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ISLAMIC METAPHYSICAL ANALYSIS IN RISĀLAH AL-KAMĀLIYAH FĪ AL-ḤAQĀʾIQ AL-ILĀHIYYAH BY FAKHR AL-DĪN AL-RĀZĪ (A Study in Islamic Philosophical Manuscript Research)

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the Islamic metaphysical structure of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥaqāʾiq al-Ilāhiyyah, a concise yet conceptually dense treatise that synthesizes theological and philosophical reasoning within the classical Islamic intellectual tradition. Employing a qualitative research design, the study integrates library research and conceptual–philosophical analysis to uncover the internal logic, metaphysical architecture, and argumentative strategies deployed by al-Rāzī. Through a critical reading of the manuscript and systematic examination of primary and secondary sources, the research analyzes al-Rāzī's treatment of key ontological categories—wājib, mumkin, and mumtani'—and his rigorous evaluation of the concept of existence (wujūd) as articulated through kalām-based rational inquiry and metaphysical argumentation. The study highlights al-Rāzī's critique of Avicennian metaphysics, especially his arguments regarding the impossibility of contingent entities serving as ultimate causes, the logical consequences of positing multiplicity within the Necessary Being, and the debate on the ontological status of relations in extramental reality. Furthermore, the research explores al-Rāzī's cosmological framework, including his discussions on celestial motion, the intellects and souls of the spheres, and the nature of space, time, and elemental composition. These analyses reveal a unified metaphysical worldview rooted in rational demonstration (burhān) and theological commitments. Overall, the findings show that Risālah al-Kamāliyah functions as both a summary and a critical intervention in Islamic metaphysics, bridging philosophical, theological, and mystical perspectives. By analyzing the text through a qualitative, concept-driven methodology, this study situates al-Rāzī's work as a significant contribution to the development of post-Avicennian metaphysical discourse and offers new insights for contemporary scholarship on classical Islamic thought.

Keywords: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī; Islamic metaphysics; Risalah al-kamaliyah; Islamic Philosophical manuscript

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1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic metaphysics (*mā baʿda al-ṭabīʿah*) constitutes one of the core disciplines within the treasury of Islamic philosophy and serves as a foundational framework for many theological and philosophical debates in the classical Islamic world. In this context, Muslim philosophers and theologians did not merely address metaphysical questions in a speculative manner; rather, they employed metaphysics as an epistemological and argumentative basis for constructing concepts of God, His attributes, and the relationship between absolute *wujūd* (God) and contingent *wujūd* (created beings). One of the most crucial points in Islamic metaphysics is the debate concerning the concepts of existence (*wujūd*) and quiddity (*māhiyyah*), which forms the ontological foundation of Islamic theological understanding.The development of this metaphysical thought cannot be separated from the historical dynamics of the introduction of philosophy into the Islamic world. Externally, the influence of philosophy on Islamic theology became evident between the second and fourth centuries Hijri, when Aristotelian philosophy began to be adapted and reformulated within an Islamic intellectual framework. During this period, a massive translation movement of Greek, Persian, and Indian philosophical works took place under the rule of the Abbasid caliph al-Maʾmūn. This project was spearheaded by figures such as al-Marzubānī, al-Jāḥiẓ, and al-Khwārizmī, who were associated with the Muʿtazilite school and active within the Bayt al-Ḥikmah in the fourth century Hijri. This process not only influenced the methodology of *uṣūl al-fiqh* but also profoundly shaped the form and substance of Islamic theology. In this context, major figures such as al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, Avicenna, al-Ghazali, Suhrawardi al-Maqtul and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi emerged, whose contributions marked the golden age of Islamic philosophy and significantly enriched theological and metaphysical discourse within the Islamic intellectual tradition.

However, the post-Avicennian period was not characterized by passive reception. Rather, it witnessed sustained critical engagement, reformulation, and, in some cases, radical revision of inherited metaphysical doctrines. Among the most prominent figures of this period is Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), whose intellectual legacy spans kalām, philosophy, Qur'anic exegesis, and logic. Al-Rāzī occupies a distinctive position in the history of Islamic thought, as he simultaneously inherited the technical apparatus of falsafah and subjected its foundational assumptions to rigorous scrutiny. One of the most significant arenas of al-Rāzī's philosophical intervention lies in metaphysics, particularly in his treatment of existence, essence, and ontological dependence. While Ibn Sīnā famously argued for the identity of existence and essence in the case of the Necessary Existent, al-Rāzī problematized this claim by introducing epistemological and logical considerations that destabilize Avicenna's ontological framework. His insistence on the necessary knowability of existence, contrasted with the radical unknowability of the Divine Essence, marks a decisive shift in metaphysical reasoning—one that privileges conceptual coherence and epistemic accessibility over inherited metaphysical formulations. Moreover, al-Rāzī's metaphysical project extends beyond the question of divine existence. His critical examination of substance and accident, the rejection of existence as a genus, the analysis of categories (*maqūlāt*), and his skepticism toward the real existence of relations collectively reflect a systematic effort to reconfigure metaphysics on more defensible rational grounds. In doing so, al-Rāzī challenges not only Avicennian ontology, but also the Aristotelian categorial framework as it had been received in Islamic philosophy. Despite the importance of these contributions, al-Rāzī's metaphysics has often been approached either through the lens of kalām polemics or as a mere transitional phase between classical falsafah and later philosophical traditions. Such readings tend to understate the philosophical originality and internal coherence of his metaphysical system. This study seeks to address this gap by offering a focused analytical examination of al-Rāzī's metaphysical thought as presented in *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-*

