İbn Sînâ Metafiziğinde Tanrı'nın Varlığı Lehine Argümanlar: İlahi Basitlik ve Modal Çöküş Problemleri Bağlamında Bir Değerlendirme

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Öz

Bu makale, Tanrı'nın varlığının ispatını İbn Sînâ'nın metafizik çerçevesi içinde, özellikle ilahî basitlik ve modal çöküş problemi kavramlarını ele alarak incelemektedir. Makale, İbn Sînâ'nın metafiziğinin Aristoteles'in metafizik anlayışından farklı bir pozisyonda olduğunu iddia etmekle birlikte İbn Sînâ'nın metafiziksel sorgulamasının dinamik bir doğası olduğunu da vurgulamaktadır. Ayrıca, İbn Sînâ'nın metafiziksel araştırmayı fizikalist ön kabullerin ötesinde yeniden tanımlama ve metafiziği diğer bilimsel disiplinler için temel olarak kurma konusundaki farklılığına da dikkat çekmektedir. İbn Sînâ'nın Tanrı'nın varlığı lehine argümanlarının, öncelikle *zorunlu*, *mümkün* ve *imkânsız*'ı kapsayan modalite formları ve *burhânü's-sıddıkîn* olarak bilinen argümanı aracılığıyla açıklığa kavuşturulması yer almaktadır. Burada İbn Sînâ'dan mülhem öne süreceğimiz argümanlar Zorunlu Varlık'ta varlık ve mahiyet özdeşliği olduğu fikrinden yola çıkarak Kant'ın analitik-sentetik önerme ayrımı üzerinden klasik metafiziğe yönelttiği bazı eleştirilerine; yine varlığın ontolojik temelini vurgulayarak bir cevap vermektedir. Bununla birlikte, Zorunlu Varlık'taki varlık ve mahiyet özdeşliği iddiası, ilahi basitlik meselesini ve modal çöküş problemini ortaya çıkarır. Söz konusu probleme İbn Sînâ'nın genel ve özel varlık arasında yaptığı ayrım ve *teşkîku'l-vücûd* (varlığın derecelenmesi) teorisi üzerinden cevap verilmeye çalışılacaktır. Bu noktada, çağdaş metafizik tartışmalarında çokça kullanılan Frege'nin anlam ve referans arasındaki ayrımının tartışmayı daha da aydınlatabileceği öne sürülmektedir. Sonuç bölümünde, İbn Sînâ'nın Tanrı'nın varlığına ilişkin argümanlarının önemli bir ikna gücü sergilediği, ancak aynı zamanda ilahi basitlik ve modal çöküşe ilişkin daha fazla sorgulamayı da beraberinde getirdiği öne sürülmektedir. Bu temaların araştırılması, İbn Sînâ'nın metafiziğe katkılarının, çağdaş felsefi tartışmalarla ilişkisinin altını çizmekte ve bu katkıların, metafiziğin geleneksel Aristotelesçi veya Kartezyen yorumların ötesinde incelikli bir şekilde anlaşılmasını sağladığı savunulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Din Felsefesi, İbn Sînâ, Metafizik, Burhânü's-Sıddıkîn, İlahi Basitlik, Modal Çöküş

Arguments for the Existence of God in Ibn Sīnā's Metaphysics: An Evaluation of the Problems of Divine Simplicity and Modal Collapse

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Abstract

This article investigates the proof of God's existence within Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical framework, particularly addressing the concepts of divine simplicity and the problem of modal collapse. It commences by positioning Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics in contrast to Aristotle's, emphasizing the dynamic and evolutionary nature of Ibn Sīnā's engagement with metaphysical inquiry. The article highlights Ibn Sīnā's distinctiveness in redefining metaphysical exploration beyond physicalist presuppositions and establishing metaphysics as foundational for other scientific disciplines. Central to this exploration is the elucidation of Ibn Sīnā's arguments for God's existence, primarily through his concept of modality—encompassing the necessary, contingent, and impossible—and his unique argument known as The Proof of the Sincere (Burhān al-Siddiqīn). These arguments demonstrate Ibn Sīnā's belief in the necessity of a being whose existence and essence are identical, countering Kantian critiques by emphasizing an ontological foundation rather than rational judgments alone. However, the assertion of the identity of existence and essence in the Necessary Being introduces the issue of divine simplicity and the potential for modal collapse—a challenge whereby distinctions between possible states of affairs are nullified. The article proposes that Ibn Sīnā's distinction between general and special existence, alongside his theory of *tashkīk al-wujūd* (gradation of existence), offers avenues to navigate this philosophical challenge. Additionally, it suggests that Frege's distinction between meaning and reference could further elucidate the discussion. The conclusion posits that while Ibn Sīnā's arguments for God's existence exhibit significant persuasive power, they also prompt further inquiries into divine simplicity and modal collapse. The exploration of these themes underscores the relevance of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical contributions to contemporary philosophical debates, advocating for a nuanced understanding of his work beyond traditional Aristotelian or Cartesian interpretations.

Keywords: Philosophy of Religion, Ibn Sīnā, Metaphysics, The Proof of the Sincere (Burhān al-Siddiqīn), Divine Simplicity, Modal Collapse

Introduction

When examining the breadth of classical metaphysical frameworks, it becomes evident that the metaphysical system espoused by Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) exhibits notable distinctions from that of Aristotle, particularly concerning the fundamental subject matter of metaphysical inquiry. This divergence does not signify an outright rejection or disassociation from Aristotelian metaphysics; instead, it reflects a sophisticated form of engagement characterized by a dialectical interaction. This interaction entails a nuanced negotiation and engagement with the complexities and novelties introduced by Ibn Sīnā's revised perspective on ontology, specifically his exploration of beings, encompassing both corporeal and abstract entities.

This perspective aligns with the analysis presented by Wisnovsky in an article, where evolutionary aspect of Ibn Sīnā's philosophical contributions are emphasized in the sense that Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical system can be understood not merely as an isolated intellectual artifact but as a living dialogue with Aristotle's work, one that both honors and transcends its foundational premises.[1]

Furthermore, a significant portion of the scholarly literature examining this dialectical engagement has posited that Ibn Sīnā's distinctiveness in metaphysical thought is principally derived from his transformative adaptations of the metaphysical frameworks of predecessors such as al-Kindī (d. circa 252/866), and al-Fārābī (d. 339/950).[2] In a detailed scholarly exposition, Alper elucidates the convergences and divergences between Ibn Sīnā's philosophical conceptions and those of the aforementioned philosophers. Alper contends that there exist at least three salient dimensions through which the distinctive characteristics of Ibn Sīnā's approach *vis-à-vis* these classical thinkers can be discerned, or through which the trajectories of their philosophical interactions can be traced. These dimensions include: i) the endeavor to articulate and refine the objectives and problematic inquiries of metaphysics through critical revision of its subject matter, ii) the undertaking of radical methodological initiatives, such as the proposition that a

[1] Robert Wisnovsky, "Ibn Sînâ'nın Şey'iyye Kavramı Üzerine Notlar", trans. Arzu Meral, *M.Ü. İlâhiyat Fakültesi Dergisi 26* (2004), 85-118, 118.

