STUDY COMPARISON ON KNOWLEDGE BY PRESENCE IN THE VIEWS OF IBN SĪNĀ, SUHRAWARDĪ, AND MULLĀ ṢADRĀ

Nano Warno*
Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Sadra, Indonesia; *nanowarno2021@gmail.com*

Abstract: *This article wants to describe the science of ḥuḍūrī according to three great philosophers from Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī, to Mullā Ṣadrā. Even though they both adopt ḥuḍūrī science, the three of them are different in terms of paradigm and also their implementation. This research uses general hermeneutic methods on the main books of Suhrawardī, Ibn Sīnā, and Mullā Ṣadrā as well as experts in the field. Ibn Sīnā accepted the science of ḥuḍūrī only as a science of the self because he adopted the plurality paradigm of wujūd. Suhrawardī and Mullā Ṣadrā focus more on ḥuḍūrī knowledge, not only self-knowledge but also developing other forms of wujūd. Even for Suhrawardī and Mullā Ṣadrā the only true knowledge is ḥuḍūrī knowledge. Mullā Ṣadrā with his ḥuḍūrī theory of science succeeded in building unity between epistemology and ontology because he defined science with the presence of non-material in non-material. The soul is a non-material entity still weak because it is tied to the body and must undergo substantial transformation with knowledge and charity. The source of knowledge is the non-material, active mind which bestows knowledge on the subject who has carried out catharsis and then there is unity between the two. External objects are not sources of knowledge, but stimulants. Science in general and the science of ḥuḍūrī, in particular, were also later developed further into the science of God.*

Keywords: *Knowledge by Acquaintance, Knowledge by Presence, Paradigm, Rational Demonstration, Self-Knowledge.*

Abstrak: Tulisan ini ingin mendeskripsikan ilmu *ḥuḍūrī* menurut tiga filsuf besar dari Ibnu Sīnā, Suhrawardī, hingga Mullā Ṣadrā. Meskipun sama sama mengadopsi ilmu *ḥuḍūrī*, ketiganya berbeda dari sisi paradigma, dan juga implementasinya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode hermenetika umum atas kitab-kitab utama Suhrawardī, Ibnu Sīnā, dan Mullā Ṣadrā juga para ahli di bidangnya. Ibnu Sīnā menerima ilmu *ḥuḍūrī* hanya sebagai ilmu tentang diri karena ia mengadopsi paradigma pluralitas *wujūd*. Suhrawardī dan Mullā Ṣadrā lebih fokus dengan ilmu *ḥuḍūrī* tidak hanya ilmu diri, tetapi juga

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* Corresponding Author

mengembangkan pada *wujūd-wujūd* yang lain. Bahkan bagi Suhrawardī dan Mullā Ṣadrā ilmu yang sejati hanyalah ilmu *ḥuḍūrī*. Mullā Ṣadrā denga teori ilmu *ḥuḍūrī*-nya berhasil membangun kesatuan antara epistemologi dan ontologi karena ia mendefinisikan ilmu dengan kehadiran non materi dalam non materi. Jiwa adalah entitas non materi yang masih lemah karena terikat dengan tubuh dan harus melakukan transformasi subtansial dengan ilmu dan amal. Sumber ilmu itu adalah akal aktif non materi yang melimpahkan ilmu kepada subjek yang telah melakukan katarsis dan kemudian terjadi kesatuan di antara keduanya. Obyek-obyek eksternal bukanlah sumber ilmu, tetapi stimulan. Ilmu secara umum dan ilmu *ḥuḍūrī* secara khusus juga kemudian dikembangkan lebih jauh lagi menjadi ilmu Tuhan.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Ilmu Ḥuḍūrī, Ilmu Tentang Diri, Māhiyah, Paradigma, Wujūd.*

Introduction

Knowledge by presence is intricately linked to the epistemological and epistemological aspects of Islamic philosophy and is not discussed separately from ontology (Warno 2021, 5). The Classical books of Islamic philosophy have an extensive discussion about ontology from the aspects of concepts, instances, and arguments and they seem to overlook the themes of epistemology. Only one decade some scholars started to seriously address the themes of Islamic epistemology in works written by the following generations.

Islamic philosophy, ontology, and epistemology are not separated. The focus of Islamic epistemology includes the limitations of human knowledge, the process of acquiring knowledge, abstractions, definitions, relationships, reasoning (*burhān*), the unity of subject and object, types of perception, and so forth. This conditions the subject to receive illumination from the pinnacle source of reality (the ultimate Reality) and also discusses the obstacles to knowledge (Shirazi 2004, 24).

The finest scholarly literature is the monumental work by Mehdi Hairi Yazdi on the knowledge of my presence (*'ilm ḥuḍūrī*) which has been written for several decades past. Mehdi Hairi, an expert in traditional philosophy, presents this work to Western society. He refers to eminent philosophers such as Plato, al-Farābī, Ibn Sīnā, and Suhrawardī, employing a linguistic analysis approach inspired by Wittgenstein. Subsequently, two dissertations concerning knowledge by presence (*'ilm ḥuḍūrī*). The first employs a comparative method, while the second specifically delves into Suhrawardī's perspective on knowledge by the presence (*'ilm ḥuḍūrī*). The dissertations also focus on the concept of the knowledge of God, a subject earnestly discussed by Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī, and Mullā Ṣadrā.