Ḥaqā'iq al-Ilāhiyyah. By analyzing al-Rāzī's arguments concerning existence, essence, substance, accident, and the Necessary Existent, this article aims to demonstrate that al-Rāzī should be understood not merely as a critic of Avicenna, but as a metaphysician in his own right—one whose work represents a crucial reorientation of Islamic metaphysics toward a more critical and epistemologically grounded ontology.

2. METHODS

This Journal employs a qualitative research, library-based research[1] methodology grounded in philosophical analysis and textual interpretation.[2] The primary objective of the research is to examine Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's metaphysical framework as articulated in *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥaqā'iq al-Ilāhiyyah*, with particular attention to his conception of existence (wujūd), essence (*māhiyyah*), necessity and contingency, substance and accident, and his critical engagement with Avicennian metaphysics. Given the theoretical and non-empirical nature of the subject matter, a qualitative and interpretive approach is both methodologically appropriate and philosophically necessary.

The research adopts a philosophical-analytical approach, which aims to reconstruct, analyze, and critically assess al-Rāzī's arguments within their internal logical structure as well as their broader intellectual context. This approach focuses not merely on descriptive exposition, but on uncovering the underlying assumptions, argumentative strategies, and conceptual innovations that characterize al-Rāzī's metaphysical thought. In this sense, the study treats metaphysical doctrines as rational constructions that must be evaluated in terms of coherence, consistency, and explanatory power. In addition, the study utilizes a historical-philosophical approach to situate al-Rāzī within the post-Avicennian tradition of Islamic philosophy. This allows for an examination of continuity and rupture between al-Rāzī and earlier thinkers, most notably Ibn Sīnā, without reducing al-Rāzī's position to either simple opposition or uncritical inheritance. Historical contextualization is employed not as an end in itself, but as a means to clarify the philosophical motivations behind al-Rāzī's departures from established metaphysical doctrines.

The primary source of this research is *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥaqā'iq al-Ilāhiyyah*, attributed to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and edited in modern critical editions. This text is treated as the central object of analysis, particularly its discussions on existence, categories (maqūlāt), substance (jawhar), accident ('araḍ), and the Necessary Existent (wājib al-wujūd). Secondary sources consist of classical philosophical texts by earlier Islamic philosophers, especially Ibn Sīnā, as well as contemporary scholarly studies on Islamic metaphysics, kalām philosophy, and post-classical intellectual history. These secondary sources serve three main functions: (1) clarifying technical terminology and conceptual frameworks, (2) providing interpretive perspectives on disputed metaphysical issues, and (3) situating al-Rāzī's thought within broader philosophical debates.

Data collection is conducted through systematic close reading of the primary text, supported by comparative engagement with relevant secondary literature. Particular attention is given to key passages where al-Rāzī explicitly formulates arguments, raises objections, or critiques earlier positions.

[1] Nashruddin Baidan, *Metode Khusus Penelitian Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Belajar, 2019), h. 28.
[2] Ẓuchri Abdussamad, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Makassar: CV. Syakir Media Press, 2021), 30.

The research employs several complementary methods of analysis:

1. Textual Analysis

This method involves close reading of al-Rāzī's text to identify key concepts, definitions, distinctions, and argumentative moves. Arabic philosophical terminology is analyzed with attention to its technical meanings within the Islamic philosophical tradition. Where necessary, semantic nuances are clarified through comparison with parallel usages in kalām and falsafah literature.

2. Logical Reconstruction

Al-Rāzī's arguments are reconstructed in a systematic and structured form, often by identifying premises, intermediate conclusions, and final conclusions. This method allows for clearer evaluation of the validity and strength of his reasoning, especially in complex discussions involving modality, causality, and ontological dependence.[3]

3. Comparative Analysis

The study compares al-Rāzī's positions with those of Ibn Sīnā and other philosophers in order to highlight both convergence and divergence. This is particularly important in discussions concerning the relationship between existence and essence, the status of categories, and the ontological status of relations. Comparative analysis is used analytically rather than polemically, aiming to clarify philosophical implications rather than to adjudicate doctrinal superiority.

4. Critical Evaluation

Beyond exposition, the study critically assesses the internal coherence of al-Rāzī's metaphysical system. This includes evaluating whether his epistemological premises successfully support his ontological conclusions, and whether his rejection of certain metaphysical entities (such as real relations or categorical realism) avoids the problems he attributes to them.

