IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

MASTER THESIS

MUSTAFA SABRI'S CRITICISMS OF KANT ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF GOD'S EXISTENCE BASED ON THE CONCEPTS OF TRUTH AND REASON

ŞEYMA SEVİM

THESIS SUPERVISOR
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by
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ÖZ

MUSTAFA SABRİ'NİN HAKİKAT VE AKIL KAVRAMLARI BAĞLAMINDA TANRI'IN VARLIĞI SORUNUNA DAİR KANT'A ELEŞTİRİLERİ

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Osmanlı Devleti'nin son şeyhülislamı olan Mustafa Sabri Efendi (1869-1954) Mısır'da *Mevḳıfü'l-ʿaḳl* kitabını kaleme almıştır. Bu tezin amacı ise, Sabri Efendi'nin bu eserinde Tanrı'nın varlığının akılla bilinemeyeceğini iddia eden Kant'a bu bağlamda yönelttiği eleştirileri incelemektir. Tezin cevaplamaya çalıştığı temel sorular şunlardır: Sabri Efendi'yi Kant'ı sert bir dille eleştirmeye sevk eden sebepler nelerdir? Kant'ı eleştirmek için tutarlı ve başarılı argümanlar geliştirebilmiş midir? Kant'ı doğru anlamış mıdır?

Tezin ortaya attığı bu soruları cevaplayabilmek için önce Kant'ın felsefesini ve Batı düşüncesini nasıl etkilediğini, daha sonra Sabri Efendi'nin *Mevḳıfü'l-ʿaḳl* kitabını inceledik. Dönemin Mısırlı düşünürlerine ve Kant'a yönelttiği eleştirilerini ele aldık. İkinci bölümde Kant'ın ve Sabri Efendi'nin nasıl bir bilim ve düşünce ortamı içerisinde yetiştiklerini inceledik. Sabri Efendi'yi Kant'ı eleştirmeye sevk eden faktörleri tespit edip Kant'ı hangi kaynaklardan okumuş olabileceğini değerlendirdik. Üçüncü bölümde, Kant'ı, metafiziğin epistemoloji bağlamında bir bilim olarak temellendirilemeyeceği yönündeki iddiası bağlamında inceledik. Bu konuda Mustafa Sabri'nin düşüncelerini ve Kant'a yönelttiği eleştirileri aktardık. Daha sonra Sabri Efendi'nin Tanrı'nın varlığını kanıtlamak için geliştirilmiş geleneksel deliller bağlamındaki Kant'a yönelttiği eleştirilerini, Kant'ın, Tanrı'nın varlığının akıl yoluyla

bilinemeyeceği yönündeki iddiası çerçevesinde değerlendirdik. Dördüncü bölümde, Kant'ın metafiziğin ancak ahlâk bağlamında bir bilim olarak inşa edilebileceği iddiasını inceledik ve Mustafa Sabri Efendi'nin, bu ahlâk argümanının Tanrı'nın varlığını ispatlamaya yetmediği yönündeki eleştirilerini değerlendirdik.

Sonuç bölümünde Mustafa Sabri'nin Kant'a yönelik eleştirilerinin önemli ve anlamlı olduğu kanısına vardık. Özellikle yaşadığı dönemde Kant felsefesinin İslam dünyasında felsefi ve dini düşünceyi nasıl etkilediğine dikkat çekmesi açısından önemlidir. Kant'a yönelttiği eleştirilerde kendi içerisinde tutarlı olduğunu ve Kant'a yönelik bazı önemli eleştiriler sunduğunu ileri sunduk. Ancak, Kant'ı ikincil kaynaklardan ve bütüncül okumaması nedeniyle Kant'ın ana projesini tam olarak anlamadığı sonucuna vardık. Bu sebeple Sabri Efendi'nin Kant'ın felsefesindeki bazı noktaları yanlış anladığı, ayrıca dönemin Mısırlı düşünürlerinin tartıştığı meselelerin onu Kant'ı sert bir şekilde eleştirmeye sevk eden bir faktör olarak görülebileceği sonucuna ulaştık.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Akıl, Hakikat, Kant, Mustafa Sabri Efendi, Tanrı.

ABSTRACT

MUSTAFA SABRI'S CRITICISMS OF KANT ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF GOD'S EXISTENCE BASED ON THE CONCEPTS OF TRUTH AND REASON

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This thesis explores Mustafa Sabri Efendi's criticism of Kant's assertion that theoretical reason cannot prove the existence of God. The thesis aims to investigate three key questions: the motives behind Sabri Efendi's critique of Kant, the validity and effectiveness of his arguments, and the extent to which his interpretation of Kant's ideas is accurate.

The thesis provides an introduction to Kant's influential project and its impact on Western thought. It examines Sabri Efendi's book Mawqif al-'Aql, summarizing his critiques of Egyptian thinkers and Kant. The second chapter explores the scientific and intellectual context of both Kant and Sabri Efendi, identifying reasons for Sabri Efendi's critique and investigating his sources of knowledge on Kant.

The third chapter of the thesis thoroughly examines Kant's perspective on epistemology, particularly his argument that metaphysics cannot be considered a science. It also analyzes Sabri Efendi's thoughts on this subject and his criticisms of Kant's stance. The fourth chapter focuses on the question of whether metaphysics can solely exist as a scientific discipline within the domain of morality, as proposed by Kant. Additionally, the thesis explores Sabri Efendi's critique, which argues that relying solely on the moral argument is insufficient for proving the existence of God.

In conclusion, this thesis highlights Sabri Efendi's significant criticisms of Kant, revealing the profound influence of Kant on philosophical and religious thought in the Islamic world. While Sabri Efendi presents consistent counter-arguments and significant critiques of Kant, the research indicates a potential misunderstanding of Kant's primary objective due to reliance on secondary sources rather than engaging directly with his original texts, and due to lack of a holistic understanding of Kant's project. The intellectual milieu of the time is also crucial in comprehending the reasons behind Mustafa Sabri Efendi's critique of Kant.

Keywords: God, Kant, Mustafa Sabri Efendi, Reason, Truth.

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Şeyma Sevim

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CPR	Critique of Pure Reason
Edit.	Editor
etc.	And other similar things
Trans.	Translator
Vol.	Volume
i.e.	That is
DİA	Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi
Ibid	In the same place

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I will critically explore Mustafa Sabri's position in the discussion of reason's role and status within the Islamic tradition, focusing particularly on his arguments against Western philosophers, notably Kant. Mustafa Sabri (1869-1954) holds significant importance among Muslim scholars as the last Shaykh al-Islam (chief judge) of the Ottoman Empire. He was also actively involved in politics during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With a solid education in Western philosophy, Mustafa Sabri authored numerous books, but this thesis primarily centers on his titled work, "*Mawqif al-ʿAql wa al-'Ilm wa al-'Alam min Rabb al-ʿālamīn wa-ʿibādat al-Mursalīn*" (referred to as *Mawqif al-ʿAql*). This book, published in 1950 during his exile in Egypt, holds historical significance as it was initially banned in Turkey until the late 1980s due to his critiques of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The book's restriction, combined with its Arabic language, has resulted in limited scholarly exploration, particularly from a philosophical perspective. While the book offers a wealth of philosophical ideas and arguments, our main interest lies in its intellectual engagement with Kant's attempts to refute the proofs of God's existence.

Throughout the book, Mustafa Sabri sought to examine the position of intellect, knowledge, and the world in the pursuit of truth. He aimed to assess the compatibility of societal transformations Kant influenced with Islamic principles. In this book, Sabri intended to establish a balanced and restrained mental framework that Muslims could follow in their philosophical inquiries regarding existence. He explored whether reason, experience, or senses could lead to knowledge about existence. Initially, he criticized some scholars in the Islamic world for inadequately defending Islamic values and beliefs. These scholars accepted the claims of Western philosophers without questioning their alignment with Islamic values and without offering any criticism, unlike earlier Islamic scholars who critiqued Greek philosophy while upholding Islamic culture. Within the first volume of the book "*Mawqif al-ʿAql*," Sabri

specifically criticized Egyptian scholars such as Muhammad Farid Wajdi, Muhammad Abduh, Muhammad Rashid Rida, Muhammad Mustafa al-Maraghi, Mahmoud Shaltout, Muhammad Husayn Haykal, and Abbās Mahmūd al-Aqqād. Furthermore, Sabri's critique extended to numerous Western philosophers, including Bacon, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Hegel, Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Rousseau, and others, spanning the entirety of the second volume and a portion of the third volume of the book.

Kant holds a significant position in the history of philosophy, having exerted a profound influence and transformative impact on subsequent thought systems. Criticizing Kant as severely as Mustafa Sabri did is no easy task. Kant's philosophical works have played a pivotal role in shaping the foundations of numerous philosophers' thinking. Particularly noteworthy are his three Critiques: *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), *the Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), and *the Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790). These critiques have held immense significance in the annals of philosophy. It was through these works that German idealism, one of the most pivotal and influential movements in the history of philosophy, emerged.

Ayhan Çitil argued that Kant's primary objective was to sever the connection between science and metaphysics, aiming to offer a purely scientific account of space and time.[1] That is because the foundation of all scientific explanations up to that day rests on God.[2] All scientific explanations given up to that day, especially those given by Newton and Leibniz, are based on God.[3] In the Critiques, Kant engaged in a second struggle, questioning how to reconcile freedom within the mechanical universe.[4] He sought to clarify the notion of freedom in relation to our existence within mechanical causality.[5] Additionally, he explored the objective and necessary basis for the relations between cause and effect, countering David Hume's claim that causality was merely a habit of the intellect.[6] Kant's examination of these three problems served as the impetus behind his writing of the Critiques.

[1] Ayhan Çitil, *Kant Okumaları Birinci Kritik,* İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2021, "Kant'ın Kritik Projesi", p. 16.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid, p. 25.
[5] Ibid, p. 21.
[6] Ibid, p. 20.

Kant's contributions to modern thought have had a transformative impact on theoretical reason. In his work, particularly the first Critique, Kant established the limits of theoretical reason. He argued that we can only have knowledge of things as they appear to us, which are objects of sensible intuition in the forms of space and time. However, we are unable to have knowledge of an object as it exists in itself. According to Kant, our knowledge is limited when it comes to understanding God, the world (immortality), and the soul (freedom). We cannot claim to possess definitive knowledge or make absolute judgments about these concepts. Nevertheless, it is crucial to note that Kant did not outright deny their existence. He emphasized that they are still thinkable, meaning that we can conceive of them in our thoughts. Even though we cannot know these things in themselves, the fact that we can at least think of them must be acknowledged. Ayhan Çitil explained that, according to Kant, it is essential to demonstrate that things in themselves are merely thinkable.[7] This demonstration is crucial because it allows us to discuss concepts such as freedom or a free cause.[8] By acknowledging their thinkability, we can engage in philosophical discussions and explore the implications of these concepts, even if they are beyond our empirical knowledge.

Similarly, Kant explored the realm of morality and moral responsibility, aiming to provide meaningful concepts for God and spirit. His work in the second and third Critiques sought to transform the understanding of morality and the good, introducing a new perspective. Within the boundaries of theoretical reason, Kant argued that there is no empirical evidence for the existence of God, and it cannot be proven. However, he proposed that our knowledge of God can only be established through its connection with morality. Kant asserted, "Thus I had to deny knowledge to make room for faith."[9] This statement indicates that Kant believed in prioritizing faith, necessitating the rejection of absolute certainty in certain realms of inquiry. According to Kant, by limiting the reach of theoretical reason to things as they appear and not accessing the "thing in itself," human existence and actions become meaningful. Kant's transformational thought involved the recognition that freedom, God, and the spirit

[7] Çitil, ibid, p. 53- 5.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and edit. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, “Preface” (B xxx).

cannot be contemplated within the confines of mechanistic physics. Furthermore, Kant argued that without the ability to discuss free will, the worth of humans as intelligent beings diminishes. This idea introduced a novel perspective, emphasizing the importance of understanding limitations and embracing the realm of faith and morality to find meaning and value in human existence.

I will examine Mustafa Sabri's arguments against Kant regarding the role and status of reason. The primary purpose of this thesis is to highlight the challenges involved in criticizing Kant, as attempted by Mustafa Sabri. I will explore Mustafa Sabri's discussions with Kant on three points: the problem of existence, the knowledge of existence, and the proof of the presence of God and its justification. Mustafa Sabri categorized Kant in the skeptical tradition based on his criticisms of Kant. According to Sabri, the knowledge of necessary existence is essential in terms of reason, while Kant deemed theoretical knowledge impossible. Sabri claimed that denying it leads to skepticism. He considered skepticism as a disorder that casts doubt on everything, including the existence of God. Sabri believed that Kant was a skeptic.[10] There are two main reasons underlying this claim concerning Mustafa Sabri. The first reason is his denial of the possibility of accessing truth beyond the empirical realm of space and time. The second reason is his rejection of perceiving both subject and object. He dismissed knowledge of God, the soul, and the external space.

Before delving into Mustafa Sabri's critical arguments against Kant, it is essential to first present Sabri's perspective on Kant. Gaining an understanding of the reasons that led Sabri to formulate such harsh criticism is also a significant aim of this thesis. Evaluating Mustafa Sabri's statements in the book *Mawqif al-'Aql* reveals his negative perception of Kant. Throughout the book, Sabri raised questions about whether Kant truly deserved the reputation of being a great philosopher.

The central claim of this thesis, in this context, is that a highly severe critique of Kant's new assertion is not currently possible, or at least not yet. Additionally, this thesis

[10] Presently, "agnostic" is more prevalent to denote this circumstance instead of "skeptic." This distinction is significant as it underscores the absence of the concept of agnosticism in Mustafa Sabri's time.

argues against Mustafa Sabri's assertion, claiming that there is no contradiction between religious belief and reason in Kant's philosophy. These pure beliefs transcend the realm of empirical knowledge and experience. According to Kant, there is no logical connection between understanding through the senses and belief in religion, thus negating any contradiction or conflict between the two.[11] In simpler terms, individuals can have knowledge of what they perceive and can demonstrate, but they believe in things that are not visible or demonstrable. Considering the distinction between Kant's understanding of "knowing" and that of Mustafa Sabri, it becomes necessary to question the assumption that reason can provide complete knowledge, as Kant suggested. Therefore, it is imperative to assess that belief extends beyond mere understanding.

