .

the third his imaginary image, the fourth his reflection in the mirror and finally the fifth, his sculpture as produced by the sculptor.[101]

While this ranking among people can, as Rizvi suggests, be deemed "unashamedly elitist," it is also important to not lose sight of the fact that Ṣadrā consistently makes emphasis on unveiling being given by the grace of the Divine to whomever He wills. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the prophets and the saints are superior to regular folk for the fact that they, by being connected with the divine realm, witness the Divine in all his manifestations.[102] That being said, as Ṣadrā emphasizes towards the end of the treatise ultimately, the Real, as the true teacher, can gift whomever He wills among His servants with knowledge and closeness. As such, God's teaching is not exclusive to the saints and prophets. In fact, alluding to the verse, "So fear Allah; for it is God that teaches you"[103] Ṣadrā asserts, for lack of a better word, that it is "incumbent" upon the Divine to teach those who seek Him "that which [they] did not know."[104] The more one struggles along the path, the more it is likely for the Divine to manifest Himself. Of course, each person will only be able to witness the Real in keeping with his or her existential consciousness[105], which Ṣadrā does not see in a static, predetermined manner either. Rather, just like each moment, which is entirely new and different since there is no repetition in the self-disclosure of the Divine, the awareness available to seeker each moment is new, bearing new openings, insights, and opportunities. Along the journey, as the person grows and evolves, the wayfarer will come to have access to different degrees of consciousness. Once again, the clarity of his knowledge (*ma'rifah*) and the sincerity of his actions (*taqwā*) will inform the depths he will have access to.

[101] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 109.
[102] Ibid., 74.
[103] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 123. (2:282) Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 115.
[104] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 1537. (96:5) Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 115.
[105] Ṣadrā also likens the diversity among people in this regard to the way in which different colors manifest the light to different extents. Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 70, 74.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter puts forth that, according to Ṣadrā, true knowledge, through unveiling and witnessing cannot be attained unless one leads a life in harmony with the Divine Command, turns away from an attachment to the material world and treads the path towards Allah through the example of the Prophet.[106] In this respect, Ṣadrā started out by reminding the human person of his forgetfulness and the steps he would need to take in order to grow in proximity to the Divine. In order to embark on this journey, he needed to die to his forgetfulness and heedlessness, which Ṣadrā referred to as "voluntary death" (*al-mawt al-irādī*) so that his innate spiritual capacity could come to life. Then, once on the path, he had to fulfill four requirements, namely faith, repentance, isolation and servanthood, culminating in his self-annihilation. Ṣadrā explained that faith came through practicing the Divine command and believing in the light that was present within each form of obligatory practice. As for repentance, it came through a recognition for the impermanence of the material world and a turning away from the physical desires and attachments it generated. As for isolation, based on Ṣadrā's exposition, it took place in three stages; turning completely towards Allah through pure intention and righteousness (1), using one's potencies, lower and higher, in an integrated manner towards the fulfillment of good deeds (2) and purifying the heart by always questioning the demands of the carnal soul and constantly working towards letting go of human limitations so that it can take on Divine attributes and become a locus for the Divine Self-disclosure. (3) Ultimately, these steps led to the self-annihilation of the wayfarer where one's knowledge met that of the Divine and thereby became boundless and unlimited.[107] However, here, of course, the beholder of knowledge was ultimately God for nothing of the seeker could remain at this point. Hence, Ṣadrā wrote that the face of servanthood became annihilated in the face of Lordship.

Thus, Ṣadrā moved away from a subjectivist notion of knowledge to one that was purely reliant upon the Divine. As such, Ṣadrā asserted that once the ultimate ground for reality was never lost sight of, all actions, thoughts and deeds, even if infinitesimally, could serve as occasions and opportunities for remembrance. Of

[106] Ibid., 98.
[107] Ibid., 100.

course, this also meant one being accountable for each form of engagement. Finally, Ṣadrā ranked the seekers writing that the highest among them were the people of unveiling and witnessing, who were firm in knowledge and the inheritors of the prophet in their way of life. Finally, the Perfect Ones were the greatest servants of Allah in actuality. Thus, they were not the ones who approached knowledge as a realm of mental abstraction and most certainly not those who had fallen victim to the temptations of their desires and sought power in political leadership.[108] After all, as Ṣadrā maintained, any bit of adherence to the lowly desires was enough to spoil a whole sea of knowledge.[109]

