



## God's will from Ibn Sina's Point of View

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### **Abstract**

Muslim theologians and philosophers generally accept the attribute of will for God, but they disagree about its meaning and quality. Ibn Sina views God's will as an essential entity and define it as active knowledge and providence regarding the good and the better in the system of existence. In addition, he considers God's agency as one through providence. According to him, the goal of obligatory actions is His essence itself, and it does not come from outside of His essence. One of the results of the discussion is that if Ibn Sina's general philosophical system is considered, his point of view will be a reasonable and defensible one, and the criticisms expressed by critics are not justifiable.

**Keywords:** *Will; Providence; Agent by Foreknowledge; Purpose*

### **Introduction**

The subject of God's names and attributes is one of the age-old and important topics concerning divine religions. There is a consensus among Muslim theologians and sages that God has the attributes of being all-knowing, all-powerful, and has the power of life, will, etc. However, they disagree about how to describe God with these attributes. Among the topics related to God's attributes, the topic of the attribute of will is a difficult and challenging topic. Most theologians and sages believe that God possesses the power of will, however, they disagree about its meaning. Some have considered it to be a matter of nature and eternity (Baghdadi, 1981: 90), while some consider it as the knowledge of the good and the better system (Ibn Sina, 2000: 14) and some consider it as the knowledge of what is better which is hidden in action (Taftazani, 1989: Vol.2/338).

Theologians reason that the proof of God's will is that His actions are performed at a specific time and assigning them to a specific time requires an agent, and that agent is nothing but the will. This is because attributes such as God's absolute knowledge and His power to perform or not perform actions are the same. Therefore, they cannot be the agent doing actions at a specific time (Halli, 2009: 402-401).

According to the principle of the essential existence of the nature, Ibn Sina (428 AH) demonstrates in his works that God has all attributes, including the attribute of will (Ibn Sina, 1984: 6). Then, according to this rule that every external being must refer to the essential being, it specifically

proves God's essential will. In other words, a will that is not essential must refer to a will that is essential (Ibn Sina, 2000: 56).

Regarding the attribute of will, the following questions are raised: What is the meaning of God's will? And how is it different from human will? How is God's will related to human will? What is the relationship between God's will and his essence and other attributes? Is God's will existential or non-existential? Is it creatable or eternal? Is it from the attributes of the essence or from the attributes of the action? To what extent is the scope of God's will? Is God's will the same as special knowledge, i.e., knowledge of the right system or belief in expediency hidden in action, or does it have a meaning independent of knowledge?

Considering the breadth of the discussion and the fact that it is not possible to examine all the issues in one essay, in this article, by referring to Ibn Sina's works and using a descriptive-analytical method, the following issues will be discussed and investigated. From Ibn Sina's point of view, the meaning of will What is God? And what is the difference with the meaning of human will? Is the will of God one of the attributes of essence or one of the attributes of action? Does God's will have an independent meaning or is it traced back to other attributes? Can Ibn Sina's philosophical system respond to the criticisms directed at his view?

### ***Statement of the Problem***

Attributes of aseity are discussed and investigated among Muslim theologians and sages from two aspects of ontology and epistemology. In ontology, it is argued whether the necessary existence of the attributes of perfection originate from the essence or action? Whether they are creatable or eternal? If they are eternal, are they the same as the essence or are they different from the essence? And in epistemology, it is argued whether what is understood by reason about human attributes can be put into words that can portray the infinite examples of God's attributes? And are these words compatible with the divine will? And what is the difference between the will of God and the will of man?

Muslim theologians are generally either Sunni or Shiite. Sunni theologians are divided into two categories: Ash'ari and Mu'tazila. Sunni Muslim theologians disagree with each other on the interpretation of will. The Ash'arites do not distinguish between God and man in the interpretation of will and consider will as an attribute distinct from knowledge. They consider will as preference or agency for one of the two possible sides, i.e., doing or not doing an action (Fakhr Razi, 1980: 294). In other words, the doer is faced with an action that he can choose to do or not to do, and what causes the doer to make a choice is will.

