



GENÇ MÜTEFEKKİRLER DERGİSİ

JOURNAL OF YOUNG INTELLECTUALS

e-ISSN: 2718-000X

Yıl: 5, Cilt: 5, Sayı: 3

Eylül-2024

MAKALE BİLGİLERİ

Analyzing The Problem Of Consciousness Through The Lens Of The Law Of
Emergence From Essence

Bilinç Sorunsalının Özden Oluş Yasasıyla Analizi

YAZAR

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<http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13769891>

Yayın Bilgisi

Yayın Türü: Araştırma Makalesi

Makale Geliş Tarihi: 25.08.2024

Makale Kabul Tarihi: 14.09.2024

Sayfa Aralığı: 747-774

ABSTRACT

Examining Mystical and Psychedelic Experiences, as old as humanity itself, in a manner consistent with their nature, can open doors not only for understanding the universe but also for giving it meaning. The philosophical analysis of these states, which create special states of consciousness for solving the problem of the source of consciousness, is important. Because exceptional situations that go beyond routine in solving any problem may contain important clues for the solution of the problem. Starting from this basic logic, this study goes beyond the solution of the problem of consciousness and aimed to answer the most fundamental questions of ontology. In the introduction section, there are interpretive analyses and inferences based on short literal reviews on the subject of Mystical and Psychedelic Experiences, which includes scientific studies on psychedelic use and brain entropy. In the next section, an attempt is made to reach a holistic philosophy aimed at solving the problem of consciousness by evaluating scientific studies and philosophical theses on the levels of consciousness in living beings. In the last section, some answers developed by mystical-philosophical-religious disciplines throughout human history are examined and the holistic philosophy whose foundations were laid in the previous section is further matured.

Keywords: Consciousness, Mystical Experiences, History Of Religions, Taoism, İslam

ÖZET

İnsanlık kadar eski olan Mistik ve Psikedelik Deneyimlerin doğasına uygun bir şekilde incelenmesi, yalnızca evreni anlamak için değil, ona anlam kazandırmak için de kapılar açabilir. Bilincin kaynağı sorununun çözümü için özel bilinç durumları yaratan bu durumların felsefi analizi önemlidir. Çünkü herhangi bir sorunun çözümünde rutinin dışına çıkan istisnai durumlar, sorunun çözümüne yönelik önemli ipuçları içerebilmektedir. Bu temel mantıktan yola çıkarak başlanan bu çalışma, bilinç sorununun çözümünün ötesine geçerek ontolojinin en temel sorularını yanıtlamaya yönelmiştir. Giriş bölümünde, psychedelic kullanımı ve beyin entropisi üzerine yapılan bilimsel çalışmaları içeren Mistik ve Psychedelic Deneyimler konusuyla ilgili kısa literal gözden geçirmelere dayalı yorumsal analiz ve çıkarımlar yer almaktadır. Bir sonraki bölümde canlılardaki bilinç düzeyleriyle ilgili bilimsel çalışmaları ve felsefi tezleri değerlendirerek bilinç

sorununu çözmeye yönelik bütüncül bir felsefeye ulaşmaya çalışılmıştır. Son bölümde ise insanlık tarihi boyunca mistik- felsefi- dini disiplinlerin geliştirdiği bazı cevaplar incelenerek bir önceki bölümde temelleri atılan bütünsel felsefe daha da olgunlaştırılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bilinç, Mistik Deneyimler, Dinler Tarihi, Taoizm, İslam

INTRODUCTION

Consciousness, which is a complex concept that generally expresses the individual's inner experiences, emotions, thoughts and perception of the outside world, includes the individual's awareness of himself and his environment. Thanks to consciousness, which can be defined as a person's state of alertness, the individual can perceive the events around him and himself, show emotional reactions and direct his thought processes (Dossey, 2013). However, consciousness, which exhibits a clearly individual attitude in daily life, almost changes its attitude in some extraordinary circumstances. Two of these conditions are Mystical Experiences (ME) and Psychedelic Experience (PE) states (Marshall, 2015; Luke, 2019). ME involves the experiences of the transcended individual self opening up to a sense of unity as well as direct encounter with ultimate reality (Letheby, 2022). Mysticism in philosophy tries to examine the source of the feeling of unity with God, the Universe or the World. Why does the perception of integration accompanied by sub-perceptual, super-perceptual and holistic experiences manifest? (Porter, 2023). Moreover, ME appear in different cultures and religious traditions throughout history. They even showed themselves in Shamanism and Animism, the first religious traditions of humanity (Koç, 2022).

Examining these experiences internally, scrutinizelly and spiritually in accordance with their nature, can open the door to making sense of the universe as well as understanding it. The recent increase in scientific studies on psychedelics has aroused new interest in the making sense of ME (Carhart-Harris, 2018). Because in general, therapeutic benefits seem to occur in psychedelic therapy only if ME occurs (Gandy, 2019). Psychedelics,

