THE BASIC PRINCIPLE IN IBN-SINA'S ONTOLOGY

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Abstract

The study of existence is the principal pivot of Ibn-Sina's philosophical system. Ibn-Sina's opinion about existence is based upon the difference between "quiddity" (mahiyyat) and "existence" (wujud). This principle is so important that he builds up much of his discussions on theology and ontology upon it. Following al-Farabi, Ibn-Sina considers "existence" a metaphysical element, distinguished from "quiddity". From his point of view, "quiddity" is exactly the presence of contingent within the knowledge of God. Unless God grants his existence, his essence will never come into existence. Ibn-Sina was well aware of the religious concept of creation. Having been inspired by the religious texts, he establishes a principle in his philosophy that has been followed by the Islamic philosophy thereafter. To know God as the only existent, within whose realm no non-existence is allowed, means the very acceptance of God as the pure existence, and that nothing may be found beyond Him. The logical requirement for such a statement is to prove the existence of God by means of a new reasoning which Ibn-Sina names the veracious reasoning (Borhan Siddigin). It is inconceivable to claim that such a reasoning be presented by philosophers like Plato and Aristotle who do not consider God the very existence, who do not present the relationship between God and universe within the pivot of existence, and who do not believe in creation. This article studies the question of existence from Ibn-Sina's point of view in order to clarify the reason why the metaphysical difference between "quiddity" and "existence" which was neglected by Aristotle, was the main concern of Ibn-Sina; and the reason why this problem, that the Islamic philosophy has taken grand steps in this way and towards its consequences and correctness, was the basis of Ibn-Sina's ontology.

Introduction

Ibn-Sina's metaphysics deserves to be studied thoroughly. In his works, there are a lot of conclusive and genuine materials concerning the manner of belief in the Supreme Existence and His Attributes, the distinction between the First cause and the world of existence, the question of creation and perpetual creation (creatio continua), immateriality and eternity, and immortality of the soul. It must be confessed that Ibn-Sina has explained the most fundamental concepts in metaphysics and epistemology and has delineated their limits exactly.

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Ibn-Sina considers the question of existence as the most fundamental problem in his philosophical meditation. Undoubtedly, a true understanding of his philosophical system rests upon an exact analysis of this question. What distinguishes Ibn-Sina's philosophy from Greek philosophy is that he bases his philosophy on a conception of the Divine Existence, while Plato and Aristotle never did so. From Ibn-Sina's point of view, God, or the pure existence, is the source and creator of all objects. Such a conception of God has a close relationship with his view on existence. As a result, by proposing new philosophical principles, Ibn-Sina reconstructs the intellectual and theoretical heritage of Greek philosophy and attempts to explain many religious principles and subjects through reasoning.

What follows in this article is a brief survey of Ibn-Sina's views on the question of existence. This paper consists of three sections. The first section studies the relationship between existence and the subject of metaphysics. The second section analyses the distinction between "quiddity" and "existence" as the most fundamental principle in Ibn-Sina's ontology, and in the third section, the philosophical consequences of this principle are presented.

The Concept of Existence and the Subject of Metaphysics

One of the important points that can be both studied comparatively and analyzed historically is "existence" as the subject matter of metaphysics. Ibn-Sina's answer to the question of existence, which is the main question in philosophy, differs from that of Aristotle. Ibn-Sina considers metaphysics as the knowledge of existence, and divides existence into the necessary and the contingent. From his viewpoint, a philosopher analyses both the Necessary Existence and its attributes, and the contingent existence.

Ibn-Sina refutes the theory that God is the subject of Divine Knowledge[1]. In his opinion, the subject of metaphysics is "being qua being" (Mujud bema-hova Mujud), that is, "the general or absolute existent" and not "existence in the absolute sense". Such existence is absolute and free from all restriction. So metaphysics is not a science whose subject is one of the existents, say the sensible existent or the intelligible or even the absolute existent; rather, its subject is the absolute existent that neither has a physical restriction, nor is a mathematical being, nor even a Divine Existence[2].

Aristotle considers metaphysics as the science of existence as well, but he considers existence as substance[3]. For Aristotle, the existent and the substance are the same. Aristotle, who sees in substance all forms of being – intellect, soul, matter, form and body –, and does not consider accidents independent of substance, establishes substance as the subject of metaphysics and, as a result, defines philosophy as the science of substance and of the essence of objects. But Ibn-Sina cannot consider substance as the subject of philosophy, for substance, being quiddity, is a contingent existence, and metaphysics is not to be confined to the study of the contingent only.

