

## ***Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah: The Synthesis of Mulla Sadra's Islamic Philosophy and Its Influence on Islamic Epistemology***

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**Abstract:** *Al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah holds its significance in the harmonious integration of philosophy, mysticism, and Islamic theology. This study aims to uncover the concept of al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah, focusing on its epistemological sources, this research employs a historical-philosophical approach with a library research method, relying on the study of both primary and secondary sources. The data analysis technique is carried out in three stages: historical description, philosophical analysis, and critical interpretation. The findings of the study show that: Al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah according to Mulla Sadra is a synthesis of prior epistemologies, derived from three principles: intellectual intuition, rational demonstration, and Sharia, forming a wisdom acquired through spiritual enlightenment, presented in rational arguments, and realized by adhering to Sharia regulations. The methods of acquiring it can be achieved in two ways: first, through intellectual intuition and rapid progress, such as direct divine teaching referred to as 'ilm ladunni (divinely inspired knowledge); and second, through conceptual thought and gradual progress, such as self-learning and following the teachings of a mentor. The verification of Mulla Sadra's epistemological sources is influenced and supported by earlier thinkers, such as Ibn Sina in the field of epistemology, Suhrawardi in the concept of existence and tashkik al-wujud (gradation of existence), and Ibn Arabi in matters of Islamic philosophical issues.*

**Keywords:** *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah, Epistemology, Mulla Sadra, Influence, Synthesis*

**Abstrak:** *Al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah memiliki urgensi yang terletak pada integrasi harmonis antara filsafat, mistisisme, dan teologi Islam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap konsep al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah yang berfokus pada sumber-sumber epistemologinya, cara mendapatkan pengetahuan al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah, serta verifikasi yang dilihat dari pengaruhnya bagi epistemologi Islam. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan historis-filosofis dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan (library research) yang bertumpu pada telaah terhadap sumber-sumber primer dan sekunder. Teknik analisis data dilakukan melalui tiga tahapan: deskripsi historis, analisis filosofis, serta interpretasi kritis. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan bahwa, Al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah ala Mulla Sadra merupakan sintesa dari epistemologi sebelumnya, yang*

*bersumber dari tiga prinsip; intuisi intelektual, pembuktian rasional, dan syari'at membentuk wisdom yang diperoleh lewat pencerahan ruhani, disajikan dalam bentuk dan argument rasional, dan direalisasikan dengan mengikuti aturan syari'at. Cara mendapatkannya dapat diperoleh melalui dua cara: pertama, melalui intuisi intelektual dan gerak cepat. Seperti halnya pengajaran langsung dari Tuhan yang disebut ilmu ladunni dan kedua, melalui pemikiran konseptual dan gerak lambat. Seperti halnya melalui usaha belajar sendiri dan mengikuti ajaran guru. Sedangkan verifikasi dari sumber epistemologi Mulla Sadra dipengaruhi dan didukung oleh pemikiran-pemikiran terdahulu, seperti Ibnu Sina dalam hal epistemologi, Suhrawardi dalam hal konsep aksistensi dan tasykik al-wujud, dan Ibnu Arabi dalam hal isu filosofis Islam.*

**Kata Kunci:** *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah, Epistemologi, Mulla Sadra, Pengaruh, Sintesa*

## Introduction

The study of *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* is an intriguing topic of debate due to its inclusion of extensive philosophical elements. One of its core aspects is the synthesis of epistemology, integrating *bayani* (textual reasoning), *burhani* (demonstrative reasoning), and *irfani* (mystical reasoning), forming a transcendent theosophy that continues to be developed by the followers of Mulla Sadra (1572-1640).<sup>1</sup> Additionally, its ontological dimension is based on *wahdat al-wujud* (the unity of existence), *tashkik al-wujud* (the gradation of existence), and *asalat al-wujud* (the primacy of existence). Sadra also introduced the concept of *al-Harakah al-Jauhariyah* (substantial motion), which addresses the transformation of levels of existence within the universe, known as the theory of evolutionism.<sup>2</sup>

There are three factors that highlight the urgency of discussing *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*. First, from a conceptual perspective, *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* represents an integration of philosophy, mysticism, and Islamic theology into a harmonious unity. This synthesis provides a system of thought that is not only rational but also spiritual, bridging the gap between intellectualism and mystical experience.<sup>3</sup> Second, from a functional perspective, *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*, in terms of theological discourse, offers a systematic approach to addressing complex issues related to faith, reason, and the attributes of God. In the context of Islamic education, it promotes a balance between

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<sup>1</sup> Sayyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from Its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy* (State University of New York Press, 2006), 223.

<sup>2</sup> Khudori Soleh, Achmad, *Filsafat Islam; Dari Klasik Hingga Kontemporer*, ed. Aziz Safa, 1st ed. (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2016), 146.

