

# Ibn Sina's Concept of *Wājib al-Wujūd*

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## Abstract

This paper is an exposition of Ibn Sina's concept *Wājib al-Wujūd* (Necessary Existence), a concept of God derived from or modified out of Aristotle's natural theology. Since it deviates from Aristotle's philosophy, it considerably distinct from the Greek philosophical tradition. Unlike Aristotle whose theological framework departs from physic, Ibn Sina delineates the concept of God from pure metaphysical approach consisting of ontological and cosmological arguments. From this delineation Ibn Sina has successfully solved Aristotle's problem of God knowledge and change, and that is by positing that God knew something other than Himself but it does not imply change in His essence since His knowledge is unbounded by time. Be that as it may, this philosophical concept is subject to further examination from theological perspectives. However, the term *Wājib al-Wujūd* is a key concept for the explication of the existence of God, but the term itself is not assumption, but the goal to be investigated. Although Necessary Existence is only ontological concept it is used in his various way of proving God's existence, whether in cosmological argument or other argument. Interestingly, since all depend on the key concept of 'necessity', the proof that begins from the causality does not end in the First Cause but on *Wājib al-Wujūd*, an end that seems to be incompatible with the beginning.

Tulisan ini adalah sebuah penjelasan tentang konsep *Wājib al-Wujud* Ibnu Sina, yakni sebuah konsep tentang Allah yang bersumber dari teologi natural Aristoteles. Karena menyimpang dari filsafat Aristoteles, maka konsep ini jauh berbeda dari tradisi filsafat Yunani. Tidak seperti Aristoteles yang teologinya berangkat dari kerangka fisik, Ibnu Sina menggambarkan konsep Allah dari pendekatan metafisik murni yang terdiri dari argumen ontologis dan kosmologis. Dari penggambaran ini Ibnu Sina telah berhasil memecahkan masalah Aristoteles

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tentang pengetahuan dan perubahan Allah, dan itu adalah dengan memposisikan bahwa Allah mengetahui sesuatu selain diri-Nya sendiri, tetapi bukan berarti perubahan dalam hakikat-Nya karena pengetahuan-Nya tak terbatas oleh waktu. Itu dikarenakan, konsep filosofis ini tergantung pada penelitian lebih lanjut yang berangkat dari perspektif teologis. Bagaimanapun, istilah *Wajib al-Wujud* merupakan kata kunci untuk menjelaskan keberadaan Tuhan, tetapi istilah ini sendiri bukanlah asumsi, melainkan tujuan yang akan diselidiki. Kendati demikian *Wajib al-wujud* hanya merupakan konsep ontologis yang dalam berbagai caranya digunakan untuk membuktikan keberadaan Tuhan, apakah dalam argumen kosmologis atau argumen lainnya. Menariknya, karena semua tergantung pada konsep kunci ‘wajib’, bukti yang dimulai dari kausalitas tidak berakhir di Penyebab Pertama melainkan pada *Wajib al-Wujud*, sebuah akhir yang tampaknya tidak sesuai dengan awal.

**Keywords:** *Necessary existence, possible existence, ontological arguments, cosmological argument, nature of God.*

## Introduction

**W***ājib al-Wujūd* is a term coined by Ibn Sina to establish the proof for the existence of God. Since this concept is of Ibn Sina’s origin, Davidson regards him as the first philosopher who employed the concept of necessary existence to prove the existence of God.<sup>1</sup> It is a fixed expression and becomes the core of Ibn Sina’s theology (*Ilāhiyyāt*) as he reiterates his elaboration in his various treatises.<sup>2</sup> Netton mentions Ibn Sina’s proof for the existence of *Wājib al-Wujūd* are four: metaphysical proof from necessity, proof from movements, proof from causality and proof from ontology.<sup>3</sup> But the proof from movement is almost the same as the proof from

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<sup>1</sup> Davidson, Herbert A, “Avicennas’s Proof of the Existence of God as a Necessarily Existent Being” , in *Islamic Philosophical Theology*, ed. Parviz Morewedge, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1979), p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> His long elaboration is to be found in his *Kitab al-Najat*; his brief and somewhat obscure presentation is in the *Isharat wa al-Tanbihat*. The full account of *Wajib al-Wujud* is in *al-Shifa’* and *Danish Nama*, in which he tends to be only concentrating on the nature of *Wajib al-Wujud*.