Aminrajavi tackled the subject of how Avicennian was Suhrawardī's theory of knowledge to demonstrate that Suhrawardī incorporated elements from Avicenna's theory of knowledge (Aminrazavi 2003). According to Aminrajavi, both philosophers shared the common belief that knowledge by presence (*'ilm ḥuḍūrī*) serves as an initial step

toward spiritual experience. However, they diverged in terms of their practical approaches. While Ibn Sīnā emphasized "*irādah*" or intention, Suhrawardī gave prominence to ascetic practices, such as fasting for forty days (Abdullah 2013).

Numerous additional articles explore the potential of knowledge by presence ('*ilm ḥuḍūrī*) for achieving mystical unity and as a resolution to dissolve the ontological and epistemological dichotomy, which has posed challenges for thinkers from both Western and Eastern philosophical traditions. Some articles also discuss the concept of "*shaṭāḥat*" from the viewpoint of the philosophy of the science of "*ḥuḍūrī*", as well as the role of knowledge by the presence ('*ilm ḥuḍūrī*) in transcendent philosophy (*al-ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah*).

In Western philosophical discourse, this topic is addressed within the realm of philosophy of religion using the term "spiritual experience", as extensively examined by William James in his work "*The Varieties of Religious Experience.*" In this book, James brings together individuals from diverse backgrounds who have undergone what is commonly known as spiritual experiences. He outlines the distinctive characteristics of these religious experiences (James 2004, 60-300). Ralph W. Hood, Jr. has contributed to the field by differentiating between spiritual experiences and religious experiences in their publication titled "*Mystical, Spiritual, and Religious Experience*" (Hood 2005).

Islamic philosophy exhibits universal traits that are inherent in every branch of its thought. Nonetheless, each branch also formulates unique approaches that contribute to the development of distinct philosophical paradigms. Ibn Sīnā's definition of philosophy is the apprehension of existence qua existence, confined within the bounds of human capacity (Nasr 1997, 102). In this definition, Ibn Sīnā already anticipates the limitations of human knowledge and the boundaries of what can be known by humans. Ebrāhīmī Dīnānī subsequently extensively elaborated on the issue of these limits of human knowledge in his thesis.

Islamic Epistemology

In Islam, epistemology is not confined to mere theory; it encompasses practical application, often preceding theoretical considerations (Kamal 2016, 75). In the Aristotelian philosophy, for instance, the practice of mathematics, logic, and dialectical art is a prerequisite for those who wish to master philosophical knowledge, akin to the tenets of Islamic illuminations philosophy (Rustom 2007, 91). Within the peripatetic tradition, knowledge assumes varied forms: knowledge by definition, knowledge by perception, knowledge by a priori concepts, and mystical presence knowledge. Ibn Sīnā introduces "*burhān*," a specific deductive method with universal relevance. *Burhān* serves as a logical and scientific rationale for any proposition, exhibiting objectivity, permanence, and

certainty. *Burhān* stands out as a special form of deduction due to its combination of a priori and a posteriori premises. It serves as a scientific method for intelligible categories.

This method is instrumental in investigating intelligible categories. The objectivity of *burhān* is grounded in its logical coherence and by its foundations (Hosseini, Masoudi, and Mosleh 2016, 78). Ibn Sīnā alludes to spiritual experience in his last magnum opus *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt*. Through this magnum opus, Ibn Sīnā begins to recognize knowledge by presence (Ziai 2001, 123).

Suhrawardī advocated the study of mathematics and logic as well as *sulūk* practices such as abstaining from eating meat, fasting for 40 days, and most importantly the spiritual practice of leaving the body. According to Suhrawardī, sages are those who can witness the essence and it is traveled after being trained in the discursive aspect (*baḥth*). In this philosophy, the pre-epistemological conditions play a crucial role (Jurji 1940, 43).

He was a master of peripatetic teaching. Suhrawardī identified numerous shortcomings within the Peripatetic system (Ziai 2001, 70). He found Ibn Sīnā's theory of definition to be limiting, as the essence of a genus is not easy to perceive. A genus serves as a prerequisite for a perfect definition. Eventually, Suhrawardī proposed an alternative definition by introducing an empirical approach to various functions.

Suhrawardī developed the theory of intellectual consideration (*'itibār 'aql*) to determine whether a concept is a mental construct or not. This theory is rooted in the notion that qualities can be divided into two categories: external qualities and internal qualities of the mind (Suhrawardī 2020, 102). According to him, external qualities include those holding a form (*ṣūrah*) in the rational mind, while the second category contains qualities whose external nature is identical to their internal nature in the mind and are not present in the external realm.

In Suhrawardī's research, qualities are divided into two parts: those that exist both outside and inside the mind. For instance, white and qualities related to essences (*māhiyah*) exist only within the mind. Their external mode of existence is through concepts present solely in the mind, like species (*naw'iyyah*) predicated to humans or particulars (*juz'iyyā*t) predicated to individuals like Zaid. When we say Zaid is a particular outside, it does not mean that the particular exists externally as a distinct entity attached to Zaid. This understanding also applies to thingness (*shay'iyyah*), which is the second philosophical category (*ma'qūlāt thānī*) also claimed by peripatetic philosophers. With this division, we can discuss notions like contingency (*imkān*), unity (*waḥdah*), necessity (*wujūb*), and the like (Aminrazavi 2003, 76).