<sup>3</sup> Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from Its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy*, 223-224.

intellectual, spiritual, and ethical dimensions. Additionally, in the realm of intellectual renewal, it serves as a source of inspiration for contemporary Islamic thinkers.<sup>4</sup> Third, from a contributive perspective, *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* makes significant contributions to epistemology by advancing the pursuit of higher knowledge. In philosophical anthropology, it explores the development of the human soul toward spiritual perfection.<sup>5</sup>

Several previous studies are relevant to the title of this research. *First*, a study by Kholid al-Walid and Bil Hamdi explores the perspective of spiritual atheism.<sup>6</sup> *Second*, Hosseinzadeh examines Mulla Sadra's universal intellectual interpretation.<sup>7</sup> *Third*, Titis Rosowulan, Ahmad Fuad Hasyim, and Purwanto analyze Mulla Sadra's architectural framework.<sup>8</sup> *Fourth*, Halimatuzzahro Marzuki investigates Mulla Sadra's theories from the perspective of divine philosophy.<sup>9</sup> *Fifth*, Nurul Khair delves into the meaning, purpose, and urgency of Mulla Sadra's *'Ilm al-Ilahi* (Divine Knowledge).<sup>10</sup> *Sixth*, Nano Warno discusses the presentation of *'Ilm Huduri* (knowledge by presence) within the paradigms of three major philosophies.<sup>11</sup> *Seventh*, Achmad Khudori Soleh and Fathul Lubabin Nuqul explore the sources of thought in Islamic epistemology.<sup>12</sup> *Eighth*, Alkaf Rodiallah and Achmad Khudori Soleh study Mulla Sadra's ideas through the lens of Sufi philosophy.<sup>13</sup> *Ninth*, Hossein Mohammadi and Abdolrasoul Kashfi analyze the views of

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<sup>4</sup> Nasr, 226.

<sup>5</sup> Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (Routledge, 1993), 367.

<sup>6</sup> Kholid Al Walid and Bil Hamdi, "Analisis Spiritual Atheism Dalam Tinjauan Filsafat Jiwa Mulla Sadra," *Tajdid: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 22, no. 2 (December 31, 2023), 298.

<sup>7</sup> Mohammad Hosseinzadeh, "Mullā Ṣadrā on Intellectual Universal," *History and Philosophy of Logic* 44, no. 3 (July 3, 2023), 255.

<sup>8</sup> Titis Rosowulan, Ahmad Fuad Hasyim HS, and Purwanto Purwanto, "Analisis Rancang Bangun Epistemologi Mullā Ṣadrā," *Wahana Islamika: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 2022, 110.

<sup>9</sup> Halimatuzzahro Marzuki, "Filsafat Ketuhanan Mulla Shadra," *Sophist: Jurnal Sosial Politik Kajian Islam Dan Tafsir* 4, no. 1 (July 14, 2022), 42-48.

<sup>10</sup> Nurul Khair, "Konsep Al-'Ilm Dalam Studi Pemikiran Filsafat Mulla Sadra," *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 23, no. 2 (October 31, 2021), 90.

<sup>11</sup> Nano Warno, "Study Comparison On Knowledge By Presence In The Views Of Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī, And Mullā Ṣadrā," *Kanz Philosophia: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* 9, no. 2 (December 8, 2023), .

<sup>12</sup> Jurnal El-qudwah, U I N Maulana, and Malik Ibrahim, "Epistemologi Pemikiran Islam Oleh: A Khudori Soleh Dan Fathul Lubabin Nuqul," *Epistemologi Pemikiran Islam*, no. 1 (2006), 1-24.

<sup>13</sup> Alkaf Rodiallah and Khudori Soleh, Achmad, "Pemikiran Filsafat Tasawuf Mulla Sadra Alkaf," *Al-Hikmah; Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 13 (2023).

Mulla Sadra and John Hick regarding the nature of the soul.<sup>14</sup> Finally, Nur Khosiah examines the concept of *al-Hikmah* within Mulla Sadra's theoretical framework.<sup>15</sup>

After analyzing these studies, similarities and differences with the current research were identified. The similarity lies in the main theme of the study, as previous research has extensively explored Mulla Sadra's *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*. However, the difference lies in the conceptual focus of the study. This research emphasizes epistemology—specifically the sources, methods, and verification of knowledge in *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*—and does not delve into other aspects such as philosophy and ontology. This focus constitutes the novelty of this study.

This study aims to specifically examine the contribution of Mulla Sadra's epistemology of *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* to the development of Islamic epistemology. The main focus is directed toward the analysis of sources of knowledge (*bayānī*, *burhānī*, and *irfānī*), methods of acquiring knowledge, and the verification mechanisms that distinguish Sadra's epistemology from that of his predecessors. Accordingly, this research highlights Sadra's contribution in shaping an integrative paradigm of Islamic epistemology.