[2] In order to see how Ibn Sīnā differs from al-Fārābī, see the following article. A. Atar, "Fârâbî ve İbn Sînâ'da İlâhî Basitlik Anlayışının Tanrı-Âlem İlişkisine Yansıması," *İslami Araştırmalar* (2023) , c. 34/1.144-159.

coherent metaphysical system can be conceived independently of naturalistic presuppositions,[3] and iii) the ambition to reconstitute metaphysics as a foundational discipline that provides the epistemological underpinnings for other scientific inquiries.[4]

These scholarly interventions highlight the innovative aspects of Ibn Sīnā's engagement with the metaphysical tradition, underscoring his contributions to the redefinition of metaphysical inquiry, the expansion of its methodological boundaries, and the reinforcement of its role as a cornerstone of the scientific enterprise. Through Alper's analysis, the nuanced complexity of Ibn Sīnā's philosophical project is illuminated, demonstrating the ways in which it both assimilates and diverges from the works of his predecessors, thereby establishing a novel paradigm for understanding the nature and scope of metaphysical science.

Employing a methodology analogous to that of Ibn Sīnā and extending it to engage with contemporary philosophical systems, I will articulate a thesis positing that Ibn Sīnā's philosophical insights offer valuable solutions to certain quandaries prevalent in modern metaphysical discourse. The focal point of this examination is the philosophy of religion, specifically leveraging Ibn Sīnā's arguments for the existence of God. Through this analytical framework, I aim to elucidate how Ibn Sīnā's establishment of a hierarchical ontology, delineating the relationship between God and other entities, provides a cogent resolution to the 'modal collapse problem' endemic to discussions of divine simplicity within the philosophy of religion. This problem pertains to the challenge of maintaining God's distinct attributes without succumbing to modal collapse — the predicament where distinctions between possible states of affairs are obliterated due to the immutable nature of divine simplicity.

By meticulously applying Ibn Sīnā's philosophical principles to this contemporary issue, the goal is to demonstrate the enduring applicability and relevance of his metaphysical constructs in addressing and potentially resolving intricate theological dilemmas. The investigation seeks to highlight the sophistication of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical system, particularly its utility in conceptualizing the divine essence and its relation to other ontological categories, thereby offering a nuanced approach to the modal collapse problem. Through this endeavor, I aim to contribute to the ongoing dialogue within the philosophy of

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[3] For a more detailed exposition of this idea, see. Ayşenur Ünügür-Tabur, *Divine Free Action in Avicenna and Anselm* (Springer Nature Switzerland, 2023), 23-37.

[4] Ömer M. Alper, "İslam Felsefe Geleneğinde Metafiziğin Konusu Sorunu: Özgünlük Açısından Bir İnceleme", *İslam Felsefesinin Özgünlüğü*, ed. Mehmet Vural (Ankara: Elis Yayınları, 2009), 46-85.

religion, showcasing the potential of classical metaphysical frameworks to inform and enrich contemporary philosophical inquiry.

The primary objective of this article is then to elucidate Ibn Sīnā's approach to the proof of God's existence and to outline a comprehensive framework within which this issue is situated.[5] The initial section will delineate the terminological foundations by explicating the meanings attributed to key concepts such as 'existence (wujūd)', 'existent (mawjūd)', and 'quiddity (māhiyyā)', followed by an examination of modal distinctions including the possible (mumkūn), necessary (ḍharūrī), and impossible (mustaḥīl). Within this conceptual framework, the discourse will proceed to analyze Ibn Sīnā's utilization of the argument from possibility and the Proof of the Sincere (burhān al-ṣiddīqīn) in advocating for the existence of God.

Though Ibn Sīnā's arguments bear conceptual resemblance to traditional analogical arguments and the temporal kalām cosmological argument (ḥudūth), they are distinguished by unique logical structures that set them apart. I contend that the distinctive nature of these arguments stems from their grounding in the modality of existence and essence, rather than in physical causality, as typical seen to be the main feature of cosmological arguments.[6] The discussion will further

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[5] It is important to state that for Ibn Sīnā, the subject inquiry of metaphysics is not the existence of God. On the contrary, God's existence is the aim of metaphysics. Therefore, there seems to be an important difference between İbn Sīnā and Aristotelians like Ibn Rushd. For this see. Ömer M. Alper, "Avicenna's Conception Of The Scope Of Metaphysics: Did He Really Misunderstand Aristotle", *İstanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 16 (2007); Also in *al-Ilāhiyāt* Ibn Sīnā writes: "The existence of God– exalted be His greatness – cannot be admitted as the subject matter of this science [the metaphysics]; rather, it is sought in it. This is because, if this were not the case, then [God's existence] would have to be either admitted in this science but searched for in another, or else admitted in this science but not searched for in another. Both alternatives are false. For it cannot be sought in another science, since the other sciences are either moral, political, natural, mathematical, or logical. None of the philosophical sciences lies outside this division. There is [absolutely] nothing in them wherein the proof of God – exalted be His greatness – is investigated. [Indeed,] this is impossible . . . [God's existence] would then have to be either self-evident or [else] something one despairs of proving through theoretical reflection." see. İbn Sīnā, *The Mataphysics of The Healing: al-Shifā: al-Ilāhiyāt*, ed. & trans. Michael E. Marmura (Provo (Ut): Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 3 (chap I.1. section 11; quoted from Zarepour; cross-checked with the original text). This passage is a clear divergence from Aristotle regarding the subject of metaphysics. For a more detailed analysis of the passage also see. M.S. Zarepour, *Necessary Existence and Monotheism: An Avicennian Account of Islamic Concept of Divine Unity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 7.

[6] In fact, Davidson argued that Ibn Sīnā's argument is closer to the cosmological arguments. See. Herbert Alan Davidson, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation, and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 298; However, this view is criticized. See. Engin Erdem, "İbni Sina'nın Metafizik Delili", *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 52/1 (01 Nisan 2011), 97-119. To avoid this sort of misconceptualizations, Erdem also argues that Ibn Sīnā's whole argument for the existence of God should be classified as 'metaphysical proof'. Although this concern is rightly stated, it is

explore the implications of the conflation of existence and essence within the concept of necessary existence and its potential to precipitate modal collapse. This analysis will be enriched by considering Frege's distinction between meaning (Sinn) and reference (Bedeutung), aiming to clarify the nuanced consequences of this philosophical debate.

In concluding this paper, I will focus on modal collapse issue within the philosophy of religion, a problem arising from Ibn Sīnā's non-differentiation between essence and existence in the Necessary Being. The exploration of this issue will leverage Frege's renowned theory of meaning and reference as an analytical tool, positing that it may elucidate certain complexities surrounding interpretations of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical propositions. Through this approach, the paper seeks to contribute to the scholarly examination of Ibn Sīnā's philosophical legacy, particularly his impact on contemporary metaphysical and theological discussions.

1. Conceptual Frame

At the outset, it is imperative to acknowledge that the concept of 'existence (wujūd)' occupies a position of unparalleled centrality within Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical schema. This notion is regarded as the most all-encompassing and universally applicable concept within his philosophical oeuvre. Indeed, the concept of existence subsumes all entities, irrespective of their nature as mental constructs or external realities, implying that there exists no broader category that can subsume 'existence' itself. In essence, the concept of existence defies traditional logical categorization or genus classification, standing as the most universal concept conceivable within the ambit of metaphysical discourse.