Elsewhere, Suhrawardī says that nature is completely divided into two, firstly the external nature which has a form in the mind, such as black,

white, and motion, and the nature whose external existence is identical to the mental existence (Kamal 2009, 42).

Suhrawardī posits that knowledge is analogous to light, possessing luminance and clarity. Light inherently illuminates other concepts, serving as a foundation and a means of elucidation. Through knowledge, one attains explanation and enlightenment, thereby rendering knowledge even brighter and more lucid. The knowledge under consideration pertains to the ultimate realm, encompassing knowledge of the ultimate entities like God, the luminosity of light, intellect, angels, and the celestial and terrestrial souls. This ultimate knowledge is not apprehended solely through mental cognition but through direct witnessing.

Knowledge gained through witnessing carries a heightened level of certainty compared to knowledge acquired solely through rational demonstration. Suhrawardī asserts that ultimate knowledge can be attained through both rational demonstration and witnessing (*shuhūd*) (Marcotte 2004, 67). Nevertheless, *shuhūd* holds a higher degree of certainty. Those who can attain knowledge through witnessing no longer require rational demonstration (Aminrazavi 2003, 115).

The majority of researchers who have investigated Suhrawardī's work are mostly prominent Iranian scholars, well-recognized even in the Western academic sphere, such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Hosein Ziai, Aminrazavi, and others ('Abdul-Haq 1971, 92). Almost no one has criticized Suhrawardī except for insignificant criticism. Criticisms of Suhrawardī by non-Iranian scholars have not been taken seriously. Suhrawardī's followers, Quṭbuddīn Shīrāzī, and Shahrazūrī the two commentators on *al-Ḥikmah al-Ishrāq* gave great praise to this figure. Mullā Ṣadrā, despite his outstanding work, did not receive such high praise from his students.

Extraordinary and divinely related stories along with special dreams are not only attributed to philosophers but also to Bukhārī, Ibn 'Arabī, and others. Ibn 'Arabī, for example, believed that what was written down was dictated by the Prophet himself (Kalin 2013, 15).

Ishrāq means to illuminate, to immerse oneself in the object, to capture, to illuminate, to give emanation (*fayḍ*). The essence of all perception is an *ishrāqiyyah* relation (*iḍāfah ishrāqiyyah*). Suhrawardī believed that the method of *burhān* and intuition is a valid method of gaining knowledge (Rizvi 1999, 23).

Mullā Ṣadrā was a philosopher who reconstructed knowledge as a manifestation of being (Dakake 2010, 25). He made an extraordinary shift in Islamic philosophy with principles such as *aṣālah al-wujūd*, gradation of being, substantial transformation, and so on. There are many similarities between Plato and Mullā Ṣadrā or between Aristotle and Ibn Sīnā. Actually, according to Mehdi Hairi Yazdi, Islamic epistemology wants to fill the gaps in Plato's epistemology and Aristotle's epistemology.

Philosophical traditions resemble flowing rivers, each endowed with

a distinctive dynamism, winding its course, and converging into other tributaries. The emergence of new currents stems from acknowledging the limitations of prior philosophical streams. While Islamic philosophy is renowned for maintaining a robust coherence, perceptive readers cannot disregard its factual susceptibilities.

According to Mehdī Ḥa'irī Yazdī, what distinguishes Islam, and the West epistemologically is knowledge by presence. Knowledge by presence is entirely unknown in Western epistemology (Kalin 2000, 27). Some Western philosophers developed a kind of science similar to the knowledge by presence. For instance, Bergson introduced intuition. In Islam, the concept of knowledge by presence was introduced long ago by the Western philosopher, Plato.

For Western societies, direct knowledge without mediation is considered a kind of illusion and fantasy that cannot be verified, or subjective, and could potentially lead to hallucinations. Some others perceive it as an unconventional type of knowledge, as its validity has already been guaranteed. Knowledge by presence is viewed as disregarding correspondence (syirwani 1390, 109).

Through the study of comparative knowledge by presence, numerous insights can be collected regarding how dialectics unfold, subsequently giving rise to the cultivation of innovative developments that may also continue to evolve beyond the latest philosophy, the philosophy of *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*.

Interestingly, Suhrawardī and Mullā Ṣadrā developed their respective approaches in exploring the treasury of preceding philosophies. Suhrawardī explored Peripatetic philosophy, while Mullā Ṣadrā engaged with the philosophies of both Suhrawardī and the Peripatetics.

The methodologies through which they evaluated the wealth of preceding philosophical knowledge present captivating subjects for examination. Rooted in their respective paradigms, they devised comprehensive approaches to these treasuries of wisdom, subsequently interpreting them in harmony with their paradigms.

Knowledge by presence finds validation within the knowledge by acquaintance. In the realm of knowledge by acquaintance assume the roles of the subject and object. The endeavor to comprehend reality inherently requires interaction with an alternate reality, specifically the realm of mental forms. This is because knowledge entails the transfer of cognition from the external domain to the internal landscape of the mind. The connection between the subject and this form cannot be intermediated by any other factor, as it would lead to an endless chain of causality (*tasalsul*). The link between the subject and the form must be direct and firmly established in its truthfulness. This serves as the origin of knowledge by presence.