According to well-known Mu'tazila theologians such as Abu al-Hudhayl Allaf, Nazzam, Jahiz and Balkhi, will is considered as perception and they define it as the belief in the benefit of an action. According to them, a capable person can decide to do an action or leave it. What causes a preference for and realization of an action or leaving it is the belief in the existence of benefits in doing the action or the belief in the harm that may arise from leaving that action (Taftazani, 1989: 2/338).

It is understood from the words of Mu'tazili theologians that the meaning of "belief" here is intellectual belief, that is, confirmation versus conception; both of which are types of knowledge. More so because along with "belief in the benefit", the term "suspicion of the benefit" is used in the discussion of this point of view (Jorjani, 1998: 6/64).

They believe that after the doer finds the power to do or not do an action, he/she begins to believe in the benefit or loss arising from doing that action. This belief makes them prefer to do or leave that action, and as a result, the doer would choose to do or not do that action (Mulla Sadra, 1981: 6/338).

Some Mu'tazila theologians consider will as a desire that arises after believing in the benefits of doing something and makes the subject eager to do it. In fact, they consider the will to be the result of

knowledge of the benefits and usefulness of doing work, not knowledge and awareness itself (Mulla Sadra, 1981: 6/338). The question is why this group of Mu'tazila theologians do not consider the power of God as preference for doing or not doing an action?

In response, it can be said that power, according to Muslim theologians, is the correctness of doing or not doing something. And the relation of God's power to all creatures is the same, and power is only involved in the doing of actions not in preferring to do or not do them. That is, the order of doing the action follows the preference and an action will not be done until there is a preference for it.

In other words, it can be said that the state of power is the state of influencing and creating, and this state of power includes all times. So, God's power cannot be the factor that allocates beings in specific times and places. It means that God's power cannot be the factor by which every being is created by God in a certain time and place.

Shia theologians agree that God has the attribute of will, but they differ in the interpretations they offer. For example, some of them may ask whether God's will is an attribute of essence or an attribute of action; or if God's will is a form of knowledge or is it an attribute independent of knowledge. The essence of God is an attribute that is sufficient for abstracting and describing God's essence. However, the attribute of action requires that in abstracting and describing the essence of God, his actions also be considered.

Until the 7<sup>th</sup> century (AH), Shia theologians often considered the will of God as an attribute of action based on the hadiths of religious leaders. Therefore, they believed that God's will is the creation of action, which is abstracted from the position of the action and is the same as the instance of objects (Saduq, without date: 4 and Mofid, 1992: 13).

In the 7<sup>th</sup> century (AH), the researcher Nasir al-Din Tusi (672 AH) adopted the opinion of Abul Hasan Basri Mu'tazili (436 AH), which was close to the opinion of Muslim sages. He considers God's will to be the knowledge of expediency hidden in action, and he considers this special knowledge to be the motive for doing an action (Helli, 2009: 402).

It should be mentioned that Mohaghegh Tusi does not consider absolute knowledge as the factor that influences agency and preference for an action, because absolute knowledge is always present and does not exist only at specific times. Rather, he considers the agent of action to be special knowledge, that is, the knowledge of expediency hidden in action. Also, he does not consider God's will to be the desire to achieve a goal; rather, he considers the desire to achieve a goal to be the cause of action in humans.

Indeed, what they mean by knowledge is active knowledge and not the passive one. In other words, from their point of view, knowledge is the origin of the known (external existence). That is, first there is knowledge, then knowledge is created through that knowledge. That is, first there is knowledge, then knowledge arises through that knowledge, not that the known is the cause of that knowledge (Mulla Sadra, 1967: 451).

In other words, knowledge sometimes becomes the cause of external existence, which is called active knowledge. And sometimes an external entity causes the creation of a mental state, which is called passive knowledge.

### **Ibn Sina: The Will of Man and God and the Difference between Them**

One of the common ways of understanding God's attributes among Muslim sages and rationalist theologians is that they analyze and examine human attributes and eliminate his potential defects and aspects and then attribute them to God. Man's will is one of the principles of his voluntary actions, which is achieved after conceptualizing the action and confirming the goal and developing enthusiasm for the action. Willingness for action means conceptualizing that action in such a way that there is agreement between the idea of that action and the action itself. In other words, conceptualizing what is imagined

arouses the desire to do it. Therefore, there is a necessary and causal relationship between the will for action and its prerequisites.