Scholars have written numerous theses, books, and articles about Mustafa Sabri in Turkish, English, and Arabic. Furthermore, an organizing committee arranged a symposium about him on 8 August 2017. That is *Uluslararası Mustafa Sabri Efendi'nin (1869- 1954) İslam Düşüncesine ve Yeni Kelam Çalışmalarına Katkısı Çalıştayı*. In addition, the article "*Mustafa Sabri Efendi"* published in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedi* has been an essential source for obtaining general information about his life, works, religious and philosophical views.[12] However, the focus of these texts primarily revolves around Mustafa Sabri's thoughts on Kalam or his political opinions. Nevertheless, there are some studies that specifically address and analyze Mustafa Sabri's views, particularly from a philosophical standpoint. Here, we will highlight four notable studies on this subject.

Two noteworthy studies are relevant to our examination of Mustafa Sabri's *Mawqif al-'Aql* in detail. One of them is Ibrahim Bayram's Ph.D. thesis, "*Son Devir Osmanlı Şeyhülislâmlarından Mustafa Sabri Efendi'nin Dinî Düşüncesi*" (2014), he conducted at Marmara University's Social Sciences Institute. The other study is Mehmet Emin Şen's Ph.D. thesis, "*Mustafa Sabri Efendi'nin Düşünce Sisteminde Din ve Diyalektik*" (2019), he carried out at Necmettin Erbakan University's Institute of Social Sciences. These studies play a significant role in systematically addressing Sabri's religious

[11] Ş. Teoman Duralı, *Aklın Anatomisi; Salt Aklın Eleştirisinin Teşrihi*, İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2017, p. 109.
[12] See for more information (DİA, XXXI, 350-353).

thought. This thesis will extensively explore Sabri's philosophical perspectives on knowledge and existence, including his critiques of Kant.

On the other hand, Halim Çalış published an article titled "*Mustafa Sabri Efendi ve Kant Felsefesine Yaptığı Eleştiriler*" (Yeni Ümit Dergisi, Sayı 54, 2001 that addressed a subject parallel to that of this thesis. In the article, Çalış provided a general analysis of Mustafa Sabri's criticisms of Kant. However, neither Ibrahim Bayram's Ph.D. thesis nor Mehmet Emin Şen's Ph.D. thesis included individual examinations of Sabri's criticisms of Kant since there was no philosophical analysis of the objections. Furthermore, Osman Demir's text "*Mustafa Sabri Efendi'nin Modern Bilim ve Ateizm Eleştirileri*" which we found in the book *Şeyhülislam'ın Kelamı Mustafa Sabri Efendi'nin İslam Düşüncesine ve Yeni Kelam Çalışmalarına Katkısı* (İstanbul: Ketebe Yayınları, 2020, p. 107-147) is another critical study. This text specifically examined Mustafa Sabri's criticisms of modern science, modern Western philosophy, and atheism in *Mawqif al-'Aql*. In summary, all these studies lacked a philosophical analysis of Mustafa Sabri's complaints. However, this thesis conducted a critical investigation into Mustafa Sabri's complaints of Kant. It included a philosophical analysis of these criticisms. This thesis also sought to understand the reasons behind Mustafa Sabri's harsh criticism of Kant.

CHAPTER II

THE SCIENTIFIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL MILIEU OF MUSTAFA SABRI AND KANT

2.1. Kant and His Scientific and Philosophical Milieu

2.1.1. Pre-Kantian Western Scientific and Philosophical Developments

Since the sixteenth century, Aristotle's influence has been profound in both science and philosophy. Islamic philosophy and science have fundamentally transformed the foundation of ancient Greek understanding and its subsequent development. This transformation has given rise to a new perspective on nature, leading to profound changes. Subsequently, the transition to the "modern" era took place after the sixteenth century. The waning faith in traditional church teachings in Europe resulted in an increased reliance on reason. The newfound power of reasoning enabled people to make significant scientific discoveries. Humans began perceiving nature as a machine rather than an organism, establishing their dominance over it. Science was embraced as the sole tool capable of comprehending and controlling this machine, serving as a means of measurement. Throughout history, science will be recognized as a novel and systematic approach to experimental research, exploring both the measurable and qualitative aspects of nature. Galileo and later Newton played a crucial role in human acceptance of the laws of nature as mathematical. Over time, science gained autonomy and became a distinct discipline separate from philosophy. Substantial advancements have occurred in the fields of physics, chemistry, biology, and astronomy, forming the bedrock of modern science's primary domains.

2.1.2. Pre-Kantian Ontology and Epistemology

Kant's contribution to the modern world of thought, as it gradually evolved from rationalist to empiricist philosophy, is immense. Two rival schools emerged during the early modern period in philosophy: rationalism and empiricism. Although both schools

have ancient roots, they are considered contemporary doctrines. Furthermore, the leading philosophers of the early modern period aligned themselves with one of these two schools. Rationalists, such as Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, held that we possess a priori knowledge independent of sensory experience. Empiricists, represented by Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, argued that our concepts and knowledge are derived from sense experience. However, Kant did not align himself with either of these extreme schools. Instead, he synthesized the two, establishing a new middle ground in philosophy. He emphasized that while the source of knowledge is rooted in sense experience, its formation relies on reason. In doing so, he significantly altered the course of philosophical inquiry.

2.1.2.1. The Analysis of Rationalists and Empiricists in Terms of Kant and Mustafa Sabri

To comprehensively understand the world of thought that influenced Kant and his aims with the Critiques, it is crucial to examine the entire pre-Kantian period, which commenced with the scientific revolution. During this period, science emerged as an increasingly valued tool, providing modern humans with a reliable means to access knowledge grounded in experience. Metaphysics, on the other hand, pertains to realms beyond direct experience. From the scientific revolution until Kant's time, the reliance on reason diminished, and the prevailing notion became that knowledge is derived from experience and observation. Kant observed that society had grown weary of metaphysics, with many adopting an indifferent attitude towards it in order to escape the contentious metaphysical debates that had persisted for centuries. Kant criticized this attitude, recognizing that indifference does not resolve the issues at hand. Irrespective of whether one follows an empiricist or rationalist approach, these discussions inevitably lead back to a similar kind of metaphysics. Kant argued that it was imperative to identify the underlying source of these problems. He contended that his *Critique of Pure Reason* held the key to addressing all metaphysical matters.[13]

All the rationalists and empiricists, which we mentioned above, have something in common. All of them referred to belief in God to ground their philosophical system or

[13] Kant, ibid, (A xii).

to correct any inconsistency or deficiency. Descartes had to prove the existence of God in order to verify the existence of material things. In Leibniz's philosophy, there is no relationship between monads; hence he used the metaphor that monads are windowless. In this case, he explained the regular movements of monads through the idea of pre-established harmony, and he suggested that God could have established this harmony. Idealist Berkeley, on the other hand, claimed that the existence of things in the physical world depends on the presence of an observing subject. He used the presence of God to indicate that these things still exist even when subjects close their eyes since they will continue to be perceived by God. Kant, however, determined what we know by drawing the boundaries of reason, and Kant established a consistent philosophical system with a thoroughly scientific method without relying on God. He made a breakthrough.

In his book *Mawqif al-ʻAql,* Mustafa Sabri also made references to the rationalists and empiricists mentioned earlier. Sabri provided a summary of Descartes' views among the rationalists and those of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume among the empiricists, drawing from Ahmad Amin and Zaki Naguib Mahmoud's book *The Story of Modern Philosophy* (قصة الفلسفة الحديثة). His primary objective was to address the insecurity of reason, which he believed was instilled by modern Western thought. He held the view that the existence of God could only be known through pure reason and sought to eliminate doubts surrounding it. Sabri did not criticize rationalists, particularly Descartes, negatively. He asserted that their thoughts aligned with his thesis due to their reliance on reason. However, he expressed greater criticism towards the views of the empiricists. According to Sabri, it was Hume who awakened Kant from his intellectual slumber and challenged his trust in traditional teachings.[14] Although Sabri did not specifically mention causality, he interpreted Hume's rejection of religion and knowledge, along with the claims made by empiricists in general, as the catalyst for Kant's awakening. Sabri argued that Hume, in particular, denied the existence of the soul because he did not consider anything derived from experience as knowledge. Moreover, Sabri claimed that the denial of the soul inevitably leads to the rejection of religion.[15] Similarly, Berkeley's idealist stance, which cast doubts on the existence of

[14] Mustafa Sabri, *Mawqif al-ʻAql*, 2nd vol., Cairo: Dar al-Afaq al-Arabiyah, 2006, p. 139.
[15] Ibid, 138.

matter, posed significant obstacles to acquiring knowledge.[16] Sabri contended that these destructive outcomes collectively served as a wake-up call for Kant. In the context of truth, Sabri criticized Hume, asserting that in Hume's thought, truth is limited to possibilities and choices—mere preferences for something.[17] He further argued that modern science supports Hume's perspective since all natural sciences are relative, representing a preference for a particular possibility. Sabri claimed that Hume did not demand absolute truth because he considered it impossible, suggesting that modern humans do not require the entirety of truth if it were to exist.[18]

Mustafa Sabri focused more on Descartes among the philosophers mentioned above, particularly in relation to the proof of the existence of God, as he extensively examined various Western philosophers, including Kant. Sabri argued that Descartes stood out as the philosopher who developed the most compelling arguments regarding the presence of God. He meticulously analyzed the evidence put forth by Descartes to establish God's existence. Sabri contended that Descartes was the first Western thinker to overcome the mind-faith dichotomy prevalent during the Christian Middle Ages.[19] One notable aspect highlighted by Sabri is that Descartes managed to prove the existence of God prior to establishing the existence of the material world.[20] However, Sabri also found Descartes' ontological argument problematic. According to Sabri, Descartes derived the existence of God from the concept of God itself. Descartes posited that the concept of God encompasses all perfections, and therefore, God exists because existence is a perfection.[21] This proof is problematic for Mustafa Sabri since God must have all perfections for everyone who believes in his existence, and it does not have to be the same for those who do not believe in God because He does not exist for him, nor He has all perfections.[22]

[16] Ibid.
[17] According to Mustafa Sabri, the issue of truth is very important because the rejection of the truth leads to the denial of the existence of God. For him, truth is absolute and necessary. Otherwise, the presence of God cannot be proven because from his point of view, the proof of His presence is the impossibility of His absence.
[18] Ibid, 210.
[19] Ibid, 205-206.
[20] Ibid, 210.
[21] Ibid, 199.
[22] Ibid, 216.

2.1.3. Kant and His Critiques

We come to know Kant through his three Critiques, which encompass his transcendental philosophy and moral philosophy. However, it is crucial to recognize that Kant also published several other significant books during the pre-critical period. Understanding the transformation that occurred in Kant's thinking with the emergence of his Critiques requires an awareness of his endeavors during this earlier period. In his youth, he primarily focused on physical geography, the philosophy of physics, and metaphysics. Kant attempted to develop a metaphysics that he would later critique, particularly in his first Critique. The influences of Leibniz and Newton are evident in Kant's early works. Initially, Kant held a rational optimism regarding the capacity of pure reason to generate knowledge about God and the structure of the universe. In 1781, he published his first Critique, Pure Reason. The preceding decade marked the gradual process that led him to the formulation of the Critiques. During this period, he began to question the problems he aimed to solve in his Critiques, prompting a shift in his positive stance towards traditional metaphysics.

Kant's first Critique, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, was published in 1781 and served as the foundation for his subsequent two Critiques. In this work, Kant examined the possibility of metaphysics as a science. He described metaphysics as a 'battlefield of endless controversies.'[23] According to Kant, previous metaphysical explanations relying on reason had resulted in interminable debates. A general sense of indifference arose among philosophers. However, Kant argued that despite the illusory nature of all previous metaphysical theories, the issues they sought to address, such as the existence of God, immortality, and freedom, remained unavoidable due to the dictates of reason. In response, he proposed the establishment of a 'court of justice of reason'—a criticism of pure reason itself.[24] This court would not critique philosophers or their arguments directly; rather, it would scrutinize the faculties of reason itself to determine the possibility or impossibility of metaphysics. The primary objective was to delineate the boundaries of reason and ascertain the scope of our knowledge. Kant highlighted three perennial controversies among metaphysicians: the paralogisms concerning the soul, the antinomies surrounding the cosmos, and the illusions associated with God.

[23] Ibid, 99.
[24] Ibid, 101.

The Critique of Practical Reason was the second one Kant published in 1788. It served as Kant's moral philosophy in the second Critique. The ideas of freedom, God, and soul were postulates of reason, and these postulates found their connection with reality in the Critique of Practical Reason. Moreover, *The Critique of the Power of Judgment* was the third and last of Kant's Critiques, published in 1790. It was written in his old age, and he expressed his views on aesthetics and natural teleology as the two main topics in this book. However, it received less attention than the other two Critiques because natural teleology and aesthetics were much less central among philosophers compared to philosophical fields like epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics.[25] Moreover, natural teleology has received much less attention than Kant's aesthetics. Furthermore, natural teleology received much less attention than Kant's aesthetics. The third Critique complemented the other two Critiques. Kant philosophized the theoretical field in the first Critique, which was the field of nature, and in the second, he addressed the practical area, which was the field of morality. It was not possible to justify freedom within the area of nature, which involved causality and determinism. Kant built a bridge between these two fields in the third Critique and simultaneously made the principles of liberty actual in nature.[26] As a result, he connected theoretical judgment and moral action through the power of judgment.

2.2. Mustafa Sabri and His Scientific and Philosophical Milieu

2.2.1. Philosophy in the Age of Mustafa Sabri (20th Century)

Islamic thought has shaped itself in three main areas: Kalam, philosophy, and mysticism. It was between the eighth and thirteenth centuries that Muslim scholars produced a wealth of original content in these fields. Starting from the twelfth century, commentaries and footnotes on the works of Islamic philosophers covering various subjects were written or translated into other languages.[27] During the period between

[25] Hannah Ginsborg, "Kant's Aesthetics and Teleology," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2013.
[26] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 3- 81; Heinz Heimsoeth, *Kant'ın Felsefesi*, trans. Takiyettin Mengüşoğlu. Ankara: Doğu Batı Yayınları, 2016, pp. 144- 45; Gamze Keskin, *Art as the Possibility of Transition from Freedom to Nature in Kant's Critical Philosophy*, Archives of Philosophy, 50, 2019, 31- 41; T. B. Veblen, *Kant's Critique of Judgment*, The Journal of Speculative Philosophy, 18, 1884, 260- 74, retrieved from https://www.jstor.org; Hannah Ginsborg ibid.
[27] Mahmut Kaya, "Felsefe", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 12, (1995): 321, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr.

the twelfth and twentieth centuries, the works of early Islamic philosophers served as the primary source for studies.[28] However, there were also individuals who opposed philosophy and wrote critical works on philosophical views, such as Al-Ghazali and his work 'The Tahāfut al-Falāsifa.' In the twentieth century, the Islamic world began to engage intensively with modern Western philosophy. Islamic philosophers translated numerous works in philosophy from Western languages. These outcomes can be divided into several groups: those solely interested in Western philosophy, those who continued the tradition of classical Islamic philosophy, those who wrote works objecting to Western philosophy, and those who attempted to synthesize the issues and problems of classical Islamic philosophy with Western philosophy.[29]

In the past hundred and fifty years, the Islamic world has experienced a significant expansion in its literature on Western philosophy, influenced by its profound impact. Islamic scholars have written about the history of philosophy, compiled philosophy dictionaries, and created bibliographies about philosophers.[30] Moreover, materialism and positivism, in particular, have emerged as two philosophical schools that greatly influenced the contemporary Islamic world, leading to the creation of numerous books on these subjects. [31] In the realm of Islamic philosophy itself, there exists a comprehensive collection of works that not only document its history but also serve as introductory materials to the field. The ongoing discussion primarily centers on the orientalists' assertion that the first Islamic philosophers had limitations in their writing. According to this claim, these philosophers were unable to surpass the act of writing annotations based on their acquired knowledge from Ancient Greece, rather than creating original content.

