

An Investigation into the Nature of God's Knowledge of the Worlds of *Takwīn* and *Tashrī'*

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge is one of the affirmative attributes of God, which has been acknowledged by all theologians and philosophers. Regarding God's knowledge of the world of Takwīn (creation), there are different theories. Peripateticists believe that this knowledge is al-ḥusūlī (acquires knowledge). Illuminationists consider it as al-ijmālī (general) and al-ḥuduri (by presence). Mullā Ṣadrā views it as al-ijmālī knowledge with al-taḥṣīlī (specific) unveiling. God's knowledge of beings after their creation is also al-ḥuduri and al-taḥṣīlī. Regarding the knowledge of particulars, different schools of Islamic philosophy have different theories. In the peripatetic school, Ibn Sīnā argues that God's knowledge of particulars is al-ijmālī, and God has al-ijmālī knowledge about all beings. However, for the followers of the School of Illumination, this knowledge is al-ḥuduri and illuminative so that God comprehends all things. In transcendent school, Mullā Ṣadrā views God as the source of the grace of all truths and believes that knowledge of things is like knowledge of one's own essence and al-ḥudūrī. As to the knowledge of the world of Tashrī' (legislation), it should be said that all knowledge has been recorded in al-lauh al-mahfūz (the preserved tablet) and is present before God. It was gradually sent to the earth based on the requirements of the time. Therefore, God's knowledge of the world Tashrī' is also al-ḥudūrī.

Keywords: knowledge, God, world, Takwīn (creation), Tashrī' (legislation).

Introduction

The Divine attributes have always been discussed in Islamic theology and still are the most important discussions of this area. Scholars have differing views on this issue. An important and the most complicated issue regarding the Divine attributes is related to God's knowledge. Great scholars such as Ibn Sīnā and Mullā Ṣadrā have proposed various theories on the Divine knowledge. One of the most challenging issues proposed about God's knowledge is the provability of God's knowledge, God's knowledge of His essence,

God's knowledge of things in the world of *Takwīn* (creation), the quality of God's knowledge of the beings before and after their creation in the world of *Takwīn*, God's knowledge of the world of *Tashrī'* (legislation), etc.

In various verses and Ḥadīths, God assigns Himself the attribute of knowledge. For example, "... Be wary of Allah and know that Allah has knowledge of all things".¹ Moreover, Imam Bāqir (AS) states "God's knowledge of the beings after their creation is like His knowledge of them before their creation".²

Based on these verses and narrations, philosophers and theologians also have discussed Divine knowledge and have come to some philosophical conclusions. The present study aims to compare the view of the attribute of Divine knowledge which is confirmed by the reliable religious sources with the views of the Islamic Philosophers and theologians to shed more light on the nature of God's knowledge for the researchers and those interested in the Divine knowledge.

A. Definition of the Divine Knowledge

Ilm (knowledge) literally means 'knowing', opposite for ignorance.³ In Qur'ān, *Ilm* is also defined as knowing: "They said, 'Immaculate are You! We have no knowledge except what You have taught us'".⁴

Knowledge is one of the attributes of God: *al-'Alīm*, *Al-'Alim*, and *al-'A'lām*. The Almighty God says He is the All-creator, the All-knowing⁵ and He is the Knower of the sensible and the Unseen.⁶ In *Lisām al-'Arab*, Ibn Manzūr states "God's knowledge encompasses all things, whether outward or inward, whether subtle or clear, as perfect as possible".⁷ *Al-'Alīm* means 'All-knowing': "Immaculate are You! We have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed You are the All-knowing, the All-wise."⁸

The term *Ilm* (knowledge) means a decisive belief based on reality. Knowledge is the acquisition of the form of an object in the intellect and it is divided into *Ilm al-Qadīm* (Pre-eternal Knowledge) and *Ilm al-Hādīth* (Contingent knowledge). *Ilm al-Qadīm* is the Necessary knowledge of God, which is substantive and is not similar to the sciences which occur to the servants of God. *Ilm al-Hādīth* is of three kinds: obvious, necessary, argumentative.⁹

Regarding the Divine knowledge, Jurjānī writes "a knowledge that discusses the state of beings which are not in need of any matter".¹⁰ A knowledge that focuses on the states, attributes, and signs of the beings which are independent of matter. This knowledge is also called the First knowledge, the First philosophy and general knowledge.¹¹ Accordingly, God's knowledge means the unveiling and emergence of things before God. In other words, things are present before God and God's knowledge of things is similar from pre-eternity to the end of eternity and before and after their creation.

B. Proving the Knowledge of the Necessary Being

Reasons for the Divine knowledge are divided into the narrative and rational reasons.

¹ Qur'ān, English translation by Sayyid 'Ali Qulī Qarā'ī. 2: 231.

² *Kulaynī, Muḥammad Ibn ya'ghū, Usūl min al-Kāfī. Tehran, Iran: Dār al-kitāb al-Islamiyya, 1986, V. 1, p. 107.*

³ *Al-Farāhīdī, al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, al-'Ayn (1st Ed.), Qom, Iran: Usveh, 1993.*

⁴ Qur'ān, 2: 32

⁵ Qur'ān, 15:86

⁶ Qur'ān, 59:22

⁷ *Ibn Manzūr, Muḥammad ibn Mukarram, Lisām al-'Arab (3rd Ed.), Beirut, Lebanon: Iḥyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1993, V. 12, p. 471.*