This foundational premise underscores the expansive and foundational role that the concept of existence plays in Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics. Unlike more narrowly defined concepts that fall within distinct categories or classes, existence transcends such limitations, offering a unique conceptual framework through which all forms of being can be understood. This recognition of existence as devoid of logical division or genus highlights Ibn Sīnā's innovative approach to metaphysics, where he posits a primary category that is intrinsically unbounded

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essential also to focus on particular aspects of argument without evaluating it in a whole since all of these arguments eventually lead to a broader category. However, one thing to be stated for sure is that Ibn Sīnā does not see his argument as apriori; for he writes: "…There is [absolutely] nothing in them (i.e., sciences) wherein the proof of God – exalted be His greatness – is investigated. [Indeed,] this is impossible . . . [God's existence] would then have to be either self-evident or [else] something one despairs of proving through theoretical reflection…" Ibn Sīnā, *ibid*.

and universally applicable. Thus, the concept of existence emerges not merely as a foundational element of his metaphysical system but as the most general and encompassing concept within the domain of philosophical inquiry as conceived by Ibn Sīnā.[7] Ibn Sīnā employs the concept of existence with meticulous precision, given its foundational role in the formulation of his metaphysical arguments. This concept, as articulated by Ibn Sīnā, does not inherently imply a tangible, external manifestation. This is underscored by the presence of abstract entities, such as numbers, which do not necessitate an external, material form for their existence, thereby decoupling existence from physical corporeality. This distinction facilitates the conceptualization of a metaphysical framework that is not predicated on the principles of physics, thereby allowing for the exploration of existence as a concept independent of material constraints.[8]

The genesis of the concept of existence within the human intellect is a topic of significant intrigue. Ibn Sīnā posits that the understanding of existence is innate within the human psyche, a primordial concept that is self-evident and does not derive from empirical observation or experiential deduction. This notion suggests that the apprehension of existence is not contingent upon sensory experience or mental construction, but rather, it is an inherent aspect of the human intellectual landscape, bestowed by the Active Intellect. Consequently, within the philosophical schema of Ibn Sīnā, the concept of existence emerges not as an epistemological acquisition through intellectual or experiential engagement, but as an intrinsic element of human cognition, provided directly and without necessitation of deliberate contemplation. This perspective underscores the unique status of existence within Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical system, positioning it as a foundational premise that is both universal and immediate in its apprehension.[9]

The concept of existence, as elucidated by Ibn Sīnā, defies classification into traditional categories of genus and species, rendering it ostensibly indefinable. However, within the philosophical framework of Ibn Sīnā, particularly as articulated in his metaphysical treatise, *al-Shifā*, the inability to define existence does not engender epistemological ambiguity. Ibn Sīnā contends that the essence of existence, when considered in its purest form as being qua being, neither

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[7] Ibn Sînâ, *Kitabü'ş-Şifâ: el-İlâhiyât*, trans. Ekrem Demirli - Ömer Türker (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2004), 25. (I will use Turkish and English translation retrospectively if needed).

[8] Ibn Sīnā, *The Metaphysics of The Healing*, trans. Michael E. Marmura (Provo (Ut): Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 91.

[9] For more detail, see. Ömer M. Alper, *Ibn Sînâ* (İstanbul&Ankara: İSAM Yayınları, 2022), 98.

necessitates empirical verification for its acknowledgment nor demands rational demonstration for its comprehension.[10]

Despite its indefinability, existence serves as a foundational cornerstone from which other concepts can be delineated and defined, positioning it as the central subject of metaphysical inquiry. This characteristic underscores the universal scope of metaphysics, establishing it as the discipline uniquely equipped to explore the existence of all entities whether be abstract or concrete. Through this lens, Ibn Sīnā elevates metaphysics to a status of universal significance, capable of encompassing the investigation of existence in its most comprehensive sense. And therefore, granting it to a unique place.

Furthermore, Ibn Sīnā's philosophy maintains that existence is not confined to the realm of the mental or conceptual; it also possesses an external, concrete reality independent of human cognition. This stance reflects Ibn Sīnā's commitment to a realist interpretation of metaphysics, firmly rejecting any form of skepticism regarding the external manifestation of existence. Such a perspective underscores Ibn Sīnā's assertion of a direct and unambiguous correlation between the conceptual framework of existence and its empirical reality, thereby affirming the ontological continuity between the intellectual and the material domains.

The notion of quiddity occupies a pivotal position within Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical schema, serving as a crucial determinant in the modalities of existence. Quiddity, or the essence of a thing, fundamentally addresses the query of an entity's nature, delineating 'what' a thing is by virtue of the causes (ʿilla) to which it is intrinsically linked. In the absence of any causative association, quiddity assumes a passive state, characterized by non-existence. This conceptual framework posits that the transition of a contingent entity from non-existence to existence, and vice versa, is contingent upon causal influence, with causation assuming an active role in the instantiation of existence and a passive role in the eventuation of non-existence.

From this philosophical vantage point, one might infer that, according to Ibn Sīnā, non-existence is essentially the result of the absence of causation. This introduces the concept of non-existence having a meta-cause, defined by the absence of a direct cause. Consequently, it can be derived that the essence or quiddity of an entity, in isolation, does not inherently dictate its existence or non-existence. Instead, the presence or absence of a causative agent plays a critical role in determining the existential status of an entity. This insight underscores the intricate relationship between essence, causation, and existence within Ibn Sīnā's

[10] Ibn Sīnā, *ibid*, 27.

metaphysical framework, highlighting the nuanced interplay between these fundamental concepts in shaping the ontological realities of beings.

In *al-Madhāl* part of *al-Shifa*, Ibn Sīnā articulates a nuanced conceptualization of quiddity, delineating it into two distinct categories: the quiddity manifest in external beings and the quiddity inherent in mental constructs. This bifurcation engenders a tripartite analytical framework for understanding quiddity: firstly, as an intrinsic essence unaffiliated with the modalities of mental or external existence and unbound by any adjuncts; secondly, as embodied within the external realm, where it is subject to accidental properties; and thirdly, as a conceptual entity within the intellect, associated with logical predicates.[11]

Despite these diverse categorizations, a unifying theme across all manifestations of quiddity is its representation as a potential state of being. This perspective is crucial in distinguishing between the concepts of existence and quiddity, particularly in the context of contingent beings—entities for whom existence and non-existence are equally plausible. The crux of this distinction lies in the fact that for such beings, existence does not inherently form a part of their quiddity. Within this theoretical framework, it becomes apparent that both mental and external entities, when considered as mere possibilities, lack an intrinsic necessity for existence, thereby challenging the identification of a causal principle that would mandate their actualization.

Ibn Sīnā, through this sophisticated modal system, delineates a profound separation between essence (quiddity) and existence, a distinction that is especially pertinent in the analysis of contingent beings. This foundational dichotomy underpins his metaphysical inquiry, offering a comprehensive lens through which the ontological statuses of entities can be explored, predicated on the critical separation of their essence from their existence. This approach not only accentuates the complexity of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics but also underscores his contribution to the evolution of modal logic and ontology.