On this basis, Aristotle considers the ten categories as the categories of existence and not categories of quiddity, while Ibn-Sina, following Farabi, takes contingent existents to be consisting of two intellectual analytical parts, namely, "existence" and "quiddity". Then, based on quiddity, he divides them into ten categories of substance and accident. One should not consider this division as a minor change in one of the branches of philosophy, since this division turns out to be the source of many fundamental issues in Islamic philosophy, which cannot be found in Greek philosophy.

A word which plays a key role in Ibn-Sina's ontology and is considered the pivot of his philosophical discussions is the word "existent" (mujud), and not "existence" (wujud). By dividing existent into the necessary and the contingent, Ibn-Sina introduces the concept of the existent, since it functions as a pointer to the existent itself. This is because pure existence, without considering other aspects, is not divisible into the necessary and the contingent. What can, indeed, be divided into the necessary and the contingent is the concept of the existent insofar

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as it points out to an existent that may be essential or non-essential. Thus one must accept that Ibn-Sina remains within the domain of Aristotelian metaphysics, which is primarily and directly concerned with the "existent" and not "existence". Transition from the "existent" to "existence" is Mulla Sadra's existential characteristic. This reveals the primary importance that he lays on existence as the actual existence.

Not considering the distinction between "existence" and "quiddity" and the division of existent into necessity and contingency sufficient for explaining philosophical problems, Mulla Sadra establishes the notion of the principality or the fundamental reality of existence as the basis of his metaphysical system[4]. On this basis he moves from frequent conceptual discussions in past philosophies to discussions of "existence". He consistently emphasizes the necessity of differentiating between the two meanings of existence, that is, the existent, which is the philosophical secondary intelligible, and the concrete and external reality of existence[5]. By transition from the concept of existence to the reality of existence, he no more considers the combination of existence and quiddity as the criterion for the contingent need and its difference from necessity. He propounds possibility in the sense of need (imkan-i faqri) for essential possibility (imkan-i mahuwi), and instead of the distinction between the referents of necessity and contingency, which are both considered existent, he proposes the distinction between the stages of the reality of existence[6]. Moreover, not finding the distinction between existence and quiddity consistent with the basis of the principality of existence, and not finding it sufficient for the need of the world to God either, he sets the above principle as the foundation of "Burhan siddiqin" in his philosophy. In this way, he inspires the spirit of Ibn-Sina's argument in its principality of existence and through this recreation he releases himself from dividing existents into the necessary and the contingent, which is related to the principality of quiddity.

The Distinction Between "Quiddity" and "Existence" as a Fundamental Principle in Ibn-Sina's Ontology

Ibn-Sina's theory of existence is based on the distinction between "quiddity" and "existence". According to Aristotle, this is a logical distinction[7]; but Ibn-Sina extends this distinction, converting it into an ontological one. There is no reason for Aristotle to move from the domain of logic to the domain of metaphysics[8]. The world, from his point of view, is both eternal and necessary so that in the other world the proof of the reality of an essence means proving its existence. In this regard, E. Gilson says that in the case of Ibn-Sina, the Islamic philosopher, it is not like that; he is well aware of the Jewish-Christian concept of creation, and with the concept of the real gap which exists, both in reality and in logic, between essence and existence. Essence is exactly the presence of the contingent before the knowledge of God, and that essence, in itself, does not contain the reason of its real existence. If God does not grant him real existence, essence shall never come into being. To understand the concept of God, one must conceive of Him as an existence to whose case this problem does not apply, and the only way to fulfill this point is to think of God as if he has no essence, or, in Ibn-Sina's word, no quiddity[9].

To emphasize the distinction between "existence" and "quiddity" or "essence"[10], Ibn-Sina follows the ideas of Farabi. Based on this distinction, he has introduced into Islamic philosophy the concept of existence as a metaphysical element distinct from quiddity. Doing so, he has gone much further than Aristotle and has led the analysis of the concept of existence beyond the domain of substance into the domain of actual existence[11]. He shows that appending a non-individuated and general quiddity to another non-individuated, general quiddity does not prompt its individuation. From his viewpoint, the criterion of individuation may not be sought in the appending and conjunction of quiddities. Individuation is the essential property of existence and quiddity is only determined within the domain of existence.