Finally, Ṣadrā concluded the treatise asserting that from the beginning to the very end, the journey of the seeker and wayfarer was one of servanthood, in every sense of the term, ontologically, epistemologically and ethically. For this reason, on a rather poignant note, we find Ṣadrā dedicate the final two pages of the treatise to the Sufi principle and practice of *iḥsān* (*beauty*). Alluding to the Prophet's response to the question of what *iḥsān* is, Ṣadrā writes, "That you worship God as if you saw Him, for if you do not see Him, truly God sees you." This is a rather profound statement when we couple it with the saying "I am as my worshipper sees I am" and "Does it not suffice that your Lord is witness to all?" both of which Ṣadrā includes in the treatise. On this note, Ṣadrā wrote this treatise for the seekers of the mysteries of unity and wrote about the requirements, the struggles and the rewards that are on the path of attaining human perfection. However, it is undeniable that the way ahead full of struggle, discipline and perhaps above it all, uncertainties. It is precisely in this regard that Ṣadrā is wanting to leave the reader and seeker with the Sufi principle and notion of *iḥsān.*

What is central here is that while it might not be possible for all to know the Real as He is in Himself, independently and free from His manifestations, it is seeking this end that is most important. At moments, our fear and awe of the Divine, given His transcendence, will motivate us to recognize the consequences of our actions, at others, our love and closeness, given His immanence, will provide us with the hope to persevere. We will move between these two poles; this is part of the human condition. Regardless, however, even if we cannot attain to the highest of stations and earn

[108] Ibid., 116.
[109] Ibid.

proximity to the Divine, we will continue serving because, as God reveals “I am as my worshipper sees I am.” Ultimately, this profound yet comforting statement affirms that it is the act of seeking and serving the Divine that matters most. Thus, even if the knowledge of God and the reality of things as they are remain beyond our grasp, certainly they are not in the case of God, the One and Absolute Real. Hence, while our philosophical inquiry will guide us to wanting to see the ultimate truth, to grasp things with totality and certainty, Ṣadrā brings the whole discussion full circle and reminds us that, *perhaps it is the practice of “as if seeing” that is more powerful than the seeing itself.*

CONCLUSION

This thesis provided a critical analysis of one of Mullā Ṣadrā's understudied mystical treatises, *Īqāẓ al-Nāimīn (Awakening the Sleepers)*. As Ṣadrā expresses at the very beginning of the treatise, it was not the product of a "bookish" study of philosophy but rather the product of an experience of the Unity of Being (*tawḥīd*). In my analysis of the treatise, I put forth that its primary argument is that human perfection takes place through a journey of knowledge of God (*ma'rifat Allah*) and servanthood (*al-'ubūdiyyah*). As such, mirroring the three overreaching realms of discussion found in the *Īqāẓ*, this thesis, too, was composed of three chapters. It started by providing the metaphysical foundation informing Ṣadrā's views and moved on to explore the epistemological and anthropological implications this foundation led to in the subsequent second and third chapters.

The first chapter showed Ṣadrā grounding everything in the unity, gradation and simplicity of existence (*wujūd*). I explored how Ṣadrā established the relation between God and the world of creation, and as such the relation between the One and the many, through his tripartite model; Absolute Existence (the unknowable Divine Essence), Relative Existence (everything other than the Real, existing through its relation with the Ultimate ground of reality) and finally, Self-Expanding Existence (God's creative act in generating the world of creation). Through this model, Ṣadrā also attempted to overcome a seeming conflict among Ibn al-'Arabī and the later commentators which had left room for the Sufis to be attacked with accusations of pantheism. Ṣadrā wrote that the term Absolute Existence (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*) in the writings of Ibn al-'Arabī's commentators, unlike what had been understood by some, stood for the first degree in this model, as the unknowable Divine Essence and not the third degree, which would mean predicating multiplicity onto the Unity of the Real and therefore lead to the false accusations. Ṣadrā asserted that the realizers (*'urafā'*) among the Sufis had no confusion regarding the transcendence of the Real and that such claims were "abominable and grave slander."