This research is deliberately focused on metaphysical issues and does not attempt to provide a comprehensive account of al-Rāzī's theology or natural philosophy in this text book. Moreover, while kalām contexts are acknowledged, the analysis prioritizes philosophical argumentation over doctrinal theology. The study also does not aim to trace the full reception history of al-Rāzī's ideas, although it notes their significance for later developments in Islamic thought.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Biography of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī lived during a period of political instability in Central Asia in the decades preceding the Mongol conquests. He was born in 544 AH/1149 CE in the city of Rayy in Persia, located near present-day Tehran, Iran. His epithet "al-Rāzī" derives from his place of birth, although this designation has often led to confusion with other prominent figures from Rayy, such as Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 313 AH/920 CE) and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 765 AH/1364 CE).[4] Throughout his life, Fakhr al-Dīn rarely remained in Rayy. Instead, he traveled extensively across Persia and Central Asia in pursuit of knowledge, patronage, and intellectual exchange with leading scholars

[3] Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalām* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 497–505.
[4] Peter Adamson, "Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2021, accessed August 12, 2025, https://plato.stanford.edu.

of his time. His early education was received from his father, a theologian and jurist of the Shāfiʿī school, who belonged to the second generation of students of the eminent Ashʿarī theologian al-Juwaynī (d. 478 AH/1085 CE).[5] From a young age, al-Rāzī was thus trained in rational theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*) within the Ashʿarī tradition, as well as in Shāfiʿī jurisprudence. He later continued his studies in Nishapur, where he first encountered the philosophical works of al-Fārābī (d. 339 AH/950 CE) and Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna, d. 428 AH/1037 CE). These encounters proved decisive for his intellectual development, as Avicennian philosophy would become both a major object of his critical engagement and a central reference point in his own metaphysical reflections. In Marāgha, al-Rāzī studied under Majd al-Dīn al-Jīlī (d. after 571 AH/1175 CE), who was also known as a teacher of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 587 AH/1191 CE), the founder of Illuminationist (Ishrāqī) philosophy. This diverse educational background contributed significantly to al-Rāzī's distinctive synthesis of Ashʿarī theology, Avicennian metaphysics, and rigorous logical analysis.[6]

B. Structure of Manuscript

Al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥaqāʾiq al-Ilāhiyyah, authored by Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Rāzī al-Shāfiʿī (d. 606 AH), widely known as Fakhr al-Rāzī or Ibn al-Khaṭīb, is a work concerned with logic, philosophy, and astronomy (hayʾah. The first work was edited by ʿAlī Muḥyī al-Dīn, while the second was edited by Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm Ṭarāzī. It consists of ten treatises (*maqālāt*). With the exception of the third treatise, which is arranged into twenty chapters, and the tenth treatise, which comprises six chapters, the remaining eight treatises are each organized into ten chapters. The first treatise addresses logic; the second discusses the categories; the third is devoted to knowledge of the divine essence; the fourth examines the attributes of the Necessary Being; the fifth concerns the divine acts; the sixth treats the states of bodies and motion; the seventh discusses the attributes of the celestial spheres; the eighth establishes the existence of the elements; the ninth addresses the science of the soul; and the tenth is devoted to astronomy. The book opens with an introductory study by the editor, which presents a brief account of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's life and highlights his major works. In this introduction, the editor draws attention to the fact that some bibliographers have attributed the treatise to Fakhr al-Rāzī, while others have suggested that its original composition was in Persian. However, no reference is made to the identity of a translator who may have rendered the work into Arabic. It is therefore plausible that Fakhr al-Rāzī himself translated the text into Arabic, given his known mastery of both languages and his authorship of refined poetry in Arabic and Persian alike.[7] Since a comprehensive presentation of all the themes addressed in the two works under discussion is not feasible within the limited scope of this section, the following account restricts itself to two representative points for each work, intended to provide the reader with a general orientation.

C. His Epistemology

The possibility of acquiring knowledge constitutes one of the most significant issues in epistemology; for this reason, it has always been a central topic of concern among scholars and thinkers. Although the question of the possibility of acquiring knowledge has never been met with a complete denial by Muslim intellectuals, some of them have insisted on the impossibility of learning in certain domains and have explicitly articulated arguments in support of this view. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, often referred to as *the Imam of the Skeptics* (*Imām al-Mushakkikīn*), is