especially by interacting with serotonin receptors, can lead to changes in consciousness and deep inner experiences (Vollenweider & Smallridge 2022). These receptors can cause perceptual changes and emotional experiences (Császár-Nagy et al., 2019). However, PE has the potential to lead the individual to search for meaning (Hearn, 2021). Therefore, it has been suggested that these experiences may contribute to increased insight and personal development (Amada et al., 2020). The rise in popularity of psychedelics dates back to the late 1990s. Considering that it was first studied in the 1940s, it can be said that this popularity is not new (Nichols, 2016). Chris Letheby (2021) states that the underlying reason why many people in different populations achieve therapeutic benefit with PE is not the dosage of drugs, but the emergence of ME. Moreover, therapeutic benefits have been achieved thanks to PE that cause ME in patients with completely different psychological conditions. Letheby, a proponent of methodological Naturalism, states that there is nothing fundamental in psychedelic medicine that cannot be reconciled with this worldview, relying on relevant scientific findings and not dwelling on philosophical conclusions that do not integrate with them (Athéa, 2023). In my view, this benefit comes from the mind's direct contact with transcendental truth. Transcendental information obtained through ME have been evaluated in many channels throughout human history, from prophecy to religious views, from art to scientific discoveries. However, such direct information may not always be accurate and useful. I think it's because some of it isn't really direct knowledge at all. Relative consciousness and mind may have been involved. Whatever the case, the functioning of this mechanism is an important phenomenon that needs to be examined philosophically, as it gives us clues about a different reality that affects our own reality.

According to widespread scientific understanding, consciousness is associated with neurological processes and generally occurs as a result of the interaction between many different regions of the brain (John, 2002). However, there are still many unknowns about how exactly consciousness arises and works. In fact, this is because Naturalism, which tends to reduce consciousness to neurobiological foundations, only considers brain activities and nervous systems in solving the problem based on experimental data and scientific research. Due to this attitude, despite nearly 100 years of effort by Naturalism, consistent brain-based traces of not only consciousness but even emotions have not been

revealed (Barrett, 2017). Science assumes that there is no one-to-one mapping and that the emotion-brain relationship covers many areas of the brain (Loaiza, 2021). ME is often personal and subjective, based on cultural beliefs and spiritual insights. Therefore, efforts to directly measure or explain ME using objective scientific methods may be difficult. Naturalism tries to explain states of consciousness through brain activity, emphasizing objective observation and scientific methods. Mystical experiences, on the other hand, emphasize a dimension beyond the consciousness that is assumed to be produced by the brain according to Naturalism.

ME are deep and meaningful experiences that express the union of an individual with his or her own essence, the universe, or a universal consciousness. The expression of such experiences often goes beyond the boundaries of language. Because it is subjective in nature, it is difficult to fully explain in scientific or neuroscientific terms. Interestingly, however, contrary to its subjective nature, ME have been described on the same grounds by very different people in very different times and cultures. In fact, this alone shows that this experience, which is thought to be subjective, is based on an objective reality. For this reason, some studies have tried to approach objectively by examining changes in brain activity during PE or measuring changes in mental processes during practices such as meditation (Millière et al., 2018). However, understanding and characterizing ME is often carried out within philosophical, religious, cultural and psychological frameworks. Terms such as brain or mental entropy are used to highlight more measurable aspects of these experiences.

In neuroscience, brain entropy generally refers to the disorder or complexity of brain activity (Keshmiri, 2020). In general, entropy describes the degree of disorder or complexity in a system (Denbigh, 1989). By monitoring brain activity with techniques such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) or electroencephalogram (EEG), brain entropy can be measured (Bin & Chen, 2021). A more disordered or complex brain activity is associated with higher entropy (Rosso, 2007). Factors such as diversity in psychological and cognitive processes, creativity, or states of consciousness can influence mental entropy (Wiggins, 2020). In fact, the term "entropy" is not an appropriate term to describe ME, as it is a term that measures disorder or degree of disorder. Because ME is

generally characterized by a sense of order, meaning and unity. Some research suggests that regular meditation can reduce brain entropy and the use of psychedelic substances can increase this entropy (Young et al., 2021). In my opinion, when mental disorder is reduced, the relative consciousness of the individual becomes open to a universal consciousness beyond the individual mental activities that have come to a halt. ME thus gives the individual consciousness an experience of universal unity. However, meditation and contemplative practices can help the individual reach deeper understanding by reducing entropy, while the use of psychedelic substances can increase it. So entropy at maximum or minimum points may find meaning as an indicator of mental tranquility or cognitive order. However, terms such as 'brain entropy' play a limited role in understanding the subjective aspects of these experiences. In these matters, combining the objective and observational methods of science with the inner exploration and search for meaning of mystical traditions is a complex task. Similarly, the complexity and nature of consciousness make it difficult to understand and define. So much so that studies on consciousness have given rise to various theories and approaches on the subject in fields such as science, philosophy and psychology. Research on this subject continues, and various interdisciplinary studies are being conducted to reach a greater understanding of consciousness.

THE SOURCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Consciousness is a reality whose existence we cannot doubt. In fact, the sentence "Consciousness exists" is not the expression of a proposition, thesis, hypothesis or theory, but a law in itself. However, the consciousness that we experience almost every moment is perhaps the most familiar, indisputable, but actually, when we think deeply, the strangest reality. Because "understanding-making meaning" is a direct activity of consciousness. Therefore, when the subject is "understanding consciousness", the paradox of holding a mirror to the mirror arises. The solution to the problem converges to infinity and no meaningful result can be obtained. In other words, since consciousness must be used to understand consciousness, the solution effort turns into a cycle of self-repetition. When you attempt this effort, it is as if you are walking down a strange Escher staircase. While approaching a solution, we return to non-solution (Zhang & Li 2023). That's why the problem of convergence to infinity is expressed as uncertainty and even

meaninglessness in mathematics. The difficulty in understanding consciousness arises from being caught up in this self-repeating paradox. For this reason, the problem of consciousness was called the "World Knot" by Schopenhauer (Globus, 2012).