<sup>3</sup> Netton, Ian Richard, *Allah Transcendent*, (London: Routledge, 1989).

causality. Morewedge<sup>4</sup> finds out that the concept of *Wajib al-Wujud* has been used in three ways: ontological, theological and phenomenological principles. Morewedge does not mention cosmological principles for he found that it is analyzed within the context of ontological principle. However, here I shall concentrate on the concept of *Wajib al-Wujud* based on ontological principles that will include cosmological principle with additional discussion of His nature.<sup>5</sup>

### Ontological Principles

*Ontological* argument is an argument in the realm of thought without assuming the actual existence of anything. It is notable as being purely *a priori* as an attempt to prove the existence of God without using any contingent premise. According to Davidson, in the history of ontological proof, the term *necessary being* is used in two senses: a) Necessary being in the sense of a being, whose existence is established by *a priori*, logical necessity. b) Necessary being in the sense of a being that exists through itself, whose essence contains sufficient reason for its existence.<sup>6</sup> *Wajib al-Wujud* in Ibn Sina's theology is logical necessity based on an analysis of the concept of God's nature in so far as the essence of God in that concept contains sufficient reason of His existence.

In this principle Ibn Sina examines the *Wajib al-Wujud* from the existence itself, by considering the condition (*hal*) of being. Ibn Sina established the existence of the *Wajib al-Wujud* from the consideration of existence in general. This is quite different from the other general proof for the existence of God like Aristotle; for example, who considers only one segment of existence, which is God's creation and effect, namely motion. Although Ibn Sina's concept is still within the Aristotelian tradition, which "examine the existent *qua* existent and what belongs to it by virtue of itself",<sup>7</sup> he brilliantly applied it in

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<sup>4</sup> Morewedge, Parviz, Morewedge, Parviz, *The Metaphysics of Avicenna* (Ibn Sina), A critical translation-commentary and analysis of the fundamental argument in Avicenna's *Metaphysica* in the *Danish Namai, 'ala'i*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), See translator commentary pp. 229.

<sup>5</sup> For the difference between ontological and cosmological argument, See Simon Blackburn, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, (USA: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 85; 269.

<sup>6</sup> Davidson, Herbert A, "Avicennas's Proof", p. 165.

<sup>7</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IV.1.1003a20-21. Cf. Ibn Sina, *al-Shifa': al-Ilahiyyat*, vol.1, eds. Ibrahim Madhkur, Qanawati, Said Zayd, (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-'Ammah li Syu'un al-Matabi' al-Amiriyya, 1960), p.13.

different way, that is by limiting his examination only from metaphysical principle drawn from metaphysics. In contrast, the proof for the existence of God in Aristotle's theology is drawn largely from the argument of *Physics*.<sup>8</sup> For this reason Ibn Sina claimed that his method is more certain and more exalted (أوثق و اشرف).<sup>9</sup>

The distinction of Ibn Sina's proof from that of Aristotle is manifest. Aristotle's proof starts from a set of physical principles, mainly motion, while motion in place underlies all other kinds of change.<sup>10</sup> Everything moved have the cause of their motions outside themselves;<sup>11</sup> nothing can maintain itself in motion unless it is continuously moved by an agent;<sup>12</sup> only circular motion is continuous and eternal;<sup>13</sup> and only an infinite force can maintain the heavens in motion for an infinite time.<sup>14</sup> From all those principles Aristotle came to his final analysis that there must exist the unmoved mover, which is the only cause of the motion in the universe.<sup>15</sup> Here the existence of God is identified from the physical phenomena and drawn from physical principles. Ibn Sina, in contrast, does not start his proof from physical phenomena, but from the very existence of the universe. He left aside all the physical argument leading up to Aristotle Unmoved Mover and begins with a fresh concept by analyzing the existent of necessity or as he call is *Wājib al-Wujūd* (Necessary Existent). This, certainly, requires less premises and, as Ibn Sina claimed, more certain.