[28] Ibid, 321.
[29] Ibid, 325.
[30] In this period, we can list the following names among the representatives of Islamic thought and philosophy; Seyyid Ahmed Han, Namık Kemal, Ziya Paşa, Şinasi, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, Tunuslu Hayreddin Paşa, Ali Suavi, Said Halim Paşa, Rifaa et-Tahtavi, Cemaleddin-i Efgani, Muhammed Abduh, Musa Carullah Bigi, Reşid Rıza, Muhammed İkbal, Ziya Gökalp, Mehmed İzzet, Hilmi Ziya Ülken, İzmirli İsmail Hakkı, Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi, Mustafa Abdürrazık, Mustafa Şekip Tunç, Seyyid Kutub, Murtaza Mutahhari, Ali Şeriati, Seyyid Muhammed Tabatabai, Muhammed Aziz el-Lahbabi, Malik b. Nebi, Mevdud, Fazlurrahman, Seyyid Hüseyin Nasr, Rene Guenon (Abdülvahid Yahya), Frithjof Schuon, Hasan Hanefi, Muhammed Abid el-Cabiri, Zeki Necib Mahmud and Muhammed Arkoun. Ibid, 328.
[31] Ibid.

Examining the philosophical studies of Mustafa Sabri's period and geography would be beneficial for the thesis. Mustafa Sabri witnessed the transformative events of the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the new Republic of Turkey, which significantly impacted Muslim societies. As part of the ongoing modernization process, Turkey prioritized scientific advancements over religious aspects. Scholars of that period engaged in philosophical studies with the aim of embracing modernity.[32] They sought to explore and understand the thought systems that underpinned Western practices. These studies in Western philosophy gained momentum day by day, with scholars interpreting ancient Greek philosophy through a fresh lens, often neglecting the rich tradition of Islamic philosophy. They relied on translations and interpretations from Western sources. Subsequently, studies in modern Western philosophy followed suit, building upon the earlier scholarly endeavors. Conversely, Islamic philosophy received relatively less attention, primarily due to its metaphysical nature within its historical context. Atilla Arkan argued that the emerging mindset, which favored natural sciences over metaphysics, detrimentally impacted the exploration of Islamic philosophy's history.[33]

Another essential feature of the philosophical studies carried out in this period in Turkish society, as Ali Utku and Cüneyt Kaya stated, is that, with a few exceptions, almost all of them had an enlightened understanding of philosophy and interpreted Western philosophy within this framework.[34] Therefore, for the Turkish scholars of this period, philosophy is enlightening their lives by getting rid of tradition due to their experiments and observations with their minds.[35] Furthermore, it is worth noting that a significant portion of the philosophical literature from Mustafa Sabri's period consists of translations from French.[36] This reliance on French translations was due to the prominence of France as the leading intellectual center, where Turks had extensive access to Western culture in the nineteenth century. Consequently, Turkish scholars primarily engaged with Western philosophy through secondary sources authored by

[32] Ali Utku and M. Cüneyt Kaya, "Türkiye'de Modern Felsefe Tarihi Yazımının Serencamı: Geç-Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Bir Literatür Değerlendirmesi", *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 9, no. 17, (2011), 12.
[33] Atilla Arkan, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkçe İslam Felsefesi Tarihi Çalışmalarına Dair Literatür Denemesi", *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 9, no. 17, (2011), 108.
[34] Utku and Kaya, ibid, 42.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid, 33. For more information about this literature, see Utku and Kaya, ibid, 13- 33.

French scholars, including their translations of Kant's works. We will delve deeper into this matter in subsequent sections of the thesis. It is noteworthy that the philosophical studies conducted by Turkish thinkers during Mustafa Sabri's lifetime maintained a superficial, pragmatic, and emotional approach.[37]

2.2.2. Mustafa Sabri and His Philosophical Perspective in *Mawqif al-'Aql*

Mustafa Sabri, the last Shaykh al-Islam of the Ottoman Empire, made significant contributions to crucial decision-making during the preceding period. He led an active intellectual and political life, mentoring numerous students and authoring various Turkish and Arabic works. In addition, he voiced opposition against the Committee of Union and Progress as well as the Turkish national struggle.[38] Following his critique of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and resistance against the Committee of Union and Progress, Sabri lived in exile in different countries from 1922 until his passing in Egypt in 1954. Despite not being actively involved in politics during his time in Egypt, his exile allowed him to create his magnum opus. He served as a teacher in al-Azhar and authored the book "*Mawqif al-'Aql*" during this period.[39] Politically and intellectually, Sabri stands at the crossroads of the Empire's transformation into a Republic, the shift from a religious worldview to secular considerations, and the transition from East to West.[40]

In Mustafa Sabri's book "*Mawqif al-'Aql*," the primary concern of all discussions and objections from Muslim scholars and modern Western philosophers is to safeguard and support the ancient Islamic scientific tradition. Mustafa Sabri did not have any issues with modern science or modern philosophy.[41] His main criticism revolved around the notion of perceiving only modern science, along with the modern reason that is contingent upon it, as the sole fundamental sources of knowledge.[42] He believed that this perspective hindered the ability to prove the existence of God and demonstrate

[37] Ibid, 12.
[38] Ahmet Akbulut, Şeyhülislam Mustafa Sabri ve Görüşleri (1869- 1954), İslami Araştırmalar 6, no. 1, (1992), 32.
[39] Ibid, 33.
[40] For more information about Mustafa Sabri's life, see Ahmet Akbulut, Şeyhülislam Mustafa Sabri ve Görüşleri (1869- 1954), İslami Araştırmalar 6, no. 1, (1992), 32- 43. Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, Mustafa Sabri Efendi, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* 31, (2006), 350-353.
[41] Sabri, ibid, 1st. vol., 219.
[42] Ibid.

the necessity of faith in prophets. According to Mustafa Sabri, the Egyptian intellectuals of that time, influenced by Western thought, brought this idea to the Islamic lands and unintentionally sowed the seeds of skepticism regarding religious matters, ultimately exacerbating irreligion within the Islamic world. The main objective of publishing this book, in Mustafa Sabri's own words, was to demonstrate that reason, experience, and senses collectively contribute to acquiring knowledge about existence. He endeavored to create a balanced and restrained mental framework and mindset that Muslims could follow in their philosophical inquiries about existence.[43]

During his exile, Mustafa Sabri said that in Egypt, he encountered a new tendency that started to see religion as superstition and a fairy tale.[44] Likewise, he has also seen that some scholars tend not to accept the ancient Islamic scientific tradition, especially the science of Kalam, as a science.[45] They rejected reason and science, which experience and experiment did not support.[46] Even despair began to develop against their religion. They tried to prove the existence of God by reason in the past.[47] However, in the era of positive science, pure reason (العقل المحض) and transcendental logic (المنطق التجريدي) held little significance He provided several examples of this despair and extensively examined them to demonstrate the peculiar assertions of Egyptian intellectuals.[48] From these examples that Mustafa Sabri brought, we can say that which have encouraged at that time was a perception of religion that was far from thinking with pure reason or transcendental logic and providing evidence because experience and experiments could not prove these methods. The Egyptian intellectuals held the belief that their sole recourse was to confine religion to an exclusively emotional domain, devoid of intellectual and rational factors. Consequently, they rejected the notions of miracles, fate, fatalism, and resurrection. Additionally, they approached the historical events depicted in the Qur'an from a historicist perspective. Some even contended that the Qur'an was revealed during a specific historical period, offering solutions tailored to the issues of that time.

[43] Ibid, 4, and 271.
[44] Ibid, 95.
[45] Ibid, 96, 219-20, and 271.
[46] Ibid, 100.
[47] Ibid.
[48] On more information for Mustafa Sabri's examples of Egyptian intellectuals' claims, see ibid, 101-885.

On the contrary, a mindset began to emerge that regarded these events as mere mythology and sought to diminish their significance. However, during that period, such discussions were not openly debated in Turkish society, as the focus was primarily on the arduous process of political transformation and engagement in wars. Nevertheless, these issues are now extensively deliberated among Turkish scholars. It is likely that Mustafa Sabri was taken aback when he encountered these discussions in Egypt.[49] Additionally, one reason for his surprise could be attributed to the fact that Turkish thinkers, having emerged from the remnants of a collapsing empire and embarking on a modernization process, were primarily preoccupied with sociological and practical concerns. In this context, it is essential to highlight Mustafa Sabri's assertion that the foundation of all these discussions lies in modern Western philosophy, particularly the works of Kant.

Mustafa Sabri held a negative view of Kant, expressing his criticisms of Kant and his philosophy in his book "*Mawqif al-'Aql*." His critiques of Kant can be summarized as follows: Firstly, Sabri contested Kant's assertion that the existence of God cannot be known or proven through theoretical reason, arguing that it is indeed possible to prove God's existence through theoretical reason alone. Secondly, Sabri criticized Kant for deeming the principle of causality necessary while denying the existence of a beginning and limiting the chain of causation to time and space. Sabri believed that while an infinite chain of causality may be logical, Kant rejected the notion that the chain of causation must ultimately rest upon a necessary being whose existence requires no other cause. Sabri's third criticism centered around Kant's denial of certain knowledge, leading him to argue against the concept of essential knowledge or entity. The fourth criticism was about Kant's attempt to prove the existence of God, whose absolute and necessary existence is unknown, through moral evidence. Sabri claimed that Kant's argument could allow for something that is not necessary to be regarded as God. In Sabri's view, Kant felt compelled to prove the existence of God in order to establish the necessity of morality. Consequently, Sabri considered Kant to be a complete skeptic, drawing parallels between Kant and Hume in this regard and asserting that Hume exhibited greater internal consistency.

[49] Ibid, 238.

Mustafa Sabri held negative views and expressed harsh criticisms for several reasons. This thesis will briefly outline the following factors that contributed to Sabri's negative perception of Kant: Firstly, Sabri viewed Kant and other Western philosophers as having a disdainful tendency due to their belief, influenced by their Christian tradition, that reason and religion were incompatible. Secondly, according to Sabri, Kant and his contemporaries underestimated or even denied alternative methods of evidence due to their excessive reliance on science and empirical experience. Thirdly, Sabri's lack of direct engagement with Kant's original texts resulted in misunderstandings. His criticisms were not rooted in a thorough understanding of Kant's intentions, his philosophical constructions, and the development of his new thought system. Instead, Sabri's critique was likely based on secondary sources and their interpretations of Kant's most renowned arguments. Lastly, shifts in Islamic thought, particularly among certain thinkers in Egypt, fostered biases against Kant in Mustafa Sabri. As Sabri encountered new discussions on religious matters in Egypt, emerging tendencies posed threats to religious beliefs and eroded trust. Sabri found that these new ideas within the Islamic thought tradition were influenced by modern Western philosophy. Consequently, he regarded Kant as the primary culprit responsible for the significant transformation of modern Western philosophy. Sabri's exposure to these changes influenced his biased perception of Kant, leading him to approach Kant's arguments with preconceived notions and resulting in his severe and critical assessments.

The sources from which Mustafa Sabri read and learned Kant's philosophy hold significant importance in understanding his perspective. This thesis raised an important question about whether Mustafa Sabri directly read Kant's works, particularly the three Critiques. Fortunately, Mustafa Sabri provided references to the texts he quoted in his book *Mawqif al-ʻAql*, offering insights into his potential sources for Kant's writings. Mustafa Sabri drew from Arabic, Turkish, and French authorities, as inferred from these references. Notably, Mustafa Sabri quoted Kant from the following resources: Ismail Fenni Ertuğrul's book *Maddiyyûn Mezhebinin İzmihlâli*, Paul Janet's book translated into Turkish by Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır as *Metâlib ve Mezâhib*, Charles Renouvier's book *Analytical philosophy of history* "فلسفة التاريخ التحليلية," and Ahmad Amin and Zaki Naguib Mahmoud's book *The Story of Modern Philosophy* "قصة الفلسلة الحديثة." İsmail Fenni Ertuğrul (1855–1946) was a Turkish writer and philosopher, and his book *Maddiyyûn Mezhebinin İzmihlâli*, wrote in Turkish in

1928, critically examined materialist claims made in Ludwig Büchner's book Kraft and Staff (1855). One can infer that Mustafa Sabri had already acquainted himself with Kant's ideas prior to his time in Egypt, indicating his prior familiarity with Kant's ideas.