The most important characteristic of beings with will is to have knowledge and awareness. It can be said that the origin of will is the knowledge that leads to taking an action. And this knowledge may be intellectual, theoretical or conceptual. For example, what an engineer does originates from his will and reason; and with a person who runs away from danger, the source of his will lies in his presumptions; and with a person who wishes for something simply because of its similarity to something of higher quality, the source of will is in his power of imagination.

In his discussion about the quality of the formation of will in man and its difference with God's will, Ibn Sina argues that whenever a man wills something, he first imagines it and its benefits in an esoteric, imaginary or perceptive way. Then, the desire to achieve that thing arises in the person. When that passion is intensified and the human powers are prepared, the will to that thing arises in the person and the human muscles move as a means to achieve the thing desired. However, *Wajib-ul-Wujud* (the essential being), which is perfect and super-perfect, has no motivation and nothing is beneficial or exciting for him (Ibn Sina, 2000: 11).

According to Ibn Sina, there is no difference between will and knowledge of the *Wajib-ul-Wujud*, and the fact that he is aware of his essence means he has the will to do anything. Should a person want to make something, he first designs for it and then starts making that thing. Now, if man himself had been the best and most perfect designer, the existence of man himself would have been enough to make that thing. In that case it could have been said that man's awareness of himself, and his will to make that thing and create that thing, would have been the same.

Ibn Sina considers God's agency as "agency by foreknowledge". In other words, reflection of the general system of the world of creation with its characteristics in God's previous knowledge of the system of the world of creation is the reason for creating the system of creation, in the same order and image as God had foreknowledge of. Therefore, it can be said that God's purpose for any of his actions cannot be originating from any source other than his essence (Ibn Sina, 1996: 140/3).

In other words, from his point of view, the creation of the world by God with his knowledge of the system of creation are necessary and bound to each other; and with his knowledge of the system of creation, nothing else is necessary. Thus, his will for the creation of the world is the same as his knowledge of the creation of the world. In the next part we discuss whether it is necessary, according to this claim of Ibn Sina, that God is forced to create or not.

In order to explain how the divine will is connected to his knowledge, Ibn Sina analyzes the human will and by lifting the limitations and shortcomings of the human will. He defines God's will by explaining that human will is subject to his intention and his intention is influenced by external factors. And because there are many external factors, various actions come from him. As for God's actions, since He is not an external factor, what is issued from him is necessary and obligatory. That is, God's actions are necessary for His perfect and super perfect essence and vice versa (Ibn Sina, 2000: 121). It should be added that with necessity, sometimes the will has no effect on the action, like the ray of light which is relative to the source of light. Sometimes the will has an effect on the action, like the relationship between creatures and God. This means that creatures are a requisite for God's knowledge of His essence, where will is related knowledge.

### **Ibn Sina - Proof of the Essential Will of God**

Ibn Sina proves God's essential will in two ways. First, by noting that every external matter must lead to an essential matter. Second, by highlighting the link between God's essential will and the essentials of God's essence.

In line with the first proof, he argues that in the system of existence, there must be an essential being, so that other beings that are incidental lead to it. In the same way, the essential will must exist so that the will of other beings, which are temporal, will lead to that essential will (Ibn Sina, 2000: 56).

In other words, according to Ibn Sina, just as there must be an essential being that other beings can acquire the attributes of existence from, there must also be essential will in order for beings to have the attribute of non-essential will (Ibn Sina, 2000: 52). Therefore, Ibn Sina does not deem it permissible to contradict God's will with God's essence and believes that it is not right for God's power or will to be apart from His existential identity (Ibn Sina, 1984: 21).

Regarding the second proof, Ibn Sina argues that it is not possible for creatures to arise from God without God's will. Because God considers His essence as the origin of all beings, and since He finds His essence to be the origin of all beings, His will towards His creatures is necessary and certain (Ibn Sina, 1984: 32). Here, Ibn Sina highlights the point that if God does not have a will in the creation of creatures, then His being as the Creator is like creatures such as animals and plants that lack will and perform their actions without will.

According to Ibn Sina, God's will is different from man's will. Because man's will is potential and it arises and becomes actual due to need or motivation. Need or motivation are either intrinsic or extrinsic, and both are the same as compulsion. However, since God's essence is the same as perfection, there is no other kind of supplication or motivation other than the goodness of his essence, so he is the actual sovereign. And his permanent free will is not only a proof of his being forced, but also a proof of his true and complete free will (Ibn Sina, 2000: 52).