As we have mentioned above that Ibn Sina examines the necessary existence from metaphysical principles, now he begins with the statement that primary concepts cannot truly be defined.<sup>16</sup> Definition in this sense refers to Aristotelian logic, which is formed from *genus* and *a specific difference* already known. Since the primary

<sup>8</sup> See Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, "The Nature of God in Aristotle's Natural Theology", *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization, TSAQAFAH*, vol.4, no.1 Zulq'adah 1428, pp. 39-54, Darussalam Institute of Islamic Studies.

<sup>9</sup> Ibn Sina, *al-Isharat wa al-Tanbihat*, ed. Sualyman Dunya, Dar al-Ma'arif, Cairo, 1958, p.146.

<sup>10</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, VIII, p.7.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p.5.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p.6.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p.8.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Sina, *Al-Shifa'*, p.35. وقد يعسر علينا ان نعرف حال الواجب والممكن والممتنع بالتعريف الخفوق

concepts like *existence* and *thing* are not subsumed under anything better known, they are not definable.<sup>17</sup> The *necessary*, *possible* and *impossible* are of primary concepts and therefore cannot be defined and made known in a true sense. But they, in fact, imprinted in soul in a primary fashion.<sup>18</sup>

Since the primary concepts are not definable, the definition constructed by philosophers, in the eye of Ibn Sina, leads to vicious circle. The possible is defined as either necessary or impossible, and the necessary is either possible or impossible, while the possible is either necessary or possible. However, Ibn Sina tries to clarify them in ostensible definition. The impossible, is that which is not possible to exist, or that which is necessarily not to be; the necessary is that which is impossible not to be or not possible not to be. The possible is that which is not impossible to be or not to be.<sup>19</sup> This is the only possible way to define, but in fact not in Ibn Sina's standard.

However, although the primary concepts cannot be defined from anything better known, Ibn Sina find a way to explain to those who do not have them imprinted in the soul. That is by understanding the denotation of the words and by directing attention and following the speaker's intention.<sup>20</sup> Among these three concepts (*necessary*, *possible* and *impossible*) the priority should be with the necessary. It is because necessary "signifies certainty of existence"<sup>21</sup> and existence is better known than the non-existence (*'adam*) as it is known by itself, while the non-existence is known, in some way, by existence. By this way the existence play role like, so to speak, the better known thing, from which anything else can be described. Accordingly, if the necessary is signifies certainty, and existence is better known than non-existence, the Necessary existent by reason of itself is the final result.

Now from the primary concept of necessary and possible, Ibn Sina turns to apply them to necessary existent being and possible existent being. The explication runs as follows: Necessary existent being is being that when it is assumed not to exist an impossibility

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 35.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p. 28.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 35-36

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. 29. . ما يدل به عليها من الالفاظ -- منبها علي ما يريد القائل و يذهب به .

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p. 36. الواجب يدل علي تأكد الوجود

result. The possible existent being is a being that when it is assumed not to exist or to exist no impossibility will be the results.<sup>22</sup> I shall quote the argument in full.

أن الواجب الوجود هو الموجود الذي متي فرض غير موجود عرض منه محال،  
و أن الممكن الوجود هو الذي متي فرض غير موجود أو موجود لم يعرض منه محال.  
ثم أن الواجب الوجود قد يكون واجبا بذاته و قد لا يكون بذاته. أما الذي هو  
واجب الوجود بذاته فهو الذي لذاته لا لشيء آخر، أي شيء كان، يلزم محال  
من فرض عدمه. أما الواجب الوجود لا بذاته فهو الذي لو وضع شيء مما ليس  
هو صار واجب الوجود.<sup>23</sup>

The Necessary existence is something that cannot not exist because of itself and not of anything else, while the possible existence is something that can become necessary existence because of something other than itself. Ibn Sina gives the illustration for the latter category from the combustion that is necessarily existent because of the occurrence of contact between fire and inflammable material; and from 'four' that is necessarily existent when we assume two plus two. The logical consequence comes up from the premise that if there is necessary existence by reason of other then there must be possible existent by reason of itself. Therefore, the result would be three categories: a) necessary existence by reason of itself b) the necessary existence by reason of another and c) the possibly existence by reason of itself.<sup>24</sup> The necessary existence by reason of itself is the necessary being in the sense of that which exists through itself and has its essence the sufficient reason of its existence. The necessary existence by reason of another is the same as the category of thing having physical necessity. The latter indicates that Ibn Sina relates