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This statement is considered a turning point in the history of philosophical thought, since before its time philosophical discussions were based on the idea that those external existents must be identified only by means of quiddities. In fact, quiddity was the fundamental basis of philosophical discussions, while after Farabi, the attention of philosophers was turned towards existence, and they came to know that the concrete existence has special properties that cannot be understood by means of essential properties.

While discussing existence in his Metaphysics[12], Aristotle explicitly distinguishes two kinds of existence. By existence he means substance. The theory of existence in Aristotle's philosophy cannot be studied independently of his theory of substance. Substance, in Aristotle's opinion, is either pure form, if it is non-material, or it is the unity of form and matter, if it is body. According to Aristotelian philosophy, each of them, with regard to itself, is an existent by itself, which is independent of others in order to survive. Aristotle considers the contingent a mobile existent composed of potentia and action, which in the end leads to the necessary existent, that is the first Unmoved Mover, which is the extreme cause of actualizing potentia. The first mover is the everlasting principle of the everlasting motion, which moves the world as the final cause, meaning that it belongs to desire and love. In Aristotle's view, if the first mover, as the efficient cause, were the cause of motion, then itself would undergo change as well.

As a result, one must not take the relationship between the necessary and the contingent in Aristotle's philosophy as if the contingent were the created thing of the necessary and the necessary its creator and creative efficient cause.

Aristotle uses the terms necessary and contingent in a totally different way from Ibn-Sina. Ibn-Sina's approach leads to the concept of a God without quiddity. Existence in this metaphysical system is something that can not be explained and justified only by means of the essential nature of quiddity. Existence is something more than quiddity and extrinsic to it[13].

Ibn-Sina shows quite explicitly that a finite being which is composed of quiddity and existence cannot be the cause of its own existence. Its existence must be emanated from, or occurred to quiddity, from another source, that is, the creator and the grantor of existence. In this way he proves the distinction between quiddity and existence. He says: "The quiddity of anything is different from its existence; for man to be man is different from his being existent"[14]. He adds: "whatever that has quiddity is an effect, and existence is a meaning occurring to it from outside"[15].

From a metaphysical point of view, this theory, more than anything, intends to change the Aristotelian analysis according to which any material being is composed of two parts, matter and form. Ibn-Sina believes that it is not possible to get concrete being out of form and matter alone. This statement refutes Aristotle's view on explaining the concrete existence of objects. That is why Ibn-Sina has analyzed the relationship between form and matter in Shifa[16], concluding that both form and matter are dependent upon active intellect. It must be noted that in this theory, existence is not a constituent part of objects in addition to matter and form; rather, it is a relation with God. It is the relative aspect, which is called accident by Ibn-Sina, who says existence is an accident[17].

The accidental aspect of existence is an important problem, which Ibn-Sina has left for his followers. Ibn-Rushd takes Ibn-Sina's view concerning the accidental aspect of existence as meaning that existence is an ordinary accident like whiteness, and as a result criticizes Ibn-Sina very severely[18]. But this is a misunderstanding of Ibn-Sina's view, since existence and quiddity in the external world are the same for Ibn-Sina, and the concept of accidence from an ontological point of view is the result of an intellectual analysis of something which is in actuality existent. In his book Al-Ta'liqat, Ibn-Sina distinguishes between two kinds of accident and shows that his idea of accidence is not an accident like whiteness, which is imminent in a subject[19].

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One can claim that the same solution is applicable to other important problems, which cause the same type of misunderstanding. This problem concerns Ibn-Sina's theory on contingency.

Philosophical Consequences of the Principle of the Distinction Between "Quiddity" and "Existence"

1- The most fundamental division of existent in Ibn-Sina's thought is its division into the "necessary" and the "contingent". A contingent being is something which, in-itself, is the same with regard to existence and to non-existence and, in order to come into existence, it must attain existence from outside[20]. This does not mean that it must somehow have had some kind of realization before its existence. Ibn-Sina and his followers have not accepted this kind of pre-existence realization, which has been specifically attributed[21] to some Mu'tazilite scholars and they do not believe the contingent essence having subsistence before its existence[22].