[5] Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalām* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 502.
[6] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna, Suhrawardī, Ibn 'Arabī* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 56.
[7] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥikmah*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥyī al-Dīn, with *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir* by Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, ed. Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm Ṭarāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1423 AH). Page 1

among these figures. He maintains that concepts (*taṣawwurāt*) cannot be acquired, and consequently regards all concepts as self-evident. Fakhr al-Rāzī's theory was not accepted by later thinkers and was instead rejected and criticized. He addresses this issue in *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah*, where he writes: "As for acquired concepts, there are several objections to them. The first is that this concept which is said to be acquired is either already obtained or it is not. If it is already obtained, then acquiring it is impossible, because the acquisition of what is already obtained is impossible. If it is not obtained, and the mind has no awareness of it whatsoever, then seeking it is impossible; for seeking something that is not present in the mind is impossible. If one were to say: 'It is possible for something to be known in one respect but not known in another; therefore, insofar as it is known, seeking it is not possible, while insofar as it is unknown, seeking it is possible,' the response is that the object sought is either sought insofar as it is known or insofar as it is unknown. The first case is impossible, because it entails the acquisition of what is already obtained, which is impossible. The second case is also impossible, because that which has no presence in conception will never be sought by the mind. The second objection is that the definition of such a concept is either given through its essential attributes or through its accidental attributes. The first option is invalid: if it is defined by all of its essential attributes, this is impossible, because the totality of essential attributes is identical with the thing itself; thus, if the totality of its essential attributes defines it, it would follow that a thing defines itself, which is impossible. If it is defined by some of its essential attributes, this too is impossible, because knowledge of some parts of a thing does not yield knowledge of the whole. The second option is likewise invalid, for the accidental attribute either can apply to something other than the subject or it cannot. If it can apply to something else, the definition fails to be determinate; if it cannot, then this exclusivity can only be known once knowledge of the essence has already been obtained. Thus, if knowledge of the essence is acquired through that exclusivity, a vicious circle ensues, which is impossible. These, then, are the objections that can be raised against the acquisition of concepts."[89]

D. Islamic Metaphysics of Razi

The Definition of Metaphysics

Islamic philosophy represents a rational endeavor to understand the reality of existence (*wujūd*), the nature of God, and the structure of the universe. Within this framework, metaphysics occupies the highest rank among the branches of philosophy, as it addresses fundamental questions concerning existence (*wujūd*), quiddity (*māhiyyah*), and the principles of divinity. Etymologically, the term "metaphysics" originates from Greek. Linguistically, *meta ta physika* means "after" or "beyond physical things." During the Middle Ages, particularly with the synthesis of philosophy and theology and the emergence of Scholastic philosophy (1200–1500 CE), metaphysics came to encompass the branch of theological philosophy responsible for providing philosophical explanations of Christian doctrines concerning divinity. This endeavor was sometimes referred to as "Christian philosophy," which sought to bridge the gap between Christian faith and human reason. Metaphysics, according to Ibn Sīnā, as articulated in his various works such as *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (*The Book of Healing*) and *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt*, constitutes a rational endeavor to explain the totality of the reality of *wujūd* (existence). Prior to this, Ibn Sīnā constructed a comprehensive system for the classification of the sciences by determining the proper object of inquiry for each discipline and dividing them into two principal branches:

[8] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥikmah*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥyī al-Dīn, with *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir* by Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, ed. Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm Ṭarāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1423 AH). Page 19-20

[9] Mehdi Pourmousavi, "*Badāhat-e Hame-ye Taṣawwurāt: Naẓariyyeh-ī Qābel-e Defāʿ* [The Self-Evidence of All Concepts: A Defensible Theory]," *Maʿāref-e ʿAqlī* (معارف عقلی), no. 17 (Dey 1389 SH / 2011), 33–58.

theoretical sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-naẓariyyah*) and practical sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ʿamaliyyah*). According to him, theoretical sciences are concerned with things whose existence does not depend upon human action, whereas practical sciences pertain to what is useful for human conduct and action. With specific regard to metaphysics, Ibn Sīnā offers a comparative analysis of its subject matter (*ʿilm mā baʿd al-ṭabīʿa*). In his work *Ḥikmat al-ʿUyūn*, he states: *"First philosophy has as its subject the existent insofar as it is existent. Its aim is to investigate the essential accidents of the existent insofar as it is existent, such as unity, multiplicity, causality, and other such attributes."*[10] Within this discipline, existence is investigated in an absolute manner and without restriction. Consequently, metaphysics encompasses all fundamental categories related to existence and non-existence, such as derivative relations of being, whether necessity and contingency, mental and extramental existence, substance (*jawhar*) and accident (*ʿaraḍ*). Nevertheless, the most universal and all-encompassing categories are existence (*wujūd*) and quiddity (*māhiyyah*) themselves, which serve as the foundation for all other categorial determinations. Accordingly, Ibn Sīnā affirms that metaphysics is the science of being in its most universal sense, transcending the limitations of physics and mathematics, and occupying the position of the foundational discipline for all theoretical sciences. And according to al-Jurjānī in his work *al-Taʿrīfāt*, metaphysics is defined as follows: "Metaphysics (*mā baʿda al-ṭabīʿah*) is the science that investigates the states (*aḥwāl*) of existents whose existence does not depend on matter."[11]In this interpretation, the prefix *meta*, meaning "after," is understood as contingent or incidental, referring merely to the order of the texts rather than to an intrinsic conceptual priority.