In Suhrawardī's view, Aristotle and other learned scholars prompt us

about authentic knowledge, which involves returning to oneself. The call to turn inward is a hallmark of the teachings of theosophy and perennial wisdom, and it holds particular significance within the teachings of the Sufis.

However, in Islamic mysticism the notion of the "self" is exceedingly mysterious and those who comprehend it would possess secret knowledge. However, is it genuinely accurate to assert that self-knowledge has not got attention from Western scholars? Western philosophers who are immersing themselves in Eastern traditions are increasingly showing interest in self-knowledge and further in esoterism.

Rene Descartes' postulates about the soul and God, along with the convictions of certain Western philosophers regarding innate ideas, share synchronicity with forms of intuitive knowledge. Even the concept of a priori does so. This is due to the universality inherent in every mental concept, applicable to many individuals, unlike the ego which is singular and subjective.

As for any external reality, Ibnu Sīnā considers it not to be a type of knowledge by presence but rather a subjective knowledge about something external, which remains within the domain of the knowledge of by acquaintance as well. It represents your information about something outside thus falling into subjectivism as well.

You don't access the external reality directly; instead, you convey that reality according to your perspective. The only validation of knowledge by presence is your knowledge about yourself. Humans possess knowledge related to themselves, like feelings of hunger, fullness, thirst, and pain, directly (Marcotte 2004, 27). However, of course, this knowledge is not the kind that philosophers aim for. Philosophers seek to understand reality itself (*fī nafs al-'amr*) through direct and indirect knowledge.

Ibn Sīnā's perspective, which denies knowledge of things external to oneself, is rooted in the pluralistic paradigm of existence that finds it difficult to perceive the unity of existence except at the conceptual level. Ibn Sīnā, within his "*aṣālah māhiyah*" paradigm, perceives that the essence is plural, arguing that each existing essence has distinct effects. The effect of the essence of fire is heat, the effect of the essence of water is fluidity, and so forth, with each effect differing from one another. This implies that the essence is plural. For Ibn Sīnā, existence is embodied in the existing essence (*mawjūdah*). The pluralities of these existing essences are unified by the concept of existence itself (Nasr 1997, 83).

In contrast, Mullā Ṣadrā's paradigm adheres to the belief in the monism of existence and the gradation of existence, both of which offer a rational foundation for knowledge by the presence involving distinct entities in their existential contexts. The unity of knowledge by presence between the subject and the object finds effective justification within this paradigm. Aligned with the principle of the primacy of existence

(*aṣālah al-wujūd*), what holds existence, objectivity, and an effect (*athār*) is existence itself, whereas the essence signifies the inherent limitation of existence. It remains intricately connected to existence, being neither self-sufficient nor independent of it, it follows the trajectory of existence. The essence exists if existence exists; devoid of existence, it lacks an ontological standing (Kamal 2016, 38).

Mullā Ṣadrā emphasizes that the cognition of external objects, which exist independently of us, is tied to an external existence characterized by distinct attributes. These attributes encompass external effects—fire being hot or ablaze, water flowing and cold. Conversely, the mental representations of fire or water neither possess heat nor ignite, nor do they exhibit flow. Mental existence is inherently feeble, as it lacks external impacts (Kamal 2009, 77).

According to Mullā Ṣadrā, human knowledge of a concept itself is knowledge by presence. This is because if knowledge about the concept itself requires passing through another concept, it would result in an infinite regress and this infinite regress would be invalid as it leads to a contradiction between existence and non-existence. Mullā Ṣadrā criticizes Ibn Sīnā for not explicitly articulating the knowledge by presence concealed within knowledge by acquaintance. This is because knowledge by acquaintance itself is inherently rooted in knowledge by presence.

You do not access external realities directly, but rather, you only access those realities according to your perspective. The only valid knowledge by presence is self-knowledge. Humans know themselves, feelings of hunger, distress, appetite, and pain directly (Marcotte 2004, 90). However, of course, this knowledge is not the kind of knowledge that philosophers pursue. Philosophers pursue the truth as it is (*fī nafs al-'amr*) through direct knowledge.

Ibn Sīnā's perspective challenges the notion of *ḥuḍūrī* knowledge regarding the external world due to the paradigm of the pluralism of existence, which makes it difficult to grasp the unity of existence except on a conceptual level. Ibn Sīnā, guided by the *aṣālah māhiyah* paradigm, posits that essences are inherently plural. He argues that each existing essence possesses distinctive attributes. For instance, the essence of fire manifests as heat, the essence of water as fluidity, and so on, with these attributes varying among different essences. This reasoning implies the inherent plurality of essences. According to Ibn Sīnā, the term 'existence' (*wujūd*) pertains to existing essences (*māhiyah mawjūdah*). The multiplicity of these existing essences is harmonized by the overarching concept of existence (Nasr 1997, 77).