Contingency, in the sense that Ibn-Sina attributed to beings, is not the same contingency that Greek philosophers believed in. Undoubtedly, in Plato's view, the multiplicity of the visible world with regard to the unity of the world of Ideas is like a contingent subject. According to Aristotle, those existents, which are subjected to the process of realization in the world, are in the process of being contingent in relation to the necessity of the first immovable mover. But we have no way to prove the sameness of contingency for Ibn-Sina and for Greek philosophers. The conception of contingency in Ibn-Sina's philosophy is not possible before achieving special belief in the Lord creator, who brings objects into existence from non-existence by a simple word "Be".

2- Ibn-Sina's theory of Causality differs from that of Aristotle. Ibn-Sina considers the agency of the Truth as creative and inventive agency. Invention is something that becomes the origin of the existence of another thing without the intermediary matter, tool, or time. When analyzing the relationship between the sensible, changing world and the pure actuality, Aristotle considers pure actuality as the final cause of existents[23]. The pure act is not the efficient cause of the world. He is the pure thought and has knowledge of himself, which means that He is thought of thought, but has closed the door to the world and has nothing to do with it. Aristotle considers the world eternal. Ibn-Sina accepts this idea but interprets it according to his own philosophy. Naturally Ibn-Sina does not accept Aristotle's theory, because for him God is the creator of the world and the source of the existence of everything[24] and that is why he rejects the theory that the world is eternal and uncreated. Ibn-Sina challenges Aristotle on this point. On the one hand, he takes God as the creator, the guardian, and the intelligent Designer of the world and, on the other hand, he rejects the infiniteness and the eternity of the world.

Ibn-Sina's idea about the origination of the world is closely related to his conception of the possible (contingent) and the necessary existent. In his opinion, the origination of the world exactly means that between two totally different existents - that is, that which is necessary in itself and that which is contingent in itself but becomes necessary through relationship with the necessary existent- there is an intermediate process known as origination. As a result, the world is contingent and God is pre-eternal[25].

Origination, in this sense, could not have been conceivable for Aristotle, since the world he is concerned with is one whose non-existence is inconceivable. There is no place for the concept of distinction and of the relationship between the necessary and the contingent in such a metaphysical system.

In criticizing and challenging the views of theologians, whose arguments on the existence of the creator is based on the temporal contingency of the world, Ibn-Sina considers the combination of existence and quiddity and the precedence of existence over non-existence as the necessary condition for the potential of an object to be created[26]. In Ibn-Sina's opinion, invention is a higher stage of creation and evolution. So the existence of the

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world, be it eternal or non-eternal and whether having a temporal beginning or not, in any case, requires a Maker. Both in origination and in survival, the world requires a Maker.

3- In Ibn-Sina's ontology, the discussion of the necessary and the contingent has a close relationship with his theology. Ibn-Sina's theology, based on the ontology of the necessary and the contingent, has been presented in various ways in Shifa, Nijah and Isharat, and his other writings[27]. The basis of this division is the distinction between existence and quiddity, which counts as one of the important philosophical problems. In Ibn-Sina's philosophy, the discussion of the necessary and the contingent naturally leads to the discussion of the necessary existence in itself, which is beyond the world of contingencies, and is exempt from any type of composition, including the composition of existence and quiddity. In Ibn-Sina's opinion, the essential characteristic of such a being is the necessity of existence and the reason for his existence has a logical relationship with this attribute.

Ibn-Sina establishes the concept of the "necessary existent" as the foundation of his theology. Among the names and attributes used in religious texts, the one closer to "necessary existent" is "self-sufficient" or "rich". He always emphasizes that the necessary existent is pure existence and absolute entity and does not consist of quiddity. This is because whatever that has quiddity is a cause while an absolute existence, which is essential in it, is not a cause. Such a being is the Truth and anything other than Him is false. The Truth is the one whose existence comes from Him[28].

In his interpretation of "Surah-Tawhid", which contains his deep viewpoints concerning the knowledge of the Truth, His Names, and Attributes, Ibn-Sina points out the above-mentioned truth[29]. Then, under the Holy verse "allaho-samad" (Allah is He on whom all depend), he attempts to interpret the meaning of "samad", the impenetrable, which is totally compatible with the concept of "Necessary Existence"[30].