Discussion: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Metaphysical Framework and His Critical

The metaphysical exposition presented in *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah* reveals Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's distinctive approach to ontology, one characterized by logical rigor, epistemological caution, and sustained critique of Peripatetic metaphysics. Rather than merely reproducing Aristotelian–Avicennian doctrines, al-Rāzī systematically reassesses their foundational assumptions, especially concerning existence (wujūd), substance and accident, and the categorical structure of reality. At the most fundamental level, al-Rāzī affirms that the concept of existence is axiomatic (badīhī).[12] His argument proceeds from the epistemological observation that the intellect necessarily distinguishes between existence and non-existence, and that this distinction rests upon an immediate form of assent (taṣdīq) rather than discursive acquisition. Since this assent is itself self-evident, the concept of existence presupposed by it must also be self-evident. In this way, al-Rāzī blocks any attempt to define existence through more basic notions, thereby avoiding both infinite regress and circular definition. Metaphysics, in his view, does not begin by defining existence but by recognizing it as the most primary intelligible. Al-Rāzī further maintains that existence is genuinely common to all existents (*al-mushtarak al-ḥaqīqī bayna al-mawjūdāt*). This claim is grounded in modal analysis: existence is meaningfully divided into Necessary Existence (*wājib al-wujūd*) and contingent existence (*mumkin al-wujūd*), and such a division presupposes a univocal core that is shared by both. Nevertheless, al-Rāzī sharply distinguishes this commonality from genushood. If existence were a genus, Necessary Existence would be composed of genus and differentia, implying composition (tarkīb) and, consequently, contingency. Since contingency is incompatible with necessity, the genus-theory of existence is

[10] Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Sīnā, *Rasāʾil Ibn Sīnā*, ed. Ḥilmī Ḍiyāʾ Ulken (Istanbul: Maṭbaʻah Ibrāhīm Khurūz, 1953), vol. 1.p.61

[10] Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar Fakhr al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-Ḥikmah*, taḥqīq Aḥmad Ḥijāzī al-Saqqā (Teheran: Muʾassasat al-Ṣādiq (ʿa), 1373 Hsy.), vol 3, p.. 175

[11] Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Jurjānī, *Al-Taʿrīfāt*, ed. Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿArabī (Tehran: Nāṣir Khusraw, 1370 H.S.), 67

[12] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥikmah*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥyī al-Dīn, with *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir* by Ṣadr al Dīn al-Shīrāzī, ed. Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm Ṭarāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1423 AH). Page 33-34

rejected. This argument simultaneously preserves divine simplicity and undermines ontological schemas that treat existence as a classificatory category akin to natural general.

The discussion of mawjūdāt extends this critical stance into the realm of substance (*jawhar*) and accident (*'araḍ*).[13] Al-Rāzī accepts the classical division of contingent beings into those that subsist in themselves and those that subsist in others, yet he denies that either substance or accident can function as a genus. His analysis of substance is particularly revealing. Whether substance is assumed to be simple (basīṭ) or composite (murakkab), it fails to meet the logical conditions of genushood.[14] A simple substance cannot fall under a genus without becoming composite, while a composite substance cannot be reduced to a genus without collapsing into an aggregate of accidents, which would negate its substantiality. Similarly, accidents cannot be general because their very being is relational and posterior to the constitution of quiddity (*takawwun al-māhiyyah*). This critique destabilizes the traditional Porphyrian tree when applied to metaphysical realities. Al-Rāzī's analysis of place, causality, and inherence further illustrates his methodological concern with avoiding circular dependence (dawr) and infinite regress *(tasalsul*). By arguing that a cause cannot itself be dependent upon its effect, as would be the case if place were the cause of what inheres in it, he redefines the relationship between form, accident, and spatial location. His nuanced distinction between attributing an accident to a place and attributing it to the composite whose surface constitutes that place exemplifies his sensitivity to levels of predication and ontological dependence. This critical orientation becomes even more pronounced in al-Rāzī's treatment of the Aristotelian categories (*maqūlāt*).[15] While he reports the conventional enumeration of ten categories, he explicitly challenges the claim that these constitute the highest genera of being. He questions both the proof that the number of highest genera must be ten and the justification for excluding alternative reductions, such as limiting categories to substance, quantity,[16] quality,[17] and relation. [18]

His central objection is structural: if relations or other categories function as genera, their differentiation would itself require further relations, leading to infinite regress. Consequently, al-Rāzī casts doubt on the ontological status of several categories, treating them instead as conceptual frameworks rather than real divisions of being. This skepticism is especially evident in

[13] al-Ṣalībā, Jamīl. *Al-Muʿjam al-Falsafī bi al-Alfāẓ al-ʿArabiyyah wa al-Faransiyyah wa al-Inklīziyyah wa al-Lātīniyyah*. 2 jilid. Bayrūt: al-Sharikah al-ʿĀlamiyyah li al-Kitāb, 1414 p. "402