<sup>22</sup> Ibn Sina, *Kitab al-Najat*, ed. Majid Fakhry, (Beirut: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadida, n.d), p.261.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 261

<sup>24</sup> From cosmological perspective Nasr put b) and c) under the category of contingent being (*mumkinat*). This is divided into two classes: 1) Those that are necessary in the sense that they could not not be. They are contingent by themselves but receive from the Necessary Existence the quality of being necessary. These being are substance, like intelligible and angelic substance. 2) Those that are only contingent, which is composed bodies of the sublunary region which into being and pass away. See Nasr, S.H. *Islamic Cosmological Doctrine*, (Harvard: Thames and Hudson, 1978), p. 199.

the necessity with the actual existence rather than the necessary existence. Therefore, it is clear that *the necessary actual existent being* can be categorized into two: that which is necessary by virtue of itself and that which necessary by virtue of another.

The possibly existent does not actually exist unless rendered necessary by something else; and on the contrary the necessarily existent is every actually existing thing, including whatever occurs in the physical, such as combustion, four and the like. The possibly existent can enter the domain of the actual existence only if a factor other than itself comes with existence. During the present of this factor, the existence of the possibly existent being become necessary.<sup>25</sup> In other words, during the time the possible existent actually exists, its existence is necessary, and during the time it does not exist, its existence is impossible. However, the necessity and impossibility are conditioned, that is by the presence or the absence of an external condition which necessitate its existence or nonexistence. The argument for the determination of necessary, possible and impossible with regard to its essence is related to that condition. The argument is:

If every being is considered with respect to its essence, it is either necessary being or not necessary being. If it is necessary, it is eternal and the necessary existent by virtue of its essence. But, if it is not necessary it cannot be impossible for it has been determined as being.

If the essence of being is conjoined by a condition (شرط) (that it causes or not causes exists), it becomes impossible or necessary, but if it is not conjoined by a condition that it causes or not cause exists, the third alternative is left, which is the possible (*al-mumkin*). This possible being, with respect to its essence, is a thing, which is neither necessary nor impossible. Therefore, every being is either necessary or possible being by virtue of its essence.<sup>26</sup>

Thus necessity and impossibility are conditioned, due not to thing itself, but to the presence or absence of an external condition which necessitates its existence or nonexistence. The possible is determined by its being in isolation from the external condition. Ibn Taymiyyah denied that the possible is an essence that can be either existing or non-existing, for if an essence is regarded as non-existing

<sup>25</sup> Ibn Sina, *Kitab al-Najat*, p. 262.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Sina, *Al-Isharat*, Vol.III, pp. 447-448. Cf. Morwedge, Parviz, *Avicenna' Metaphysics*, p. 48.

it can still be present in the mind, which is called *al-wujud al-dhihni*. If the word possible is referred to the *real existence* there is nothing in reality which is neither necessary and nor impossible.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, Ibn Rushd also objects Ibn Sina's idea in attaching the *necessity* to the possibly existence.<sup>28</sup> Since necessary is already designated as "signifying the certainty of existence", to put the necessity to the possible existence, would, perhaps, blur the degree of certainty in the Necessary existence being. This is, in fact related to the problem, whether certain thing has sufficient reason for its existence.

The quotation we have just presented serves the explication of the determination of existence based on the condition, Ibn Sina in his *al-Syifa'* alternates by examining the sufficiency of existence from the *quiddity*. The argument runs as follows: Thing exists because existence has come to it, and does not exist as non-existence has come to it. If existence and non-existence come from something else, that other is the cause. If it does not come from something else it is determined by something other than itself. All this is because either the *quiddity* of the thing is sufficient for determination for existence and non-existence or not sufficient for it. Now if the *quiddity* is sufficient for one of these two attributes (existence and non-existence) it becomes necessary and it is absurd to be assumed as not necessary. Now if the *quiddity* is not sufficient for its existence, but something else bestows its existence, then its existence comes from the existence of some other thing different from it and must be its cause.<sup>29</sup>

So it is clear that the necessity of the possible existence is attained through a cause and in relation to it; if it is not necessary while the existence of its cause is necessary, it would be still called possible. Thus the possibility is determined due to its relation to its cause. This kind of thing, according to Ibn Sina, requires from the beginning the existence of some third thing through which its existence or its non-existence is determined.