In contrast to Mullā Ṣadrā's paradigm, which adheres to the belief in the monism of existence and the gradation of existence, the justification for *ḥuḍūrī* knowledge with distinct entities on an existential level, and the unity of perception between subject and object, can be effectively

explained. Aligned with the principle of *aṣālah al-wujūd*, which posits that what exists, is objective, and possesses effects (*athār*) is existence itself, while *māhiyah* represents the limitation of existence, inseparable from existence, following its presence. It exists when existence exists; without existence, it lacks ontological status (Kamal 2016, 17).

Mullā Ṣadrā emphasizes that knowledge concerning external objects that exist independently outside of oneself pertains to external existence with specific attributes. These attributes encompass external effects, such as the heat or combustion of fire, or the flow and coldness of water. However, mental fire or water lacks qualities like heat, combustion, or flow. Mental existence is a feeble existence, as it lacks external effects (Kamal 2009, 27).

According to Mullā Ṣadrā, human knowledge of a concept itself is by presence for if knowledge itself of the concept were to pass through another concept, it would result in circularity, and this circularity would be invalid as it leads to a contradiction between existence and non-existence. Mullā Ṣadrā critiques Ibn Sīnā's inability to explicitly differentiate between two modes of knowledge.

Criticism of the knowledge of my presence because its truth is already determined, while the category of knowledge itself could be true or false. Knowledge is considered valid if it corresponds to external objects, and if it doesn't, then it's considered invalid. There are many definitions of knowledge, such as knowledge being a disclosure of something, and ignorance being its opposite. Therefore, if there is knowledge that is always true, that knowledge doesn't require correspondence. These criteria indeed don't match with knowledge by the present, which is knowledge obtained through conceptual means.

Knowledge by presence encompassing all its facets – it encompasses intuitive insight, sensory perception, witnessing, or disclosure (*kashshāf*) – inherently embodies subjectivity. The dichotomy between subjectivity and objectivity presents an enduring and contemporarily relevant quandary that remains unresolved. Regarding the question of how to effectively address this matter of subjective knowledge, Suhrawardī also acknowledged the method of rational demonstration as a valid approach, but he believed that knowledge by presence is more compelling than rational demonstration.

Prominent philosophers such as Descartes, Immanuel Kant, Spinoza, Edmund Husserl, Heidegger, and other great philosophers developed their epistemologies, which originated from their thoughts or the results of the analysis of previous philosophers then they can explain these epistemologies in a systematic, and coherent way.

According to Mullā Ṣadrā, knowledge by presence encompasses not only self-knowledge but also knowledge of the cause and its effect, knowledge of the effect of the cause, and knowledge of necessary existence. The way

a cause possesses knowledge by presence over its effect is explained by Mullā Ṣadrā through four divisions of causes: material cause, formal cause, and existential cause. In Mullā Ṣadrā's view, the relation between cause and effect is not independent; the effect does not have an ontologically independent status.

Knowledge by presence can also be elucidated through the renowned theory of Mullā Ṣadrā, known as the unity of the knower, knowledge, and the known (*ittiḥād 'ālim, 'ilm, wa ma'lūm*). In Mullā Ṣadrā's definition, knowledge is the actualized existence, not mixed with nonexistence, and is non-material, further simplified by Ṭabāṭabā'ī as the non-material presence within the non-material.

The soul itself that acquires knowledge is non-material, and the concepts that enter the mind are also non-material. Mullā Ṣadrā employs his theory of gradations, as a shift into the material, imaginal, and intellectual (*taḥasūs, takhayyūl, and ta'aqūl*), corresponding respectively to sensory faculties, imagination, and reason. Similarly, there are corresponding realms: the material realm, the imaginal realm, and the intellectual (intellect) realm. According to Mullā Ṣadrā, the soul ascends through these realms, transcending the material realm and the imaginal realm, to ultimately reach the intellectual Realm.

Humans, according to Mullā Ṣadrā, possess a capacity for substantial transformation through knowledge and action. Every time one's knowledge and actions are perfected, the *wujūd* also perfects its intensity and at its peak, it can unite with the source of knowledge, namely the *fa'āl* which in the peripatetic tradition is the giver of the form (*wāhib ṣūrah*).

This unification occurs because the actualized soul transforms, united with the object of knowledge. The soul becomes the recipient (*qabil*), the knower, and the creator of knowledge. The first level that the soul attains is the readiness to acquire knowledge. The second level is becoming a soul that possesses knowledge, and the third level is a soul that creates knowledge (Dakake 2004, 54). Substantial transformation, however, is not accepted by Ibn Sīnā. He states that if my soul changes, then the one who just spoke is not the same as the one who spoke before. Similarly, Suhrawardī rejects the unity of the knower, knowledge, and the object of knowledge.

In principle, Suhrawardī introduced spiritual experience as the foundation of true knowledge. This method of direct witnessing is strict and complicated. As a result, his philosophy is synonymous with specific practices (Ziai n.d., 86). In the beginning, Suhrawardī introduced spiritual experience as the foundation of true knowledge. This method of direct witnessing entails rigorous procedures (Ziai n.d., 55).

Philosophy employs the method of verification known as demonstration and can be harmonized with other sciences. Philosophy must find harmony with the other sciences such as mathematics, logic,

and scriptural sciences. This science is both human and divine, parallel to existence that comprises layered hierarchies from the highest to the lowest levels. The hierarchy of existence encompasses not only the most perfect forms but also the weakest, even mere potentiality (Burrell 2010, 67).