However, we cannot solve the problem by focusing on reflections on the same plane. The only way to avoid the mirror paradox is to seek the solution from an off-plane perspective. This means that the solution will not be given by the reflections on the surface of the mirrors but by the quality in their depth. We should not consider the medium in which consciousness resides, or so to speak, the surface on which the reflections in the mirror occur, but the essence of consciousness itself or the texture of the mirror itself. According to Nicholas Humphrey, who developed the evolutionary theory of consciousness, the root meaning of the word "consciousness", which comes from ancient Greek civilization, is based on the term "self-knowledge" (Humphrey, 1999). This determination leads us to the following clue, even though it is not Humphrey's intention: Knowing yourself is about knowing the essence of me, not the me where consciousness resides. This essence will be the truth of the consciousness that we see reflected in beings, and the solution can only be found here.

By its nature, naturalistic science works on the principle of holding a mirror to a mirror. Examines things in the order they belong to. The only tool that can reach outside the plane can be found through philosophy, that is, thinking about knowledge. In fact, naturalism works so within the plane that, as Thomas Nagel said, when scientific development was not yet ready, studies on consciousness were not considered among the fields of scientific research, as an indicator of a prejudiced attitude (Nagel, 1989). It was virtually forbidden to attempt to unravel consciousness, which seemed a futile effort for science (Firestein, 2012). When viewed from this perspective, it was correctly argued that the nature of consciousness, which is a subjective thing, could not be solved by objective scientific methods (Nagel, 1974). However, cognitive science, which has developed in parallel with the development of brain imaging techniques, has also enabled the development of philosophy and psychology on this subject. Consciousness research now falls within the scope of cognitive science. Again, under the influence of important advances in cognitive neuroscience, metaphysical research aimed at solving the mind-body problem has begun

to find a place in the philosophy of mind. All these efforts are the primary means of investigating consciousness. However, the sense of self, based on biological processes, is not fixed. It changes with a constantly adapting mechanism under interaction with the environment (Dong et al., 2023). Individual consciousness, which I argue is originally reflected from a metaphysical source (non matter-energy), is also shaped by interactions on the material-energy plane. This bidirectional, mutually reinforcing state of consciousness has caused cognitive science and philosophy of mind to begin to focus on how environmental factors increase cognitive capacity, rather than individual-relative consciousness (Clark & Chalmers, 1998). Studies on these issues constitute the second way of researching consciousness. Therefore, in parallel with the bidirectional state of consciousness that I claimed, today's studies are grouped on two basic issues. Scientists working on one of these generally label the other as either closed to the truth or unscientific.

Contemporary discussions of consciousness often treat it as a single thing. LeDoux (2023) states that this is not the truth, and that he is at least important to distinguish between "creature consciousness" and "mental state consciousness". According to him, creature consciousness refers to the state of being alert and responding behaviorally to environmental stimuli, and is valid for the vast majority of animals. Mental state consciousness is the state of having experience with real content about the world and/or oneself (LeDoux, 2023). In parallel with LeDoux's conclusions, Damasio (2018) also says that every organism has a certain level of intelligence. According to him, the intelligence of bacteria is hidden but exists. It is based on the biochemical and electrical processes within them. Even at the lowest level of vitality, this kind of feeling exists. Homeostatic emotions that maintain internal stability in a paramecium serve as an example of this, In contrast, open intelligences that exhibit complexity have emotion and consciousness (Damasio & Damasio, 2022). Therefore, there are two types of emotions in living things: primitive-homeostatic emotions such as hunger and high-level emotions such as sadness. The characteristic of the conscious mind is formed by the integrated organism appropriating the mental contents that arise within itself (Dong et al., 2023). Actually, in line with these perspectives, David Chalmers and Humphrey, like many other philosophers, argue that only consciousness with phenomenal qualities holds

significance. Therefore, Humphrey points out the need to make a careful distinction between cognitive consciousness and phenomenal consciousness when talking about consciousness. The first is an umbrella term used to enter the realm of consciousness. The second is used especially when discussing access to sensations with extraordinary sensory qualities. As defined by Humphrey, cognitive consciousness is related to cognitive processes and functions associated with consciousness. It includes the capacity for reflective thinking, internal observation, and the ability to process and manipulate information (Humphrey, 2006). Based on observations on different organisms, Humphrey concludes that cognitive consciousness developed before the emergence of phenomenal consciousness. Therefore, uncovering the evolutionary history of consciousness is to answer the questions of when and why phenomenal consciousness emerged.