2. Modality: Necessary, Contingent, Impossible

Ibn Sīnā's exploration of the modalities of existence is a cornerstone of his metaphysical inquiry, particularly in the context of demonstrating the existence of God (isbāt al-wājib). His conceptualization of God as *wājib al-wujūd* (Necessary Existence) underpins this investigation. Ibn Sīnā posits that the modal

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[11] İbn Sînâ, *Kitabu'ş-Şifâ: Mantığa Giriş*, trans. Ömer Türker (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2006), 8; see also. Hacı Kaya, "İbn Sînâ'da Varlık-Mahiyet Ayrımının Epistemolojik Bağlamı: Epistemological Context of Entity-Essence Distinction in Avicenna", *Beytülhikme: An International Journal of Philosophy,* III/2 (2013), 53-65-65.

concepts of necessity, contingency, and impossibility are foundational and primary, asserting that their intrinsic nature defies further reduction or explication into more fundamental terms.[12] According to Ibn Sīnā, the emergence of any entity into existence must be situated within these three distinct modal frameworks.

Furthermore, Ibn Sīnā contends that the modal concepts are inherently undefinable, arguing that one cannot explicate the nature of contingency without recourse to the concept of necessity. This predicament is distinct from the challenge of defining existence (wujūd) itself, which stems from its status as the most general of concepts. In contrast, the modality categories elude definition due to their relational and referential character. Within the passages 82 and 83 of the *al-Ilāhiyāt* section of *al-Shifā*, Ibn Sīnā elaborates on this issue, suggesting that any attempt to define these modal categories would inherently adopt a referential logic:

"It is very difficult for us to describe the state of the necessary, the contingent and the impossible in real terms. We can only describe them by means of signs. All the words that have reached you from the predecessors about the definitions of these terms almost lead to a circular reasoning. For when they wanted to define the contingent, they included either the necessary or the impossible in its definition, and [it seems] there is no other way..."[13]

Although we encounter certain dilemmas regarding the concepts of modality, Ibn Sīnā nevertheless tries to get rid of these dilemmas. He states that of the three concepts in question, the one worthy of being conceived first is the necessary (wājib).[14] This point can be considered one of the original aspects of the philosopher. In the continuation of the relevant passage, Ibn Sīnā develops an epistemic optimism about existence, arguing that existence is better known than non-existence, and that the necessity is a form of emphasis of existence. Therefore, from this point of view, prioritizing the concept of the necessary as the basic ground of modality seems to be a very rational attitude both epistemically (because as existence is reinforced, the possibility of obtaining knowledge will increase and,

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[12] İbn Sînâ, *Kitabu'ş-Şifâ: el-İlâhiyât*, trans. Ekrem Demirli - Ömer Türker (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2004), passage 82; M.S. Zarepour, *Necessary Existence and Monotheism: An Avicennian Account of Islamic Concept of Divine Unity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022) , 13; Allen Back, "Avicenna's 'Conception of the Modalities'", *Vivarium* 30/2 (1992), 217-255. Also see Erdem for a more comprehensive discussion regarding the modality in İbn Sina and his appropriation within the *tajrid* tradition. Engin Erdem, "Tecrîd Geleneğinde Zorunlu Varlık'ın Zorunluluğu Tartışması: İsfehânî, Kuşçu ve Devvânî", *Beytulhikme An International Journal of Philosophy* 11/11:2 (2022), 659-682.

[13] Ibn Sînâ, *el-İlâhiyât*, 82,83. Al-Tūsī follows somewhat similar approach. For this, see also. Erdem, *ibid*, 662.

[14] *Ibid*, 84.

in Ibn Sīnā's words, "existence can be known through itself and non-existence can be known through existence in any way"[15]) and ontologically (because contingents exist depending on the necessary by their essence) and finally metaphysically.

When Ibn Sīnā's conception of modality is compared with Aristotle's, it is noteworthy that there are minor but important differences in the systems of the two philosophers. For example, while Aristotle's understanding of modality has only a temporal character, Ibn Sīnā's understanding of modality is closely related to the aforementioned mental-external existence, and existence-essence distinctions. For example, in Aristotle, 'necessary' corresponds to 'always', while 'impossible' to never, and finally 'possible' to 'sometimes.'[16] However, Ibn Sīnā does not reduce modal logical operators and temporal operators to each other. To give a simple example, according to Ibn Sīnā, a contingent can be contingent in terms of its essence; and be necessitated by others. Simply put, when something contingent merges into existence, the contingent necessarily exists. This shows that Ibn Sīnā does not have temporal necessitation in mind. Rather he understands it as ontological necessity. Further, there could be such cases in which things do not exist in time in any way possible; however, their existence continues mentally (in a timeless way). Therefore, temporality is not required. This idea is evidence that Ibn Sīnā interprets modality in a way that differs from Aristotle through the distinction between existence-essence and mental-external existence. Thus, it is noteworthy that Ibn Sīnā has an atemporal understanding of modality in addition to temporal modality. Finally, it is noteworthy that Ibn Sīnā further expands the framework of necessary existence. There are some things that are necessary by themselves (li-ḏhātihi), while other things are necessitated by something other than themselves (bi-ğhayrihi). When the two states of existence are taken into account, necessity is also compartmentalized. All this indicates that Ibn Sīnā developed a unique understanding of modality. Recent studies have shown that Ibn Sīnā's understanding of modality is largely determinative of current metaphysical debates due to its simplicity and high explanatory power.[17]

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[15] *Ibid*, 84.

[16] Jaakko Hintikka, *Time and Necessity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 92-5. For a more detailed explanation of modality and its relation to God's nature and attributes, see Reçber. Mehmet Sait Reçber, *Necessity, Logic and God* (King's College, University of London, PhD Dissertation, 1998). Overall, in the context of providing an argument from a modal necessity, it is important to see the implications of theistic conceptualism and activism. For this, see. Thomas V. Morris - Christopher Menzel, "Absolute Creation", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 23/4 (1986), 353-362.

[17] Jon McGinnis, "The Ultimate Why Question: Ibn Sīnā on Why God Is Absolutely Necessary", *The Ultimate Why Question: Why Is There Anything at All Rather Than Nothing Whatsoever?*, ed. J Wippel (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 65-83, p. 69-70; see

The modality presented by Ibn Sīnā reflects an understanding of metaphysics that takes into account the limits of the mind and consistently determines the framework of the speculative intellect. His arguments in favour of God's existence are also based on this understanding. The relevant arguments will be analyzed below.

3. Arguments for the Existence of God

In the preceding discourse concerning the concept of modality, it becomes evident that Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical framework aligns with the principles of metaphysical realism.[18] To elucidate, when one undertakes an analysis delineating the juxtaposition of mental existence against external reality in absolute terms, it is discernible that the essence of existence is autonomous, transcending the contingent existence of the perceiving subject. It is posited that Ibn Sīnā's assertion-the axiomatic recognition of the existence of an entity-underscores the irrefutable demarcation between the domains of mental and external realities. Such a delineation inherently suggests that the realm of mental existence cannot be simplistically conflated with that of external reality, nor can the latter be subsumed under the former. Consequently, this nuanced stance appears to be Ibn Sīnā's methodological attempt to circumnavigate the pitfalls of excessive skepticism or the philosophical inclination towards solipsism within the study of ontology.