What we have just previously discuss is in fact touch the description of the properties of the primary concepts.<sup>30</sup> Ibn Sina analy-

<sup>27</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar' T'arud baina al-Aql wa al-Naql*, ed. Rishad Salim, (Mecca: Jami'a M. Ibn Sa'ud al-Islamiyyah, 1983), vol.III, pp. 344.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Rushd, "Fasl al-Maqal fi ma Bayn al-Hikmah wa al-Shari'ah min al-Ittisal", in *Kitab Falsafat Ibn Rushd*, ed. Mustafa 'Abd al-Jwad 'Imran, (Cairo: Maktabah al-Muhammadiyah, al-Tijariyyah, 1968), pp. 41-42.

<sup>29</sup> Ibn Sina, *Al-Syifa'*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 37.

zes the properties of the Necessary existence in relation to the cause. The necessarily existent by reason of itself does not have a cause. If something has a 'cause' for its existence, his existence would be through that cause and cannot have existence by necessity. And if thing does not have existence by necessity, when considered in itself apart from the other, it is not necessary in respect to existence through itself.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, the Necessary Existence cannot be united with any cause (*sabab*), for the principle of causality cannot be applied to Necessary Existence. In other words Necessary existence cannot be united with something in a "reciprocal union". The reason, says Ibn Sina, is that reciprocal relation would risk the application of causality in It. Each would be prior to the other or posterior to the other and consequently its being would be conditioned by another being.<sup>32</sup>

To sum up, ontological principle of Ibn Sina's concept of *Wajib al-Wujud* begins with the *a priori* proposition that there is existence

(لا شك أن هنا وجودا).<sup>33</sup> Further, he applies his proposition into the actually existent being and resulted in two conceivable categories: Everything that exists is either necessary by reason of itself and possible by reason of itself or necessary by reason of another. The first has been established smoothly, but the second render complicates the degree of necessity in the first. In general, we may infer that Ibn Sina's explication is well based on an analysis of *actually* existent by reason of itself, rather than an analysis of the *necessarily* existent by reason of itself.

### Cosmological Principles

*Cosmological* argument is an argument that begins by recognizing the actual existence of something in the universe. Its premises are that all natural things are dependent for their existence on something else, which is God. However, the cosmological proof can utilize the term *necessary being* in different sense other than merely by analyzing concepts. It can establish the proof in the sense that such a thing has a sufficient reason to exist by itself, because the cosmological proof tries to establish the existence of God as an

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Morewedge, *Metaphysics*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>33</sup> Ibn Sina, *Kitab al-Najat*, p. 271.

uncaused cause.<sup>34</sup>

The cosmological principle in Ibn Sina's concept of the Necessary Existence is marked by the explication of causality to reach the uncaused cause. In his argument Ibn Sina starts from the proposition that existence either necessary or possible. If it is necessary the Necessary existence is proven and that is the goal. But if it is possible it needs further explanation that the possible stops its existence in the Necessary existence.<sup>35</sup> The analysis is not too much different from the analysis of movement, which is Aristotelian flavor. The full argument in *al-Isharat* is follows:

Every totality formed successively of causes and effects, in which there is a cause which is not an effect, must have that cause as its outermost point; because if it were in the middle it would be caused. Every series (*silsila*) which comprises causes and effect is finite or infinite. It is clear that, if it only comprised what is caused, it would need a cause external to it, to which it would be attached, without any doubt, by an outermost point. It is clear that, if that series contained something, which was not an effect that would be an outermost point and extremity (*nihaya*). So every series culminates in the Being necessary by His essence راجب الوجود بذاته.<sup>36</sup>