The nature of emotion and consciousness depends on the roles they play in the evolution of matter. Regarding the functional role of affect and consciousness, it is appropriate to follow a monist ontology in which matter is considered mind (Gabriel, 2023). Many human emotions are cultural and historical creations because we are acculturated creatures living in vast niches composed of countless historical resonances (Laland et al., 2015). The cognitive agenda, stating that our thoughts are entirely determined by our information processors, misinterprets the continuity between culture and biology (Gabriel, 2023). The idea that a version of panpsychistic consciousness exists in living beings, i.e., the instantiation of tokens that exist as part of a type of consciousness present in the physical universe, including living beings, is manifested in the Cellular Basis Theory of Consciousness (CBCT) (LeDoux, 2023). Starting from the principle that all extant and extinct species evolved biologically from the first prokaryotes, CBCT is based on the idea that all expressions of emotion, perception, and cognition follow the same path (Reber and Baluška, 2023). Thus, according to this theory, life and consciousness evolve together. Single-celled bacteria, archaea, and protozoa follow the same evolutionary path of fundamental perceptual and acquisition-based memory processes present in *Homo sapiens* (Baluška and Reber, 2019). Therefore, while some of our abilities may be relatively new, the fundamental characteristics of our behaviors have deep roots that can be traced back to the beginning of life. So, human consciousness may be the most advanced form of sensitivity, but it is not a separate function. It is situated on

a continuity that started with the first life forms and evolved over several billion years. This suggests the claim that all living forms, including the most primitive single-celled prokaryotes, have an existentially secure consciousness. In other words, CBCT is based on the view that cells are sensitive. Despite the adoption of the perspective in science and philosophy that all species evolved biologically from these primitive single-celled organisms, it is not universally accepted that all mental life, awareness, sensitivity, or consciousness followed the same path.

The prevailing paradigm, contending that the mind is a product of the brain, asserts that the mental aspect is exclusively generated by material substance (Baluška et al., 2016). In the final analysis, the characteristics evident in entities arising from the combinations of matter-energy must necessarily exist, at least in potential form, in matter-energy, whether implicitly or explicitly. Otherwise, it would be to claim that any quality emerged from nothing, which is extremely illogical. According to our assumption, consciousness has manifested in its most developed form in humans. Therefore, it must also exist in the matter-energy, which is the building block of humans. This manifestation, whether implicit or primitive, must already be present in the background of matter-energy. However, the deep question is whether consciousness is inherently a part of matter-energy and a quality that emerges from matter-energy, or whether it is a fundamental quality independent of matter-energy that feeds matter-energy. Interestingly, supporting my statements in contrast to its intended purpose, LeDoux (2023) says that animals and modern protozoa share a common ancestor from a billion years ago. He suggests that some of the genes related to learning in our nervous system might have come to us through our microbial ancestors, which didn't even have a nervous system but could learn to escape danger (LeDoux, 2023). Humphrey, parallel to LeDoux, claims that extraordinary consciousness is a relatively recent evolutionary innovation. He concludes that organisms such as anemones, starfish, worms, etc., belong to this category based solely on perceptual responses. Bees, octopuses, Japanese fish, frogs, etc., have senses; and only warm-blooded animals, mammals, and birds can be sensitive (Zhang & Li 2023). A recent study has shown that cuttlefish possess one of the cognitive markers LeDoux uses to define episodic memory. They learn what an event is, where and when it will occur. Moreover, intriguingly, they retain memory until old age (Schnell et al., 2021).

These situations means that consciousness, which manifests itself in the clearest and most perfect form, as far as we know, in humans, who are among the beings on the matter-energy plane, was actually already inherent in the matter- energy plane as a core. Perfect consciousness began to manifest gradually in the realm of matter-energy before human consciousness. In other words, consciousness has manifested itself step by step, from primitive to complex, in accordance with the evolutionary stages on this plane. Therefore, even if consciousness exists implicitly or primitively in the background of matter-energy, it must be in its most ripe and complete state in a deeper and more fundamental field. In support of my theory, Damasio argues that consciousness spontaneously emerges from various homeostatic emotions such as hunger and pain. These kinds of emotions often carry an inherent awareness that the organism is alive and that the mind is inherent to this unique organism (Damasio, 1994). Emphasizing the significant role of the nervous system in the development of emotions, Damasio further asserts that the experience of emotion is the origin and foundation of consciousness. Therefore, according to Damasio, the capacity for feeling forms the foundation of cognitive capacity (Damasio, 2010).

At this juncture, it would be beneficial to scrutinize the data regarding the initial emergence of life on the matter-energy plane, as far as we know, based on our current understanding. If our claims are accurate, life should be able to behaviorally manifest the consciousness inherent in matter-energy from the moment of its first emergence. The first step in this direction was taken when Herbert Jennings reported in 1906 that eukaryotes such as *Stentor roeselii* not only learned escape responses but also exhibited avoidance learning, a more complex behavior (Reber and Baluška, 2023). Subsequently, over time, literature has extensively presented data showing relational learning in prokaryotes, including their ability to learn simple patterns, establish stable memories, make decisions, anticipate upcoming events, evaluate the nutrient content of molecules, and respond to toxic substances in a time-coordinated manner (Reber, 2019). Single-celled organisms consciously move within seconds and communicate with each other using modified molecular messengers to adapt to changing conditions. Evidence has been presented that bacteria also exhibit valuable responses to events in their environment, respond to anesthetics, control membrane permeability by allowing the entry of nutrients and benign

molecules while blocking potentially harmful molecules, and mark time with internal clocks (Baluška and Reber, 2020).