Metâlib ve Mezâhib is a Turkish translation of the metaphysical and theological sections of the history of philosophy book called *Histoire de la philosophie, les problemes et les ecoles*. and written by the French historian of philosophy Paul Janet with the support of Gabriel Seailles. The French historian of philosophy, Paul Janet, wrote the original work with the support of Gabriel Seailles. Elmalılı M. Hamdi Yazır translated the book, although different translators have translated it multiple times.[50] In his translation, Elmalılı added a forty-page preface and numerous explanatory notes, which are unique features of Yazır's version.[51] He also took the opportunity to discuss the ideas of Western philosophers and compare them with the viewpoints of Muslim philosophers and theologians, expressing his own views on the matter.[52] It is worth mentioning that Mustafa Sabri is quoted from the Turkish translation of this book. Elmalılı, who performed the translation, praised his work, considering it the best book on the history of philosophy.[53] Mehmet Emin Erişirgil, a contemporary of Elmalılı and who teaches the history of philosophy at Daru'l Funûn, made the same comment.[54] Although Erişirgil evaluated Elmalılı's preface as the work of a person with philosophical power, he criticized Elmalılı's approach to the history of philosophy from a systematic and functional point of view.[55] Erişirgil evaluated Elmalılı as someone who did not know the teachings of philosophers and, therefore, could not fully grasp their ideas.[56] The claim that Elmalılı could not adequately comprehend the teachings of Western philosophers strengthens our thesis that Mustafa Sabri, influenced by this source, could not sufficiently understand the instructions of these philosophers. All this information is essential for this thesis because it shows us how

[50] For more information about the reason why Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır led to translate a philosophical book, see Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır, "Dibâce," Metâlib ve Mezâhib, İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2019, 26- 7. You can see Asım Cüneyt Köksal, "Takdim," ibid, 13- 14 for more information about why he preferred translating Paul Janet's book.
[51] Utku, ibid, 30.
[52] Asım Cüneyt Köksal, "Takdim", Metâlib ve Mezâhib, 2018, 14- 15.
[53] Utku, ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid. For more information about Mehmet Emin Erişirgil's thoughts on Elmalılı, see: Mehmet Emin Erişirgil, "İki Eser-i Felsefî Münasebetiyle," Darülfünun Edebiyat Fakültesi Mecmuâsı 2-3, (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1923), 159- 166.

important it is for Mustafa Sabri and how he used it as a significant source in his criticism of Kant.

Mustafa Sabri utilized other resources in his study of Kant. One such resource was *'Philosophie analytique de l'histoire*,' a book by Charles Renouvier. Charles Bernard Renouvier (1815-1903), a French philosopher, aimed to reinterpret and enhance Kant's theory of knowledge. In addition to Renouvier's work, Mustafa Sabri also drew from *'The Story of Modern Philosophy*,' an Arabic book, which Ahmad Amin and Zaki Naguib Mahmoud authored in 1949. The authors of the book were Egyptian. Evident from all this information, Mustafa Sabri relied on these secondary sources for his quotes about Kant. When it came to quotes about other Western philosophers, Mustafa Sabri did not refer directly to their original texts. Instead, he relied on secondary sources. This suggests that Mustafa Sabri approached Kant's philosophy primarily through secondary sources. However, there is no available data to confirm otherwise. By studying Kant through secondary sources, it becomes easier to understand why Mustafa Sabri criticized Kant and held a negative opinion about him. To gain a comprehensive understanding of Kant's philosophy, it is essential to engage with his three Critiques.

CHAPTER III

THE POSSIBILITY OF METAPHYSICS AS A SCIENCE: EPISTEMOLOGY

To better understand the subject, it is beneficial to explore Teoman Durali's explanations on metaphysics in his book *'Aklın Anatomisi*' (Anatomy of Reason). According to Durali, the fundamental purpose of metaphysics is to unveil the underlying reality that exists beyond mere truths. Attaining truth requires contemplation, as it surpasses the realm of empirical experience and delves into the transcendent reality. However, this contemplation can be pursued through logical reasoning. In essence, logical contemplation forms the foundation of metaphysics. In the phenomenal world, the perception of existence is limited, as true existence lies beyond our grasp. Durali argued that what we perceive are beings, which are the perceptible reflections of existence. However, the transition from beings to existence can only be achieved through intense abstraction. Philosophers present three distinct interpretations regarding this matter. The first interpretation suggests that existence can be reached through synthesizing beings. The second interpretation posits the opposite, stating that it is sensible to infer beings from existence. Between these two extremes lies Kant's perspective. Kant argued that in contemplating existence, our starting point is beings and our perceptions of them. Beings that I perceive do indeed exist. However, Kant claimed that we cannot make any assertions about entities that will never become the object of our perception.

3.1. In Kant’s Regard

Kant's assertion that constructing metaphysics based on epistemology as a science is impossible had a profound and transformative impact on the world of thought. Similarly, Mustafa Sabri raised objections and criticisms of Kant's ideas. This Sabri's criticisms, in this thesis, I will thoroughly examine under three main headings: the Problem of Existence, the Possibility of Knowledge of Existence, and the Proof of the

Existence of God through Pure Reason. However, in order to offer a more accurate critique of Sabri's arguments, it is essential to first provide a concise overview of Kant's position on these issues. While the primary focus of this thesis is Mustafa Sabri's criticisms of Kant, I will briefly outline Kant's views before delving into a detailed analysis and critique of Sabri's perspectives.

3.1.1. The Problem of Existence

Everything subject to knowledge is existence.[57] In other words, whatever we can discuss or talk about falls within the realm of existence.[58] However, Kant challenged the long-standing tradition of metaphysics by arguing that it was a major mistake to assume that existence could be grasped through logic. He believed that as beings living within the realm of the senses, we cannot add or subtract from existence, as Ayhan Çitil explained.[59] He asserted that reason is incapable of knowing anything independent of experience, stating, '...with experience every cognition begins'.[60] He proposed that our understanding and knowledge of objects of experience are made possible through categories, which are pure concepts of understanding within the pure forms of time and space. Through his critiques, he demonstrated that metaphysics as a science based on epistemology is no longer tenable. He contended that such metaphysics is merely an illusion. His ideas have left a lasting impact on the entire philosophical tradition, including Islamic philosophy. Notably, Ayhan Çitil emphasized the influence of traditional metaphysics on Islamic philosophers, who incorporated concepts from it. Therefore, Kant's claim encompassed them as well, suggesting that their philosophy, like others, was founded on speculation and delusion.[61]

3.1.2. The Possibility of Knowledge of Existence

First and foremost, Kant challenged the idea that knowledge about existence could be derived solely from the analysis of concepts based on pure logical principles. He

[57] Durali, ibid, 64.
[58] Ibid, 65.
[59] Çitil, ibid, 14.
[60] Kant, ibid, (B I)
[61] Çitil, ibid, 14.

distinguished between two types of judgments: analytical judgments and synthetic judgments. [62] Analytical judgments involve the spontaneous emergence of the predicate through the analysis of the subject, serving to clarify what we already know within the subject. On the other hand, synthetic judgments expand upon the concept of the subject and provide us with new knowledge. These judgments are exclusively synthetic judgments of experience.[63] According to Kant, the possibility of knowledge of existence is only achievable through synthetic judgments. However, he argued that these judgments alone are not sufficient for attaining universal and necessary knowledge. Kant proposed that human cognition has two roots: sensibility and understanding. He asserted that objects are given to us through sensibility, and then, through understanding, we are able to think about them.[64]

Sensibility, according to Kant, is the initial stage of cognition. We intuit objects through our senses, and then we comprehend them using categories, which are the pure concepts of understanding. In Kantian philosophy, before we can proceed to the second stage, we encounter "appearance." Kant claimed that appearance refers to the undetermined object of empirical intuition.[65] Furthermore, there are two forms of appearances: space and time. Kant referred to 'space' and 'time' as pure forms of sensible intuition and as principles of a priori cognition.[66] According to Kant, they do not possess absolute reality and are not entities existing independently outside of us.[67] Each phenomenon in the mechanical universe, connected to others through causal relations, can only be understood within a specific place and time period. Without adhering to the patterns of time and space, it is impossible to attain cognition of anything.

More importantly, Kant claimed that "…outer objects are nothing other than mere representations of our sensibility, whose form is space …".[68] As a result, "… whose

[62] For more information about the difference between analytic and synthetic judgments, see Kant, 1998, CPR (A 6- A 16), (B 10- B 30).
[63] As Kant said: "Judgments of experience, as such, are all synthetic." Ibid, (A 7), (B 12).
[64] Ibid, (A 15), (B 29).
[65] Ibid, (A 20), (B 34).
[66] Ibid, (A 22), (B 36).
[67] Heimsoeth, 2016, Kant'ın Felsefesi, 80.
[68] Ibid, 178.

true correlate, i.e., the thing in itself, is not and cannot be cognized through them, but is also never asked after experience".[69] Thanks to these representations, the object that is still undetermined (appearances) will be determined by the spontaneity of the concepts.[70] Kant argued that a priori concepts are universal and necessary, and these concepts make intuitions understandable.[71] Kant, following Aristotle, referred to these concepts as categories, which serve as the foundational and binding forms of thinking. They are essential for the entry of any content into consciousness. Kant asserted there are twelve categories organized under four headings: quantity, quality, relation, and modality.[72] It is through the application of these categories that understanding reaches its culmination. However, since the first stage is not fulfilled, it becomes impossible to progress to the second stage. In the absence of sensible intuition and appearance, we cannot categorically frame the three ideas of God, freedom, and immortality. According to Kant, these ideas remain unattainable within the confines of experience, governing by the forms of space and time. According to Kant's argument, one cannot complete the initial step of cognition. In Kant's framework, God, freedom, and immortality are considered transcendental ideas of pure reason. They lie beyond the realm of empirical knowledge and elude apprehension within the boundaries of space and time.

According to Kant, endless debates lead 'reason' to fall into paralogism. In these debates about the soul, the cosmos, and God, metaphysicians engaged, but they were under the illusion that these ideas have congruent objects, which are never within the realm of sensory experience. Ayhan Çitil further highlighted how metaphysicians mistakenly treat the spirit as if it were a chair.[73] Within the domain of pure 'reason', Kant himself identified the occurrence of different errors, such as "sophistical inferences,"[74] associated with each of these ideas. Regarding the soul, pure 'reason' succumbs to a transcendental paralogism. In the case of the cosmos, it becomes entangled in antinomies, as it can propose both thesis and antithesis statements.

[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid, 193.
[71] Ibid, 205.
[72] For the table of categories look Kant, 1998, CPR (A 79- A 82), (B 106- B 108).
[73] Çitil, 2021, 267.
[74] Kant, CPR, "The Dialectical Inferences of Pure Reason" (A 339), (B 397). He called them 'sophistical inferences' because they are not rational inferences. They are sophistries of pure reason but not of human beings. He means that no matter how wise or hard we try, we cannot get rid of them completely.

Inferences about God result in dialectical[75] reasoning, originating from the concept of the ideal. Nevertheless, Kant asserted that these metaphysical problems remain insoluble within the scope of theoretical 'reason.' Consequently, Kant maintained that metaphysics cannot be regarded as a science or an epistemological discipline.

3.2. In Mustafa Sabri Efendi's Regard

In his book Mawqif al-'Aql, Mustafa Sabri developed an epistemology that is fundamentally rooted in the presuppositions of his ontology. To better understand Sabri's framework, we will first delve into his definition of existence. Subsequently, we will explore his perspective on how knowledge of existence can be attained and delve into his thesis concerning the presence of God. Additionally, we will examine Sabri's criticisms of Kant in relation to this topic. According to Kant, theoretical knowledge regarding the presence of God is deemed impossible. However, Sabri countered this stance by asserting that knowledge of necessary existence is essential from a rational standpoint. He argued that to deny this knowledge is to embrace skepticism, a state of doubt that encompasses everything, including the existence of God itself. Furthermore, Sabri proceeded to critique Kant's views. Sabri's criticisms encompass three main areas: the Problem of Existence, the Possibility of Knowledge of Existence, and the existence of God. By exploring these aspects, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of Sabri's objections to Kant's perspective.

3.2.1. The Problem of Existence

Mustafa Sabri based his thesis on reaching knowledge of existence, specifically the presence of God, on his ontological presuppositions. One fundamental assumption Sabri made is the acceptance of necessary existence, a concept widely acknowledged in Islamic philosophy and theology. According to Sabri, existence can be classified into two types: necessary existence (*al-wāğib al-wuğūd*) and possible existence (*mumkin al-wuğūd*).[76] The necessary existent, in Sabri's view, does not owe its

[75] Kant stated that he called 'dialectic' a logic of illusion. For more information, see CPR, "Transcendental Dialectic," (A 293- 310), (B 249- 366).
[76] Sabri, ibid, 2nd vol., 131.

existence to anything else; all other things depend on its presence.[77] It is not contingent upon or reliant on any other entity. This necessary existence, according to Sabri, refers to God.[78] The existence or absence of other entities is not obligatory but rather contingent, determined solely by His choice.[79] For Sabri, whose existence is sublime, we can reach his existence through reason.[80] Sabri posited that we can attain knowledge of God's existence through reason, emphasizing that His existence is sublime. He argued that the proof of the definite and necessary can only be achieved through theoretical reason, as it is the sole method of evidence that cannot be refuted and is impervious to contradictions that experience might present. In essence, Sabri's framework revolves around the idea that through reason and theoretical exploration, we can grasp the concept of God's necessary existence, which stands beyond the realm of contingent entities.[81]

Mustafa Sabri raised the question of whether it is obligatory for God to be al-wāğib al-wuğūd, the necessary existent. He argued that if God is not a necessary being, then He falls into the category of possible beings, either as an obligatory possibility or a contingent one. There is no middle ground in this regard.[82] Furthermore, Sabri asserted that if we can consider God a possible being, then His existence would depend on something else, similar to other viable entities.[83] Rejecting the notion of God as a necessary being, while weighing His existence against His absence, fails to resolve the issue of an infinite chain of causality.[84] This perspective also introduces the possibility of doubting God's existence.[85] Sabri contended that empirical knowledge, regarded as science in the Western world, remains limited to prevailing assumptions and predominant possibilities. Hence, it is insufficient as evidence for necessary existence.[86] Modern science and Western philosophers, according to Sabri, do not distinguish between necessary and possible beings, treating everything as possible.

[77] Ibid, 123.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid, 291.
[81] Ibid, 103.
[82] Ibid, 126.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid, 127.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid, 128.

However, he argued that their discourse lacks essential immediacy and lacks specific information necessary for genuine understanding.[87]

According to modern Western thinkers, the formation of the world, whose existence is possible because there is no necessary existence, occurred spontaneously, without the need for the necessary existent. However, Mustafa Sabri challenged this notion by asserting that these conclusions were not derived through scientific means or experiential knowledge.[88] According to him, those who deny the existence of God go beyond the limits of science and experience, saying that the world revolves around laws, that these laws are from the nature of things, not from an outside force, and that the cosmos does not need another entity to bring it into existence.[89] Although they deny the existence of God or at least remain indifferent because they cannot reach the presence of God through science, their claims about the reality of the world do not conclude by experience or even by a correct rational method.[90] On the contrary, according to Sabri, it is only an assumption based on experience.[91] While Mustafa Sabri made a general criticism of science on this subject, he also criticized Kant in particular because he made a great mistake by claiming that causality is limited to this world only and that the principle that everything has a cause applies only to perceived things.[92] We will discuss Sabri's criticisms in more detail later in the section 'The Possibility of Knowledge of Existence.'