Furthermore, it is tenable to contend that Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical doctrine remains robust against the critiques typically leveled at Cartesian metaphysics, particularly within the context of discussions surrounding *isbāt al-wājib* (the affirmation of the Necessary Being). This resilience is attributed to Ibn Sīnā's conviction that there is an intrinsic unity between existence and essence within the concept of necessary existence. The dilemma known as *taḥsīl al-ḥāṣıl* (the procurement of the already obtained) engendered by the dichotomy between existence and essence in contingent entities does not afflict the notion of Necessary Existence. Hence, in the discourse on the Necessary Being, the inquiry arises: how is 'existence' conceptualized as a predicate of the necessary? Ibn Sīnā posits that existence is apprehended as a notion that embodies various gradations. These gradations, or degrees, delineate the distinction between necessary and contingent beings, a concept referred to as *tashkīk al-wujūd* (the gradation of existence).[19]

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also. M.S. Zarepour, "Ibn Sīnā on the Nature of Mathematical Objects", *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review* 55/3 (2016), 511-536.

[18] For a detailed discussion on realism and anti-realism debate, see. J. T. M. Miller, *Metaphysical Realism and Anti-Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022). However, it is imperative to state that Ibn Sīnā is realist in the strongest sense possible.

[19] For a detailed explanation, see. Mehmet Ata Az, *İlahi Basitlik Bağlamında Tanrı'nın*

The analysis presently engaged offers a nuanced articulation of the intrinsic similarities and distinctions between necessary and contingent entities within the existential spectrum, highlighting a universal aspect of existence juxtaposed with a marked differentiation in the realm of potentiality. This universal aspect of existence, notwithstanding its ubiquity, is sharply contrasted by a distinct divergence in the qualitative and quantitative attributes of existence when examined within the purview of specialized existence. In this analysis, the parity of any entity with the Necessary Being is unequivocally non-existent.[20] Ibn Sīnā's discourse on this matter provides profound insights, particularly in the light of his argumentation which distinctively navigates through the critiques posed by Immanuel Kant towards the concept of necessary existence in modern philosophical inquiry.[21]

Ibn Sīnā posits that the very fabric of existence is contingent upon the premise of necessary existence, thereby asserting an ontological fundamentality that existence, in its essence, cannot be devoid of the Necessary Being. This stance elucidates that the attribute of existence does not supplement the essence of the Necessary Being but is rather intrinsic to it, establishing the Necessary Being as the *mabda al-Ishtiqāq* (the primordial source of all being). This perspective not only foregrounds Ibn Sīnā's contribution to metaphysical discourse but also accentuates the distinctiveness of his argument in the face of Kantian skepticism, asserting a foundational ontological principle that existence, in its most elemental form, necessitates the acknowledgment of necessary existence. Although Ibn Sina and Kant agree that the copula 'exists' in contingent beings is analytic (probably), Ibn Sīnā differs from Kant in the sense that the proposition 'the necessary being 'exists' is metaphorical (majāzī, since it cannot be imagined otherwise) for Ibn Sīnā, and that the argument applied to contingent beings cannot be applied to the necessary being. As a matter of fact, contingent beings need necessary existent in order to exist, and in a series of $_{...-3,-2,-1},D^0_{1,2,3}$, modal worlds in which the Necessary Existence is imagined not to exist (if the negative worlds are taken as negative immaterial worlds to which the cause is not attached and the positive contingent worlds to which the cause is attached), it follows that there cannot be any existence.

Bilinebilirliği (Ankara: Otto Yayıncılık, 2016), 335ff.

[20] Ibn Sīnā, *The Metaphysics of The Healing*, trans. Michael E. Marmura (Provo (Ut): Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 31; see also Ibn Sīnā's commentator al-Ṭūsī's argument for the impossibility of an actual infinity and his explanation of the related issue. Nasîruddin Tûsî, "Risâle fî İsbâti'l-Vâcib", trans. Parviz Morewedge, *The Metaphysics of Tusi* (Binghamton: SSIPS, 1992), 3.

[21] Kant states: "All alleged examples are without exception drawn exclusively from judgements, not from things and their existence". Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer - Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A594/B622.

This is because, according to Ibn Sīnā, existence can only emerge from the Necessary Being through emanation. In other words, the Necessary Being grants existence to other beings through His own existence. Consequently, the proposition that there is necessary existence cannot be an analytic proposition. Because, contrary to Kant's criticism, Ibn Sīnā starts from ontological realities, things (in general and in particular) and their existence, not from rational judgements.

In the following, I will put forward two types of arguments. The first of these is the argument of possibility through finitism, and the other is the argument considered as *burhān al-siddiqīn*. For the first argument, Ibn Sīnā sets two conditions and emphasizes that no set of objects that fulfils these two conditions can exist without a necessary being: (1) there is such a set of objects whose members are naturally ordered or can be ordered (the condition of success). (2) there is such a set of objects whose members all exist together at the same time (the condition of coexistence). According to Ibn Sīnā, all contingent, phenomenal states fall under these two conditions. Therefore, their existence (without necessary existence) is impossible. In the same way, it can be proved from this point that eternity is impossible.

3.1. Argument from Contingency Through Finitism

1. Something - let us call it 'A' - exists (the assumption based on Ibn Sīnā 's 'existence is self-evident' argument).

2. Either A is necessary in itself, or A is contingent in itself but necessitated by someone/something else (from 1, and from the modal distinction).

3. If A is necessary in itself, then there exists a necessary being.

4. If A is contingent in itself but necessary through another, then the chain of A's causal antecedents is either circular, linearly infinite, or linearly finite.

5. The chain of causal antecedents of A cannot be circular (because of the the problems of backward causality, and impossibility of transitivity).

6. If the chain of causal antecedents of A is linearly infinite, then there can be an infinite number of linear things that all coexist and exist simultaneously (from the definition of causality and the principle of the coexistence of cause and effect).

7. There cannot be an infinite number of linear things that all coexist and exist simultaneously (the principle of the impossibility of actual infinity).[22]

8. The chain of causal antecedents of A cannot be linearly infinite (from 6 and 7).

9. If A is contingent in itself but necessary through another, then the chain of causal antecedents of A is linearly finite (from 4, 5 and 8).