Therefore, it can be said that God's will is the same as His essence, not something that is incidental to His essence. Also, God's will is required by His perfect essence, not that His will is there to achieve a goal outside of His essence.

## **5. Ibn Sina - The Will of God and Man in Terms of the Purposefulness or Non-purposefulness of Their Actions**

In most of his works, Ibn Sina, unlike other sages, believes in conceptual unity in addition to the representative unity of God's affirmative attributes (Ibn Sina, 1997:294 and Ibn Sina, 1984:21).

What exactly does he mean by the conceptual unity of God's attributes? Does he mean to emphasize the representative unity of the attributes of other sages, or does he mean to negate the contradiction of affirmative attributes, or does he mean that God's attributes have a conceptual unity due to its representation (i.e., God), or does he mean something else? This is a topic that needs detailed discussion in another article.

Whenever a person decides to do something, he has knowledge and awareness of its benefit(s) and goodness, whether that knowledge is intellectual or unrealistic. And the idea of doing that action creates passion in that person, and by strengthening the passion, will emerges in him/her and then his/her physical powers begin to function. Therefore, the human will is subject to profit or benevolence. However, since God is absolute perfection and is devoid of any defects or deficiencies, His will cannot be anything other than His existential identity. Also, His will cannot be subject to profit-seeking, benevolence, and the elimination of defects and his perfection, like the will of a human being.

In order to explain the concept of God's will, Ibn Sina first explained the stages of a human voluntary action and then explained the difference between human will and God's will. According to Ibn Sina, the stages of a voluntary action of a person are as follows: First, a person imagines the action, then he acknowledges the usefulness and benefit of it. After confirming the usefulness of the action, the desire to do it appears in the person. When this passion becomes intense, the powers in the human muscles are stimulated and the person carry out the action (Ibn Sina, 2000: 16).

He also believes that if a person wills something, it is not because of the essence of that thing. Rather, it is because of the pleasure that lies in it. And if that pleasure had knowledge and awareness by its own essence and that essence was also the cause of performing actions, then it would be said that that pleasure became the cause of those actions by its own essential will (Ibn Sina, 2000: 11). And according to him, the human will is associated with something that does not have that thing. And if that which desires it has it, it would be meaningless to will that thing. Therefore, making a will in humans is always accompanied by perfection. However, God's essence is perfect, even super-perfect, and it does not lack anything that seeks to find it and perfect itself. Therefore, God's actions have no goal or purpose, and He does not do anything to achieve a purpose or goal (Ibn Sina, 1985: 638).

Now the question arises, why in Ibn Sina's point of view, God's actions cannot have a goal or purpose? In response, Ibn Sina believes that God is not only perfect but super perfect and that his actions cannot be characterized as having a goal or purpose. In other words, it is not permissible for God to gain knowledge and awareness of something that agrees and is compatible with him, and then form a desire for it in order to obtain it. Rather, God's will is based on His knowledge and awareness of His own existence, which is superior and good in itself. Therefore, with this knowledge, *Wajib al-Wujud* does not need any will. Rather, his very knowledge, which is the cause of the creation of a system of possibilities with a special order, causes the creation of objects (Ibn Sina, 2000: 12).

In another argument, Ibn Sina states the reason why God's will does not have a goal or purposes: The supreme Being does not want anything for lower beings where such a desire is construed as a purpose or goal for Him. Because the intention is that it is preferred over its opposite. Therefore, if something is superior and better by itself, but the actor does not consider it superior and better, then that thing cannot be intentional. Therefore, the true bounteous and all-possessing Being does not have a purpose, and there is no purpose for the supreme being in the existence of lower beings (Ibn Sina, 1996: 149).