3.2.2. The Possibility of Knowledge of Existence

In order to comprehend Mustafa Sabri's epistemology, it is important to delve into his perspective on the different types and sources of knowledge. According to Sabri, the process of acquiring knowledge in humans is orchestrated by God and occurs in various degrees. This includes self-evident and immediate knowledge (بديهيّ), knowledge obtained through reasoning (برهانيّ), and knowledge acquired through

[87] Ibid, 131.
[88] Ibid, 264.
[89] Ibid, 265.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid, 197.

experimentation (تجريبيّ). [93] While the first two types are considered necessary knowledge, the third type is not deemed essential.[94] Sabri identified reason, sensation, and experience as the primary sources of knowledge. He emphasized that self-evident knowledge emerges as reason develops and does not require inference, hence being relatively scarce.[95] According to Sabri, if God intends to create necessary knowledge obtained through reasoning, He ensures that it can be supported by rational evidence.[96] The acquisition of such knowledge is made possible through reflection and education, varying in quantity depending on the individual. [97] Likewise, when it comes to knowledge based on experience, Sabri argued that God creates knowledge in a manner that aligns with the way He creates human experiences.[98]

Mustafa Sabri placed a greater emphasis on knowledge obtained through reason over knowledge acquired through experience. He believed that reason, unlike experience, does not permit contradictions and is the only means to provide proof of certainty and necessity.[99] While experience can inform us that something has occurred, it cannot entirely eliminate the possibility of its opposite realization. Sabri argued that we can attain knowledge of both necessary and probable existence. While knowledge of possible existents can be acquired through both logical and empirical evidence, understanding the existence of God, a necessary being, is only achievable through theoretical reason (العقل النظري). According to Sabri, we can only obtain the proof of the absolute and essential through reasoning, as it is the sole method of evidence that avoids contradiction, while experience cannot definitively resolve contradictions. For Mustafa Sabri this distinction is crucial. Sabri regarded this distinction as highly

[93] Ibid, 156- 157.
[94] Ibid, 157.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid. In Mustafa Sabri Efendi's epistemology, the formation of necessary knowledge is necessary only for man but not God because He, as with all His actions, has a choice in creating this knowledge. However, as Ibrahim Bayram emphasized, according to Sabri, the fact that God has the right to choose whether or not to make the necessary knowledge does not make any contradiction in forming this knowledge as essential knowledge for human beings. About Ibrahim Bayram's views on Mustafa Sabri's epistemology, see for more information Ibrahim Bayram, "Mustafa Sabri Efendi'nin Bilgi ve Din Anlayışı," *Şeyhülislâm Mustafa Sabri Efendi'nin Dini Düşüncesi*, Footnote 10.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid, 289.

significant. The primary objective of his book, *Mawqif al-ʿAql*, was to assess the role of reason, sensation, and experience in comprehending existence.[100]

Sabri emphasized the significance of experience in determining the existence of things in nature. He acknowledged that the sciences, while acknowledging the limitations of their empirical investigations, do not outright deny the existence of certain phenomena. Instead, they assert that their knowledge, restricted to the realm of experience, has not yielded evidence supporting their existence.[101] More importantly, Mustafa Sabri highlighted that when modern sciences assert knowledge of a possible existence, they do not claim certainty or immediate knowledge (علم اليقين). The knowledge they acquire lacks certainty.[102] Consequently, he argued that what the Western world recognizes as science merely constitutes prevailing assumptions or predominant possibilities.[103] Therefore, assertions such as "God does not exist" or "the world originated without a Creator" certainly do not emerge from natural science.[104] Mustafa Sabri maintained that neither science nor experience denies the existence of God. Those who reject the idea of a Creator exceed the boundaries of science and experience. They propose that the universe operates according to inherent laws, which do not require an external source but stem from the nature of things itself. According to Sabri, their viewpoint disregards the need for any other entity to bring about the universe's existence.[105]

Mustafa Sabri, a traditionalist Muslim modern scholar, began his exploration by defining existence and proceeded to construct his ideas around the potential knowledge of existence, drawing from this ontological framework. In doing so, he not only conveyed a traditional perspective but also consciously criticized modern Western concepts. Sabri posited that existence we can categorize into two types: that which is necessary and that which may be absent. His aim was to challenge the prevailing Western notion that everything is possible, devoid of necessary or impossible circumstances. According to Sabri, the distinction between the presence and absence of something is not easily discernible.[106] Western science claims knowledge based on

[100] Ibid, 133.
[101] Ibid, 289.
[102] Ibid, 131.
[103] Ibid, 128.
[104] Ibid, 264.
[105] Ibid, 265.
[106] Ibid, 131.

an immediate, non-essential understanding, lacking definitive information and absolute truth.[107] For Sabri, the validation of knowledge lies in irrefutable proof. Additionally, Sabri emphasized that Islam relies on explicit knowledge.[108] In the Muslim faith, there is no room for hesitation regarding explicit knowledge.[109] Furthermore, Sabri asserted that explicit knowledge in Islam does not pose any compatibility issues with reason.[110] However, in Sabri's perspective, those who introduced Western philosophy to Muslim intellectual life not only instilled doubt in matters of faith but also failed to establish any concrete principles that would not contradict the new ideas they got.[111]

Mustafa Sabri emphasized that in the modern West, science solely focuses on understanding the superficial aspects of things and does not delve into revealing hidden truths. Science, as practiced in the West, is disconnected from metaphysics.[112] However, according to Islam, science should not be limited to the observable realm alone. Moreover, the essence of God and His attributes are not concealed matters; although they may be beyond the realm of sensory experience, they are evident truths within a rational framework.[113] In contrast, the Western perspective, particularly that of Kant, categorizes knowledge that lacks scientific validation as uncertain and merely sufficient for practical purposes.[114] Sabri argued that although reason may not provide absolute certainty, it is more beneficial and productive for humanity.[115] He also highlighted an important distinction between Islam and Christianity: Christian scholars employ reason solely as a defense mechanism against rational skeptics, whereas in Islam, reason serves as more than a defense tool for religion.[116] Sabri contended that Islam and reason are not contradictory; in fact, he asserted that while adhering to a religion and contemplating God are inherent to human nature, blind devotion without reasoning is inappropriate.[117] In fact, according to him, while it is like a man to adhere

[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid, 149.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid, 119.
[112] Ibid, 117.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid, 104.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid, 107.
[117] Ibid, 136.

to a religion and meditate on God, it is not fitting to attach to it without reasoning.[118] Unlike Christianity, Islam considers reason as essential for the fulfillment of faith.[119] Sabri specifically criticized Rousseau for denigrating reason and positing that emotions lead humans to believe in God, while reason undermines that belief.[120] In response, Sabri questioned whether it is reasonable to choose ignorance and insanity if reason leads to invalidity, asking, "Should we be stupid to believe in God?"[121] He extended his critique to Kant, exploring the potential influence of Rousseau on Kant, a philosopher whose impact on the field of philosophy is profound.[122] Ultimately, for Mustafa Sabri, knowledge entails acquiring evidence-based understanding and arriving at comprehension through reason.[123] Thus, he maintained that the logical criterion, dominated by reason, should guide the sciences, rather than experience alone.[124]

3.3. The Proof of the Existence of God Through Reason

3.3.1. In Kant's Regard

Kant's thinking underwent a "critical turn" concerning the question of whether God's existence can be proven, marking a pivotal aspect of his contribution to modern Western philosophy. One of the primary arguments that solidify Kant's position can be found in his work, the Critique of Pure Reason. Specifically, in the third chapter of the "Transcendental Dialectic" section, he expounded on this idea under the title of the "Ideal of Pure Reason." [125] Initially, Kant asserted that all previous attempts to theoretically establish the existence of God had unequivocally failed, leading him to the conclusion that such proof is inherently impossible. However, it is worth noting that prior to this conclusion, Kant haSd written a book titled "The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God" (1762-3).[126] In this

[118] Ibid, 141.
[119] Ibid, 136.
[120] Ibid, 142.
[121] Ibid, 144.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid, 263.
[124] Ibid, 289.
[125] Ibid, Doctrine of Elements, Part II, Division II, Book II, Chapter III, pp. 551-623.
[126] For more information, look at Immanuel Kant, The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God (1763) trans., and ed. by David Walford in, The Cambridge

earlier work, Kant posited at least one conceivable explanation for proving God's existence. The title of the book itself suggests that Kant, during that period, believed that the existence of God could be established through pure reason. This notion corresponded to what Kant later referred to as 'the physico-theological proof' in his first Critique, also known as the teleological argument. Ultimately, Kant's shift in thinking and recognition of the impossibility of proving God's existence represents a significant development in his philosophical trajectory, contributing to his status as one of the most influential thinkers in modern Western thought. Kant elucidated this transition is in the Critique of Pure Reason, particularly in the "Transcendental Dialectic" chapter, wherein he expounded on the "Ideal of Pure Reason."

In his first Critique, Kant later put forth the view that proving the existence of God using theoretical reason is not possible. According to Kant, all the traditional arguments presented by metaphysicians to establish God's existence resulted in contradictions, starting from the concept of the ideal of God. Kant described the ideal as "an individual object in that understanding's pure intuition, the perfect thing of species of possible beings and the original ground of all its copies in appearance."[127] When contemplating the conditions necessary for the existence of an individual being, the idea of an "ens realissimum"[128] naturally emerges. Kant argued that this idea arises from the comprehensive determination of the particular concept of an individual being. He contended that the object of this ideal is only found within reason, and likewise, it represents the original being. Furthermore, this ideal has no superior entity above itself, making it the highest being. Therefore, Kant's standpoint in his first Critique indicates that proving God's existence through theoretical reason encounters insurmountable challenges, primarily stemming from the contradictions arising from the concept of the ideal of God.

Kant scrutinized the traditional proofs for the existence of God under three categories: the ontological, cosmological, and teleological evidence. The first, the ontological proof, attempts to establish the objective reality of a necessary existence based on the

Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Theoretical Philosophy 1755-1770, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

[127] CPR, "The Ideal of Pure Reason," (A568), (B 596).

[128] The most real being

logical principle of non-contradiction. Kant argued that the presence of God is solely established within the concept of God itself. He contended that 'being' is not a 'real predicate' that adds actuality or perfection to the concept or subject of God.[129] When we say "God is omnipotent," the predicate 'is' does not introduce a new attribute to the concept or subject of God. Instead, it merely posits "the subject within itself with all its predicates," as Kant stated.[130] The predicate of actuality is not contained within the concept analytically, but we can synthetically add it to our predicate.[131] As a result, Kant concluded that the ontological proof fails to demonstrate the existence of God.[132] Regarding the cosmological proof, Kant argued against accepting the principle of causality as an ontological principle, stating that it only holds validity within the mechanical order of nature, where we can perceive necessary consequences. Absolute necessity, according to Kant, exists only as a concept within reason and cannot be used to prove God's existence.[133] Similarly, the teleological proof seeks to derive God's existence from the order, purposiveness, and beauty observed in the universe, but Kant asserted that it can, at most, establish a highest architect rather than a world creator, as the architect's work is limited by the material at hand.[134] Additionally, Kant maintained that the teleological proof alone is insufficient to establish the existence of the highest being and that ontological proof is implicitly necessary.[135] As Allen Wood pointed out, Kant undermined all proofs for the existence of God with a kind of domino effect, claiming that cosmological and teleological proofs cannot be successful without implicitly relying on ontological evidence and that there can be no ontological proof of God's existence.[136]

[129] Kant defines the predicate as follows: "…a concept of something that could add to the concept of a thing, representing the positing of the thing or specific determinations in and of themselves.." CPR, "The Ideal of Pure Reason," (A599), (B627).
[130] Ibid.
[131] According to Kant, only synthetic propositions give us information. Kant argued that analytical judgments are just like the repetition and expansion of the proposal in the subject, these judgments do not impose a new predicate on the subject.
[132] For more information about Kant's statements on the impossibility of the ontological proof of the existence of God, see: CPR, "On the impossibility of an ontological proof of God's existence," (A592-603), (B620- 631).
[133] Ibid, (A607), (B635). For more information about Kant's statements on the impossibility of the cosmological proof of the existence of God, see: CPR, "On the impossibility of a cosmological proof of God's existence," (A603- 621), (B631- 649).
[134] Ibid, (A627), (B655).
[135] Ibid, (A625), (B653).
[136] Allen Wood, *Kant*, "Üç Tür Tanrı İspatı", 135.

3.3.2. In Mustafa Sabri's Regard

According to Sabri, God is a necessary being, independent of anything else, while all other beings are contingent and owe their existence to Him.[137] God is not dependent on other beings for His existence, nor does He exist based on their preferences, as that would create a paradox.[138] There must be a foundational point from which all beings originate, as an infinite series would lead to an irrational conclusion. Additionally, if the entire cosmos, referred to as space or "el-alem," exists independently of God, then it would mean that they are preferred without something to prefer them, which Sabri argued is a contradiction.[139] Moreover, as the supreme being, God is the being that reason necessarily reaches.[140] Therefore, this is the only reason that will make the decision. [141] No science based on experience or experience can make such a judgment.[142]

3.3.2.1. The Proof of the Existence of God as *al-wāğib al-wuğūd*

In addressing the problem of existence and the possibility of knowledge, Mustafa Sabri's main focus was on grounding the proof of God as a necessary subject, al-wāğib al-wuğūd. While Kant's criticisms of the evidence for God's existence are rooted in the argument that reason cannot know or prove the existence of God, Sabri's criticisms revolve around the idea that only reason can establish God's presence. Sabri particularly directed his critique towards Kant in his work *Mawqif al-ʿAql*. Sabri asserted that the proof of God can be realized by emphasizing the necessity of God's existence, rather than attempting to define God through specific and particular definitions.[143] Instead, God can be proven in a broad manner, akin to a universal concept in logic, through pure reason.[144] Sabri argued that it is logically impossible to experience such a being in all its perfection, just as we cannot discuss the existence of the universal in logic independently from external factors.[145] Our knowledge of God,

[137] Ibid, 123.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid, 162.
[140] Ibid, 291.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid, 302.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid, 303.

according to Sabri, is obtained through reason and not through experience, allowing us to understand that He exists, that He is unique, and that there can be no other being like Him.[146]

Mustafa Sabri strongly criticized Kant for his assertion that theoretical reasoning cannot know the existence of God, arguing that it was Kant's biggest mistake.[147] Sabri raised the fundamental question of how Kant could believe in a God who is not a necessary being and whether a being that lacks necessity can truly be considered God.[148] This question highlights a significant divergence between Mustafa Sabri and Kant in terms of their philosophical purposes and methods. While Kant initially believed that reason could prove God's existence and later shifted his focus to examining the scientific possibilities of metaphysics, Sabri's primary aim was to establish the existence of God as a necessary being. For Kant, his conclusion that the knowledge of God is impossible and that attempts to prove His existence are illusory was a result of his philosophical investigations, rather than the initial goal of his philosophy. In the first Critique, Kant formulated a mathematical-like framework, demonstrating that we can apprehend the points that align with this framework through theoretical reason, but not those that do not. On the other hand, Mustafa Sabri pursued a goal-oriented philosophy centered on proving the existence of God.