In this way, being inspired by religious texts, Ibn-Sina proposes a principle in his philosophy, which is then followed in Islamic philosophy. He considers God as the sole being in whose realm there is no room for non-existence, meaning that quiddity and existence are identical in God. This principle turns into an effusive source for Islamic philosophy, so much so that all studies which were done afterwards can be considered as its results. Such an idea cannot be found in the philosophical systems of Plato and Aristotle. The source of this idea must be sought in Farabi. Existence in this metaphysical system is something that cannot be explained and accounted for by means of the essential nature of quiddity. This is true in the case of all contingent existents. God and only God is absolutely simple in his existence.

Put simply, Aristotle means some form which is not mixed up with matter. He considers the first mover the pure actuality in whom one can find no composition, no potentia and matter, no change and motion, and no recipient and agent. In Ibn-Sina's philosophy, and after him in all Islamic philosophy, simplicity is proved more precisely for the Supreme God, which requires rejection of any type of compositions, even composition of the rational analytic parts. On this basis, the necessary existent is neither to be made definite nor to be proved; no composition of existence and quiddity exists in his essence and no composition of genus and differentia is attributable to his essence[31].

4- The concepts of unity and creation are concepts explicitly presented in Islamic philosophy. In Ibn-Sina's philosophy, the discussion of unity and multiplicity inevitably leads to the discussion of the First principle of existence, which is the same as the One in the absolute sense[32], and there is nothing like Him. "lay-sa kamislihi shaiy"[33] (Nothing like a likeness of Him).

Ibn-Sina has not acquired the concept of monotheism from the prevailing tradition in Greece. In none of the philosophical systems of Greece does one find a single existence called God upon whom the existence of the whole world is then made dependent. Never has such a success been

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achieved even in the Divine knowledge of Plato and Aristotle.

According to Plato in Timaeus Dialogue, there is the Demiurge who cannot be considered the principle of principles, since ideas are above and beyond him, and the Demiurge, by considering the Ideas as a prototype, designs the world by copying them[34]. The Timaeus indicates Plato's attempt to recognize a God, who even though he occupies the first rank amongst the Gods, nevertheless counts as one of them. The Demiurge, according to what we see in the Timaeus, cannot be a religious God. One cannot obtain the concept of creation from Plato's view of the Demiurge.

The same goes true with Aristotle as well. Even though the concept of the single God may be found in Aristotle's works, in the 10th book of Metaphysics one can find polytheism[35]. Aristotle's God, compared with the God of Islam, is a separate, immovable mover who is pure act and the thought of thought and has not brought our world into existence[36], while the God of Islam is pure existence, and the giver of existence to the world, and the creator of the world. From a philosophical point of view, the multiplicity of the immovable mover is not impossible, while in Ibn-Sina's philosophy the Necessary Existent is essentially free from any kind of multiplicity.

5- To prove the reality of monotheism, which is a rational issue in nature and is one of the most important intelligible concepts, Ibn-Sina makes attempts to grasp a proper concept of God. This is because the nature of this truth, which has a decisive effect on the evolution of philosophical thought, becomes clearer by the attempt to relate the question of the essence of God to the question of His Unity. The reason that Greek philosophers were not able to understand the unity and the oneness of God and make it the basis of their principles is that they did not recognize God in its true sense, which is incompatible with plurality. God in Aristotelian philosophy is the First mover and is devoid of any change and motion; that is, God is the pure actuality and separate from matter[37]. In Ibn-Sina's opinion, instead, God is a being without any kind of need and dependence on another and is self-existent and self-sufficient. Ibn-Sina goes beyond the distinction between material and immaterial, as stipulated in Aristotle's philosophy, and gets to the distinction between necessity and contingency. In fact, the criterion presented by Aristotle to clarify the distinction between material and non-material substance cannot explain the distinction between God and material and immaterial substance. Ibn-Sina, who considers God as Necessity and all other than God – be it material or immaterial – as contingent, is able to prove the belief in God in a philosophical and intellectual manner[38].

The God, which Ibn-Sina seeks to know and considers the source of all objects, is not itself one of the abstract universal concepts, neither is its content in any way to be conformed to such concepts. God is beyond all imaginable and sensible forms and all concepts that we may have of Him. There is no possible definition for His essence, since He does not have genus and differentia[39]. No reference to Him is possible but through pure intellectual Gnosticism[40]. God is the actual absolute existence with regard to pure actuality. Reason cannot apprehend His innermost core and the truth of such an existence. He has a reality without a Name. The necessity of existence and the absolute unity are either lexical explanation of that reality or a requirement of His requirements[41].