Explaining that anything that has a benefit in the eyes of the actor - whether that benefit is intellectual or imaginary - that actor will want that benefit, and if that action does not have any benefit, it will not be the actor's intention and desire. So, the actor does something that will benefit him in the end, be it a material or spiritual benefit. In other words, the actor whose action are done for the benefit of others is imperfect, because this actor is actually looking for perfection, greatness and praise in his/her doings by benefiting others, where s/he is also looking for his/her own benefit. And if this motivation does not exist in the actor, s/he has no motivation to benefit others. Therefore, it does not matter whether the actor does his/her work to benefit himself/herself or to benefit others. Similarly, it does not matter if the actor seeks to prevent harm from himself/herself or to prevent harm from others. In both cases, s/he is in need and with his doings, s/he removes defects and deficiencies to complete himself/herself. As a result, it can be said that because the supreme being (God) does not have any defects, deficiencies or needs to compensate for them, he does not do anything for the sake of gaining benefits.

In his commentary on Ibn Sina's book "*Al-Isharat wa Tabihaat*", Nasir al-Din Tusi maintains that the reason why God's actions do not have an end is because the actor who performs actions for an end is incomplete in terms of existence and essence. It is due to having this goal that the actor wants to perfect his existence and it is again through the essence of that goal whereby the actor wants to achieve the goal as the agent of that essence. It is while *Wajib al-Wujud* is absolutely self-sufficient and is not dependent in any way on anything (Ibn Sina, 1996: 152/3).

In other words, the actor who intends to achieve a goal by performing an action is incomplete in two ways: One is that reaching that goal means perfection for him. Another is that it is the nature and existence of the goal that makes the actor the actor. Because until the actor does not imagine and acknowledge the benefit of the action, and does not find passion for it, and the will to do it does not appear in him, s/he will not do it. This is why they maintain that the goal, with its subjective nature and existence, is the cause of the actor becoming the actor. Thus, it can be said that if God performs His actions for the sake of perfection, He is not self-sufficient by essence, He rather becomes self-sufficient by his actions. If He were rich by essence, he would not seek to achieve that perfection by His actions.

Therefore, from Ibn Sina's point of view, the goal of the obligatory action is not something other than His essence, and His will is firstly attributed to his essence (Ibn Sina, 2000: 192).

In other words, all beings are required by the necessary essence and originate from him, and since He loves his essence, all possible beings are willed because of His essence, unbound by any purpose. That is, *Wajib al-Wujud* does not want any creature for that creature's sake, but because he wants his own essence, he wants everything that has arisen from his essence. Just like when a person loves someone or something, he is fascinated and desires all the representations and attachments of the beloved. Although human love has conditions that are not present in *Wajib al-Wujud* (Ibn Sina, 1984: 363).

Now the question may be raised that although it is impossible to distinguish between the effect and the cause, why is there a group of beings that are created with delay? In response, Ibn Sina believes that some possible entities have existed since eternity, and for their creation, only the existence of the agent and the possibility of that entity is sufficient. But with the other category of possible beings, in addition to their possible existence, there are other conditions, such as a special talent at a certain time that are also necessary for their realization, which arise slowly and gradually (Ibn Sina, 2000: 17).

Another question that may be raised is how does *Wajib al-Wujud* will the existence of evil? In response, Ibn Sina believes that although the world of matter has flaws and defects, its existence is good. And if the world of matter were not created, evil would be much more than the evil that exists in the creation of the world. Also, if the world of matter were not created, many creatures would be deprived of goodness. And this is in itself a very big evil (Ibn Sina, 1997: 454).

Additionally, when asked why the world of matter was not created in such a way that there is no evil in it, Ibn Sina argues in response that if everything was good in the world of matter and there was no evil, then the system of matter would not be a system of matter, the world of intellects, which lacks the effects of matter. In addition, defects and deficiencies are part of the inseparable features of the material world and the material world does not reach perfection without movement and conflict (Ibn Sina, 1997: 454).

He views God's will as God's knowledge of the system of the good and the best (Ibn Sina, 2001: 96), because all that knowledge is associated with, is required by His essence, and His will is also knowledge in the same sense. The creatures in the world in themselves along with the system they are in, constitute the requirement of His essence. Therefore, everything exists because God will it, and if it contradicted His essence, He would not have created it (Ibn Sina, 2000: 138).

Based on the above, it can be understood that there is a gap between human knowledge and human actions, knowledge of the benefits of actions and will, and as such will is one of the weaknesses of the actor. Regarding God's will, however, benefits of actions is not relevant. In addition, there is no gap between God's knowledge of the correct system and his actions, and to do His works, His essential knowledge is sufficient, and this knowledge is the same as His will, existence, and power.