Mustafa Sabri employed a method that focuses on proving the existence of God based on necessity, a method commonly used in Kalam scholarship where God's necessary existence is demonstrated. The aim was to establish the necessity of a being whose existence is obligatory, making the absence of God logically implausible. When considering the existence of the universe,[149] often referred to as the realm of contingent beings, it becomes impossible to prove its existence without invoking the necessary being.[150] Mustafa Sabri Efendi argued against the notion of the universe being eternal and infinite because it would undermine the necessity of God's existence.[151] If we were to accept the assumption of an eternal world, it would render both the existence and

[146] Ibid, 291.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid, 292.
[149] Mustafa Sabri used the word 'alalam almashhud' here as the visible universe, the cosmos. For more information, see ibid 158
[150] Ibid, 158.
[151] Ibid, 160.

nonexistence of God possible, thus obviating the need for His presence.[152] Consequently, in such a scenario, God would require another being to account for His own existence.[153]

Mustafa Sabri's claim regarding the involvement of scientists such as Descartes, Newton, and Leibniz in invoking God to explain space is valid. These scientists found it necessary to appeal to a divine substance in their attempts to elucidate the nature of space. Kant, on the other hand, attempted to overcome this reliance on a divine entity by asserting that space is solely a pure form of our sensory perception. He aimed to develop a framework for physics that did not require a divine substance. However, whether Kant's definition of space aligns with contemporary physics remains a separate matter. While Kant's ideas, as Allen Wood argued, were remarkable and persuasive during his time, they have become outdated in light of significant advancements in geometry and physics.[154] However, as Ayhan Çitil pointed out, this was an ingenious solution for Kant's philosophy.[155]

According to Mustafa Sabri, it is incorrect to perceive the inability of experiments to prove the existence of God, which serves as the foundation of modern science, as a deficiency and consequently assert that we cannot prove God's existence.[156] He emphasized that experience is not the sole method of proof in science; rather, reason holds greater evidential power than experimentation. The absence of empirical evidence for God's existence does not imply confirmation of His nonexistence; likewise, we cannot definitively comprehend His nonexistence.[157] Mustafa Sabri even contended that modern empirical science lacks the authority to determine the existence of something. Such a determination falls within the realm of theoretical reason, and sciences are grounded in reason.[158] No scientific discipline or empirical experience contradicts or refutes the existence of God. Those who argue otherwise posit that the universe operates according to inherent laws, which stem from the nature of things and

[152] Ibid, 161.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Wood, ibid, 63.
[155] Çitil, ibid, 111.
[156] Ibid, 298.
[157] Ibid, 293.
[158] Ibid, 292.

do not necessitate the presence of any additional entity for existence. Thus, this assertion ventures beyond the boundaries of science and sensory experience.[159]

Mustafa Sabri argued that the inability of experimentation to prove God's existence does not stem from its connection to matter, but rather from the inherent nature of God's presence.[160] The proof of a universal category does not rely on the senses or empirical experiences; instead, it resides in the domain of pure reason. Universal categories, by their very nature, are independent of sensible intuitions and cannot be experienced or intuited solely based on their pure universality.[161] Mustafa Sabri further contended that if God's existence could be proven through experience, it would undermine the concept of al-wāğib al-wuğūd—the necessary being whose nonexistence is impossible—and reduce God to a being whose existence is not essential, ultimately negating His status as God.[162]

3.3.2.2. The Relation Between the Necessary Being and the Universe

According to the argument of the necessary being, the existence of a possible being necessitates the existence of an essential being. Therefore, if there were no essential existence, the existence of the current universe would be impossible, which is logically contradictory.[163] This ever-changing and existing world, which encompasses all events and creatures and is unlikely to be devoid of them, posits God's existence as a requirement.[164] Additionally, the world itself is an event.[165] Mustafa Sabri proposed that we can deduce the necessity of God's existence from the presence of the universe.[166] Without the existence of the universe, we would not be able to perceive God's existence and the necessity of His presence.[167] The universe's existence is unquestioned, and as long as it exists, the necessity of God's presence as its creator is deemed essential.[168] He referred to this type of necessity as the necessity of the

[159] Ibid, 265.
[160] Ibid, 302.
[161] Ibid, 303.
[162] Ibid, 317.
[163] Ibid,162.
[164] Ibid, 303.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid, 304.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Ibid, 169.

predicate condition, which is enough to establish the absolute necessity of God's existence.[169] He argued that if the universe exists, it is necessary for God to exist as long as the universe exists, as God's presence is essential for being the creator of this cosmos, which requires a creator.[170] However, it should be noted, as İbrahim Bayram highlighted, that this discussion solely addresses the existence of the world.[171] It does not imply that God needs the world or that the world necessitates God's presence, as such a claim would contradict the concept of al-wāğib al-wuğūd.[172] On the contrary, it affirms that God, being eternal and necessarily present, serves as the foundation for the existence of all beings in the universe, making nonexistence impossible.[173]

Mustafa Sabri pointed out that Kant argued the universe exists only in our minds, as Kant distinguished between the concept of a "thing"[174] and the concept of a "thing in itself."[175][176] According to Kant, we cannot directly perceive things as they are in themselves through sense experience, as they exist outside our minds, making knowledge of them impossible. Mustafa Sabri criticized this view, stating that claiming the unknowability of the thing in itself implies that we cannot know the thing itself, rendering apprehension impossible.[177] In other words, Kant asserted that we can only comprehend what we perceive as it appears in our minds, subject to our perception. Mustafa Sabri further contended that this line of reasoning leads to conclude that we cannot fully know the external reality of the perceiving subject, both spiritually and physically, since each aspect exists as a thing in itself.[178] Additionally, Mustafa Sabri argued that Kant's argument falls short because we perceive and understand the reality of things in the external world not merely as representations of the mind but as actual material realities. Defining what we perceive as cognition and what we see becomes impossible.[179] Mustafa Sabri maintained that the comprehension

[169] Ibid. He used here the word "محمول". It is a term in logic that is used for sentences that express judgment. There is a distinction between the maḥmūl and mawḍū. This distinction is called subject and predicate in grammar.
[170] Ibid.
[171] İbrahim Bayram, *Şeyhülislâm Mustafa Sabri Efendi'nin Dinî Düşüncesi*, "Allah'ın Zâtı ve Hakikati", 147.
[172] Ibid, 148.
[173] Sabri, ibid, 304.
[174] It is an object noticed by the mind or senses as a person's perception.
[175] A thing, as it exists in itself, is not knowable by the senses through observable qualities.
[176] Ibid, 306.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid, 235.
[179] Ibid.

of things we intuit through sensible experience, their existence in the external world beyond the mind, is self-evident[180] and apparent.[181] Consequently, it requires no further definition or description, as it is inherently evident.[182] Attempting to prove something self-evident would be akin to proving what is inevitable.[183]

Furthermore, Mustafa Sabri found Kant's distinction between the thing and the thing-in-itself to be meaningless.[184] According to Kant, we could know the former but not the latter, just like how we cannot know the soul, the universe beyond our minds, or the absolute being, God.[185] However, Mustafa Sabri argued that Kant overlooks the fact that reason, which has knowledge of things, can at least make a judgment about the existence of things-in-themselves, even if it doesn't possess knowledge of their truths.[186] Mustafa Sabri supported his argument by quoting Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır's commentary on the skeptics, who translated the book "Matalib and Madhhab" into Turkish. The skeptics consider everything as phenomena, objects of our perceptions, and not as noumena, truths beyond our perceptions.[187] However, they must acknowledge that there are things in themselves, even if they differ from what we perceive. By contradicting their own doctrine, they negate knowledge of the latter while this distinction inherently includes knowledge of it, thus resulting in a contradiction in their claims.[188] Similarly, Mustafa Sabri argued that despite Kant's assertion that we could not know things in themselves, our knowledge of phenomena includes an understanding of the other.[189] Furthermore, Mustafa Sabri posed a question to Kant: What is the evidence for a subject who perceives something without confusion, perceiving it as an appearance and not as a thing-in-itself?[190] He also questioned how the forms of things can enter the soul if we do not have the opportunity to sense them directly.[191] While these questions raise valid concerns and challenge Kant's views, there are still some problems with Mustafa Sabri's criticism of this issue.

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[180] He used the word 'badīhī.' (بديهيّ)
[181] Ibid, 237.
[182] Ibid.
[183] He sad "لا يحتاج إلى الإثبات بل لا يمكن ذلك ويكون كإثبات الثابت", ibid, 237.
[184] Ibid, 221.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Ibid.

Mustafa Sabri overlooked a minor detail regarding Kant's distinction between "thing" and "thing in itself." While Sabri did not explicitly use the terms "noumenon" and "phenomenon," he referred to them as "الشؤون" and "ذا الشؤون," namely things and things in themselves. He described the latter as truths of things.[192] Sabri quoted Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır's analysis, as mentioned earlier, and translated Yazır's comment into Arabic using the words ظاهريّ and حقيقيّ.[193] We can translate them as phenomenon and noumenon. Sabri used this quote to support his critique of Kant's claim regarding things in themselves, it shows us that Sabri misinterpreted the distinction between thing and thing in itself.[194] Ayhan Çitil pointed out that the thing-in-itself and noumenon are not identical concepts. According to Çitil, Plato's "ideas" are truly noumenal, as we can only access through thought.[195] In contrast, Kant maintained that my contact with noumenon, whether these ideas exist or not, is impossible.[196] However, although we cannot know things in themselves, the only thing that can be conceptualized as noumenon for Kant is things in themselves. He expressed this notion clearly, stating that "… if we cannot cognize these same objects as things in themselves, we at least must be able to think them as things in themselves."[197] In conclusion, contrary to Mustafa Sabri's claim, Kant did not overlook the fact that reason, which comprehends things, can at least form a judgment about the existence of things in themselves, even if it lacks knowledge about their truths.

According to Mustafa Sabri, Kant's acceptance of space as a thing in itself leads to the conclusion that we cannot have any knowledge about space. Consequently, space and all potential external experiences are subjected to our perception. Sabri criticized Kant's argument regarding space, challenging the notion that space, like time, is solely the pure form of our sensory intuitions. In his criticism, Sabri used the term "al-alam," which refers to the universe or cosmos. He claimed that according to Kant, the universe exists only in our minds This interpretation suggests that Sabri understood something different from the concept of space that Kant aimed to explain, perceiving the universe we observe externally as having no objective reality but existing solely within our

[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Çitil, ibid, 106.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Kant, ibid, (B XXVİ).

minds, aligning it with Berkeley's idealism. However, in Kant's philosophy, space refers to the framework that physics and geometry seek to elucidate. According to Kant, space is a unified whole, where every part of space within the universe is interconnected.[198] Thus, space is merely the form or structure through which we perceive our sensory experiences.[199] In other words, for Kant, our perception of the universe we currently inhabit is only possible through the forms of space and time. It is inappropriate to consider space as something that can be divided into a thing and a thing in itself. Kant described space as "nothing other than merely the form of all appearances of outer sense, i.e., the subjective condition of sensibility, under which alone outer intuition is possible for us."[200] Consequently, space serves as a criterion through which we can understand both appearances and things in themselves. In summary, Mustafa Sabri's critique of Kant's understanding of space seems to stem from a misinterpretation, as Kant's notion of space pertains to the framework through which we perceive the external world, rather than implying that the universe exists solely within our minds.

Mustafa Sabri argued that Kant failed to provide a justification for the existence of the universe as he did for other things in themselves, unlike Descartes.[201] Descartes posited that if the substances we perceive were not truly outside us, then God would be deceiving us.[202] Sabri believed that Kant's claims led to skepticism and likened him to David Hume in this regard.[203] According to Sabri, Kant denied the existence of the perceiving subject's soul outside and rejected the notion of matter itself.[204] Kant proposed that the universe derives its form from us while its matter is inherent to itself.[205] Sabri contended that if our souls give form to the external world, even if it doesn't actually exist, then Kant must also deny the existence of matter since matter cannot be separated from form.[206] Similarly, Hume also denied the existence of anything independent of the soul.[207] Consequently, Mustafa Sabri criticized Kant for

[198] Heimsoeth, ibid, 79.
[199] Çitil, ibid, 108.
[200] Kant, ibid, (A 27, B 43).
[201] Ibid, 243.
[202] Ibid, 243- 4.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid, 244.
[205] Ibid, 245.
[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid.

adopting a Humean skepticism.[208] However, Sabri acknowledged a difference between Kant and Hume.[209] Hume not only denied the universe's existence but also its knowability and the existence of universal laws.[210] Hume argued that our knowledge is based solely on past experiences and that we cannot generalize these experiences to predict future outcomes.[211] It is impossible to derive universal laws and knowledge solely from experience. On the other hand, Mustafa Sabri claimed that Kant differed from Hume in that he recognized the importance of learning. Kant acknowledged that the laws of reason apply universally to apparent things, and sense experience consistently supports these laws.[212]

Mustafa Sabri asserted that there are two reasons behind Kant's acceptance of knowledge and his avoidance of skepticism. Firstly, he attributed it to the advancement of scientific knowledge over the past centuries, which provided concrete evidence. Secondly, Sabri suggested that Kant, like many Western philosophers, was influenced by worldly desires, particularly the rapid progress and tangible benefits of material science.[213] Sabri argued that if religion had experienced similar progress, Kant would have sought to establish the existence of God with rational necessity instead of relying solely on moral evidence.[214] However, when considering Kant's moral philosophy, it becomes difficult to agree with Sabri's criticisms. Kant contended that objective morality is not driven by personal interests or goals but is grounded in the notion of duty. He maintained that human nature, combined with the prevailing ethical frameworks of utilitarianism and pragmatism in the modern age, posed challenges in establishing a moral system solely based on reason, as he proposed. It is not always easy to exhibit virtuous behavior without religious or worldly motivations. The meaningfulness and consistency of such a moral system are subjects of separate and vital discussions. Nevertheless, these considerations suggest that Kant's philosophical pursuits were not aimed solely at yielding worldly benefits, as Sabri claimed. In summary, Mustafa Sabri argued that Kant's acceptance of knowledge and avoidance of skepticism were influenced by scientific progress and worldly desires. However,

[208] Ibid, 248.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Ibid, 250.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Ibid.

when analyzing Kant's moral philosophy, it becomes apparent that his approach goes beyond mere pragmatic considerations. Kant emphasized the significance of duty and the challenges of establishing a purely rational moral system. Therefore, Sabri's criticisms regarding Kant's motivations and intentions may not accurately reflect Kant's philosophical endeavors.