Reber and Baluška (2020), based on the aforementioned data, argue that the characteristics, mechanisms, processes, and functions that materialize in human behavior have a long evolutionary history. They transcend various continuities and determining their evolutionary origins is a crucial element in filling in the story of the past four billion years. In fact, an organism devoid of sensitivity would become a Darwinian dead-end. In a chaotic environment where nutrients, temperature, multiple viruses, and various toxic substances constantly change, life could not survive. In fact, even molecules and chemicals lacking internal, perceptible, experiential, extraordinary, and valuable sensitivity had their "First Minds." All existing and extinct species utilized this as a biomolecular platform for the evolution of more complex forms of mental life (Baluška & Reber, 2020).

In addition to all these theories, it is essential not to overlook aspects of cognition that occur largely or completely independently of language, both in human and non-human contexts. For instance, it is emphasized in the literature that artistic creation is often carried out independently of conscious thoughts (Fayena-Tawil et al., 2011). The concept of "unconscious work" is argued to be a fundamental aspect of creative problem-solving (Gilhooly, 2016). Implicit learning is based on unconscious memory processes. Art affects us as linguistic-conceptual beings through a sensory experience mediated by our cultural practices. It also has the potential to act existentially on us with our non-linguistic essence (Gabriel, 2012). This situation is one of the most powerful emotional clues we have about our deep past (Gabriel, 2023).

THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF SOURCE

In this chapter, I will examine some of the answers developed by mystical-philosophical-religious disciplines throughout human history (especially the first and third of these are intertwined and nourish each other, and the second has intensively evaluated the arguments of the others at least until modern philosophy) (for now, this study will mainly focus on Taoism and Islamic Philosophies will be discussed) and I will further mature the

holistic philosophy that I based on in the previous chapter. Like consciousness, another reality that we cannot doubt its existence is the principle of spontaneous arising/generation. However, does this principle represent a truly spontaneous existence in the literal sense of the word, or does it represent a phenomenon nourished by a hidden/potential essence? In fact, the fact that spontaneity arises from an essence, just like the existence of consciousness, is an indisputable reality. So, the expression "to arising from essence" is an expression of a universal law. The reason for the differences of opinion on the subject in whether this essence is matter, energy, both matter and energy, consciousness, or conscious energy. At this point, delving into metaphysical analyses becomes inevitable in line with the subject. In these analyses, the path I will follow is to address some philosophical-religious-mystical propositions. However, while doing this, even though it may be simple, I need to provide fundamental proofs for the invalidity of the dominant concepts of God in institutional religious views.

Life in our world continues by deriving itself, either by consuming other living things or by basing/ being dependent on inanimate beings. More generally, when we look at all living and non-living entities, we see that they sustain their existence through an exist arising from their own structures. Even though this existence evolves and transforms under the influence of other entities, it appears as if It seems as if there is no need for a latent influence outside of beings. So much so that it can be said that existential interactions are sufficient for beings to exist. So, if we were to ask directly, for example, is the freezing of water in the cold and its evaporation in the heat governed by a metaphysical factor, or does it happen due to its nature and environmental factors? Or, is a baby not first formed by its parents, is there any need to seek another latent cause? Therefore, as Alan W. Watts said, we don't come into this world. We are come into existence in this world. Just as the leaves of a tree and the waves of the ocean form, the universe also forms life and humanity. In this case, every human becomes a movement of the Universe and nature, a unique expression of it (Watts, 2003).

The transition of matter from one state to another, the self-sustaining nature of life, and the continuous movements of atoms behind the observed material forms, all seem to demonstrate a spontaneous unfolding based on things relying on themselves and similar

entities. As stated in Tao Te Ching, a Taoist text: "Everything under the sky changes by itself. When the sky and the earth unite, sweet dew covers the earth. This is not a human-made phenomenon. It develops spontaneously in nature." (Tzu, 2009).

However, at this point, we need to ask, 'What is the basis for the self-realization of entities?' Does it originate solely from their temporary forms, or does it stem from an essence? Shouldn't there be a Universal consciousness and infinite power behind consciousness and potency, i.e., conscious, constructive energy? Otherwise, we would be accepting the relativity of consciousness and power, observed in one entity for a while and then disappearing with the cessation of that entity, but concurrently observed both at the same time and at separate times in other entities. If it is, would imply acknowledging the groundlessness of consciousness and energy, or more precisely, their reliance on absolute nothingness.

When we consider all the beings currently present at every point in an enormously scaled universe, we get the idea of an 'infinite number of beings'. Especially when we generalize 'all the beings currently present,' meaning when we consider all forms that have ever existed, all living things, all atoms, all events, and movements – in short, all occurrences – we come closer to the idea of 'infinite number of beings'. Moreover, if we embrace models like 'Multiple Universes' or 'Parallel or Infinite Universes,' we confront the concept of 'Infinite Manifestations' to a considerable extent. In this case, rather than an external, external force and consciousness influencing everything and having control over every creation, we seem to perceive a reflection of an essential, intrinsic, and latent power within the creation, and a concealed consciousness utilizing this power. This perspective confronts us with the truth that there is no metaphysical entity or God creating entities from outside, manipulating them from a distance. After all, managing the balance of subatomic particles within an atom inside a microbe in my body from beyond, while also attending to and accounting for another occurrence at the far end of the Earth or in a distant corner of a galaxy, seems impossible even for a God. And this God has been doing it simultaneously across the entire universe for a long time! Managing everything every moment and everywhere, orchestrating it from a distance!