10. If the chain of causal antecedents of A is linearly finite, then there is a necessary being (from definitions).

11. If A is contingent in itself but necessary through another, then there is a Necessary Existent.[23]

In the following passage, I would like to offer a symbolic demonstration for this argument:

3.1.1. Demonstration I

1. $\exists A$ (A exists)

2. $A \rightarrow (Z\_A \vee (M\_A \wedge \exists B(Z\_B)))$ (If A exists, A is either necessary in itself (Z_A) or contingent (M_A) and necessitated by something else (B)

3. $Z\_A \rightarrow \exists Z$ (If A is necessary in itself then there is a necessary being (Z)

4. $M\_A \wedge \exists B(Z\_B) \rightarrow (C \vee I \vee F)$ (If A is possible and necessitated by something else, then the chain of causal antecedents of A is either circular (C), linearly infinite (I), or linearly finite (F))

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5. ¬C (the chain of causal antecedents of A cannot be circular)

6. I → ∃∞L (if the chain of causal antecedents of A is linearly infinite, an infinite number of linear things (L) can coexist and exist simultaneously)

7. ¬∃∞L (An infinite number of linear things cannot exist together and at the same time)

8. ¬I (the chain of causal antecedents of A cannot be linearly infinite)

9. M_A ∧ ∃B(Z_B) → F (if A is contingent and necessitated by something else, the chain of causal antecedents of A is linearly finite)

10. F → ∃Z (If the chain of causal antecedents of A is linearly finite, there is a necessary being (Z))

11. M_A ∧ ∃B(Z_B) → ∃Z (If A is possible but necessary by another, there is a necessary being)

12. ∃Z (Consequently, there is a Necessary Being)

3.2. The Proof of the Sincere (Burhān al-Siddiqīn)

1. Something - 'A' - exists (the assumption based on Ibn Sīnā's 'existence is self-evident' argument).

2. Either A is necessary in itself or A is contingent in itself (from 1, and the modal distinction).

3. If A is necessary in itself, then there is a necessary existent (self-evident principle).

4. If A is contingent in itself, then the sum of all contingent beings - let us call it 'B' - exists (from the Principle of Composition).

5. If B exists, either B is necessary in itself or B is contingent in itself (from the Principle of Composition).[24]

6. If B is necessary in itself, then there is a necessary existent (the principle of self-evidentiality).

7. If B is possible in itself, then there is an X that causes B (from the principle of sufficient-cause)

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[24] See Chisholm's argument for the unification principle in the context of mereological problems and other epistemological issues. R. M. Chisholm, "Parts as essential to their wholes", *Review of Metaphysics* 26 (1973), 581-603.

8. If there is an X that causes B, either X is necessary in itself or X is possible in itself (modal distinction).

9. If X is necessary in itself, then there is a necessary being (principle of self-evidentness*).

10. If X is possible in itself, then X is both part of B and contingent in itself (from 4).

11. If X is contingent in itself, then X is its own cause (from 7, 10 and the principle of transference).[25]

12. X is not its own cause (from the impossibility of running causality backwards).

13. X is not contingent in itself (from 11 and 12).

14. If there is an X which causes B, X is necessary in itself (from 8 and 13).

15. If there is an entity X that causes B, then there is a necessary entity.

(from 9 and 14).

Then;

16. If B exists, then there is a necessary being (from 5, 6, 7 and 15).[26]

3.2.1. Demonstration II

1. $\exists A$ (Something - 'A' - exists)

2. $A \rightarrow (Z\_A \lor M\_A)$ (If A exists, A must be either self-obligatory Z_A or self-contingent M_A)

3. $Z\_A \rightarrow \exists Z$ (If A is necessary in itself, then there is a necessary being Z)

4. $M\_A \rightarrow \exists B$ (If A is contingent in itself, then the sum of all contingent entities - B - exists)

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[25] For the principle of transfer see. Peter van Inwagen, *An Essay on Free Will* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 184; and Eleonore Stump - J. M. Fischer, "Transfer Principles and Moral Responsibility", *Philosophical Perspectives* 14 (2000), 47-55.

[26] Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt wa'l Tanbīhāt*, ed. S. Dunya (Cairo, 1957), IV.29 (quoted in Zarepour, 8); Mayer has provided a detailed argument, See. Toby Mayer, "Ibn Sina's 'Burhan Al-Siddiqin'", *Journal of Islamic Studies* 12/1 (2001), 18-39; However, for a more detailed version of the argument see. Zarepour, *ibid*, 43-4.

5. B → (Z_B ∨ M_B) (If B exists, either B is intrinsically necessary Z_B or B is intrinsically contingent M_B)

6. Z_B → ∃Z (If B is necessary in itself, then there is a necessary being Z)

7. M_B → ∃X (if B is contingent in itself, then there is an X that causes B)

8. X → (Z_X ∨ M_X) (If X exists, either X is intrinsically necessary Z_X or X is intrinsically contingent M_X)

9. Z_X → ∃Z (If X is necessary in itself, then there is a necessary being Z)

10. M_X → (X ⊆ B ∧ M_X) (If X is possible in itself, X is both a part of B and contingent in itself)

11. M_X → X = cause of X (if X is contingent in itself, then X is its own cause)

12. ¬(X = cause of X) (X is not its own cause)

13. ¬M_X (X is not contingent in itself)

14. X → Z_X (If there is an X that causes B, X is necessary in itself)

15. X → ∃Z (If there is an X that causes B, then there is a necessary being)

16. B → ∃Z (If B exists, there is a necessary being)

In light of the preceding expositions delineating Ibn Sīnā's philosophical justifications for the existence of a divine entity, it becomes tenable to deduce that the quintessence of divinity is predicated upon the axiom of necessary existence, culminating in the indistinguishability between divinity's existence and essence, thereby negating any bifurcation within the divine nature. Ibn Sīnā's methodological approach is twofold: initially, he endeavors to establish the existence of at least one entity characterized by necessary existence; subsequently, he seeks to demonstrate the logical impossibility of the coexistence of multiple necessary beings. Consequently, it is inferable that any attributes ascribed to the divine by Ibn Sīnā are fundamentally derived from the conceptual framework of Necessary Being.[27] Through the application of modal arguments presented herein, this discourse aims to elucidate this assertion with greater clarity.

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[27] Ibn Sīnā, *The Mataphysics of The Healing: el-Shifā: al-Ilāhiyāt*, ed. & trans. Michael E. Marmura (Provo (Ut): Brigham Young University Press, 2005), see. Book I, chapter VII.

4. Modal Collapse

Finally, let us consider whether Ibn Sīnā's argument for the simplicity of Necessary Being suffers from a modal collapse.

Let the argument for divine simplicity be formalized as follows:

4.1. Argument For DS

1. God is identical with every attribute He possesses (divine simplicity thesis)

2. Each divine attribute is identical with every other divine attribute (principle of transitive identity)

3. If all divine attributes are identical with each other, then there is only one divine attribute.

4. Therefore God has only one attribute (logically from 2 and 3)

4.1.1. Demonstration

1. $\forall N (N \in T \rightarrow N = T)$ - God (T) is identical with every attribute (N) He possesses.

2. $\forall N_1, N_2 ((N_1 \in T \wedge N_2 \in T) \rightarrow N_1 = N_2)$ - Every divine attribute (N_1) is identical with every other divine attribute (N_2).

3. $(\forall N_1, N_2 ((N_1 \in T \wedge N_2 \in T) \rightarrow N_1 = N_2)) \rightarrow \exists ! N (N \in T)$ - If all divine attributes are identical, then there is only one divine attribute.

4. $\exists ! N (N \in T)$ - God has only one attribute.