Furthermore, drawing from Ibn al-'Arabī's doctrine of the unity of being (*tawḥīd*) and Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī's assertion of "The Real Existence is Allah" Ṣadrā maintained

that ultimately there was a single Existence and that everything else was existing only insofar as it was related to this ultimate ground of Reality. As such, I explored Ṣadrā's assertion that the essences (*māhiyyāt*) of the philosophers were actually manifestations, self-disclosures of the Real and therefore devoid of any reality in themselves. That being said, Ṣadrā was also adamant that the plurality we experience in the world of creation was not simply illusory, which could lead to a form of skepticism, but rather ontologically rooted and connected with the Real, which he referred to within each thing as, the divine mystery (*al-sirr al-rabbānī*) and, borrowing from al-Qūnawī, the specific face (*wajh khāṣ*). Hence, indeed, the essences were non-existing compared to the Ultimate ground of Reality. However, in acknowledging their relative degree of existence, one was able to unlock the divine mystery within things, all while accounting for the imperfection, privation and evil that was present in the world of creation. In order to strike the appropriate balance, relying on Ibn al-'Arabī's doctrine of being a "possessor of two eyes" (*dhū 'aynayn*), Ṣadrā wrote that things needed to be approached as having two aspects, or two faces; one in relation to themselves and one in relation to their Source. After introducing this notion of duality, Ṣadrā applied it to God, understanding Him to be utterly Transcendent (the pole of *tanzīh*) in one respect and utterly Immanent in another (the pole of *tashbīh*). Much like seeing with two eyes conjuring up a single, unified image, Ṣadrā wrote that seeing with two eyes made it possible for one to essentially have an understanding for the two-way mystery of God and His connection with the world of creation.

The second chapter, building on Ṣadrā's metaphysics of existence, explored the epistemological implications that drew forth, establishing knowledge of God as the grounds from which the seeker and wayfarer could attain realization. In this respect, I wrote about how Ṣadrā rejected the conceptions of knowledge that he inherited because they reduced knowledge to the abstract, inner workings of the mind. Instead, he configured knowledge to be a mode of existence (*naḥw al-wujūd*), a dynamic enterprise imbued with transformative dimensions that could be directly revealed to the "eyes" of the seeker given the divine aspect within himself (*wajh khāṣ*) connecting him with the Real, through unveiling (*kashf*) and witnessing (*shuhūd*). Before establishing true knowledge to occur through unveiling and witnessing, Ṣadrā embarked on a critique of the Peripatetic philosophers for having forgotten the purpose of philosophy, which was attaining proximity to the Divine. In that the Real stood

beyond all categories of description, in agreement with the school of Ibn al-'Arabī, Ṣadrā asserted that reason and rational inquiry could not attain knowledge of God and the reality of things as they are through their own means, for they worked through definitions and limitations. The critique was clear and bold. That being said, Ṣadrā was not arguing for a spirituality without intellectual content, or for a kind of spiritual vision that conflicted with the demands of reason. Rather, he simply was asserting the limitations of reason when it came to metaphysical questions and by situating it instead within a broader spectrum of intelligibility, broadening reason's horizons. True knowledge was unveiled to the heart of the seeker, which was home to the Divine Presence. Thus, while the superiority of unveiling was established, in being supra-rational, Ṣadrā maintained mystical insight could not be in conflict with reason. Here, Ṣadrā relied on the metaphor of the Ka'ba and the Station of Abraham as a way of elucidating the harmonious dynamic between *aql* and *qalb*, where both informed one another without having to be considered mutually exclusive. Ultimately, what came through analyzing these sections of the *Īqāẓ* was Ṣadrā's attempt to come up with a single, unified epistemology that was able to synthesize the methods espoused by the Peripatetics, advocating for certainty being attainable through reason *alone*, and the Sufis, advocating for the subservience of reason to revelation.

Building on the assertion of the heart being the locus of true knowledge, the third chapter was devoted to Ṣadrā's assertion that spiritual growth and ultimate perfection could not be attained in the absence of a life lived in harmony with the Divine Command through complete servanthood. After all, much like the verse, "[God] measured out [or created] and then guided"[1] alludes to, the human person, on the one hand was to acknowledge his ontological state which was the product of the Divine command "Be!". On the other hand, he was to follow the path laid out through the Qur'an and through the example of the Prophet, while also finding himself a guide with whom he could share in the struggles of the Way. While Ṣadrā asserted the superiority of the human person for his innate capacity to discover God and to know the realities of things as they are, having been created in the Divine Image, this luminous quality was only dimly, potentially present within him, for he was clouded by forgetfulness. Hence, the wayfarer needed to actualize the divine attributes that