Philosophy is profoundly human-centered, comprehensively viewing humanity beyond mere biological aspects. It appreciates the human capacity for enlightenment and accessing reality in its gradations. As a subject, humans remain intimately connected with themselves, accessing all dimensions from the lowest to the highest. The pursuit of knowledge becomes a manifestation of oneself—a yearning for perfection. Humans serve as a psychological manuscript (*kitāb anfūsī*), paralleling the cosmic manuscript (*kitāb takwīnī*) of the universe and the scriptural manuscript (*kitāb tadwīnī*) of the Qur'an. Human stature is so elevated that self-knowledge becomes a ladder to understanding God. The sciences embraced by philosophy include knowledge by presence, knowledge by acquaintance with their being, and unfolding spiritual and divine dimensions veiled by the veils of the world.

Harmonization represents an appreciation and appropriation of the diversity and intricacies inherent in human nature. This assumption is grounded in Islamic philosophical realism which holds that the foundation and standard for understanding should be based on reality. Knowledge itself embodies an illuminating, actualizing, and realization.

Each branch of knowledge constitutes a unique form of revelation through distinct methods. These methods distinguish one field of knowledge from another (Eshaqnia 2020, 98). However, in essence, knowledge itself seeks to unveil the realities and laws of those realities. Ultimately, these laws of reality are the actions of God. God is present through His actions, which are profoundly genuine and authentic, constituting the basis for everyone to experience His presence. God's presence is pervasive, spanning every moment and instance. Nature serves as a manifestation of God that is intimately intertwined with humanity. Nature also signifies God's mercy through its welcoming hospitality.

Ignorance is the antithesis of knowledge, akin to darkness. In the knowledge by acquaintance, ignorance refers to a state where the soul remains latent and possesses only potential due to various factors such as lack of contemplation, imitation of others' thoughts, failure to abstract, and absence of active learning. Within the context of knowledge by presence, ignorance signifies a soul incapable of traversing higher realms. The soul becomes entangled within the body, unable to witness the universal entities that underpin the essence. As Mullā Ṣadrā articulated, "*lā 'ilma man lā kashshafa lahu*," suggesting that knowledge is not for one who does not witness, for witnessing beyond knowing.

Islamic philosophy, including the Illuminationist philosophy (*ishrāq*) of

Suhrawardī, remains captivating and perpetually relevant (Seitakhmetova et al. 2022, 181). Despite being challenged by orthodoxy, skepticism, politics, theology, materialism, and even postmodernism, classical philosophy, including Illuminationist philosophy, retains a reservoir of wisdom that offers insights. This philosophy encompasses a myriad of subjects: from particle to God, from good to evil, from pre-creation to post-existence, from the material world to the afterlife, from the ephemeral to the eternal, from the material to the immaterial, from demons to angels, from knowledge to ignorance, from the real to the illusory, from external reality to dreams, and from emotions to the rational and supra-rational realm.

One of the inclinations in philosophy that has captivated renowned philosophers throughout history and has become the hallmark of major schools of thought (Khatami 1996, 34) is the orientation of Illuminationism (*ishrāqiyyah*). This inclination involves adopting or even prioritizing methods of specific spiritual experiences alongside rational demonstration, with slight variations either by combining demonstration and witnessing methods, or by positioning intuition as superior to reason. Alternatively, both methods can be employed with functional distinctions between the context of discovery and the context of justification. The choice of method may also be adjusted based on the philosophers' level of development.

Philosophers who believe in the existence of illuminative elements in Islamic philosophy include Hossein Nasr, Ḥasanzādeh Āmulī, Jawādī Āmulī, Maḥmūd Khātamī, and others. Those who differ include Miṣbāḥ Yazdī, and Ayman Miṣrī, who view the Illuminationist school as still based on peripatetic philosophy. Ayman al-Miṣrī sees philosophical writings adorned with quotes from verses, hadith, or poetry as potentially diminishing the purity of philosophy itself (Wernst & Nasr 1965, 33).

Another expert describes Illuminationist Philosophy as a movement that seeks to return philosophy to its original wisdom (Akbarian and Neuve-Eglise 2008, 12). According to Suhrawardī, Aristotle had extinguished this original wisdom. Suhrawardī traced this ancient wisdom in the East and West, from Hinduism, Persia, Babylon, and Ancient Egypt, and saw a unity of wisdom despite the use of different symbols (Walbridge 1996).

Considering its orientation, it seems that Suhrawardī aimed to remind his disciples of metaphysics that its history had begun to forget. Ebrāhīmī Dīnānī stated that to reject metaphysics, one must do so using metaphysics itself. An example of a metaphysical principle used is the principle of identity. According to Ebrāhīmī Dīnānī, the principle of identity is a part of metaphysics. Those who reject metaphysics undoubtedly stand upon principles like non-contradiction, the principle of identity, and others that constitute the pillars of metaphysics.

Suhrawardī's contribution lies in the concept of knowledge by presence.