4.1.2. Argument Against DS

1. Wrath and mercy are not identical divine attributes.

2. God has divine attributes such as wrath and mercy.

3. God has the unity of being and essence.

3. Therefore, God contains non-identical qualities in His essence.

5. As long as non-identical qualities such as wrath/mercy are contained in God, they are identical (logically from 3)

Then,

6. The thesis of divine simplicity is false (logically from 2 and 3)[28]

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[28] Alvin Plantinga, *Does God Have a Nature?* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980), 26-

4.1.2.1. Demonstration I

1. ¬$I(W,M)$ (Wrath and mercy are not identical divine attributes)

2. H(G,D(W))∧H(G,D(M))$H(G,D(W))∧H(G,D(M))$ (God has divine attributes such as wrath and mercy)

3. H(G,E)$H(G,E)$ (God has the unity of being and essence)

4. Therefore, C(G,¬I(x,y))$C(G,¬I(x,y))$ for some x,y∈E$x,y∈E$ (God contains non-identical qualities in His essence)

5. As long as C(G,¬I(W,M))$C(G,¬I(W,M))$, I(W,M)$I(W,M)$ in the context of EE (logically from 3)

    The conclusion: 6. ¬S$¬S$ (The thesis of divine simplicity is false)

The general conclusion derived here is: if the identity of existence and essence is defended in Necessary Being, God must possess the above-mentioned qualities either necessarily or contingently. In both cases, a modal collapse occurs. In the first case, if God necessarily contains these qualities, the qualities must also be necessary; in the second case, if God does not necessarily contain these qualities, He must contain them contingently; in such a case (if there is existence-essence identity), God would contain contingent qualities in His necessary existence. In both cases, then, there seems to be a modal collapse.

4.1.2.2. Argument Against DS II

1. God's essence and existence are identical

2. A simple act of God is identical with His essence.

3. God's act of creation is a simple act

4. God's act of creation is identical with His essence (from

5. God exists necessarily (from the unity of being and essence)

Then,

6. God's act of creation is identical with necessity.

And as follows,

1. M = V – God's essence (M) and His Being (V) are identical.

7; See also. Timothy O'Connor, "Simplicity and Creation", *Faith and Philosophy* 16/3 (1999), 405-412; for the counter argument see. Alexander Pruss, "On Two Problems of Divine Simplicity", *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Religion* 1 (2008), 150-167.

2. B = M - A simple act of God (B) is identical to his essence.

3. Y = B - God's act of creation (Y) is a simple act.

4. Y = M - God's act of creation is identical to His essence (from 2).

5. Z = V - God exists necessarily (from the unity of being and essence).

6. Y = Z - God's act of creation is identical to necessity.

As can be seen, this counter argument also leads to a modal collapse. If Ibn Sina's thesis of the identity of existence and essence in the Necessary Being accepted, how can one respond to this modal collapse and arising problems thereof? Obviously, for the defenders of divine simplicity, it is a challenging issue. In order to solve these problems, Muslim theologians (mutakallimūn) have formulated various theories. For example, many Ashʿarites, such as al-Taftazānī (d.793/1390), unlike philosophers, do not accept the theory of divine simplicity and make a distinction between God's existence and His attributes.[29] What they argue is that these attributes are neither identical nor completely different from God's nature. This problem can perhaps be solved through Frege's distinction between meaning (Sinn) and reference (Bedeutung). Frege gives two propositions:

(p) The morning star is the morning star.

(q) The morning star is the evening star[30]

If we explicate these propositions as follows:

Proposition p is a=a, analytic and a priori; it does not provide information beside conceptual one. On the other hand, proposition q is a=b, synthetic and a posteriori; it provides information. However, both the morning star and the evening star refer to the same planet, namely the planet Venus. Frege's solution to this situation is that although the morning star and the evening star have different meanings, they have the same referent.[31] In both cases, what we refer to is the

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[29] For a detalied explanation, see. Nazif Muhtaroğlu, "Plantinga and Ash'arites on Divine Simplicity", *Kader* 18/2 (2020), 488-499, 491.

[30] Gottlob Frege, "On Sense and Reference", trans. M. Black, *Translation From Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*, ed. P. Geach - M. Black (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), 56-78, 67. One could also apply similiar approach to many issues within Islamic analytical theology. One example is to understand seem-to-be contradictory propositions within the dialetheism. In dialetheism, one could hold that certain metaphysical and semantic contradictions are equally true. The problem of divine siplicity then could be read thtough this methodology. It is, of couse, needless to say that one also need to be aware of where to start and end such reasoing. In other words, dialetheism does not vindicate every contradiction. For an application of dialetheic logic in Islamic theology see Abbas' PhD dissertation. Ahsan Abbas, "Islamic Contradictory Theology", University of Birmingham (2021).

[31] Edward Feser, *Five Proofs of the Existence of God* (San Francisco: Ignatus Press, 2017), 77.

planet Venus, but the difference is how we express it. The morning star is the last planet seen before sunrise, while the evening star is the first planet seen after sunset.

Frege's distinction between *Sinn* (meaning) and *Bedeutung* (reference) offers a useful analogy to resolve this issue. Just as the terms "morning star" and "evening star" refer to the same celestial object (Venus), God's attributes could be understood as different conceptual expressions (Sinn) of a single underlying reality (Bedeutung), i.e., His essence. The distinction between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung* helps clarify that while we can speak of God's attributes in various ways (knowledge, power, etc.), they all refer to the same, undivided divine reality. The attributes are not separate entities but different perspectives through which human intellect grasps aspects of God's essence by analogy (at least in principle), much like how Venus is perceived differently based on the time of day.

In terms of solving the modal collapse issue, this analogy helps by showing that the multiplicity of God's attributes does not introduce a real multiplicity into God's essence. Rather, it reflects the limitations of human language and conceptualization. We name and categorize these attributes based on their relational function to the created order, much as we name Venus based on its appearance in the morning or evening sky. The multiplicity lies not in God but in our conceptual framework.

Furthermore, by employing Frege's framework, one could argue that God's knowledge, for example, while conceptually distinct from His power, is not metaphysically different from His essence. The issue of modal collapse is thus sidestepped because the distinction between possibility and necessity remains intact at the level of created things, while God remains a simple, undivided unity at the level of His own being.

Now keeping this in mind, let's turn to Ibn Sina:

Within the discourse delineated above, it is articulated that Ibn Sīnā conceptualizes existence as embodying variegated degrees of manifestation. From an analytical perspective, the assertion of an indistinguishable unity between existence and essence within the Necessary Being necessitates a reevaluation of divine actions such as creation, cognition, wrath, and mercy. These actions presuppose the existence of causative factors distinct from the Necessary Being, thereby engendering entities characterized by a dualism of existence and essence. Despite a shared foundational reference to 'wujūd' (existence) within the ambit of general existence, the differentiation arises in the nuanced interpretations of essence (Sinn) attributed to their specialized existence.

Accordingly, it can be postulated that a harmonious existence-essence unity is intrinsic to the divine, wherein the general existence of the deity is comprehensible, albeit the specifics of the divine's specialized existence remain epistemologically elusive. Hence, the discussions surrounding modal collapse are pertinent solely to the realm of general existence and do not extend to the domain of specialized existence. Consequently, Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical framework eludes conventional categorization within both Aristotelian and Cartesian philosophical paradigms, despite his association with the Peripatetic school. The unique conceptualization of *tashkīk al-wujūd* (degrees of being) within his philosophy distinguishes his approach from these established metaphysical models.