[14] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥikmah*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥyī al-Dīn, with *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir* by Ṣadr al Dīn al-Shīrāzī, ed. Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm Ṭarāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1423 AH). Page 34

[1515] al-Ṣalībā, Jamīl. *Al-Muʿjam al-Falsafī bi al-Alfāẓ al-ʿArabiyyah wa al-Faransiyyah wa al-Inklīziyyah wa al-Lātīniyyah*. 2 jilid. Bayrūt: al-Sharikah al-ʿĀlamiyyah li al-Kitāb, 1414 p. 30

[16] Fakhr al-Rāzī, al-Muḥaṣṣal, ed. Ḥusayn Atāy (ʿAmmān: Dār al-Rāzī, t.t.), Page. 218 " Fakhr al-Rāzī explains: Quantity (al-kamm) is either continuous (mutaṣil) or such that it does not share a single boundary, in which case it is discrete (munfaṣil). As for continuous quantity, either the parts that are hypothetically posited within it exist simultaneously, or they do not. The former is continuous quantity that is stable in itself (al-kamm al-muttaṣil al-qār al-dhāt): if it has one dimension, it is a line; if it has two dimensions, it is a surface; and if it has three dimensions, it is a *jism taʿlīmī* (a geometrical body). As for that which is not stable in itself, it is nothing but time (al-zamān)....

[17] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥikmah*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥyī al-Dīn, with *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir* by Ṣadr al Dīn al-Shīrāzī, ed. Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm Ṭarāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1423 AH). Page 35 Muḥammad b. Fakhr al-Rāzī states: "Quality (al-kayf), or 'how a thing is,' is divided into four principal kinds. The first is sensible quality (al-kayfiyyāt al-maḥsūsah). (a) If the quality is stable and enduring within a subject, it is called *infiʿāliyyāt* (stable passive qualities). (b) If it is not stable, but rather subject to change and fluctuation, it is called *infiʿālāt* (passive processes or transient states)."

[18] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥikmah*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥyī al-Dīn, with *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir* by Ṣadr al Dīn al-Shīrāzī, ed. Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm Ṭarāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1423 AH). Page 34

his discussion of relation (*iḍāfah*)[19], action (*an yafʿal*)[20], and passion (*an yanfaʿil*). Against Avicennian realism, al-Rāzī argues that conceptual distinction does not entail external ontological distinction. Relations and actions, if reified as real accidents, generate explanatory regress by requiring additional relations to account for their instantiation. Hence, many categories function primarily at the level of mental consideration (iʿtibār dhihnī), not as independently existing features of external reality. Even in more technical discussions, such as those concerning quantity (*al-kamm*), quality (al-kayf), opposition (taqābul), and priority (*taqaddum*), al-Rāzī consistently applies this critical lens.[21] He reports philosophical arguments with precision, evaluates their demonstrative force, and withholds assent where proof is lacking. The result is not a rejection of metaphysics as such, but a redefinition of its scope and method.

In sum, al-Rāzī's metaphysics is characterized by three interrelated features: the axiomatic grounding of existence, the denial of genushood to existence, substance, and accident, and a sustained critique of categorical realism. His project transforms metaphysics from a classificatory science into a critical discipline that clarifies the limits of conceptualization and prepares the ground for theology (*al-ʿilm al-ilāhī*). In this sense, al-Rāzī stands as a pivotal figure whose skeptical rigor reshaped post-Avicennian Islamic philosophy and opened new pathways for later metaphysical reflection.

3. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Metaphysical Project on *Ilm Ilahi*

His Agenda

After discussing Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's metaphysical discourse represents one of the most sophisticated and critical engagements with Avicennian metaphysics in post-classical Islamic philosophy. Rather than merely transmitting Ibn Sīnā's doctrines, al-Rāzī subjects foundational metaphysical concepts, such as *wājib al-wujūd*, *mumkin al-wujūd*, existence (*wujūd*), quiddity (*māhiyyah*), causality, unity, and divine attributes—to rigorous logical scrutiny.[22] His method is neither purely philosophical nor strictly theological; rather, it is a hybrid rational-theological