3.3.2.3. The Existence of God in the Context of Truth

Mustafa Sabri said that the most damaging effect of Western philosophy on Muslim societies is that it has left no complete and specific information in their hands.[215] This absence has resulted in a lack of definitive judgments regarding conceivable and appreciable existence.[216] Sabri attributed the Western inclination towards skepticism to the historical presence of sophists and considered David Hume as one of the last sophists due to his philosophical conclusions that questioned the existence of everything, including oneself.[217] While Kant aimed to refute Hume's skepticism, Sabri argued that he ultimately failed in doing so.[218] While Kant and Hume agreed on the precision and necessity of mathematical judgments, Kant extended the notion of absolute knowledge to encompass all sciences, not just mathematics.[219] Sabri, however, contended that subsequent scientific advancements supported Hume's perspective rather than Kant's.[220] The prevailing opinion became that all sciences, including mathematics, are relative in nature. Science began to favor probability over absolute truth, as it was deemed impossible to attain absolute truth and unnecessary for human needs.[221] Nonetheless, Kant maintained that experience alone cannot limit our understanding.[222] Experience reveals the reality of things but cannot provide us with necessary truths or general truths.[223] Sabri argued that Kant, in his position, accepted the existence of absolute truths.[224] Kant utilized theoretical reason to

[215] Ibid, 119.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Ibid, 120.
[218] Ibid.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Ibid. Mustafa Sabri stated that he reached the information from Ahmad Amin and Zaki Naguib Mahmoud's book The Story of Modern Philosophy and quoted it from there. For more information, look at 2nd vol., p. 120.
[222] Ibid.
[223] Ibid, 120- 1.
[224] Ibid.

establish universal and precise knowledge based on sensory experience.[225] He believed that theoretical reason should accompany empirical knowledge to transform it into scientific knowledge and grant it certainty.[226] Sabri, however, criticized Kant for attributing an unwarranted degree of necessity to this scientific knowledge.[227] Moreover, Sabri criticized Kant for asserting that the existence of God cannot be known through theoretical reason, despite applying universality to knowledge derived from theoretical reasoning.[228] In short, Mustafa Sabri highlighted the lack of complete information in Muslim societies due to Western philosophy. He viewed Hume as a proponent of skepticism, with Kant attempting to refute him but falling short. Sabri argued that later scientific developments supported Hume's perspective, undermining Kant's belief in absolute knowledge. Sabri also criticized Kant for ascribing necessity to scientific knowledge and for his stance on the knowledge of God's existence.

According to Kant, knowledge is founded upon two pillars: sensibility and understanding. He emphasized the interdependence of these two sources, stating that neither could exist independently. Sensibility allows objects to be given to us, while understanding enables us to think about these objects.[229] Kant rejected the notion that one of these sources precedes the other, emphasizing their simultaneous contribution to cognition. Kant asserted that the presence of God cannot be known through theoretical reason, highlighting that God's existence is not within the realm of our experiential knowledge. We cannot acquire knowledge of God's presence in the same way we acquire knowledge about physical objects before us. However, as Mustafa Sabri pointed out, while Kant denied knowledge of the absolute, he accepted belief in God and regarded this belief as more potent than knowledge itself.[230] Kant did not deny or doubt the existence of God but rather acknowledged that we cannot attain knowledge of anything beyond the limits of reason, as it is inaccessible through experience Mustafa Sabri argued that Kant's denial of the existence of outer space was even more forceful than his denial of knowledge about God's presence.[231] However, it is important to note that Mustafa Sabri's criticism pertains to Western philosophy and

[225] Ibid, 104.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Ibid.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Kant, ibid, (A 50, B 74).
[230] Ibid, 221- 2.
[231] Ibid, 254.

modern science in general, rather than targeting Kant specifically. Sabri claimed that these disciplines failed to provide complete and specific information.

3.3.2.4. The Understanding of the Mechanical Universe

Mustafa Sabri specifically highlighted the influence of the mechanical understanding of the universe on perceptions about the existence of God. According to this understanding, the universe operates based on mechanical laws. Mustafa Sabri defined mechanical motion as motion without a mover, drawing a parallel to a manufactured machine.[232] He noted that among those who espoused mechanical thinking, there were two distinct attitudes: those who accepted the existence of God alongside the mechanical laws and those who denied God's presence but still acknowledged these laws.[233] Newton, for instance, embraced both the existence of God and the laws of mechanics. However, those who denied God's existence argued that these laws are self-sustaining and do not require a creator or administrator.[234]

According to Mustafa Sabri, materialists embrace the concept of mechanical motion in order to conceive of a world devoid of an active God with knowledge and will.[235] Materialists argue that the world operates autonomously without consciousness or volition.[236] It is akin to a moving machine, which lacks will, consciousness, or the capacity to deviate from its designated path of motion If the world's motion were driven by will, it would necessitate an external matter endowed with volition, which is inherently devoid of such will.[237] Similarly, this scenario would imply the possibility of altering the direction of movement according to a specific will.[238]

Mustafa Sabri argued that while experience can demonstrate the existence of certain laws, it cannot definitively prove the existence or non-existence of something.[239] Reason, on the other hand, extends beyond the limitations of experience and postulates

[232] Ibid, 279.
[233] Ibid, 278.
[234] Ibid.
[235] Ibid, 279.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid.
[238] Ibid.
[239] Ibid.

the existence of a mover.[240] Sabri pointed out an unresolved question in the context of mechanical understanding: Where does the motion originate from? [241] Reason, according to him, cannot comprehend motion without a mover.[242] Drawing an analogy with machines, he raised the following criticism: Although mechanical motion does not rely on a direct mover or their immediate will, it is still contingent upon the choices made by the machine's creator and subsequently its operator.[243] Machines are products of human intervention. Humans impart specific functions to machines during their construction and operation.[244] Machines require two types of movers: one in close proximity responsible for winding the clock every twenty-four hours, and another more distant mover that ensures the machine fulfills its intended purpose.[245] However, a third, even more remote mover is needed—the one who originally invented the clock centuries ago.[246] Interestingly, an observer unfamiliar with the inner workings of the clock may perceive it as moving on its own.[247]

According to Mustafa Sabri, Democritus was an influential proponent of materialist thought and attempted to address the problem of causation.[248] Democritus argued that each movement is caused by the movement that precedes it, forming an endless series without a beginning or end. He aimed to demonstrate that a first mover is unnecessary. [249] Sabri criticized Kant for agreeing with this view, considering it shameful for Kant to make such a statement. Sabri further contended that regardless of Kant's stature as a great and esteemed philosopher, this shame casts doubt on his greatness and wisdom. Sabri asserted that claiming an eternal extension of the chain of causes in the past corrupts and undermines the concept of causality.[250] Sabri deemed it absurd to suggest that the cause of motion is simply the previous motion, without the requirement of a singular mover, and that this series continues indefinitely without a starting point.[251]

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[240] Ibid.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Ibid.
[243] Ibid, 280.
[244] Ibid.
[245] Ibid, 281.
[246] Ibid.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Ibid.
[250] Ibid, 282.
[251] Ibid.

Mustafa Sabri, in addition to his previous criticisms, suggested that Kant's rejection of proving the existence of God through theoretical reason may have influenced his shift from the idea of a mechanical motion of the world to that of dynamic motion.'[252] Sabri argued that if Kant had chosen the mechanical motion perspective, he could have found evidence for the existence of God.[253] However, Sabri's comment appears peculiar as he does not provide any specific references or sources to support his opinion. It is important to note that Kant did not actually abandon the idea of a mechanical universe. In his three critiques, he aimed to reconcile the concept of freedom within the framework of an ordered universe, avoiding the pitfalls of determinism.

3.3.2.5. The Traditional Proofs for the Existence of God

Mustafa Sabri emphasized the importance of proving the existence of God as a necessary being (al-wāğib al-wuğūd) through pure reason, defending the traditional proofs that Kant criticized. We will explore Sabri's defense and analysis of these proofs. Additionally, Sabri criticized Kant's moral arguments concerning the existence of God, which we will discuss in the context of metaphysics as a science, specifically morality. Furthermore, Sabri examined what Kant referred to as the cosmological proof, although he did not use that specific term. Sabri defined this proof as evidence for the existence of a necessary being. He argued that it is the most essential way to establish the existence of such a necessary being.

According to Sabri, the contingent beings are dependent on the necessary being. If there were no necessary existence, the existence of the current universe would be impossible. He also pointed out that Kant claimed this argument leads to an absolute infinity, where beings are dependent on one another in an infinite chain. Sabri found this logically impossible.[254] Kant's main objection to this line of reasoning lies in the assumption of causality as an ontological principle. According to Kant, causality is a principle that governs natural events within the mechanical order of the universe, occurring in time and space. Kant argued that we can only perceive necessity and

[252] الحركة القوّانية (ديناميك)
[253] Ibid, 283.
[254] For more information about Mustafa Sabri's critiques of Kant in the context of the cosmological argument, see Mawqif al-'Aql, 2nd volume, 196- 198.

contingency relatively through our experiences, and we can only attain knowledge within these limitations. He claimed that while we can observe that certain events are the results of others, we cannot reach knowledge of absolute necessity or determine its real possibility.

Mustafa Sabri aimed to refute Kant's argument regarding the impossibility of proving the existence of God through reason by challenging the notion of infinite causation. Sabri questioned whether the physical world is also an event and argued that it requires a cause, just as Kant acknowledged.[255] He criticized Kant's attempt to object to evidence for God's existence by suggesting that the cause and effect must be sensed.[256] Sabri argued that if we don't arrive at the first cause in a series of reasons, then something caused by the previous reason would be without reason.[257] He believed that the principle of causality remains valid in the physical world, and limiting it to the physical realm does not invalidate the proof of God's existence.[258]

Sabri also addressed Kant's objections to the ontological argument, which Kant considered as the primary justification for other proofs of God's existence. Sabri found Kant's objections strange and pointed out that Descartes, a philosopher who preceded Kant, trusted this argument.[259] According to Descartes, God, as a supremely perfect being, must exist because existence is inseparable from the concept of a perfect being.[260] Kant argued that this judgment is not a synthetic judgment but an analytical one, thus failing to contribute to the proof of God's existence. Sabri acknowledged that Kant's criticism was widely accepted, but he did not see a direct contradiction in the analytical arguments. However, he noted that accepting Kant's criticism would lead to the uncaused existence of the world, which Sabri considered a fundamental contradiction.[261]

[255] Ibid, 197.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Ibid, 198.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Ibid, 198.
[260] Ibid, 199.
[261] Ibid. 199.

Although Mustafa Sabri did not consider Descartes' proof to be particularly successful or valid, he found Kant's objection even more perplexing.[262] Kant's objection extended beyond the mere rejection of the judgment "God exists"; it hindered the possibility of proving God's existence altogether.[263] Sabri, however, did not find a direct contradiction in the analytical arguments. Nevertheless, if one were to accept Kant's criticism, it would lead to the existence of the world without a cause, devoid of any determining will.[264] This, in turn, results in an infinite chain of causality, which Sabri considered a fundamental contradiction.[265] Sabri argued that Kant rejected formal logic and instead embraced inductive reasoning.[266] While Kant acknowledged necessary and self-evident matters, stating that their opposites are not possible, he contended that evidence and sense experience alone cannot express necessity. Sabri maintained that analytical judgments can still provide benefits in relation to these matters, even if evidence does not offer necessary certainty.[267] Moreover, he affirmed his acceptance of specific knowledge derived from evidence and self-evident knowledge.[268] In summary, Mustafa Sabri raised concerns about the uncaused existence of the world and the infinite causality that would follow if Kant's criticism were accepted. Sabri disagreed with Kant's emphasis on inductive reasoning over formal logic and maintained that evidence alone does not guarantee necessary certainty. Nonetheless, he affirmed his acceptance of both specific and self-evident knowledge.

In his analysis, Mustafa Sabri addressed Kant's criticisms of teleological evidence. Kant argued that the order, purposiveness, and beauty observed in the universe do not lead to the existence of a transcendental being who created it. Mustafa Sabri disagreed, stating that Kant's viewpoint only allows for the conclusion that the whole universe or matter exists, but not a creator who is a necessary and perfect being.[269] Mustafa Sabri argued that the universe, or at least its components, consists of events rather than being a single event.[270] Therefore, the combined sum of events cannot serve as the first cause

[262] Ibid.
[263] Ibid, 200.
[264] Ibid.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Ibid.
[267] Ibid, 201.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Ibid, 201.
[270] Ibid.

for other beings; it is the necessary being that serves as the first cause.[271] Mustafa Sabri rejected the notion that the existence of matter can be derived from the order in the universe, arguing that this perspective is acceptable only to materialists who claim that matter is eternal and infinite.[272] However, he pointed out that eternal and infinite matter does not entail necessary existence, as it still requires form and is not independent or perfect.[273] Additionally, Mustafa Sabri viewed matter as passive rather than active. He questioned the significance of proving the necessity of matter's existence, given that it has no role in creation and invention and is characterized by inertia.[274] Even if the existence of matter is proven as necessary, it would still require another necessary being capable of creation and invention.[275] Matter may be the substance of existence, but it cannot be its cause or creator.[276] In summary, Mustafa Sabri disagreed with Kant's claim that we cannot verify the existence of God. According to Sabri, we can indeed verify the existence of God as a necessary being through pure reason, as His absence is impossible.

[271] Ibid.
[272] Ibid.
[273] Ibid.
[274] Ibid.
[275] İbid.
[276] Ibid, 202

CHAPTER IV

THE POSSIBILITY OF METAPHYSICS AS A SCIENCE: MORALITY

4.1. Kant's Moral Argument

In his second Critique, *The Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant aimed to demonstrate the concepts of freedom, immortality, and God's existence. Before publishing the second Critique, Kant republished his first Critique in 1784 and added a second preface to this edition. The second preface is longer than the first because Kant intended to lay the groundwork for the analysis of practical reason in *The Critique of Pure Reason*. As Ayhan Çitil pointed out, Kant's main objective in this Critique was to establish his moral philosophy while simultaneously writing the First Critique.[277] The second Critique by Kant focuses on his moral philosophy. Kant's first Critique emphasized that theoretical reason cannot provide knowledge of concepts such as freedom, God, and immortality. However, he argued that it is possible to reconcile the idea of freedom with the principle of causality, which asserts that everything is governed by causal laws, including human will. Kant claimed that while causality is a necessary law of nature, the causality of freedom can be assumed independently of it. This requires conceiving of humans as things in themselves, beyond the limits of pure reason. Although knowledge of the causality of freedom cannot be certain, Kant argued that it can be realized through pure practical reason.