Given this context, I advocate for the exploration of Ibn Sīnā's notion of gradational existence as a potential methodological tool. This framework may offer innovative solutions or at least provide a protective stance against the challenges posed by the modal collapse argument. Thus, it is imperative to engage with Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics not through the lens of Aristotelian or Cartesian traditions but by acknowledging the distinctiveness of his philosophical contributions, particularly concerning the gradation of existence.

Conclusion

Throughout this article, I have tried to show that Ibn Sīnā's arguments for the existence of God, particularly within his intricate metaphysical framework, present a profound and compelling exploration of the philosophy of religion. His approach, most notably articulated through the what is known as the Proof of the Sincere (Burhān al-Siddiqīn), posits the Necessity Being whose essence and existence are identical and thus there would not be a modal distinction in His Nature. This proposition, absence of modal distinction, stands as a cornerstone of his argument for the existence of a Necessary Being, characterized by a seamless unity of essence and existence. The coherence and depth of these arguments reveal Ibn Sīnā's sophisticated engagement with metaphysical principles, transcending the bounds of both Aristotelian and Cartesian thought.

Furthermore, it is also argued that another original contribution of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical system is philosopher's distinction between general and special existence. This differentiation is crucial in addressing the complex issue of divine simplicity, which posits that God's attributes and essence are indistinguishable from His existence. While this concept strengthens the argument for a Necessary Being, it also introduces the potential for modal collapse—a scenario where the distinctions between possible states of affairs are nullified. Modal collapse is a significant challenge because it implies that all possible states

are reduced to a single actuality, thereby undermining the diversity and contingency inherent in creation.

To navigate this philosophical quandary and to offer a solution, I have argued that Ibn Sīnā employment of the theory of *tashkīk al-wujūd*, or the gradation of existence can be helpful since the theory suggests that existence manifests in various degrees of intensity and perfection, allowing for a hierarchical structure of being. By differentiating between general existence, which is shared by all beings, and special existence, which pertains to the unique characteristics of individual entities, Ibn Sīnā provides a framework that can accommodate the diversity of creation without compromising neither the unity of the nor the perfection of Necessary Being. Therefore, I suggest that Ibn Sīnā's theology can also be seen as perfect-being-theology.

Apart from the issues above, moreover, Ibn Sīnā's concept of modality, encompassing the necessary, contingent, and impossible, plays a pivotal role in his metaphysical inquiry. He asserts that these modal concepts are fundamental. It is also true that they form the basis of all existential discourse. The necessary (wājib al-wujūd) refers to that which must exist by its very nature, while the contingent (mumkūn) and the impossible (mustahīl) refer to entities whose existence is dependent on external causes or is inherently contradictory, respectively. By grounding his arguments in these modal distinctions, Ibn Sīnā offers a robust ontological foundation for the existence of God. However, one can observe that possible abstract or concrete entities are reducible to each other while necessary and impossible entities are not. Nevertheless, since the existence of impossible entities would by the very definition end in logical fallacy, the only irreducible entity can be seen as the Necessary Being.

In addition to these, Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical realism, which emphasizes the autonomous nature of existence, further strengthens his arguments. He posits that existence itself is a self-evident concept, not derived from empirical observation but from an innate understanding within the human intellect. This perspective aligns with his belief that the Necessary Being's existence is evident through the very nature of existence itself, independent of contingent entities. This intrinsic understanding of existence allows Ibn Sīnā to bypass the skepticism often associated with Cartesian metaphysics, presenting a more direct and compelling case for the existence of a Necessary Being.

On the other hand, I have tried to demonstrate that Ibn Sīnā's argumentation is his treatment of the identity of existence and essence in the Necessary Being, while philosophically elegant, raises concerns about modal collapse. If God's existence and essence are identical, then it becomes challenging

to maintain the distinctions between different divine attributes and divine actions. This issue is particularly acute when considering attributes such as mercy and wrath, which, if identical in God, would imply a lack of differentiation within the divine nature. To address this, I have argued that Ibn Sīnā's distinction between general and special existence becomes essential. By proposing that the general existence of God is comprehensible, while the specifics of divine attributes remain epistemologically distinct, Ibn Sīnā offers a pathway to avoid the pitfalls of modal collapse.

Furthermore, I maintain that the application of Frege's distinction between meaning (Sinn) and reference (Bedeutung) can augment the clarity of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical propositions. Frege's theory posits that different terms can refer to the same entity while maintaining distinct meanings. This distinction is particularly useful in addressing the problem of divine simplicity and modal collapse. For instance, the terms 'morning star' and 'evening star' both refer to the planet Venus but convey different meanings. Similarly, Ibn Sīnā's attributes of God can be understood as referring to the same divine essence while maintaining distinct conceptual meanings. This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of divine simplicity, preserving the unity of God's essence while acknowledging the diversity of divine attributes.

Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical contributions also extend to his critique of Aristotelian and Cartesian paradigms. While influenced by Aristotle, Ibn Sīnā diverges significantly by proposing a more dynamic and evolutionary metaphysical system. His framework does not merely inherit Aristotelian principles but redefines them, integrating a more comprehensive and flexible understanding of existence and essence. This redefinition allows for a metaphysical system that is not confined to naturalistic presuppositions, instead establishing a foundation for other scientific and philosophical inquiries.

In addition, Ibn Sīnā's engagement with the concept of modality reveals important differences from Aristotelian thought. Aristotle's modality is primarily temporal, whereas Ibn Sīnā's modality encompasses a broader ontological scope. For example, while Aristotle equates necessity with temporal perpetuity, Ibn Sīnā views necessity in terms of ontological independence. This distinction allows Ibn Sīnā to construct a metaphysical system that accommodates both temporal and atemporal entities, further enriching his philosophical discourse.

The implications of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical system extend to contemporary philosophical debates. His arguments for the existence of God, grounded in the necessity of a being with an indistinguishable essence and existence, challenge modern critiques of divine simplicity. By employing his

distinction between general and special existence, along with the theory of gradation in existential meaning, Ibn Sīnā offers a viable solution to the problem of modal collapse. This framework provides a robust foundation for understanding the nature of the divine and its relation to creation, underscoring the enduring relevance of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical insights.

Moreover, Ibn Sīnā's methodological approach, which integrates metaphysical principles with logical rigor, exemplifies a sophisticated philosophical inquiry that transcends historical and cultural boundaries. His contributions to the philosophy of religion, particularly in articulating a coherent and persuasive argument for the existence of God, continue to resonate in contemporary discussions. The depth and clarity of his metaphysical system offer valuable perspectives for addressing complex theological and philosophical challenges, advocating for a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of existence and divinity.

In conclusion, Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical exploration of the existence of God, through his unique arguments and modal framework, significantly contributes to the discourse on divine simplicity and the problem of modal collapse. His distinction between general and special existence, along with the theory of gradation, provides a robust foundation for addressing these philosophical challenges. The continued study of Ibn Sīnā's work reveals the enduring applicability of his ideas in modern metaphysical and theological discussions, emphasizing the need for a nuanced appreciation of his contributions beyond traditional frameworks.

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