Ibn-Sina considers the perfection and the infiniteness of the Divine Truth, which are interdependent, as two necessary aspects of an existence who is necessarily existent and for whom existence is essentially necessary. To prove the infiniteness of the essence of the Truth and his names, Ibn-Sina starts meditation from the concept of existence and concludes that one must accept the necessity of an existence, which is the First being. Afterwards, he meditates upon other attributes of the First being and proves that he is the efficient cause, and has knowledge and will; he is knowledgeable about his own essence and about all the objects in the world[42].

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Ibn-Sina's opinion in this regard differs from that of Aristotle. Aristotle asserts that the subject of God's knowledge is the same as the Divine essence, and proposes God's knowledge as His knowledge of His own essence[43]. But Ibn-Sina is a Muslim sage and does not accept such a concept of God, which is totally inconsistent with the omniscient, present and observant God of the Qur'an. Ibn-Sina explicitly claims that God is aware of His essence, and because He is the efficient cause of everything, He is knowledgeable about whatever is emanated from Him; He even knows particulars. In the language of the Qur'anic verse, He declares[44]: (Not the weight of an atom becomes absent from Him in the heavens or in the earth).

Ibn-Sina accounts for such knowledge by recognizing the first causes of particulars. Since particulars necessarily originated from their cause, "the First existent, who is knowledgeable about these causes and their consequences, is necessarily knowledgeable about particulars themselves"[45].

In addition to proving knowledge, will and other attributes of God, Ibn-Sina also proves that his essence contains these attributes infinitely. To achieve such a conclusion implies having the most perfect conceivable concept about God[46].

6- Ibn-Sina regards God as the pure act of existence, while Aristotle considers him the pure act of thought. Ibn-Sina always emphasizes the point that if by pure act one means the pure act of existence, then the totality of the actuality of existence makes the infinite existence one beyond which nothing may be found. The logical necessity of such an idea is the proof of God by a new argument that is called burhan-i-siddiqin, the first version of which he has the honor to present. In chapter four of al-Isharat wa'l-Tanbihat (Remarks and Admonitions), after presenting arguments which were unprecedented in the words of the earlier scholars, he prides himself[47].

With this argument, Ibn-Sina opens a new chapter in Islamic philosophy in proving the existence of God and prepares the ground for the appearance of a fundamental theory in discussions of God, a theory based on which we will be able to conceive the existence of the world, assuming the existence of God.

There is no doubt that there was no trace of this argument with the Greek and that it was first initiated by Islamic philosophers. It is inconceivable that philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, who did not consider God as the very existence, would be able to present such an argument to prove the existence of God. Utilizing a pure rational analysis and independently from the interference of objects and created beings, Ibn-Sina both proves the existence of God and states God's pre-knowledge over all incidents; at the same time, he shows that the whole world is contingent and becomes necessary by assuming the existence of God.

7- Ibn-Sina's attitude of interpreting the world is completely related to the distinction between the necessary and the contingent, and ensuing that, with the distinction between quiddity and existence. Ibn-Sina founds his ontology upon this distinction. This distinction is important because based on it Ibn-Sina regards God as the very existent. Inevitably, our interpretation of the world should change. It is only God whose existence is real. Apart from Him, all are contingents and do not hold a position higher than a contingent position. In every moment of their existence, they require a necessary existent who by perpetually shining his light upon them, bestows the station of existence on everything.

The world that Ibn-Sina conceives of on the basis of the teachings of Qur'an and Hadith, and which is presented by Islamic philosophers in a philosophical language, differs from that of Plato and Aristotle. The Aristotelian world is an eternal and everlasting one and has an everlasting necessity; his Supreme God has not created the world; such a world is actually existent and the possibility of its non-existence is inconceivable. In contrast, Ibn-Sina is perfectly aware of the Islamic concept of creation. He constantly attempts to reveal the contingent aspect of all created beings with regard to the necessary creator; in this way, he tries to remain faithful to a principle which is fundamental in

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Islam. That is why Ibn-Sina's conception of such a world can be regarded as one of the chief elements of Islamic philosophy.