Whether this administration is through a divine design or based on principles of creation, accepting a God as the agent of this design and creation would mean asserting that entities exist apart from God. According to this view, entities are actually created or designed in a realm where God does not exist, or they exist in a place separate from the 'space of God. This discourse essentially means drawing a limit on God's existence and defining existences as beings that are equal to God in terms of the existence-limit relationship, or reducing God to the plane of occurrences. So, this belief creates a contradictory situation with the belief in God it is based on. The only way out of this contradiction would be to say that God includes everything in some way (whether as matter- energy, or consciousness). In this case, God will manage the occurrences that overflow from Him, not from a distance, but closely. Emanations, overflowing from God, are defined by the term 'Nous (First Intellect). The 'Nous' is eternal and everlasting, existing with God. More precisely, it is a quality of the eternal and everlasting God, unchanging and constantly in operation at every moment. Therefore, the 'Nous' signifies a universal essence. This idea, found in Plotinus' work 'Enneads' (O'Meara, 1993), and the ontological basis of Neoplatonism were developed into the 'Theory of Emanation' by the Islamic philosopher Al-Farabi (Alpharabius) in the 9th century (Farabi, 2001; 2021). The term "emanation" encompasses the meanings "to be born, to come into existence, to occur, to manifest, to flow, to gush, to overflow." By the 10th century, another prominent philosopher of this theory was Ibn Sina (Avicenna) (Sina, 2022). His 11-volume book, titled "The Book of Healing," encompassing knowledge in logic, mathematics, physics, metaphysics, biology, and medicine, has been translated into Latin multiple times since the Middle Ages and used as a textbook (Sina, 2014).

The information provided by institutional religions, asserting that the universe was created later and out of nothing by the absolute will and power of God, leads to logical inconsistencies, as exemplified above. Therefore, philosophers of the Emanation theory have endeavored to establish a logical and consistent system free from contradictions. These philosophers have expanded on Plotinus' inference of the 'Nous' by proposing that God should be considered as the 'Absolute Consciousness. According to them, this 'Absolute Being,' which is the 'Absolute Consciousness,' is both the intellect and that which is understood and understands. The Absolute Being, which must not be dependent

on anything, cannot have any specific purpose. Purpose implies a deficiency or a need. Therefore, entities coexisting with God, such as the universe or universes, must inherently be eternal and everlasting. All these conditions clearly present a counter-argument to the thesis of institutional religions that states, 'The universe is created later with the absolute will of God for a specific purpose.' According to science, our universe has an age, but logically, there must have been something before. The Sudur theory logically extends this notion of 'prior to' to be an inherent necessity, reaching into the realm of the eternal and everlasting. At this point, I will clarify the solution by stating that overflowing from God takes the form of a consciousness-energy ocean, which is the source and nourisher of the realm of manifestations. Ultimately, all manifestations should be reflections nourished by consciousness-energy fluctuations overflowing from the Absolute Being. I choose to call this source the 'Inexhaustible Potential.' The concept of inexhaustible potential is the only way to explain the energy and consciousness that constitute the building blocks of the universe and are manifested in occurrences. In other words, we can say that all manifestations are essentially fluctuations in the Inexhaustible Potential. This ocean must be attributed to the Absolute Being due to the law of the absence of 'Absolute Nothingness. The concept of the absence of Absolute Nothingness is a law much clearer than the laws of the existence of consciousness and essence. To prevent the extension and complexity of my article, it is necessary to address the examination of this law and its utilization in solving the problem of consciousness in another study.

Even if all these necessary deductions are not clearly seen, we must, at the very least, accept, based on fundamental logic, that the universe is nourished from an infinite and inexhaustible energy source. This acceptance, even at a basic level, can be understood as a clear reality with an understanding of Spinoza's philosophy and the Unity of Being theory of the Sufi philosopher Muhiddin-i Arabi, who inspired him. To avoid extending the article, I will refrain from detailed analyses and not delve further at this point. However, while this reality essentially explains matter as a derivative or reflection of energy, it cannot explain consciousness. The only way to explain consciousness emerging in universal entities is to acknowledge that this energy carries at least the seeds of consciousness. The dilemma of the unity of God not based on the concept of inexhaustible potential or the idea that occurrences overflow from God unavoidably implies the

necessity for God to be changing, just like occurrences. My thesis finds a way to escape from this implication by asserting that the Absolute Being overflows with an inexhaustible potential. Therefore, the manifestation of consciousness-energy in occurrences from this potential does not imply any decrease or change in the potential. In essence, the solution lies in a fundamental mathematical principle: subtracting a quantity of infinite magnitude from infinity will not alter its infinitude. No matter how large numbers are subtracted from infinity, the result will still be infinite, meaning it will remain unchanged. Indeed, being infinite is a qualitative state. Being countable forever, on the other hand, is quantitative. Countable forever things are not inherently infinite. Infinitely countable things can only exist if they are grounded in something that is qualitatively infinite. Therefore, quantitative infinities arising from something that is qualitatively infinite cannot diminish or alter the ontological infinitude. Philosophical errors on this matter arise from confusing qualitative infinity with quantitative infinity, i.e., conceptual confusion.