⁸ Qur'ān, 2:32

⁹ *Jurjānī, Mīr Sharīf, Al-Ta'rīfāt, Tehran, Iran: Nāshir khusru, 1991, p. 67.*

¹⁰ *Jurjānī, Mīr Sharīf, Al-Ta'rīfāt, p. 67.*

¹¹ *Ibn Sīnā, al-Ḥusayn bin 'Abdullāh, Al-Shifā' al-ilāhīyāt, Qom, Iran: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-Mar'ashī al-Najafī, 1985,- V. 2, p. 518.*

The narrative reasons

Narrative reasons are divided into Qur'ānic verses and Hadīths. Some of the related verses include:

1. "The Knower of the sensible and the Unseen, the All-great, the All-sublime."¹²
2. "Indeed Allah is the knower of the Unseen of the heavens and the earth. Indeed, He knows well what is in the breasts."¹³
3. "... Be wary of Allah and know that Allah has knowledge of all things."¹⁴
4. "They said, 'Immaculate are You! We have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed You are the All-knowing, the All-wise.'¹⁵

Similarly, it is quoted that as to the holy verse "the Knower of the sensible and the Unseen", Imam Ṣādiq (AS) states "[in this verse] unseen means the thing which has not been created yet, and the sensible means the thing which has been created".¹⁶

The rational reasons

There are ample rational reasons indicating the knowledge of the Almighty God. Here, we mention a few reasons from different schools of Islamic theology.

Naṣīr al-dīn al-Ṭūsī states "the Rulings mean God's deeds are decisive and done based on wisdom. This implies that the agent of the wise deed is a knower. Since all deeds of God are wise, then God is a Knower. The essence of God is immaterial (every immaterial being is aware of his own essence and others'). God is the cause of all things and enjoys all virtues.¹⁷ Knowledge is also a virtue and God must have this virtue. So God is a Knower.

Another argument used to prove the Divine knowledge is the Immateriality of God. 'Allāma al-Ḥellī argues "The essence of God is Immaterial and every immaterial being is aware of his own essence and others".¹⁸ That is, the immateriality of the Necessary Being implies His knowledge in that God is the True Absolute Being that is free of any substance and accident. Such a True Absolute being is, first, aware of His essence and, second, thanks to his knowledge of His own essence, is aware of His deeds. Therefore, He is aware of Himself and His deeds which are His creatures.

According to Mullā Mahdī Narāqī, if God is not knowledgeable, then He is ignorant. If He is ignorant of His essence and other things, then He is imperfect since ignorance is a kind of imperfection¹⁹

The Necessary Being is the origin of all beings including the knowers, who are aware of their essence. Therefore, God is also aware of His essence. Since He is aware of His essence and is the origin of all beings,

¹ *Qur'ān*, 13:9

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¹ *Qur'ān*, 35: 38

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¹ *Qur'ān*, 2:231

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¹ *Qur'ān*, 2:32

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¹ *Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir, Biḥār al-Anwār al-Jāmi'at la-Durr Akhbār al-A'immat al-Aṭhār. Beirut, Lebanon: Iḥyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī, V. 4, p. 80.*

¹ *Naṣīr al-dīn al-Ṭūsī, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, Tajrīd al-'Itiqād, Qom, Iran: Tabliqāt-i-Islāmī, 1986, p. 192.*

¹ *'Allāma al-Ḥellī, al-Ḥasan bin Yūsuf (2nd Ed.), Kasht al-Murād, Qom, Iran: Imam Ṣādiq institute, 2003, p. 20.*

¹ *Mullā Narāqī, Mahdī, al-lima'a al-'Arshī'a (1st Ed.), Karaj, Iran: 'Ahd, 2002, pp. 295-296.*

He is knowledgeable about all beings including the intelligible and sensible, partial and general, since knowing the cause requires knowing the effect.²⁰

C. The Quality of the Divine Knowledge

Having proved that the Almighty God is a Knower and a knower must have the knowledge and presenting a number of reasons and arguments for it, now we can focus on the quality of the Divine knowledge.

Divine knowledge as one of the affirmative attributes of God is confirmed firmly by all Divine religions, particularly Islamic sects. However, there are disagreements on the quality of Divine knowledge. To explain the nature and quality of the Divine knowledge, one needs to pay close attention to some points.

Knowledge is either *al-ḥudūrī* (knowledge by presence) or *al-ḥusūlī* (acquired knowledge). *Al-ḥusūlī* knowledge is the imprinting of established forms such as knowledge of the maturity of the human being. However, *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge is presented before the knower with the presence of the known and their discovery, like the human's knowledge of his existence or his powers.

Regarding *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge, after perception of the existence of the known, there must be a relationship between the knower and the known in the external world so that known is revealed before the knower. Otherwise, every immaterial being will be aware of all the known in the external world. This statement is not valid since most of the knowledge of the immaterial beings is not discovered.²¹

As to the *al-ḥusūlī* knowledge, the existence of the known in the external world is not required since this knowledge is either active or passive, active knowledge is either real or unreal.²²

If we define knowledge as an imprinted form in the mind or the obtained forms in the intellect or the presence of the thing before the person, none of them is true about God since it requires attainment after absence and existence after the knowledge. This means the occurrence of His knowledge to His essence after the time when He did not have knowledge. This requires the knowledge to be added to His essence, while God's knowledge is His own very essence.²³

There are two kinds of knowledge for God: 1. *al-'ilm al-ijmālī* (general knowledge), 2. *al-'ilm al-Taḥṣīlī* (specific knowledge). *Al-'ilm al-ijmālī* is the knowledge which is God's very essence. Thus, it is the source of unveiling all beings.²⁴ That is to say, God's knowledge of the beings before their creation was general. This will be discussed in detail. As to the *al-Taḥṣīlī*, this is the knowledge created in the external world by God. This knowledge has different levels which are briefly presented below:

First level. In *sharī'a*, it is interpreted as the pen, the light, the intellect. In Sufism, it is called 'nous'. The wise consider it as the intellects. Thus, the pen which is the first of creatures, and what is hidden in it, are inherently present before the Necessary Being.²⁵

Second level. It is interpreted as *al-lauh al-mahfūz* (the preserved tablet) in *sharī'a*, while the Sufis and the wise respectively call it the perfect soul and Celestial Souls. It is also inherently present before God.²⁶

Third level. It is *al-lauh al-mahw* (the tablet of effacement) and *al-lauh al-ithbāt* (the tablet affirmation). It includes the physical power which encompasses the minor forms of the materials and it is the forms of

² Ibid. 0

² Ibid. p. 297. 1

² Ibid. 2

² Al-Khafri, Shams al-Din, *Ta'liqah bar alāhiāt sharḥ al-tajdīd (1st Ed.)*, Tehran, Iran: Mirāth-i-Maktūb, 2003, v. 2, p. 41.

² Ibid. 4

² Ibid. 5

² Ibid. 6

al-nafs al-muntaba'a (Impressed soul on the animal soul of man) in higher and lower bodies. Hence, these forms with all different patterns impressed in them are present before God.²⁷

Forth level. It is the level of external beings that are composed of the higher and lower bodies. These beings along with their essences are present before God at the time of their creation.²⁸

After this introductory section, we can now focus on the main discussion which is the quality of God's knowledge of His essence and the beings before and after their creation.

Examining the quality of God's knowledge of His essence starts with the question of whether God's knowledge is *al-ḥudūrī* or *al-ḥusūlī*. God's knowledge is divided into two types: His knowledge of His essence and knowledge of other beings.

God's knowledge of His essence

God is aware of His essence and His essence is present before Him. This knowledge is His very essence. In other words, it is *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge, just like man's knowledge of his own soul and power.

To prove God's knowledge of His essence, 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī argues "every immaterial being is present before himself. Therefore, he is aware of his very essence. This premise has been proven in philosophical discussions that an immaterial being is perfect in terms of his essence and is not dependent on power. Therefore, this perfect essence is present before him and his existence is for himself. What we mean by knowledge is nothing but the presence of the thing for another thing. Due to their expansion and immateriality, immaterial beings can be present both before themselves and other immaterial beings. Since the criterion for knowledge and awareness is the being's presence, every immaterial thing is aware of its essence. In the same vein, Suhrawardī (known as Shaykh al-'Ishrāq) states "God is the Light of the lights. Therefore, He knows His essence and nothing can veil him from other things."²⁹

Moreover, it can be said that the knowledge of the beings of themselves proves God's knowledge. The creatures of the world are aware of their essence. They are God's creatures. Therefore, God, the Creator of all creatures, must be aware of His essence a fortiori. Otherwise, God is imperfect, while God's essence is free of any imperfection and defect.³⁰ Accordingly, it is clear that God's knowledge of His essence is *al-ḥudūrī*.

God's knowledge of other beings

This knowledge is divided into knowledge of other beings before their creation and knowledge of other beings after their creation.

God's knowledge of the world of *Takwīn*

The world of *Takwīn* means the world of creation, the world of existence and its governing rules. To put it simply, the world of *Takwīn* is the very deed of God: "the Originator of the heavens and the earth. When He decides on a matter, He just says to it, 'Be!' and it is."³¹

² *Ibid.* 7

² *Ibid.* 8

² Suhrawardī, *Shihāb al-Dīn, Hikmat al-'Ishrāq*, Tehran, Iran: Islamic sciences and cultural studies center, 2001, p. 150.

³ Miṣbāḥ Yazdī, Muḥammad Taqī, *Philosophy teaching*, Tehran, Iran: Imam Khomeini educational institute, 2012, v. 2, p. 54.

³ Qur'ān, 2:117 1

The quality of God's knowledge of the world of *Takwīn* before its creation

It was stated that God is a Knower and His knowledge of His essence is *al-ḥudūrī*. Now, the question is whether God is aware of the beings before He creates them or not.

Scholars have differing views on God's knowledge of the world of *Takwīn* before its creation. Peripateticists believe that this knowledge is *al-ḥusūlī*. Illuminationists consider it as *al-ijmālī* and *al-ḥudūrī*. Mullā Ṣadrā and his followers view it as *al-ijmālī* knowledge with *al-Taḥṣīlī* unveiling. Some of these views will be discussed in the next section.

Ibn Sīnā's view

Ibn Sīnā defines knowledge as "the truth of the thing is represented before the perceivers and he observes that truth through what he perceives. Therefore, the truth when is perceived is either the very truth that exists outside the perceiving soul, which is not a correct possibility or the truth of the thing is impressed in the essence of the perceiver such that is not different from him in terms of nature. This possibility remains and is correct."³³ In this definition, Ibn Sīnā considers perception as the presentation of the truth before the perceiver. The word "*tamathul*" (representation), in the original Arabic sense, does not imply that the definition refers to the perception of the material affairs, excluding other types of perception. Rather it means "what constitutes the truth of the thing". Accordingly, the definition refers to both material and immaterial things. Ibn Sīnā argues that an external thing cannot be present before the perceiver. Therefore, it has to be present before the agent in abstracted form.³³

Peripateticists' view

Intellectual forms are sometimes derived from things existing in external world, and sometimes things existing in the external world are created from the intellectual form. The knowledge which is subject to *al-ma'lūm* (the known) is *al-'Ilm al-Inḥe'ālī* (passive knowledge), while the knowledge to which the known is subject is *al-'Ilm al-fe'lī* (the action knowledge). In action knowledge, knowledge results in the emergence of the known. For example, an engineer first creates the plan of the building in his mind, and, then, creates the actual plan. Presenting this premise, peripateticists state "since the relation of all things to the Almighty God is that of products to their producers, the intellect of God about things is the very forms of the thing that exist.