It may be said that if will is the same as knowledge, then there should not be a difference between knowledge and will? While God knows everything, He does not will everything, including evil, cruelty and apostasy.

Mulla Sadrai Shirazi (1050 AH) argues in response to these problems that what originally belongs to the will is good and good deeds, and evil is a necessity for them, which come to be as a result of the existence of the good. In other words, since existence of evil is a given for the will, it is associated with the good, not because it is evil. According to Hakim Sabzevari, evil is a non-existent entity that neither knowledge nor will belongs to (Mulla Sadra, 1981: 344/6).

It may also be said that if God's will is the same as His essence and knowledge, then it is necessary that God has no free will. Because, if God's will is eternal and indestructible during the creation of the world, it is necessary for the world to be necessary and certain. This means that God is obliged in

his actions and lack freedom. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that the world does not come to be. And if the will of God is eternal, then there will be an infinite sequence and an infinite cycle of wills, because a given will needs another will to arise, and so does that will. In case of continuous repetition, there will be a sequence and in case of rotational repetition, there will be a cycle, both of which are invalid.

By “creatable” and “eternal” sages and theologians mean that if a non-existent entity takes precedence over its existence, then it is called a creatable, and if it cannot be assumed to precede its existence, then that entity is called eternal.

In response, it can be said that the actor is forced if something is imposed on him by another person, not if the action originates from his essence. With God, the certainty of things is due to His will, which is the complete cause for the creation of things. And with the presence of the complete cause, the existence of the effect and its actions are necessary and certain. And this, in fact, indicates the perfection of the actor, not his/her defect. In addition, as God is a complete and absolute giver, such an attribute necessitates the creation of objects and their existence. Therefore, this necessity and certainty is rooted in God's attributes and shows his perfection, not his imperfection and obligation (Mulla Sadra, 1981: 344/6).

Ibn Sina sometimes uses the word "providence" instead of knowledge and believes that possible beings and the system that governs them, which is the best system, are surrounded by God's knowledge (Ibn Sina, 2000: 190).

According to Ibn Sina, God's knowledge of creatures is active knowledge, not passive knowledge. He argues that tracing the general system of the universe in a certain time and place in God's previous knowledge causes the emergence of the system of existence in the universe with its own order (Ibn Sina, 1984: 115). For example, when an image is formed in the human mind of a tree that is in the outside world, that mental image is called passive knowledge. And the mason who wants to build a school first draws a picture of it in his mind and then builds it according to that mental image. This mental image is called active knowledge.

Now that it has been said that God's will in Ibn Sina's philosophical view is His knowledge of creatures, it is necessary to understand God's knowledge of creatures according to Ibn Sina:

Ibn Sina considers God's knowledge of creatures to be "providential knowledge" and his agency as "foreknowledge by agency". Furthermore, based on the principle that all incorporeal beings are intelligent, he considers God to be omniscient by essence and his knowledge is knowledge by presence. In addition, he believes that since God is the cause of all beings, then he has knowledge of them. Also, he views the quality of God's knowledge as manifested by creatures. This means that intellectual forms are first pictured in the mind, and then based on those forms, objective beings are created. In other words, these intellectual forms are the origin of creation of beings in the objective world. That is to say that God's knowledge of creatures does not originate from the objective world, but from his own essence, which is the cause and origin of their existence. And this knowledge is the cause for creation of beings. And although this knowledge exists in the essence of God as knowledge by representation and inference, it is generally without change. Because God is above and beyond time and space. So, His knowledge is free from aspects of time, space and change. Also, the multiplicity of forms of knowledge does not cause multiplicity in God's essence. Because such multiplicity is part of God's essence (Tusi, 2007: 902/3).

Although Mulla Sadrai Shirazi, a famous contemporary sage, considers theologians' concept of "action by intention" as requiring multiplicity, materiality of God's essence and the lack of free will, and regards Ibn Sina's concept of "action by providence" to be more complete, he criticizes Ibn Sina's point of view. His main criticisms are as follows:

First of all, it is necessary to establish agreement and consistency between interdependencies. Therefore, just as God is an external being, His being also requires be an external being. This is



while Ibn Sina considers the conceptual forms of possible beings to be a subjective feature of God (Mulla Sadra, 1981: 6/228-229 and Mulla Sadra, 2001: 104).