[19] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥikmah*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥyī al-Dīn, with *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir* by Ṣadr al Dīn al-Shīrāzī, ed. Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm Ṭarāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1423 AH). Page 37 "Philosophers have differed over whether *nisbah* (relation) and *iḍāfah* (relational connectedness) truly exist in the external world or not. The majority hold that relations have no existence at all in the external realm. Their argument is as follows: if a relation were to exist, it could not be a self-subsisting substance, but would have to depend on something else. Consequently, the existence of a relation in a place would itself constitute another relation between that relation and the place. This would require a relation of a relation, leading to an infinite regress (*tasalsul*), which is impossible. If someone were to say, "Why can it not be the case that the relation, by its very nature, is already related to its place, thereby avoiding infinite regress?", the response is that a thing can only be in a place if it already possesses existence in itself. For if something does not have existence in itself, it cannot have existence in the form of *ḥulūl* (inherence) or *ḥuṣūl* (presence) in a place. Therefore, the essence of an accident (attribute) is not identical with its existence in a place. And if a thing's existence in a place is something other than its essence, then that additional existence itself would require yet another addition, which in every case leads back to infinite regress.As for the position of Shaykh Abū ʿAlī (Ibn Sīnā), he maintains that relations do indeed have existence in the external world. His reasoning is that discussing "the essence of the celestial body" is different from discussing "the fact that the celestial body is above." Thus, the fact that the heaven is above is something distinct from the essence of the heaven itself, which indicates that this relation truly exists. Accordingly, relation is a *thubūtiyyah* (positive, real) attribute in the external world. The response (critique) to this view is that a difference in concepts within the mind does not necessarily indicate a difference in reality in the external world. What exists in the intellect is merely a particular way of attributing or affirming a thing's relation to its place. And although infinite regress is impossible, a more detailed explanation in the form of a syllogism is still required for the matter to become fully clear."

[20] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥikmah*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥyī al-Dīn, with *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir* by Ṣadr al Dīn al-Shīrāzī, ed. Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm Ṭarāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1423 AH). Page 37

[21] Muḥammad b. ʿUmar Fakhr al-Rāzī, *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyyah*, taḥqīq ʿAlī Muḥy al-Dīn; taṣḥīḥ Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm Ṭarzī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1423 H), 35.

[22] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliyah min al-ʿIlm al-Ilāhī*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥijāzī al-Saqqā, 9 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1407 AH), vol. 1, 54

investigation that exposes internal tensions within philosophical metaphysics while preserving its argumentative rigor. Al-Rāzī's metaphysical analysis aims not only to demonstrate the existence of God but also to delimit the epistemic boundaries of human knowledge concerning the Divine Essence. His approach is characterized by systematic objection (*shubha*), dialectical refutation, and reconstruction of metaphysical principles, especially where Avicenna's positions appear to imply hidden contradictions.[23]

The Tripartite Division of Intelligibles and Its Critique

Al-Rāzī begins with the classical division of intelligibles into *wājib*, *mumtani*ʿ, and *mumkin*. While this division appears self-evident, al-Rāzī challenges its epistemological adequacy as a starting point for proving *wājib al-wujūd*. His critique targets the assumption that necessity (*wujūb*) can be conceptually grasped as an intrinsic attribute without invoking causal dependence. [24]He argues that if *wujūb al-wujūd* is treated as an additional predicate attached to an essence, then that essence becomes dependent on something other than itself, namely, the attribute of necessity, thereby collapsing necessity into contingency. This analysis reveals al-Rāzī's fundamental concern: metaphysical necessity cannot be reduced to a conceptual predicate without generating regress (*tasalsul*). Thus, the division itself, while logically valid, is insufficient as an explanatory foundation.[25]

Imkān as a Mental, Not External, Determination

One of al-Rāzī's most distinctive contributions lies in his treatment of *imkān* (contingency). Against realist interpretations, he maintains that *imkān* is a *ṣifah thubūtiyyah iʿtibāriyyah*—an affirmative but purely mental attribute (*al-ṣifātu al-iʿtibāriyyah lā wujūda lahā fi al-khārij, wa illā lazima an yajtamiʿa fi al-dhāti al-wāḥidah ṣifātun mawjūdah*).[26] It has no external instantiation independent of the intellect. This position allows al-Rāzī to avoid reifying possibility as an ontological intermediary between existence and non-existence. By locating *imkān* within intellectual consideration rather than external reality, he preserves the binary opposition between *wujūd* and ʿ*adam*, while still accounting for rational modal discourse. This move signals an early anticipation of later debates on mental existence (*wujūd dhihnī*).

Proof of the Necessary Existent and the Rejection of Infinite Regress (*Tasalsul*)

Al-Rāzī's proof of *wājib al-wujūd* proceeds through a refined causal argument grounded in the contingency of all non-necessary beings. Every contingent requires a *murajjiḥ* (determinative cause), and chains of contingent causes cannot explain themselves either circularly (*dawr*) or infinitely (*tasalsul*). His rejection of infinite regress is especially nuanced. Al-Rāzī distinguishes causal series from temporal sequences, arguing that causes must coexist with their effects. Therefore, an infinite causal chain would have to exist simultaneously as a whole, rendering it contingent and thus in need of an external cause. This argument reflects al-Rāzī's insistence on causal simultaneity rather than temporal priority, distinguishing his position from simplistic cosmological arguments.[27]

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[23] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥikmah*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥyī al-Dīn, with *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir* by Ṣadr al Dīn al-Shīrāzī, ed. Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm Ṭarāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1423 AH). Page 40

[24] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥikmah*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥyī al-Dīn, with *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir* by Ṣadr al Dīn al-Shīrāzī, ed. Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm Ṭarāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1423 AH). Page 40