At this point, we can circle back to the inception of our chain of thought and reconsider the concept of 'Infinite Becomings,' which, in my opinion, represents the ultimate reality. Infinite manifestations must endure from eternity to eternity. And inherently, they are not infinite in quality. They are countable and possess a continuously increasing magnitude. If there is an Absolute Being, which must be according to the law of the absence of Absolute Nothingness, the immutable quality of this Absolute Being is that it must constantly realize Emergence. Even the continuation of endless occurrences from eternity to eternity (that is, the eternity of emanation) will not be able to change the Absolutely Infinite Source. God's change means God's differentiation between any two starting and ending points. More importantly, the idea of change brings with it the idea of a beginning and an end, and this leads to the assumption of the beginning and end of God. In this case, the question arises, 'What was before God, and what will happen after?' As for the last link in the chain, the only conceivable answer is Absolute Nothingness. However, if absolute nothingness existed, neither God nor anything else could come into being by nature. Then, defining God as the source of Inexhaustible Potential and occurrences as fluctuations in the ocean of consciousness-energy will be the only solution to the problem. This solution actually reveals a concept that is completely different from the concepts of

God imposed by institutional religions. If this solution cannot be reached, all inferences and assumptions, including the theory of emanation, Pantheism and the theory of Unity of Existence will enter a vicious circle at some point. There is no god in institutional religions. It is something that cannot exist at all. The absence of a god gives power only to things. Things exist and pass away by interacting with each other from eternity to eternity. In fact, even being able to reach this primitive stage creates an inner enlightenment that can make everything more understandable in our minds. At this stage, as Nihichze said, God is dead. This is the God that Sufi Muhyiddin-i Arabi meant when he said, "The God you worship is under my feet."

The interaction of everything with each other demonstrates that nothing exists in the field of existence as separate and disconnected from another thing. This can also reveal, through a different perspective, the unity operating at the deepest layers of all things that appear to exist separately in the dimension we perceive, indicating a dimensional common ground in their essences. Since our capacity to perceive this unity in the essential dimension is lacking, it presents clues to the absolute truth, which, in our eyes, could be defined as non-existence or nothingness. According to Sufism, our perception, viewing the true Integral and Singular Unity as non-existence, and perceiving constantly changing entities instead of this Universal Singularity, is limited to the superficial realm where the dual world prevails – a realm composed of many parts and formations. This limitation is pointed out in the Tao Te Ching with the statement, "The greatest wholeness seems incomplete." The nothingness in the essence is emphasized with the phrase, "In what exists, there are possibilities used by what does not exist." (Tzu, 2009). Here, the expression "not-exist" refers to an inexhaustible potential that cannot be perceived with our eyes or consciousness. Indeed, something truly non-existent wouldn't have possibilities to utilize, as it simply does not exist. The term "not-exist" in this context signifies relative non-existence, a kind of absence that exists subjectively to us. However, it reveals that this absence is actually an inexhaustible potential, since it is the possibilities it uses in everything that exists. In the Quran, a similar concept is emphasized with the verse, "Do not take besides Allah another deity. There is no deity except Him ('Hu'). Everything will be destroyed except His Face. His is the judgment, and to Him you will be returned" (Quran, 28/88). This verse draws attention to Allah's station as "Hu" or

Nothingness. The word "Hu" means "He" in Arabic and, according to Sufi interpretation, it signifies the station of Nothingness of Allah. This is because in this station, there is no consciousness that could attribute names to Him; therefore, He is nameless and can only be referred to as 'He.' Due to the absence of a perspective delicate enough to perceive or see Him, He remains nameless. He cannot be fully defined. However, partially, He is known to the extent that His attributes are reflected to us. In line with one of His infinite attributes, He is described as "Latif" (subtle, refined, profound). Like all of His attributes, He has the most perfect, most mature, and the highest level of subtlety.

Taoism teaches us that, according to its principles, we can easily see events, entities, and formations, but we fail to see the ultimate reality behind them. Since we cannot fully perceive the pure reality underlying formations, Tao cannot be expressed in words. Although there is an unchanging name derived from Tao's unchanging existence, defining this name is impossible. Therefore, its name is 'Nameless.' Tao is only referred to as such for convenience. It remains unchanged, always the same (eternal), and profoundly deep (inner). Taoism's fundamental philosophy, according to the interpretations of Cleary, a commentator on Taoism, is summarized in the statement from the Tao Te Ching: "Nameless, the origin of heaven and earth" (Cleary, 2003). According to Cleary, Nothingness or namelessness reflects the unformed consciousness, indicating not the shaped state of consciousness with mental activity and logic but its intuitive state. Pure reason is nourished from a very deep source. Intuition is somewhat related to reaching this pure state of reason. Existence or the named, on the other hand, can be understood through logic and mental activity. Knowing oneself is not about the transient and superficial state of mind and body but sensing the Tao in the essence of these states and everything. In this sense, "Turning away from oneself leads to madness." Self-awareness can be achieved not with a mental function related to the realm of existence but with an intuitive orientation. "One who knows others is intelligent. One who knows oneself is enlightened." The state of self-knowledge, parallel to many esoteric teachings, is defined in Taoism as reaching the infinity in the essence. In a saying attributed to the Islamic Prophet Muhammad, "Die before you die." Similarly, in the Tao Te Ching, it is said, "One who knows how to die without dying lives long." "Know yourself, know the white within you. This is to return to simplicity." It would be illuminating to recall the relationship

between the word "consciousness" mentioned in the previous section and the expression "knowing oneself."