So, the Necessary existence being is not the cause within the series of possible causes or علة ممكنة, for if it is included in it, the necessary become possible. But if the cause is beyond the series and it is Necessary existence by virtue of itself, then the possible causes end in the Necessary existence. In Aristotle's theology God is depicted as a final cause, by being an object of desire,<sup>37</sup> but the existence by virtue of itself signifies nothing of Aristotle's doctrine of causality, neither external cause nor internal cause. Here Ibn Sina omits all four causes in Aristotle metaphysics, yet in his further explanation Ibn Sina's idea seems to be corresponding to that of Aristotle. When Ibn Sina placed the Necessary existence as point to which all series of causes of contingent being attempted to return,<sup>38</sup> we know that it certainly corresponds to Aristotle's God in His being the object of desire. Similarly, when Ibn Sina posits that the necessary existence

<sup>34</sup> Davidson, Herbert A., *Avicenna*, p. 167.

<sup>35</sup> Ibn Sina, *Kitab al-Najat*, p. 271.

<sup>36</sup> Ibn Sina, *al-Isyarat*, vol. III, pp. 26-27; Cf. Ibn Sina, *Kitab al-Najat*, pp. 271-272.

<sup>37</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 12.7.1072a, p. 29-34.

<sup>38</sup> Morewedge, *Ibn Sina Metaphysics*, p. 59.

is the end of causes of contingency essence but beyond the series of causality of contingency existence,<sup>39</sup> we recognize it similar to the argument of Aristotle's first Unmoved Mover. If the existence of the Necessary existence is established from the impossibility of infinite series of causes in the contingency, the Unmoved Mover is attained from the impossibility of infinite series of motion.

In his cosmological argument Ibn Sina employs mainly the principle of causality and the impossibility of infinite regress of causes. Compared Aristotle's cosmological argument, Ibn Sina's major characteristic is that he establishes the first cause of the universe, while Aristotle established the first cause of motion. This perhaps is the consequences of the different approach undertaken by both of them. Ibn Sina considers the existence in general, whereas Aristotle examines only a segment of existence, which is motion. However, Aristotle's theology is initiated by the search of the concept *arche*, or the beginning of everything, but in his final analysis he terminated in the first mover.

### The Nature of the Necessary Existence

One of the most important parts of the concept of the *Wajib al-Wujud* is its nature. The first part concerns about the concept of oneness of the Necessary existence. The *Wajib al-Wujud* is one for He cannot be united with any other being or cause. It is because if His existence is necessarily uncaused, it clearly cannot be linked in any way to a cause. If on the other hand, His existence is not necessarily uncaused, He obviously cannot be considered as the Necessary Being in Himself. Ibn Sina goes on to argue that it is impossible to envisage a genuinely reciprocal relationship either, between God and something else. If such relationship exists it would risk the application of causality in Him. Each would be prior to the other or posterior to the other and consequently its being would be conditioned by another being.<sup>40</sup> The impossibility of the application of causality leads to the rejection of the multiplicity in the Necessary existence, which becomes another proof of His oneness. For this Ibn Sina argues that

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<sup>39</sup> Every series (*silsila*) ends in the Being whose necessarily exists by virtue of Himself or His essence (*Wajib al-Wujud*). See *Kitab al-Najat*, p. 272; Cf. *Al-Isyarat*. III, pp. 26-27

<sup>40</sup> Morewedge, *Metaphysics of Ibn Sina*, p. 49.

although it is composed of many elements, like man's body consists of many parts, the Necessary Existence cannot have different kinds of parts, each standing by itself and forming a unit such as wood and clay in a house. If Necessary Existence has different kind of parts it would have to be united with the causes. Necessary Existence cannot contain different properties, for if it were so, its essence would be together as parts. If its essence were realized and the properties were accidental, then they would subsist in the Necessary Existence for their essence because of another cause, here the Necessary Existence, would be then receptacle.<sup>41</sup>

The Necessary existence by reason of itself cannot contain any part whatsoever, for it is simple in every conceivable way. It is also not composite or consists of component. It is incorporeal in the sense that It does not composed of matter and form. It is also undefinable inasmuch as it is not composed of genus and specific difference. And it is free from the distinction of essence and existence.<sup>42</sup>