[25] ibid

[26] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt*, ed. ʿAlī Riḍā Najafzādah, with an introduction by Hermann Landolt, 2 vols. (Tehran: Anjuman Āṣār wa Mafākhir Farhangī, 1384 H.Sh.), vol. 1, 66

[27] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥikmah*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥyī al-Dīn, with *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir* by Ṣadr al Dīn al-Shīrāzī, ed. Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm Ṭarāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1423 AH). Page 42

Divine Simplicity: Negation of Body, Accident, and Composition

A substantial portion of al-Rāzī's metaphysics is devoted to denying corporeality, accidentality, spatial location, and compositional multiplicity in the Divine Essence. His arguments systematically demonstrate that anything divisible, composite, or dependent is necessarily contingent. Notably, al-Rāzī extends this reasoning to conceptual composition, arguing that even genus–differentia structures imply dependency. Consequently, God lacks *ḥadd* (definition) and cannot be subsumed under any universal category. This radical simplicity leads directly to his insistence on divine uniqueness and the impossibility of substantial union (*ittiḥād jawharī*) or plurality within the Divine Essence.[28]

Existence and Essence: Al-Rāzī's Break with Avicenna

Perhaps the most philosophically significant divergence from Ibn Sīnā occurs in al-Rāzī's treatment of the relationship between existence and essence in *wājib al-wujūd*. Whereas Avicenna maintains their identity in God, al-Rāzī argues for their distinction. His central argument is epistemological: existence as such is known necessarily (*ḍarūrī*), while the Divine Essence is categorically unknowable. What is known cannot be identical with what is unknowable. Therefore, existence cannot be identical with God's essence. Furthermore, al-Rāzī contends that relational predication, such as saying "existence is necessary for God", only makes sense if existence and essence are distinct. Otherwise, such predication collapses into incoherence. This position marks a decisive shift toward a more critical ontology, in which metaphysical coherence is prioritized over doctrinal inheritance.[29]

4. CONCLUSION

This study has examined the metaphysical framework of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī as articulated in *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥaqā'iq al-Ilāhiyyah*, with particular attention to his ontological, epistemological, and theological arguments within the broader context of Islamic philosophy. The analysis demonstrates that al-Rāzī occupies a pivotal position in post-Avicennian metaphysics, not as a mere transmitter of Peripatetic doctrines, but as a critical reformulator who rigorously interrogates their conceptual foundations. The research shows that al-Rāzī grounds metaphysics in an epistemologically cautious framework. By affirming the self-evidence (badihah) of existence while simultaneously denying its definability or genushood, he establishes wujūd as the most fundamental intelligible without reducing it to a classificatory concept. This move allows him to preserve divine simplicity and avoid ontological composition, while also resisting essentialist schemas that risk rendering the Necessary Existent contingent. al-Rāzī's treatment of modality, particularly his view that contingency (imkān) is an iʿtibārī, mentally posited attribute rather than an extramental reality, marks a significant departure from realist metaphysical interpretations. This position enables him to maintain a strict ontological dichotomy between existence and non-existence, while still accounting for rational discourse on necessity and possibility. In doing so, al-Rāzī anticipates later discussions on mental existence (wujūd dhihnī) and reshapes the metaphysical status of modal concepts. And the study highlights al-Rāzī's sustained critique of Aristotelian categorical realism. His rejection of substance, accident, and relation as ultimate genera reflects a broader methodological shift from metaphysics as a science of classification

[28] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥikmah*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥyī al-Dīn, with *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir* by Ṣadr al Dīn al-Shīrāzī, ed. Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm Ṭarāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1423 AH). Page 43

[29] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah fī al-Ḥikmah*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥyī al-Dīn, with *Kitāb al-Mashāʿir* by Ṣadr al Dīn al-Shīrāzī, ed. Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm Ṭarāzī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1423 AH). Page

toward metaphysics as a critical inquiry into the limits of conceptualization. By exposing the problems of circularity (dawr) and infinite regress (tasalsul) inherent in reifying relations and categories, al-Rāzī redefines many ontological distinctions as conceptual rather than strictly extramental. Finally, the analysis confirms that al-Rāzī's most decisive divergence from Avicenna lies in his treatment of the relationship between existence and essence in the Necessary Existent. By arguing for their distinction on epistemological grounds, namely, that existence is necessarily known while the Divine Essence remains unknowable, al-Rāzī prioritizes metaphysical coherence over doctrinal continuity. This stance reinforces divine transcendence while simultaneously redefining the scope of human knowledge in theology. In conclusion, *al-Risālah al-Kamāliyah* emerges as both a systematic exposition and a critical intervention in Islamic metaphysics. Al-Rāzī's project integrates rigorous logical analysis with theological commitments, producing a form of philosophical theology that is skeptical without being nihilistic and rational without being reductionist. His contributions significantly shaped post-classical Islamic thought and continue to offer valuable insights for contemporary discussions on ontology, modality, and the relationship between reason and revelation in Islamic intellectual history.

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