In the Qur'an, Allah is referred to as rich: According to the Quran again, Allah is satiated and contented because of His richness. Therefore, He does not need the Worlds: "*Certainly, Allah is independent of the worlds*" (Quran, 29/6). (See also: Quran, 2/263; 2/267; 3/97; 6/133; 10/68; 14/8; 22/64; 27/40; 31/26; 35/15; 57/24; 60/6; 39/7; 64/6) Thus, according to the Qur'an, Allah is rich enough not to need the worlds, meaning that His existence is not limited to the worlds. Accordingly, He is satiated and contented towards the worlds. He is much richer than the worlds, or, more precisely, He has an existence reflecting a degree that cannot be known by the eyes of the worlds. This also means that Allah is separate from the worlds, exhibiting both immanence and transcendence. At this point, we should consider the separation from the worlds, as stated by Ibn Sina, an important philosopher of the Emanation Theory: "God is independent of everyone's place, far from taking up space. It is what is in the place, away from the place." (God is independent of any specific location, transcending spatial limitations. It is what exists within a place yet beyond the confines of that place.) Because it is true that Allah is separate from the worlds, but in turn, we can also say with reverse logic that He is not just that. At the same time, according to Islam, "Allah encompasses a thing by its essence." (3/120), "wherever you turn you are facing 'towards' Allah." (2/115) and "He is closer to a person than their jugular vein" (Quran, 50/16) These are very important differences. Because to encompass a thing by its essence is nothing but being one with the essence of the thing, being identical to the essence of the thing. Here, the two aspects of Allah according to us are expressed as "Being away from space" and "Encompassing a thing by its essence." He is both intrinsic and transcendent. In His intrinsic aspect, there is transcendence, and in His transcendent aspect, there is intrinsicness. This thought is a highly valuable ontological view systematized by the philosophy of Panentheism (Whitehead, 2010).

According to Islamic philosophy, Allah has a space but is entirely beyond space, being free from time and space. This situation is called the state of 'placelessness'. Allah can only be in space as 'placelessness.' Therefore, in Sufism, Allah exists in 'a continuous

infinite moment' since time is essentially a component of space. Time is nothing more than observing the change in space. Therefore, what exists beyond space cannot be subjected to the constraints of time. We can observe the situation I mentioned above, where Allah encompasses everything, inside and outside, from the following verse in the Quran: "Look; He truly encompasses everything as Himself" (Quran, 41/54). (For other verses describing that Allah encompasses everything, refer to: 2/247, 2/268, 4/108, 4/126, 6/80, 11/92, 18/91, 19/94, 20/98, 65/12.)

This state of encompassment is a result of Allah surrounding with His knowledge, not His essence. Because, existence, which is simultaneously separate from the realms, can only manifest as conscious-energy fluctuations. This means that Allah created and encompassed the worlds with His knowledge. In Islamic philosophy, specific references are made to Allah's attributes of power and knowledge. Knowledge signifies consciousness, and power indicates energy. The realms, in the presence of this Absolute Being that encompasses them and has a distinct existence from them, are surrounded by the knowledge of that True and Sole Existence. We can also see traces of this truth in the philosophies of Panentheism and Pandeism (Mapson, 2017). Therefore, the worlds are, philosophically, each a form of knowledge from the knowledge of that Existence.

CONCLUSION

The philosophical thesis presented in this study shares common points with many theses and theories in the history of human thought, from the past to the present. However, a comprehensive philosophical perspective, especially filling the gaps, has not been fully realized. The most important of these is how the Absolute Being, which must remain unchanged, can bring about changes in the realms without undergoing any change itself. The realm of existence, being inherently relative, is constantly in a state of flux. In this case, the Absolute Being, which must serve as the source for existences, seems to be obliged to change at least in some aspect. This acceptance exists, for example, in the philosophy of Panentheism. The Theory of Emanation, on the other hand, accepts the immutability of God as a given but does not explain how this is possible. However, the

situation of 'to effect change without undergoing change' is the key point for all thought systems in this context, and it has not received the scrutiny it deserves in the history of thought. I think I have shed sufficient light on this important issue in this text. However, of course, the situation will be further detailed with future studies. Apart from this, below is a brief summary of the key points of my thesis:

1-) Since absolute nothingness has never existed, formations and changes must continue from eternity to eternity.

2-) It is essential that there is an inexhaustible potential that nourishes the formations that continue from eternity to eternity.

3-) For the possibility of existences, a crucial quality of this constant potential is that it must be inexhaustible energy.

4-) As the source of consciousness observed in existences, there must also be consciousness in the inexhaustible potential.

5-) The consciousness already present in the inexhaustible potential manifests itself from hidden-closed state to open-competent state through the evolution of relative existences from simple to complex.

6-) The true inexhaustibility of the potential is possible only through emanation from the Absolute Being.

7-) Otherwise, if the constant potential continuously nourishes existences, both the potential and existences cannot be from eternity to eternity.

8-) The non-eternity of the potential and existences means the existence of a beginning and an end. In this case, it is necessary that there be absolute nothingness before the beginning or after the end.

9-) However, the existence of absolute nothingness before the beginning or after the end means that no potential or existence can exist in any way.

10-) In this case, the existence of the inexhaustible potential and its derivation from the unchanging Absolute Being is a necessary inference of logic.

11-) Since the 8th point is valid for the very existence of the Absolute Being, the Absolute Being must be from eternity to eternity.

12-) For the Absolute Being to be from eternity to eternity, it must be free from change.

Author certifies that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity that has any financial or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript

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