Second, God's knowledge of possibilities in Ibn Sina's philosophical system is proven based on the relationship between cause and effect, but knowledge of the existence of the effect is direct knowledge, not inferred knowledge. And the former occurs either through existential unity, divine comprehension or cause and effect. Therefore, Ibn Sina's explanation, that is, the existence of effects with their respective essences in God's essence before the creation of possible beings is not acceptable. (Mulla Sadra, 1981: 6/203 and Mulla Sadra, 2001: 104).

Third, although they are of the accidental sort, the forms that manifest God's essence are the mediators of the creation of external beings. This is while considering their essence, accidental beings are more imperfect in terms of their rank of existence. Thus, in Ibn Sina's philosophical system, the creatures that are close to God are more imperfect and weaker than the creatures that are far away from Him, and this statement is against the principle of the possibility of having the greatest of all creation, which refers to the nobility and perfection of existence of the creatures in a descending order (Mulla Sadra, 2001: 232).

Based on the above, it can be argued that Mulla Sadra's main criticism of Ibn Sina's concept of "agency by Providence" is that God's knowledge comes about through inference as well as its contradiction with God's essence.

In response to Mulla Sadra, the following points can be mentioned: According to Ibn Sina, God's knowledge of possible beings is direct and not inferred, because he views God's essence as pure, and he considers God's perfect attributes such as power, will and knowledge to be the same as God's essence. In other words, he considers God to be essentially powerful and all-knowing (Ibn Sina, 1985: 601). As Qutb al-Din Razi (766 AH) refers to this matter in his "Al-Muhakimat" (meaning Trials) in the arbitration between Khawja Nasir al-Din Tusi's and Fakhr Razi's (606 AH). Qutb al-Din Razi believes that according to Ibn Sina, God's essence is pure; it is not an essence to which the attributes of knowledge, power, and will are added; but in comparison to ourselves we say that God has knowledge. Moreover, because creatures originate from God, we say that God has power and will. As a result, God is knowledge by essence, that is, knowledge is His essence. God's knowledge is his essence and there is no duality in his essence. And the use of forms by Ibn Sina is for the sake of teaching and explaining his arguments (Qutbuddin Razi, 1996: 3).

In addition, it can be said that even if God's knowledge of possible beings is through forms and inference, God's knowledge of these forms themselves is not through other forms. Rather, it is through direct knowledge. And the knowledge of God in imprinted forms is the same as His essence. And His knowledge of possible creatures and things is through imprinted forms, which is outside of His essence. According to Ibn Sina, God is aware of Himself in the same way that He knows He is the origin of all beings He (Ibn Sina, 1997: 390).

These imprinted forms from without the essence are not related to the essence to be used to describe the essence. Rather, these imprinted forms are a feature of God's essence. In addition, the features of the essence do not exist separately from the essence itself, but exist with the existence of the essence itself. In other words, just as the attributes of uniqueness and being the actuator and the originator are part of God's essence and are based on His essence, the attributes of knowledge, power, and will are also part of God's essence.

## **Conclusion**

In Ibn Sina's view, the will of God is an essential matter, contrary to the view of Ash'ari theologians. As every external matter leads to an essential matter, God's will must also be essential so that

will can be found in other beings. Also, Ibn Sina considers the will of God to mean the knowledge of the best system and in his philosophical system, Wajib al-Wujud creates the world of existence with the rationalization of its essence as pure perfection and the origin of all perfections. Because the world of existence and its best system are required by His essence. In addition, in his view, contrary to the view of Mu'tazili theologians, God does not do anything for the sake of benefit, because benefiting oneself or others is valid where the doer has a material or spiritual deficiency and wants to overcome it. And since God's essence is perfect, even super-perfect, then benefit seeking is an invalid matter. In conclusion, it can be said that if the general and systematic system of Ibn Sina's philosophy is taken into consideration, his views are acceptable and defensible. In addition, the criticisms about some of his statements in some of his works have been made without justification and without considering some of his arguments such as the objectivity of essence and God's attributes and that God's attributes are a feature of his essence, etc.

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The author declares no conflict of interest.

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