There is a fundamental difference between the agency of God over things and our agency over forms we produce. He is the Inventor, while we produce different forms using the matter that has already existed. Another difference between the agency of God and that of us is that the realization of intellectual forms in man requires passion and using a driving force, while God in His agency is in need of nothing.³⁴

According to Peripatetic school, God's knowledge of His essence and His *al-ijmālī* knowledge of the essence except His essence is the *al-ḥudūrī*, while *al-Taḥṣīlī* knowledge of the essence except His essence is *al-ḥusūlī* and redundant to the essence. They argue that how it is possible that man has *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge about his essence and his scientific forms, while God who is the giver of all virtues lacks that knowledge! In proving the immateriality of the soul, Ibn Sīnā states "if one supposes that he was created at once, fully developed and perfectly formed. suppose that his senses are paralyzed, there is no relation between his soul and body, he is in the cold weather or he has closed his eyes, no sound is heard, the weather is moderate such that it is neither cold nor hot, he is floating in the air, his limbs separated and kept out of

³³ Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ḥusayn bin 'Abdullāh, Al-Shifā' al-ilāhīyāt*, V. 3, p. 308

³⁴ Dhabīḥī, Muḥammad, *the viewpoints of Ibn Sīnā and Mullā Ṣadrā on the Divine knowledge. Humanities studies*, 1999, 1(2), 91-115.

³ *Ibid.*

contact with one another so that they do not feel each other. In such a situation, if he focuses on his inner world, he will neglect everything but his own existence."³⁵

Using the Floating Man argument, Ibn Sīnā has proved the principle of the existence of the soul and its contradiction with the body, the immateriality of the soul, and soul's *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge of himself. Accordingly, while man's soul has no relationship with the external world, it is aware of its own essence and perceives his own "self" immediately and without the help of senses and the *al-ḥusūlī* knowledge, and scientific forms. It follows that when the man can understand his own essence immediately, God, hence, is more qualified for this knowledge. Man learns about the beings in the external world through their forms. He is not only aware of the external beings, but also is aware of this knowledge, and this knowledge- i.e., knowing that he has the knowledge of the external beings- is *al-ḥudūrī*. For this knowledge to be *al-ḥusūlī*, it should be sequential. When the man is eligible for knowing that he has the knowledge of the external beings and his knowledge is *al-ḥudūrī*, then, the Almighty God is perfectly eligible for knowing that He has the knowledge of the external beings and His knowledge is also *al-ḥudūrī*.³⁶

Mullā Ṣadrā's view

Mullā Ṣadrā presents a detailed explanation for knowledge in *al-Asfar*, which is as follows.

1. Knowledge is existential, not non-existential. Therefore, knowledge is not a soul derived from matter since derivation means non-existence.
2. The knowledge that is existential is actual.
3. This actual existence is mere an action, there is no potentiality or non-existence in it.
4. This existential knowledge is indivisible and immaterial.
5. It is one and there is no multiplicity in it.

In *al-Mabda' wa'l-ma'ād*, Mullā Ṣadrā presents a preliminary explanation about knowledge and, then, says

According to the extensive conformations, correct conjecture, and sound instinct, and in the light of effort, research, and experience, it becomes clear that knowledge is the acquirement of an immaterial thing from matter and its implications for the immaterial being that exists independently- whether the acquirement is for itself just as it is the case in *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge, or for others in the form of itself, like the *al-ḥusūlī* knowledge. *Al-ḥusūlī* knowledge is sometimes real, like knowledge of others in which the known has been truly acquired by the knowers, and sometimes it is mandatory, like knowledge of the soul in which the known is the very knower, rather than acquired by the knower. This definition of knowledge and the fact that acquiring is sometimes acquiring-for-itself and sometimes acquiring-for-other also holds for the Almighty God.³⁷

Mullā Ṣadrā also states "it is one of the most difficult philosophical issues to explain the quality of God's knowledge of things without the requirement of such issues as "the creation of the Necessary Being", "agency of the Necessary Being", and "multiplicity in the essence of the Necessary Being". Few people have stepped into this path and have not slipped and made mistakes, even Ibn Sīnā with all his unique mastery, skill, intelligence, Suhrawardī with his purity of mind, perception, and his relationship with

³⁵ Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ḥusayn bin 'Abdullāh, 'Al-ishārāt wal-tanbīhāt*, Tehran, Iran: Maṭba' al-ḥaidarī, 2000, v. 2, p. 292.

³⁶ Dhabīḥī, Muḥammad, *the viewpoints of Ibn Sīnā and Mullā Ṣadrā on the Divine knowledge. Humanities studies*, 1999, 1(2), 91-115.