What should one prepare when entering the gateway of illuminative wisdom, in his philosophy, God is present in all things, and all things are present in Him. God's knowledge of everything outside, whether non-material or material, is of knowledge by presence. This marks an aspect of the development of Suhrawardī's concept of knowledge by presence. Suhrawardī is considered a pioneer in the field of Knowledge by presence. The essence is experiential knowledge, direct and justified by rational demonstration. This immediate knowledge is a distinctive feature of Suhrawardī's philosophy (Obaidullah 2015, 67).

Meanwhile, Mullā Ṣadrā classifies knowledge by presence into several categories: self-knowledge, knowledge of cause and effect, knowledge of effect or cause, and non-material knowledge and God's knowledge. The position of God is indeed unique in Islamic Illuminationist philosophy. It not only inheres in the definition of philosophy as an imitation of God's attributes but also as the source of epistemology and ontology as well. Al-Qur'an as sacred books and nature is short of a manifestation of God's Knowledge.

The alignment between Al-Qur'an and the natural realms is commonly referred to as *tashri'iyyah* and *kawniyyah*. From the Islamic perspective, religion and science are always harmonious, as the laws governing the natural realm also originate from God, just as the Qur'an does. Any disharmony perceived between the Qur'an and science can be traced back to either the incomplete hermeneutics of the Qur'an or the continuous evolution of scientific understanding. In the view of some Western scholars, the relationship between religion and science can be categorized into four types: conflict, integration, dialogue, and contradiction.

Some experts of Suhrawardī make an interesting comparison between knowledge by the presence and the thoughts of modern Western philosopher Edmund Husserl. In Suhrawardī's philosophy, intuition is the spiritual experience accessed by individuals in the spiritual realm, referred to as direct inspiration or the flash of light (Muslih 2009, 19). Avani Reza is one who attempted to analyze Suhrawardī in the context of Husserl's phenomenology. Although both Suhrawardī and Edmund Husserl envision objective knowledge, they do not share significant similarities. Generally, Muslim philosophers seek to understand reality as it truly is. Humans are drawn to perfection and knowledge is one of humanity's perfections.

Suhrawardī and Edmund Husserl share a similar starting point: critiquing their predecessors. Suhrawardī aimed to redirect the course of peripatetic philosophy towards a more convincing path, while Husserl sought to establish a solid foundation beyond the perspectives of naturalism and psychology (Afaki 2000, 90).

During Suhrawardī's time, the prominent figure was Ibn Sīnā with his peripatetic philosophy. Ironically, Suhrawardī himself was a master

of peripatetic thought, yet he later turned to critique it for its lack of illuminating insight, according to him. Similarly, Husserl was influenced by significant thinkers of his time, such as Dilthey, Descartes, Immanuel Kant, and others. Husserl's endeavor to attain rigorous knowledge was challenging, leading some experts to categorize his work as idealistic. The presence of eidos that should be perceived by the subject, the intentional and the act of bracketing (phenomenological reduction), hindered him from achieving objectivism. The question arises whether achieving objectivism is truly feasible solely by suspending presuppositions and then employing intentionality (Afaki 2000, 100).

Suhrawardī formulated principles in the logic of *ishrāq* that posited existence as a prerequisite for creation. Existence, according to Suhrawardī, is a mental existence devoid of ontological status. Here, Suhrawardī introduced his assumptions into the principle. However, existence is an external reality and not a conceptual existence. Although, when considered as a universal existence, something cannot come into existence without having existence. To exist, something must have existence, and so on in an endless chain, which is invalid due to its violation of the principle of non-contradiction meeting existence and non-existence in one moment. Ultimately, Suhrawardī concluded that existence is a mental concept without external reality. He aimed to establish rules to classify concepts within the mind and reality itself (Ziai 2001, 57).

That which is axiomatic is a self-evident and undivided self. Thus, knowledge about the self should serve as the most solid and convincing foundation. The ego must be clear both epistemologically and ontologically before engaging in scholarly activities. Dīnānī summarized Suhrawardī's epistemology by stating that the ego, in darkness, can only speak with the aid of light "Who am I?" and without light, one cannot say anything. According to Suhrawardī, whoever knows themselves will know Allah, as the self is light (Suhrawardī 1998, 66).

Suhrawardī, Plato, and Mullā Ṣadrā all agree on the significance of self-purification (katarsis). Plato understood self-purification (katarsis) as cleansing from bodily impurities (Fakhuri and Jurr 2014).

The Knowledge of God's Presence

The discussion of God's knowledge is taken seriously by philosophers and theologians alike. Ṭabāṭabā'ī formulates premises about God's knowledge that can be explained through general premises as follows: God knows Himself and His effects because God is eternal, meaning without a beginning. This eternity is equated with attributes like the Eternal and the Infinite, without an end or a beginning. God's knowledge of His effects is non-essential, as these effects emerge from non-being into being. The origin of effects that transition from non-existence to existence is a fundamental process. This isn't a process of gradual change,

such as from small to large, weak to strong, or from potential to actual, as articulated by Aristotle. Knowledge of fundamental change would lead to a change in the knowing entity itself, which is impossible for God.

According to Ṭabāṭabā'ī, God's knowledge of His effects, if interpreted as essential knowledge, would imply a change in God–from not knowing to knowing. However, God always knows, everywhere and at all times, and remains unchanging (immutable). God's knowledge of His effects has been present since eternity. There are two types of eternity: essential eternity, which pertains to God, and accidental eternity, which pertains to other than God (Medoff 2011, 77).