Kant posited that within us, the knowledge of the moral law allows us to consider ourselves as ends in ourselves, connected to an unconditional and infinite world beyond the realm of the senses.[278] Freedom, according to Kant, is the reason for the existence of moral laws, and without freedom, these laws would lack meaning. The laws of freedom and morality, as Heimsoeth argued, are intertwined and mutually

[277] Çitil, ibid, 53.
[278] Heimsoeth, ibid, 130.

dependent.[279] Kant referred to the complete unity of the object of pure practical reason as "the highest good."[280] Contrary to happiness, the highest good represents virtue and goodwill. Kant emphasized that moral actions should be driven by a sense of duty rather than personal gain, although he acknowledged the importance of happiness for human beings. To achieve the unity of morality and happiness, Kant argued that the existence of God and the immortality of the soul are necessary. The highest good considers God as the essential precondition, and it necessitates the infinitude of the soul since the finite world cannot realize the highest good. In Kant's moral philosophy, we can accept the ideas of freedom, God, and soul as postulates of reason, and these postulates find reality in *the Critique of Practical Reason*.

4.1.1. Mustafa Sabri's Criticisms of Kant in the Moral Argument

Mustafa Sabri strongly criticized Kant's moral argument, expressing his dissatisfaction with it.[281] While Kant rejected the possibility of gaining knowledge about the existence of God, he emphasized the importance of faith in God.[282] Kant grounded faith on moral grounds and considered it more powerful than knowledge.[283] According to Kant, morality and happiness are inseparable, and together they lead to the highest good. Only God can ensure that virtuous individuals will ultimately attain this happiness.[284] Consequently, Kant accepted the existence of God solely due to the social necessity of morality. He viewed this as practical evidence, as he linked faith in God with morality, believing in God not because of His existence, but for the benefit of humanity as a whole.[285] In this perspective, Kant considered moral principles as fundamental and the foundation of all things.[286] Furthermore, he regarded those who deny belief in God as also denying moral principles. Generally, righteous individuals may not receive their rewards in this world, necessitating the possibility of achieving them either in this world or the hereafter.[287]

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[279] Ibid, 135.
[280] Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. and edit. Mary Gregor, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 194.
[281] Ibid, 292.
[282] Ibid, 3rd vol., 65.
[283] Ibid, 66.
[284] Ibid, 67.
[285] Ibid.
[286] Ibid, 68.
[287] Ibid, 69.

Kant believed in the existence of the hereafter, although Mustafa Sabri argued that we should first establish the existence of God through reason before proving the existence of the hereafter and the moral system required for attaining it.[288] Sabri considered this approach to be more reasonable. In contrast, Sabri believed that morality is not the primary factor in asserting the greatness of God.[289] According to him, God exists regardless of whether people uphold moral principles or engage in corruption. On the other hand, Kant posited that faith in God can be based on heartfelt conviction without the need for rational justification.[290] Sabri criticized Kant for undermining people's belief in God.[291] One of Sabri's main criticisms of Kant was regarding the teleological argument. While Kant rejected this argument, which derives the existence of God from the order and perfection in the cosmos, he paradoxically accepted that God guarantees the rewards of moral individuals in the hereafter, even though they may not attain their rewards in this world.[292] Sabri argued that this inconsistency implies a future need for God rather than a present necessity. According to Sabri, divine justice can only be accepted once we have established the existence of God through reason. Without such proof, it becomes difficult to claim that moral individuals will receive corresponding rewards.[293] Sabri also suggested that Kant may have accepted a God who is not a necessary being due to his Christian beliefs, as Christianity does not require rational knowledge for belief.[294] Consequently, Kant may have been satisfied with such a belief in God. Sabri criticized Kant for his mistaken assertion about the impossibility of proving God through reason.[295] If we do not establish the existence of God through reason, it becomes invalid to assume that God is a necessary being based on other evidence, as it is only theoretical reason that allows us to judge God as the necessary being. Sabri questioned whether a God who is not a necessary being can be considered valid as God, and how Kant could be content with such a notion.

[288] Ibid.
[289] Ibid, 71.
[290] Ibid.
[291] Ibid, 72.
[292] Ibid, 73.
[293] Ibid.
[294] Ibid, 74- 5.
[295] Ibid, 291.

Mustafa Sabri's criticisms of Kant's moral argument holds more strength and validity. His question about the validity of God as a non-necessary being is significant. Sabri argued that according to Kant, the moral principle is fundamental, and Kant accepted it as the foundation of everything. Kant aimed to establish a universal moral philosophy achievable through reason, and he succeeded in doing so. Although Kant justified moral rules for all rational beings, he did not base them on divine authority. Sabri suggested that for the unity of morality and happiness, Kant should first acknowledge the existence of God and then the immortality of the soul. Mustafa Sabri's criticisms stem from the belief that religion, which he considered a fundamental distinction between Islam and Christianity, is not contradictory to reason. These assertions highlight Sabri's profound reverence for reason, although it's important to note that not all Muslims universally share this perspective.

On the other hand, Mustafa Sabri claimed that Kant's philosophy has a negative impact on the perception of religion and God in modern societies. However, it is important to consider that Kant's first and second Critiques do not have the intention of undermining religion or God, contrary to Sabri's assertion. To understand Kant's criticisms fully, we need to approach them holistically. While Kant rejected the proof of God's existence, he argued that such evidence cannot provide definitive knowledge about the presence or absence of God. In other words, epistemologically speaking, the arguments "God exists" and "There is no God" cannot be equally proven. This understanding stems from the epistemology that Kant developed. Kant's main objective was to establish the boundaries or limits of reason, rather than diminishing the existence of God or glorifying sensory experiences. He delineated three concepts that surpass the limits of reason: freedom, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God, which are addressed in the first Critique. According to Kant, our understanding of these concepts relies on faith based on practical reason rather than pure theoretical reasoning.

The key point emphasized by Kant is that we cannot attain knowledge of freedom, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God through theoretical reason. However, this does not imply a negative evaluation of these concepts. According to Ayhan Çitil, Kant argues that claiming knowledge of these concepts undermines the practical

function of reason and moral experience, thereby rendering them meaningless.[296] German idealism, while admiring much of what Kant proposed, finds his claim of "We cannot know" problematic, as Çitil suggests.[297] Nonetheless, Kant's philosophical journey can be seen as both destructive and constructive. The destructive impact of his first Critique was more influential and shaped the trajectory of philosophy, as he laid its foundations on solid ground. It is challenging to find contemporary philosophy that operates beyond the boundaries set by Kant, as Çitil argues.[298] The limits he established for metaphysics and theology continue to exert their influence, with few attempts to challenge or transcend them.[299] Despite the various criticisms directed at Kant, his project remains central, and few have deviated from it or rejected it entirely.[300] Failing to consider both the destructive and constructive aspects of Kant's work, and solely focusing on the former, has led to an agnostic stance in philosophy.

[296] Çitil, ibid, 60.
[297] Ibid.
[298] Ibid, 24.
[299] Ibid.
[300] Ibid.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Mustafa Sabri, the last Shaykh al-Islam of the Ottoman Empire, wrote his book *Mawqif al-ʻAql* during his exile in Egypt, which has been recognized as an important theological and philosophical work by recent academic studies. The significance of this book lies in Mustafa Sabri's familiarity with the foundational concepts of modern science and Western philosophy, as well as his intention to address the confusion among Muslims by systematically examining these ideas. Mustafa Sabri aimed to provide guidance to Muslim thinkers through his writings.

The focus of this thesis is to critically analyze Mustafa Sabri's criticisms of Kant regarding the problem of the existence of God, as presented in his book *Mawqif al-ʻAql,* with an emphasis on the concepts of truth and reason. It is important to note that Mustafa Sabri criticized Kant primarily because Kant argued that the existence of God cannot be known or proven through theoretical reason alone, but rather through moral evidence. The thesis also aims to uncover the main reasons behind Mustafa Sabri's criticisms and determine whether he developed a consistent and justified counter-argument while expressing his theological and philosophical perspectives. Addressing these questions holds significance due to the lack of existing studies that analyze and critique Mustafa Sabri's criticisms of Kant from a philosophical standpoint. Through this thesis, we seek to fill this gap in the literature and provide a comprehensive examination of Mustafa Sabri's views and arguments.

In this thesis, we provide an explanation of Kant's philosophy and its impact on Western and Islamic thought. We contextualize the scientific and intellectual environment in which Kant and Mustafa Sabri Efendi lived, identifying the factors that led Sabri Efendi to criticize Kant and exploring the possible sources through which he encountered Kant's ideas. Furthermore, we examine Kant's assertion that metaphysics cannot be constructed as a science within the realm of epistemology. We present

Mustafa Sabri's views on the possibility of knowledge of existence and his criticisms of Kant in light of Kant's claim that the existence of God cannot be known through reason. We also analyze Kant's argument that metaphysics can only be established as a science in the domain of morality. Finally, we evaluate Mustafa Sabri's critique that this moral argument is insufficient to prove the existence of God.

Mustafa Sabri approached philosophy with a goal-oriented mindset, seeking to demonstrate the existence of God as *al-wāǧib al-wuǧūd*. He asserted that two crucial preconditions are necessary to achieve this goal: the necessity of pursuing truth and the centrality of theoretical reason in obtaining specific knowledge. According to Sabri, the existence of God, which is inherently necessary and foundational to everything else, can only be proven through theoretical reasoning. This type of reasoning enables logical inference and provides us with definite and specific knowledge. Sabri accused Western philosophers, particularly Kant, of undermining and disregarding these two fundamental assumptions, resulting in a loss of meaningful and certain knowledge in modern science and Western philosophy. He argued that this intellectual climate has also affected the Islamic world, leading to a transformation of beliefs and weakening the conviction in an actively involved Creator. Throughout the thesis, we aim to explore the consequences of Kant's philosophy on the perception of God's existence, highlighting Mustafa Sabri's criticisms of Kant's ideas and their implications for both Western and Islamic societies.

Mustafa Sabri's main criticism of Kant revolves around the concept of God's existence and the question of whether a non-necessary being can truly be considered God. He questioned Kant's justification for claiming that knowledge of God can only be attained through practical reason, suggesting that Kant employed this idea to compensate for his inability to adequately explain morality. Mustafa Sabri believed that Kant's reliance on practical reason to establish God's presence is a way to address his shortcomings in moral theory. These criticisms are significant and well-founded, as Mustafa Sabri astutely recognized the implications of Kant's philosophy and its departure from traditional beliefs. Throughout his analysis, Mustafa Sabri consistently emphasized two key aspects. First, he endeavored to prove the existence of God as a necessary being. Second, he aimed to demonstrate the logical impossibility of an infinite regress in the principle of causality, presenting it as a fundamental postulate.

By relying on the notion of "necessary existence," Mustafa Sabri challenged Western philosophers who had already discarded this approach as insufficient for providing accurate knowledge. However, despite Mustafa Sabri's earnest efforts and consistent arguments, he fell short in providing a successful solution to the transformative impact of Kant's philosophy. His misunderstandings of certain aspects of Kant's philosophy hindered his ability to develop compelling arguments against Kant. It is crucial to acknowledge these limitations in Mustafa Sabri's critique.

Upon careful analysis, we have identified four points where Mustafa Sabri misunderstood Kant's philosophy. Firstly, Mustafa Sabri struggled to grasp the concept of reason as understood by modern Western philosophers. These philosophers, unlike what Mustafa Sabri claimed, did not completely reject reason. Instead, they criticized the exclusive reliance on deductive reasoning and advocated for an inductive scientific method, which examines natural phenomena through a sufficient number of individual samples to arrive at more accurate generalizations. Secondly, Mustafa Sabri misinterpreted Kant's distinction between 'thing' and 'thing-in-itself.' While Mustafa Sabri perceived this distinction solely as a noumenon-phenomenon differentiation, it holds a broader meaning in Kantian philosophy. The distinction allowed Kant to reconcile human freedom with the mechanistic nature of the universe, providing a solution that Mustafa Sabri failed to grasp. Furthermore, Mustafa Sabri misunderstood Kant's conception of 'space' and its relationship to our perception. He erroneously believed that Kant considered space as a thing-in-itself, rendering it unknowable to us. Consequently, Mustafa Sabri accused Kant of falling into an idealistic position akin to Berkeley's philosophy. However, Kant's understanding of space was different—it referred to a pure form of sensible intuition rather than the objective external universe. Similarly, time was seen as a pure form of practical intuition. It is important to address these misunderstandings in Mustafa Sabri's interpretation of Kant's philosophy. By clarifying these points, we can ensure a more accurate understanding of both Mustafa Sabri's criticisms and Kant's original ideas.

Finally, Mustafa Sabri Efendi expressed strong criticisms of Kant's moral argument. According to Sabri, Kant's rejection of the possibility of metaphysics through theoretical reasoning was driven by an ulterior motive, leading to Sabri's biases against Kant. Sabri argued that Kant felt compelled to prove the existence of God in order to

uphold the significance of morality. Kant considered the moral principle as fundamental and the cornerstone of all things. However, Sabri emphasized that this does not diminish the value of proving the existence of God. Instead, it becomes an essential outcome within Kant's own philosophical framework because the foundation of freedom and morality holds paramount importance for him. Kant believed that without these foundations, the practical activity of reason and moral experience would lose their meaningfulness.

It is important to acknowledge that Mustafa Sabri, in his critique of Kant, approached the subject from a political and ideological standpoint. While assessing Mustafa Sabri Efendi's understanding of Kant's philosophy, we must recognize that his book *Mawqif al-ʿAql* made an original contribution. In his criticisms, Mustafa Sabri Efendi positioned himself directly against Kant, considering himself an equal and original thinker. His intention was to establish a balanced and measured intellectual framework that Muslims could adopt in their philosophical exploration of existence.

Sabri Efendi's adherence to traditionalism was further intensified during his time in Egypt, as he encountered Egyptian intellectuals who had reservations about logic and theoretical reason as valid sources in philosophical and religious discussions. Some Muslim scholars had started to reject logic and Kalam as sciences. Mustafa Sabri argued that these new ideas, which later became part of the Islamic thought tradition, were essentially rooted in modern Western philosophy. He primarily attributed this transformative shift to Kant, considering him the main culprit. These biases against Kant influenced Mustafa Sabri's critical perspective, leading him to make harsh and unfavorable criticisms of Kant's arguments.

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