³⁷ Mullā Ṣadrā, *Ṣadr ad-Dīn Muḥammād, al-Mabda' wal-ma'ād*, Tehran, Iran: Iranian philosophy and wisdom association, 1974, p. 140.

wisdom and his rank of revelation, and other eminent scholars are not infallible. When great philosophers can make mistakes, how is the state of those who rely on their sense and the world of matter and are integrated with nature?³⁸

Refuting Peripateticists' view, Mullā Ṣadrā, just like Suhrawardī, considers knowledge of the beings after their creation as the acquirement of the objective forms of the things. He also proves *al-Taḥṣīlī* knowledge before the creation of the thing. According to him, God's knowledge of the existence of things is their very existence.³⁹

To prove his claim, Mullā Ṣadrā argues that there are three kinds of requirements: 1. requirements of nature, 2. requirements of mental existence, and 3. requirements of the objective existence.⁴⁰ In other words, the requirements are of two kinds: of nature and existence which, in itself, is divided into mental and objective. Requirements of nature are not separated from the containers in which nature is placed, like the evenness of the number four. However, if something is one of the external requirements of the thing, it is not in its mental existence, and if it is one of the requirements of the mental existence, it is not in its external existence. For example, heat which is a requirement of the external existence of the fire is not in its mental existence. Logical Secondary Intelligibles such as the universality and the particularity which are requirements of the mental existence of things are not with them in the external world. In transcendent wisdom, nature, in itself, is conventional and its requirements are also conventional. Albeit, the nature by accident is characterized by mental and the external existence. Therefore, what is beyond God cannot be considered as the requirements of the Almighty God since He does not have any nature.

Therefore, lack of knowledge of things before their existence in the external world (i.e., *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge) is not a flaw. Accordingly, the assumption of the Necessary being's lack of knowledge of things before their creation does not result in any flaw in the essence of the Almighty God.

Quoting other theories in his book, Mullā Maḥdī Narāqī states that among these theorists are the *Jumhūr-i-Mashā'* (Illuminationists) who claim that God's knowledge is limited to a universal acquirement. However, the objection presented for this theory is that "so, the particularities and the personal existences are the external to God's knowledge, while it is not meaningful to negate the *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge at the presence of the appropriate existence."⁴¹

Moreover, Muḥaḥiq Ṭūsī argues that God's knowledge is *al-ḥudūrī* in any case and that all the forms of the beings, whether universal or particular, are imprinted in the First effect, and observation for the Almighty God means the unveiling of the beings before Him.⁴²

Proof: God is aware of His essence. All beings are effects of the essence of the Almighty God. Therefore, God must have *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge of all His effects. He has also *al-taḥṣīlī* knowledge with *al-ijmālī* unveiling before the beings' creations. In other words, God has *al-ijmālī* knowledge of beings, which changes into *al-taḥṣīlī* knowledge when they are unveiled. Some Qur'ānic verses imply this point, which is as follows:

1. "... Allah knows that you will be thinking of them..."⁴³ this verse can be proof of God's knowledge of beings before their creation since God says He knows that they would be thinking of them, i.e., they had not thought of them yet and they would do in the future. Accordingly, it can be concluded that God has fore-knowledge of the things that will happen in the future.

³ *Ibid.* p. 19. 8

³ *Ibid.* p. 144. 9

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 13. 0

⁴ Mullā Narāqī, Maḥdī, *al-lima'ā al-'Arshī'a* (1st Ed.), p. 323.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 324. 2

⁴ Qur'ān, 2:235 3

2. " ... He knows that some of you will be sick, while others will travel in the land seeking Allah's bounty, and yet others will fight in the way of Allah..."⁴⁴ Just like the previous verse, this verse indicates God's knowledge of things before their happening.

Similarly, there are a number of Ḥadīths from the Infallibles' (AS) about God's knowledge of things before their creation, some of them are briefly mentioned below.

1. He allotted all things their times, put together their variations gave them their properties, and determined their features knowing them before the creating them, realizing fully their limits and confines and appreciating their propensities and intricacies.⁴⁵
2. " ... He is the Knower even though there be nothing to be known..."⁴⁶
3. Al-Manṣūr bn al-Ḥāzm narrates "once I asked Imam Ṣādiq (AS) "is not God aware of what has happened and what will happen until the Resurrection Day? He respond " yes, [he was aware] before He created the heavens and the Earth.
4. Regarding the attributes of the essence, Kulaynī says "God's knowledge of everything before the creation of the being is like His knowledge of them after their creation."⁴⁷
5. Once Ayūb Ibn Nūḥ asked Imam Hādī (AS) "was God aware of the beings before creating them? He wrote, "God was aware of the beings before creating them as He is aware of them after creating them".⁴⁸

Accordingly, it can be understood that just as God has *al-ijmālī* and *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge of the beings after their creation, He had also *al-tafṣīlī* and *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge of the beings before their creation (Of course, *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge and *al-ijmālī* knowledge with *al-tafṣīlī* unveiling).

D. The Quality of God's knowledge of the *Takwīn* World After its Creation

It was mentioned that God's knowledge is divided into knowledge of His essence (which was approved) and knowledge of others. God's knowledge of others is either before their creation (which was discussed in detail) and after their creation, which is the focus of the present section.

God's knowledge of the beings after their creation, i.e., His knowledge of creation by action, is *al-tafṣīlī* and *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge, but it is not the very essence since it is assumed that this knowledge is by action and action is out of essence. Here, the reality of the world is God's deed and, simultaneously, His knowledge. It can be compared with the knowledge of the human soul of mental forms that he creates. The given mental forms, by themselves, are present before the soul and, at the same time, they are the action and effects of the soul.

This explanation of God's action knowledge of beings is one of the initiatives of Suhrawardī. According to this explanation, there is no difference between the material and immaterial beings since all of them are the effects and deeds of God, and all are present before God.⁴⁹

⁴ *Qur'ān*, 73:20

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⁴ *Imam 'Alī Nahj al-Balāghah*, *Sermōn*. 1

⁴ *Imam 'Alī Nahj al-Balāghah*, *Sermōn* 152

⁴ Kulaynī, Muhammad ibn Ya'yub, *Uṣūl min al-Kāfī*, Tehran: Dār al-kitāb al-Islamiyya, 2004, v. 1, hadith. 2.1987.