[1] Nasr et al., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, 1504. (Q 87:3)

were hidden within him by attempting, what Ṣadrā called, voluntary death (*al-mawt al-irādī*) in hopes of being born spiritually (a*l-wilādah al-ma'nawiyyah*). This voluntary death came through choosing to die, here and now, before the inevitable compulsory death ensued. This death was a death to the inherent heedlessness within oneself, by training the self to let go of the "pluralizing tendencies" that hold one captive to the world of creation. In order for the luminous, divine qualities that were only present potentially within the human person to actualize, much like the Real who relied purely on Himself, the seeker needed to develop the discipline of letting go of material attachments towards turning fully and sincerely towards Allah. Ultimately, through faith (*al-īmān*), repentance(*al-tawbah*), ascetic practice (*al-zuhd*) and servanthood (*al-'ibādah*), which corresponded to the four spiritual stages the seeker would go through, one would reach the final point of self-annihilation (*al-fanā'*). At this point, however, the Real would not become unveiled to the wayfarer, for He remains Unknown and Unseen. Rather, it would be the self-disclosures of the Divine that would become manifest within the wayfarer. In other words, only when the person became completely free of himself was he granted vision through the eye of God.

As such, Ṣadrā came to show that finally, the journey of realizing one's God-given potential needed to be motivated less by a given destination one would reach somewhere seemingly far away and, instead, more by sincerely seeking and serving, for much like the Sufi principle and practice of *iḥsān*, which Ṣadrā ended the treatise with, while we may not be able to see the true reality of things as they are, certainly they are not missed by the Divine. And, as Ṣadrā expressed in his final sentence of the treatise, only those who seek Him upon the path of the Real could be the ones who came to know Him inasmuch as He manifested Himself within. On this note, while our philosophical inquiry guides us to wanting to attain complete certainty, perhaps, as Ṣadrā insinuated, it was the act of "as if seeing" that was more important than the "seeing itself."

Īqāẓ al-Nāimīn is a clear demonstration of the impact the school of Ibn al-'Arabī and, in particular, its chief proponent Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī had on Ṣadrā's attempt to bring the schools of philosophy and Sufism together and create a holistic system of thought. As such, this study of the *Īqāẓ* also hopes to have cast some new light onto how sources, concepts and practices, typically rendered as being Sufi, came to be integral

to Ṣadrā's intellectual evolution and thereby his system of thought. In this respect, we found Ṣadrā openly critical of the Peripatetic philosophers and reminded them that unless philosophical inquiry contributed to the spiritual growth of man by laying the necessary grounds for one to attain perfection and proximity to the Divine, it had defeated its purpose. As such, given Ṣadrā's predominant reliance upon the language and method espoused by the Sufis in this text and ultimately his ranking among the seekers, which situates the realizers (*'urafā'*) at the highest level, it seems he saw the efforts of the Sufis to be most authentically representative of what it meant to do "philosophy as a way of life," the way the ancient Greeks understood it. For future studies, exploring the line between Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī and Mullā Ṣadrā this respect might lead to promising outcomes.

As far as situating the *Īqāẓ* within Ṣadrā's intellectual evolution, the preeminence of the mystical insights he relies on throughout the text, the lucidity of the language and the largely organized nature of the text appear to point at it being among his mature works. That being said, it is hard to ascertain when he might have penned it upon his return to Shiraz after his long retreat at Kahak. Nonetheless, given his staunch advocacy for the school of Ibn al-'Arabī, his most extensively used source being al-Qūnawī's works and his at times open and at others implied critique of the literalist scholars for choosing to be close to the political figures towards acquiring power and influence themselves, it seems more likely that he would have written it at a time when the political scene was more settled down. After all, based on what he shares in his letters to Mīr Dāmād, we know that he made a deliberate effort to not produce works that would merely add more fuel to the already existing narrative circulating against him and his views, out of concern that it would simply escalate matters further and be of no true benefit in any regard.

Independent of the political and social context, the *Īqāẓ* was written, as Ṣadrā expressed at the very beginning of the treatise, for the "seeker of the mysteries of Unity and the wayfarer towards Allah through the footsteps of servanthood."[2] To this end, I would argue that this treatise continues to be as relevant as it was during Ṣadrā's time, for in the ultimate sense of the term, not much has changed. People continue to be born, they continue to try to find their way over the course of their lives, and they

[2] Ṣadrā, *Īqāẓ Al-Nā'imīn*, 11.

continue to die. Ṣadrā's *Īqāẓ*, for those who sincerely seek, remains to be a "ray among the rays of God's Mercy" in awakening the wayfarer from the sleep of heedlessness and ignorance and in accompanying him on his ultimate journey of Return.

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