According to Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Sufis believe that *al-Ḥaq* (The Truth) created pre-existence through His Names and Attributes. This view is contested by some Sufi scholars who argue that *al-Ḥaq* or the theory of *waḥdah al-wujūd* manifests in various ways, leading to diversity. The problem of *'irfān* addresses the emergence of diversity from the singular, followed by how the diverse returns to the singular (Behzad 2013, 166).

The fourth viewpoint, attributed to Plato, asserts that God knows spiritual entities with detailed knowledge. Within these spiritual entities, called Platonic Ideas, reside the perfection of all species (Aftab 2006, 66). Plato believed that the realm of Ideas was the most perfect, and material reality was but a shadow of the realm of Ideas. According to Plato, humans possess knowledge of the realm of Ideas, and the learning process is merely a form of remembering (Medoff 2011, 89).

Mullā Ṣadrā states that *al-Ḥaq* is the source of emanation for all that exists. *Al-Ḥaq* is indivisible, unique, and possesses all the perfections of His creations. Consequently, according to Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥaq*, by realizing Himself, realizes His creations. This is pre-ontological, pre-existent consciousness. God knows His creations, with all their perfections, in the realm of pre-existence within His Essence. This is both detailed and comprehensive knowledge, as the known essence exists within the simple and singular essence, clear to Him without becoming manifold (Rizvi 2009, 201).

The perfection of everything other than God, or its effects, is present entirely and comprehensively within God, in the most perfect forms and levels, because God is Infinitely Perfect, free from limitations. Thus, God knows Himself. In conclusion, God knows Himself with His unlimited knowledge of His effects, in the most perfect way (Dakake 2010, 221).

For Suhrawardī, God's knowledge is by presence. God knows all things, whether we will do good or bad, and then whether we indeed perform goodness or wrongdoing. According to Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Suhrawardī's knowledge of God encompasses both non-material and material entities in detail, regarding everything after creation. Suhrawardī's detailed knowledge of material entities raises questions, as matter is non-existent and dark. Through the principle of "*aṣālah māhiyah*," Suhrawardī seeks

to establish the possibility of unity between necessary existence and essence. He also employs the theory of unity between knowledge and the known to demonstrate God's knowledge by presence.

On the other hand, as claimed by Ibn Sīnā, *ḥuḍūrī* knowledge applies only to self-knowledge, not external to it. Ibn Sīnā believes that necessary existence can know other things through universal forms (*ṣūrah kullī*), which serve as the causes of material existence. God is the cause of things other than Himself, and this cause knows its effects directly. Mullā Ṣadrā also believes that *ḥuḍūrī* knowledge belongs to both the cause and the effect. Al-Ghazali's criticism of the theory of God's universal knowledge would lead to God lacking knowledge of particulars. Ibn Sīnā's intricate philosophy indeed poses challenges for theologians to fully grasp. Ibn Sīnā holds that God's knowledge of universals also inherently includes particulars within it. The term "universal" in God's knowledge isn't opposed to particulars; rather, it holds significance (Afaki 2000, 95).

Conclusion

Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī, and Mullā Ṣadrā possess different paradigms, objectives, and methods. Nevertheless, they share many similarities, especially in their commitment to rational demonstration and the principles of Islam that continue to dominate their thoughts. These Islamic principles are not rooted in dialectical, dogmatic, or apologetic beliefs; instead, they are firmly grounded in rational demonstration. Regarding bodily resurrection, Ibn Sīnā doesn't reject it but remains silent, as he believes it cannot be proven through rational demonstration. This is because bodily resurrection would entail the consequence of reincarnation, the process of returning to the potential that has already been actualized.

On the other hand, Mullā Ṣadrā successfully harmonizes rational demonstration dan esoterism, and the Qur'an, ensuring no conflict arises between sacred texts and reason. He reconciles these texts by delving deep into the meanings (*taḥqīq*) of literal verses, discarding non-essential elements from textual sources, and discovering the essence of meaning. All three philosophers justify the truth of revelation through rational demonstration and esoterism. Esoterism refers to spiritual experience that is claimed to hold a higher level than rational demonstration. Ibn Sīnā, with his principle of ontological pluralism and unwavering commitment to rational demonstration, believed that knowledge by presence is limited to self-knowledge.

Suhrawardī, contributed extensively to Islamic philosophy, particularly intuitive witness, as the completion of rational demonstration. Meanwhile, Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy becomes the pinnacle of harmonization, incorporating elements of illuminationist, peripatetic, and esoterism. Suhrawardī goes a step further by asserting that God also

knows His creations through presence, while Mullā Ṣadrā suggests that God's knowledge of His creations is both detailed and comprehensive, encompassing detailed knowledge and global knowledge. Simultaneously. Suhrawardī's notion of God's presence-based knowledge, according to esoterism can be interpreted as God encompassing His creation to a certain degree, as all creatures are manifestations of Him. All beings are manifestations of His Names, Attributes, and Actions, which can be metaphorically described as waves and the ocean, rays of light and the sun, and so on. In contrast, Ibn Sīnā's belief in God's presence-based knowledge by presence is mediated through universal forms serving as the cause for material entities.

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