⁴ *Ibid.* hadith. 5.

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⁴ *Rabbānī Gulpāyegānī*, *'Alī, Iḍāḥ al-ḥikmah*, Qom, Iran: international center of Islamic sciences, 2007, v. 2, pp. 547-8.

Another argument presented to prove God's knowledge of beings after their creation is that the beings are actions and effects of God. Accordingly, they are present before his agent and cause (because it is not possible to have an agent without action and cause without effect). Therefore, God has *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge of the beings.

God's knowledge of the particulars

Before explaining the quality of the Necessary Being's knowledge of the particulars, it is essential to discuss the universals and particulars. Particulars have two features: 1. they are not true about the majority. 2. They are variable. In contrast, the universals are true about the majority and are fixed. In other words, the meaning and concept of the universals do not change. The term universal has two meanings: fixed and comprehensive and based on the common feature. Accordingly, if one acquires the knowledge of a particular object through his senses, his knowledge is partial. This knowledge is subject to decay and change. When that object gets out of sight, the knowledge will also disappear (here, we mean the knowledge which is acquired by the senses, not the one gained through imagination or intellect). If the knowledge of the particulars is acquired through its causes, that knowledge is universal. That is, it is fixed, not comprehensive, and based on the common feature.⁵⁰

Peripateticists' view

Peripateticists do not consider God's knowledge of the essences except His essence as *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge, which is present before Him like the known. They also do not consider perceptual *al-ḥusūlī* knowledge to be acceptable, such that for Him, the particular form is inherently known and the external object is accidentally known. Rather, they consider God's knowledge a universal *al-ḥusūlī* knowledge. Now this question is raised that how God's knowledge of particular and temporary affairs is.

To respond to this question, Ibn Sīnā writes "God is aware of the essences except for His essence, and His knowledge of the universals and the particulars is general, i.e., the fixed affairs. God reasons about things based on the means and causes that make them exist.⁵¹ He also stipulates that the Necessary Being's knowledge is not derived from things, i.e., His knowledge is not the knowledge after multiplicity, like a passerby who sees several houses and gains knowledge about them, rather His knowledge is the knowledge before multiplicity, like an architect who is aware of the house before its construction.⁵²

Therefore, since God possesses every name that is perfect and imperfect names are considered His God's negated attributes. Seeing by sensory tools, which result in acquiring variable knowledge (i.e., the knowledge is due to the existence of the object and cannot be acquired before its existence and will not exist after its disappearance), is His negated attribute. Knowledge of particularities is not worthy of Him. In fact, His knowledge of particulars is based on his knowledge of universals. This knowledge is also based on the fact that the Almighty God has the knowledge of Himself, who is the cause of all beings, of His first emanation that is His effect, and of the effect of His effect. Accordingly, He has the knowledge of all causes and effects up to a particular person with hundreds of features like Zayd. The reason for God's knowledge of particulars is that these features are Zayd's, otherwise they are universal features. If someone else has these features, God also knows him. In other words, the concept of Zayd is universal since his features can be found in other people.

To clarify the issue of the Necessary Being's knowledge of particulars, Ibn Sīnā gives some examples of astronomers' knowledge. Suppose a person gets particular information about the eclipse. That is, one hour ago when there was no eclipse, he did not know anything about the eclipse, and one hour later when

⁵ Dhabīḥī, Muḥammad, *the viewpoints of Ibn Sīnā and Mullā Ṣadrā on the Divine knowledge. Humanities studies*, 1999, 1(2), 91-115.

⁵ Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ḥusayn bin 'Abdullāh, Al-ishārāt wal-tanbīhāt*, v. 3, pp. 298-299.

⁵ Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ḥusayn bin 'Abdullāh, Al-Shifā' al-ilāhīyāt*, pp. 358, 593.

the eclipse ends, he does not know anything about it. His knowledge is merely limited to the time of the eclipse. This knowledge is passive and is subject to the occurrence of the eclipse. However, an astronomer who knows the cause of the eclipse, is aware of it before, during, and after its occurrence. His knowledge does not result from the occurrence of the eclipse. He also knows when the previous eclipse was and when the next eclipse will be. His knowledge of the causes of eclipse is applicable to any eclipse. Therefore, his knowledge of this particular eclipse is based on his universal (fixed) knowledge. This kind of intellect is permanent, though it relates to a particular affair.

In short, regarding God's knowledge of beings, Ibn Sīnā argues that He is aware of all the known elements of the world. All the known essences and all particular beings are known to Him. Regarding the first group, the scientific forms that are present before God have no incidence in the individual since intellects are limited to a person. Regarding the second group, although the known elements are not limited to the person, they get limited to a person due to the multiplicity of the features, and that universal form has no example but a person.⁵³

There are some Qur'ānic verses and Ḥadīths about God's knowledge of particulars.

1. "... and that Allah comprehends all things in knowledge."⁵⁴ According to this verse, God comprehends everything, both universal and particular, and that His comprehension of all things is absolute, not conditional.
2. "... Be wary of Allah and know that Allah has knowledge of all things [both universal and particular]."⁵⁵
3. "... He knows that some of you will be sick ..."⁵⁶ This verse explicitly indicates that God has the knowledge of the particulars since a person's illness is one of the particulars.
4. "... Allah knows that you will be thinking of them..."⁵⁷ thinking of them is one of the particular affairs of which God is aware.
5. Imam 'Ali (AS) states "Surely, Allah, the Glorified, the Sublime, nothing is hidden from Him of whatever people do in their nights or days. He knows all the details, and His knowledge covers them. Your limbs are a witness, the organs of your body constitute an army (against yourself), your inner self serves Him as eyes (to watch your sins), and your loneliness is open to Him."⁵⁸ According to Imam 'Ali (AS), the most particular things are known to God. Therefore, His knowledge includes the particulars as well.