In addition, Ibn Sina also provides an argument on the oneness of Necessary existence in the same way as the doctrine of *tawhid* in Islam. To him there is no god but Allah, and therefore the Necessary Existence cannot be more than one. There is only one entity of Necessary Existence. Without quoting any source Qur'anic source Ibn Sina tries to argue from philosophical principles: If there are two entities called Necessary Existence then there would be difference (*fasl*) or a distinguishing mark (*khassa*) for each. Since the Necessary Existence is universal and the universal cannot have *fasl* and *khassa* then the Necessary Existence cannot be two entities.<sup>43</sup>

Ibn Sina also depicted the nature of the Necessary Existence as *pure intelligence* ('*Aql Mahd*).<sup>44</sup> This is exactly parallel to Aristotle's God who is a thought of thought.<sup>45</sup> However, there is a point that looks problematic in Aristotle's depiction of God being a thought of thought, but Ibn Sina attempts to give a solution. To avoid change and multiplicity in the essence of God, Aristotle depicted the

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, p. 53-54

<sup>42</sup> Ibn Sina, *Kitab al-Najat*, p.274-275; Ibn Sina, *al-Syifa'*, pp. 344-348; Ibn Sina, *al-Isharat*, p. 144.

<sup>43</sup> Morewedge, *Metaphysics of Ibn Sina*, pp.54-55. Cf. Ibn Sina, *al-Syifa'*, pp. 343, 43, 37; Ibn Sina, *al-Isarat*, III, 36-41, 116.

<sup>44</sup> Ibn Sina, *al-Syifa'*, vol.2, p. 356.

<sup>45</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 12.9.1074b37.

Unmoved Mover as the subject and the object of thought. Ibn Sina, although, in some way, follows Aristotle's doctrine can prove that God knew many things without implying the multiplicity in His essence.<sup>46</sup> In his *al-Isyarat* he puts:

God (*Wajib al-Wujud*) necessarily knows (or understand) His essence by His essence... and necessarily knows what comes after Him inasmuch as He is the cause of what comes after Him and derives its existence from Him.<sup>47</sup>

This mean God knew something other than Himself but it does not imply change in His essence. The reason given for this is that God's knowledge is unbounded by time and can therefore know about things susceptible to change without being changed Himself.<sup>48</sup> Here Ibn Sina gives further argument on how God knows as he says that "The Necessary Existent knows all things due to Its Universal knowledge. Nothing whatsoever - be it large or small - is hidden from His knowledge as has become evident from our discussion".<sup>49</sup> Here the argument implies that God knows only universal knowledge, but later philosophers and theologians reject this argument.<sup>50</sup> However, the point that Ibn Sina deviates from Aristotle is that the Necessary existence can know object other than Himself without having any change in Himself and this is distinct from the characteristic of Aristotle concept of Unmoved Mover.

## Conclusion

What is particular in the concept of *Wajib al-Wujud* is that Ibn Sina does not employ the method that starts from the argument of physics as Aristotle did. With his mere metaphysical approach in terms of existence, Ibn Sina has successfully traveled a long journey with shorter time. However, the term *Wajib al-Wujud* is a key concept for the explication of the existence of God, but the term itself is not assumption, but the goal to be investigated. Although Necessary Existence is only ontological concept it is used in his various way of

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<sup>46</sup> Morewedge, *Metaphysics*, pp. 61-62

<sup>47</sup> Ibn Sina, *al-Isyarat*, vol.III, p. 278;

<sup>48</sup> Morewedge, *Metaphysics*, pp.64-66.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, p. 66.

<sup>50</sup> See J.G. Flynn, St. Thomas and Avicenna on the Nature of God, *Abr- Nahrain*, vol.14 (1973-1974), p. 63.

proving God's existence, whether in cosmological argument or other argument. Interestingly, since all depend on the key concept of 'necessity', the proof that begins from the causality does not end in the First Cause but on *Wajib al-Wujud*, an end that seems to be incompatible with the beginning. Be that as it may, the concept of *Wajib al-Wujud* is predominantly ontological that dealt with by *a priori*, logical necessity, based on an analysis of the concept of God's nature in so far as the essence of God in that concept contains sufficient reason of His existence.[]

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