As a result, the world in his view is a contingent existent which requires a cause, if it is attributed to existence. It is not the case that the world comprises a pre-eternal matter with forms bestowed from the Giver of forms or that the world simply owes its motion to the First Principle. Rather, the world owes its total entity to God. In Ibn-Sina's opinion, God and only God is necessary in His existence, and the existence of other objects is contingent. That's why they are all emanated from the existence of God[48].

8- After the problem of necessity and existence, there is hardly a problem more important than the problem of motion for Islamic philosophy. This is one of those cases that show how, on account of delving into some issues common to both philosophies, Islamic thought has grown more fruitful than Greek thought. Ibn-Sina came to believe that motion does not simply mean the possibility of various modes of existence in beings that come into being constantly, and then disappear. Rather, he believes, motion means the essential possibility of existence in the very beings which undergo change. He, who believed in the God of Islam, introduced the distinction between existence and quiddity in order to illustrate the eternal world, which according to Aristotle persisted outside of God and without God. In this way he managed to prove the createdness of the world. In his opinion, all contingent and sensible beings possess a kind of decline (u'ful), since their existence depends on another. In al-Isharat wa al-Tanbihat, Ibn Sina refers to the opinions of thinkers concerning the necessity and the contingence of external existents and states the truthful word based on the holy verse "La'ohobbalaflin" [49](I do not love the setting ones).

This essential contingency makes the world – be it material or immaterial, but owing to its connection to the metaphysics – gain a new manifestation which is very important, and we come to realize its importance when we propose the problem concerned with the existential agentivity of the Truth.

9- By accepting the problem of creation, which is explicitly found in religious sources and texts, Ibn-Sina totally departs from Greek philosophy. In numerous verses, the Qur'an refers to God as the Creator of everything and emphasizes His Absolute Power. Also, in contrast with the gods of the polytheists, it regards creativeness and power as the exclusive attributes of God[50]. The first verse sent down upon the prophet of Islam in order to declare to him the mission bestowed upon him on monotheism starts by pointing out the problem of creation[51]. The holy Qur'an regards creation and command as the sole property of God[52], and states so about the manner of creation, (His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it: Be, so it is)[53].

There is no sign of philosophy in these verses, yet meditation upon these verses, which denote His action, has had a deep influence upon the philosophical thinking of Muslims.

Belief in creativeness must not be attributed to Aristotle and Plato, because accepting the First principle of the whole existence, as Plato and Aristotle believed in, only provides the answer to the question of why the world is as it is, but it does not clarify why the world exists. In Timaeus, Plato portrays the Demiurge as giving everything to the world without giving its existence[54]. Plato, contrary to Islamic philosophers, cannot accept that God may bring an object from non-existence into existence simply by saying, "Be". In Plato's view, the manner of the activity of the Demiurge is giving form, not giving existence. At the same time, the First immovable mover, who Aristotle believes in, is considered the cause of all other than God; however, one should not attribute the belief of the creation of the origin of the world to Plato. In his philosophy, he does not discuss the relationship between the First cause and existence. He reaches the truth that God is the final cause of the world. Had Aristotle realized that God is the very existence, it would not have been possible to excuse him for his ignorance to accept Creation.

10- In Ibn-Sina's philosophy, the world is

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conceptualized in a way that God not only grants existence to it, but also maintains it at each moment. Such a world depends on a will that is permanently determined to create it. Ibn-Sina is completely aware of the Islamic concept of the permanent relationship between God and the world.

Based on such an interpretation of the world, one must note that objects, not only based on their forms and the combination of these forms with each other, but also based on their existence, are not confined to essence. Since the created world has possibility-by-itself, and is essentially preceded by non-existence, it is continually and automatically heading towards non-existence, and in no moment may it get rid of non-existence, unless an existence is granted to him, which it cannot grant itself, nor can it maintain it for itself. In this world nothing may exist, be it the cause of an action or be it exposed to a reaction, without its existence and realization and its action and reaction having been originated from an absolute, self-subsistent, immovable, infinite existence.