By examining and the rational and narrative arguments, it can be said that God is aware of His essence and that His knowledge of His essence is *al-ḥudūrī*. He also has *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge and *al-ḥusūlī* knowledge of all things, both universal and particular. Furthermore, all beings, both universal and particular, are present before God and the change in particulars is not in conflict with God's knowledge. In addition, God has *al-tafṣīlī* knowledge and *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge of the beings after their creation since all beings are presented before God after being created.

⁵³ Mullā Ṣadrā, Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammād, *al-Mabda' wal-ma'ād*, p. 19.

⁵⁴ Qur'ān, 65:12

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⁵⁵ Qur'ān, 2:231

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⁵⁶ Qur'ān, 73:20

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⁵⁷ Qur'ān, 2: 235

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⁵⁸ Imam 'Alī Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermōn 199

Suhrawardī's view

Suhrawardī states "the Necessary Being is free from any change and the temporal changing material things are not present before God since God is generally immaterial. Accordingly, any knowledge that does not result in any increase or change and is merely present before God must be known by God.⁵⁹ Therefore, "God has Illuminating knowledge and *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge of particulars such that He comprehends all affairs and all things are present before Him".⁶⁰

Mullā Ṣadrā's view

Mullā Ṣadrā argues that "the Almighty God is the source of the grace of all realities, and He Himself is generally all things. Thus, God's knowledge of other beings actually means His knowledge of His essence.⁶¹ Therefore, all things are present before God, and God has *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge of the things, just like His knowledge of Himself.

However, regarding the knowledge of the beings before their creation, God has *al-tafṣīlī* knowledge with *al-ijmālī* unveiling and *al-ijmālī* knowledge with *al-tafṣīlī* unveiling. In other words, God has knowledge of all beings before their creation as a single light, and that this knowledge is *al-ijmālī*. However, when creating each of the beings, He has *al-tafṣīlī* knowledge of it. In fact, God has *al-tafṣīlī* knowledge of things at the time of their creation.

For example, there are a lot of water drops in a glass of water. All the drops are in the glass and we have *al-ijmālī* knowledge of the drops (for example, we know that there are a thousand drops of water in the glass, but we do not know where the tenth drop is. We just generally know that it is in the glass). However, when we separate these drops of water, it becomes clear that a drop has been one of the drops of the glass and we gain *al-tafṣīlī* knowledge about it. For example, we know that it is the second drop. Regarding God's knowledge, it can be said that God has *al-ijmālī* knowledge of all beings as a general light. However, God's *al-tafṣīlī* knowledge occurs at the time of creating things.

E. The Relationship between God's Knowledge and Human Free Will

God's knowledge of all beings, including material and immaterial, is exhaustive. That is, God comprehends all beings and this knowledge is His very essence. It is *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge. He has knowledge of all beings before and after their creation. Moreover, God is aware of all deeds of His servant. He also is aware of all deeds and intentions before their creation. For example, it can be said that God has fore-knowledge of the deeds and intentions of Zayd and He knows that Zayd will do something on a certain day.

This belief led some to think that God's knowledge of the future events and man's deeds in the future result in determinism since if God's knowledge of beings' deeds is realized, then, man is compelled to do so and one can do nothing but what God knows of. If God's knowledge is different from what happens, that means His knowledge is not in accordance with reality. Thus, His knowledge is not basically knowledge and, hence, God's knowledge turns into His ignorance.

⁵ Suhrawardī, *Shihāb al-Dīn, Musiniḥāt*, Tehran, Iran: cultural studies center, 1996, v. 1, p. 75.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 488.

⁶ Mullā Ṣadrā, Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammād, *Al-Ḥikmat al-muta'āliyyah fī al-asfār al-'aqliyyah al-Arba'ah*. Beirut: Iḥyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1989, v. 6. P. 180.

In short, God's knowledge of man's future deeds leads either to determinism (if it is in accordance with reality) or God's ignorance (if it is not in accordance with reality). The following famous quatrain attributed to Omar Khayyām points to this issue.

I can easily drink wine before God
I drink and so everybody who is obedient like me
Since the pre-eternity, God knew that I would drink wine
If I do not drink wine, God's knowledge would turn into ignorance

Shiite scholars present response to this suspicion using two different approaches.

Refuting: Āyyatullah Subhānī states if God's fore-knowledge is the source of man's deterministic actions, God will not also be an independent agent. Since just God is aware of man's deeds, He is aware of His own deeds. Accordingly, if the foreknowledge is the cause of the deprivation of authority of the agent, we must also consider God as an obliged agent and Creator, while those who believe in the determinism of man view God as the free knower.⁶²