11- Ibn-Sina's opinion about the relationship of the world with God differs from that of Greek philosophers. That is why the arguments for the existence of God must attain new meanings. Since Ibn-Sina accepts the creativeness and the essential possibility of the world as two fundamental principles in his philosophy, one can clearly interpret the arguments to prove the existence of God based on the recognition of the world. While quoting from Aristotle, Ibn-Sina sometimes quotes Aristotle's exact words, but he proceeds in a way other than the one that Aristotle takes. In the world that Aristotle portrays, God and the world go parallel with each other from pre-eternity to eternity. Unlike Aristotle, Ibn-Sina's view denotes an Islamic tradition, for the God of this sage is not considered as the first being of the world; rather, He is the "First" with respect to the existence of this world and is its causer and creator.

Proving the existence of God through His artifacts implies accepting His existence as the creator of the world, and it implies the acceptance of the idea that the efficient cause of the world cannot be anything but its creator. The point to be accepted as a general chapter in the Islamic philosophy is that the concept of creativeness is the foundation of any types of argument which have been proposed by Islamic philosophers in order to prove the existence of God. Like any other Islamic thinker, Ibn-Sina establishes a relationship between cause and effect, which is the means of connecting the world to God by taking existence into account.

In his view, there is no doubt that whatever that exists owes its existence to God. In Ibn-Sina's opinion, the creative power of God, with respect to any act, does not involve any matter to which that act applies. Being a potential existence, how can matter be considered a condition, making the act of existence conditional upon itself? In fact, everything, including the matter itself, is subject to the act of creation. Thus, one must accept that God is the cause of the existence of nature before being the cause of any other event in nature. As a result, all the arguments put forward by Farabi and Ibn-Sina, and following them by all other Islamic philosophers to prove God as the efficient cause, prove the creative power of God as well.

12- Even though he makes use of the wordings of Aristotle's argumentation, the argument proposed by Ibn-Sina in order to prove the existence of God under the title of the First mover has its own specific meaning, which cannot belong but to Ibn-Sina's philosophy. Aristotle's argument on motion does not imply the proof of the existence of a God who has created the world preceded by non-existence; it only proves the existence of a God who is the ultimate end of all beings[55], and attracts beings towards himself[56].

In Aristotle's view, what sets skies and stars into motion is their own desire towards God, while in Ibn-Sina's view the affection and the favor of God towards the world is the origin of creation. The same kind of distinction existing between the final cause and the efficient cause also exists between these two kinds of causation. Even though Ibn-Sina refers to Aristotle on the problem of the efficient

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cause, since the concept of efficiency does not have identical referents within these two philosophies, it must be acknowledged that the argument proposed by him to prove God as the efficient cause totally differs from that of Aristotle.

The result of his argument is that beyond a series of causes whose effect shows up in the form of motion and change, there exists a cause, which is the First source of existence, and that is God. So the act of God is not confined to the causation of motion and change; rather, it is the granting of existence.

13- Ibn-Sina attempts most explicitly to differentiate between Natural Agent and Divine Agent. The former is the granter of motion, but the latter is the granter of existence[57]. That is why Ibn-Sina does not accept any kind of argument to prove God by simply relying on the knowledge of nature. He only accepts those arguments that are related to existence by its very nature of being existence. Ibn-Sina regards Aristotle's scientific and intellectual status too high to attempt to prove God through natural phenomena like motion. So he comments on it thus: "It is very hard for me to accept that belief in the origin and his unity be based on motion and the unity of the mobile world." It is conjectured as such in Aristotle's metaphysics. Such a conjecture, though not surprising on the part of a beginner, is indeed surprising on the part of the great scholars of the field[58].

14- Nature, in Ibn-Sina's philosophy, is a domain of reality, created for a specific, ultimate goal, and all its phenomena are meaningful, and the wisdom of its creator is evident every where[59]. Nature has been created under the design and the Divine system, and its ultimate goal is the realization of the best order[60].

In Ibn-Sina's opinion, since the Divine essence conceives of itself as the pure intellect and as the origin and source of all the contingent beings, he brings the created world into existence directly and without any intermediary, and sets an order which permeates throughout the world. What Ibn-Sina is looking for is the cause of the existence of order, if there is, in fact, an order. In the same way that his argument for the existence of God as the first mover does not mean that he considers him as the principal mover of nature, proving his existence as the final cause does not mean that he is only a regulator of this entirely orderly and exact world either. His words can be well understood if we ascend the stage of making into the stage of creating.

Belief in such a designer, thus, is not the result of our attention to the precision in the order of the world, since we may consider nature without such a precision in many respects; rather, it is because wherever there exists order, there must also be a cause to bestow its existence.

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