Solving: first, knowledge is different from free will. They cannot be in conflict (i.e., we Cannot say free-choice action mean to be free to do an action or to leave it, and since God knows whether we will do it or leave it, we, thus, are obliged to do it and there is no free will). Suppose two drivers are driving freely. Based on their speed, you are sure that they will meet each other at a certain point in time and in a certain place or one of them will overtake the other. If this happens, is it because of your knowledge? Does it show they had no power over their action? (Definitely, it is not so). Therefore, God's knowledge never deprives us of our free will and authority.⁶³ Second, God's knowledge of man's deeds is not absolute, rather it covers man's deeds with all its features, including his free will and the effect of man's will and power on their occurrence. Therefore, God pre-eternally knew that man would do certain actions based on his free will. It is obvious that God's knowledge not only is not in conflict with man's free will but also confirms it. It can be concluded that the action of the agent with all his characteristics is the object of God's knowledge. Therefore, if an agent lacks the reason and authority (like the fire that is the source of heat), God's knowledge is about its un-authoritative emanation. In other words, God pre-eternally knows that a certain fire will un-authoritatively cause heat in a certain time and place. However, if the agent has the reason and power (like the human, who act freely), the objects of God's knowledge is that the given agent acts authoritatively.⁶⁴ Third, those who consider per-eternal Divine knowledge in conflict with man's free will just focus on the principle of the realization of man's action and neglect its fundamentals since just as God is per-eternally aware of the principle of the realization of actions of an authoritative and un-authoritative human, He is also aware of the characteristics of the agents and their fundamentals. Therefore, God pre-eternally knows that fire does its action without awareness and choice, and un-authoritatively. He also knows that human does parts of his actions consciously and freely. Furthermore, God's knowledge is based on reality and is free of the slightest flaw. Accordingly, the fire must be un-authoritative in its actions, while human acts freely. This foreknowledge not only does not make humans obliged but also strengthens their free will and freedom.⁶⁵

⁶² Subhānī, Ja'far, *Free-will and Determinism (1st Ed.)*, Qom, Iran: Imam Šādiq (AS) institute, 1961, p. 88.

⁶³ Gherawīān, Muhsin, Ghulāmī, Muḥammad Ḥussain, & Mīr Bāqirī, *Beliefs teaching (1st Ed.)*, Qom, Iran: Dār al-'Ilm, 1951, v. 1 pp. 173-4.

⁶⁴ Mišbāḥ Yazdī, Muḥammad Taqī, *Beliefs teaching (7th Ed.)*, Tehran, Iran: Tabliqāt Islami, 1991, v. 1, p. 176.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

F. God's Knowledge of the World of *Tashrī'*

The system of *Tashrī'* refers to *Sharī'a*. i.e., God's laws and prohibitions. In other words, *Sharī'a* is the Divine law that God has sent to people through His prophets and has been recorded in the Holy Books.

Qur'ān, the Holy Book of Muslims that contains Islamic *Sharī'a*, was sent down both all at once and gradually. 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī considers two meanings for Qur'ān. 1. Exoteric meaning in the form of the words and phrases and has its own concepts. It is the Qur'ān that is recited. 2. Esoteric meaning that is the true meaning of Qur'ān and beyond the understanding of human beings. It is devoid of illusions.⁶⁶

In the interpretation of *Ar-Ra'd*, the 13th chapter (surah) of the *Quran*, in response to the question of the importance and benefit of Qur'ān for the people of Heavens and the Earth, 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī narrates from Imam Sādiq (AS), saying "everything God wills is present in His knowledge".⁶⁷ In the interpretation of *Al-Burūj*, the 85th chapter of the Qur'ān, verse 22, he also mentions that the glory of Qur'ān is constantly presented in the eternal knowledge of God.

Furthermore, in the interpretation of *Az-Zukhruf*, the 43rd chapter of the *Quran*, verses 2-4, 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī states that the 'preserved Book' mentioned in the verse is the basis and origin of Qur'ān, which has a special place in the '*al-lauh al-mahfūz*' and, then, sent down through the prophets. Therefore, the interpretation of the exoteric reality which results in the formulation of a religious ruling, among others, or expression of some knowledge, among others, is just a reference to it.⁶⁸

Accordingly, it can be concluded that Qur'ān has two existences; the exoteric one consists of the words and phrases. It is the Qur'ān recited by Muslims. There is also *al-lauh al-mahfūz* that is the source of Qur'ān. *Al-lauh al-mahfūz* is the source of all the Divine Rulings. In other words, all the Divine Rulings mentioned in *al-lauh al-mahfūz* are present before God and were revealed to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) gradually and at a proper time. Thus, the knowledge of the world of *Tashrī'* is present before God and this knowledge is *al-ḥudūrī*. However, the gradual revelation of the Divine Rulings to people depends on the situation and the requirements of the time.

G. Conclusion

The present study attempted to prove God's knowledge using narrative and intellectual evidence. Analyzing Qur'ānic verses and the infallibles' (AS) Ḥadīths, as well as intellectual reasons, it can be concluded that God has knowledge of His essence. This knowledge is His very essence. There are different views on God's knowledge of the beings before their creation. The best view, among others, is that God has *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge of all beings. God has *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge of his essence; all beings are effects of the Almighty God; therefore, He must have *al-ḥudūrī* knowledge of all beings. God's knowledge of beings after their creation is both *al-ḥudūrī* and *al-ḥusūlī*. However, God's knowledge of beings after their creation is not His very essence because here, the knowledge is in the form of action and action is out of essence. Moreover, God' knowledge of beings after their creation is *al-ijmālī* knowledge with *al-tafṣīlī* unveiling. That is, God has knowledge of all beings as one single Light before their creation, and after their creation, they, as actions of God, are present before God and God has *al-tafṣīlī* knowledge of them.

As to God's knowledge of the world of *Tashrī'*, it can be said that Qur'ān, the Divine word, has two existences: the exoteric one consisting of the words and phrases and *al-lauh al-mahfūz* that is the source of Qur'ān. All the Divine Rulings mentioned in *al-lauh al-mahfūz* are present before God and were revealed

⁶⁶ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Muhammad Hussain. *Al-Mizān*, Qom, Iran: Jāmi'a Mudarrisi, 1997, v. 2, pp. 14-16.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* v. 11, pp. 417-20.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* v. 3, p. 153.

to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) gradually and at a proper time. Therefore, it can be concluded that God's knowledge of the Divine *Tashrī'* is also *al-hudūrī*.

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