### Theory of *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* Perspective of Mulla Sadra

Mulla Sadra, a prominent philosopher from Iran, developed a philosophical theory known as *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* or Transcendent Philosophy. In his most renowned work, *Al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah fi al-Asfar al-Arba'ah*, he presents a system of thought that integrates various Islamic philosophical traditions, including Peripatetic philosophy, Illuminationist philosophy, and Sufism.<sup>16</sup> Mulla Sadra's main theory centers on *ashalah al-wujud* (the primacy of existence), where he argues that existence precedes essence. This marks a significant shift in philosophical thought, where reality is seen as something dynamic and ever-changing, rather than static.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Hossein Mohammadi and Abdolrasoul Kashfi, "The Nature of the Soul from Mullā Ṣadrā and John Hick's Viewpoint," *Journal of Philosophical Investigations* 16, no. 41 (2022).

<sup>15</sup> Nur Khosiah, "Konsep Al Hikmah Dalam Filsafat Mulla Sadra," *Ar-Risalah: Media Keislaman, Pendidikan Dan Hukum Islam* 18, no. 1 (May 7, 2020), 83.

<sup>16</sup> Mulla Shadra, *Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah Fi Al-Asfar Al-'Aqliyah Al-'Arba'ah* (Beirut: Dar Ihya' wa Al-Turats Al-'Arabi, 1981), 54.

<sup>17</sup> Mohammad Karimi Zanjani Asl, "The Autograph Manuscripts of Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1045 AH / 1635 CE): Classification and Preliminary Study," in *Personal Manuscripts: Copying, Drafting, Taking Notes* (De Gruyter, 2023), 287.

One of Mulla Sadra's significant contributions is the concept of substantial motion, which demonstrates that everything in the universe is in a constant process of change and development. He argued that the human soul undergoes a journey toward perfection and immortality through this motion.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, Mulla Sadra discussed the relationship between knowledge and the objects of knowledge, emphasizing that true knowledge is the result of a fusion between intuitive experience and rational analysis. In his view, philosophy and religion are inseparable; both originate from the same source, namely God.<sup>19</sup>

Mulla Sadra also devoted significant attention to the concept of the soul and life after death. He argued that the soul has the ability to create a new body after being separated from the material body, a perspective that combines philosophical arguments with religious texts. His works not only provide profound insights into existence and reality but also invite readers to reflect on their relationship with God and His creation. Thus, Mulla Sadra's thoughts serve as a bridge between philosophy and spirituality within the context of Islam, influencing many thinkers who came after him.<sup>20</sup>

## Method

This study employs a historical-philosophical approach, which aims to trace the development and continuity of philosophical ideas over time and to analyze them critically and thoroughly. This approach is chosen because it is considered the most appropriate for examining the complexity of the epistemology of *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* from the perspective of Mulla Sadra, particularly in understanding the continuity and synthesis of his thought with earlier figures such as Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi.

The type of research used is library research, meaning that all data is obtained from written sources such as books, scholarly articles, journals, and classical works of Islamic philosophers. The primary data sources in this study include the works of Mulla Sadra as well as books on Islamic philosophy such as *Filsafat Islam: Dari Klasik Hingga*

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<sup>18</sup> Fathul Mufid and Subaidi, "Demystifying The Islamic Thought Reconciliation Model Of Mullah Sadra's Transcendent Theosophy," *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 15, no. 1 (March 16, 2023), 205.

<sup>19</sup> Mojtaba Khajeazad et al., "Transcendent Philosophy of Medicine: A Deductive Synthesis According to the Transcendental Wisdom (Mulla Sadra School of Thought)," *Journal of Religion and Health* 60, no. 2 (April 8, 2021), 881.

<sup>20</sup> Khosiah, "Konsep Al Hikmah Dalam Filsafat Mulla Sadra", 83

*Kontemporer* by Prof. Dr. H. Achmad Khudori Soleh, M.Ag, and *Mulla Sadra: Pendiri Mazhab Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah* by Dr. Syaifan Nur. Secondary sources consist of previous studies, academic articles, and other supporting works.

The data collection technique used is documentation, which involves intensive reading of relevant literature and recording key philosophical ideas. The data analysis technique in the historical-philosophical approach consists of three stages: (1) historical description of the background and development of the *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* concept; (2) philosophical analysis of its epistemological structure, including its sources, methods, and verification; and (3) critical interpretation to reveal the relevance and contribution of Sadra's thought to Islamic epistemology.

### Sources of Epistemology *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*

*Al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*, as a construct of thought, was not solely built upon the individualistic creativity of Mulla Sadra but was derived from pre-existing materials, both traditional and historical.<sup>21</sup> However, the intellectual vision formulated by Mulla Sadra is not merely a compilation of prior ideas. Instead, he sought to combine and harmonize various earlier perspectives, such as those of Ibn Sina (980–1073), Ikhwan al-Safa (900–1000), and Suhrawardi (1154–1191), with his own ideas. Through his creativity and genius, he synthesized these viewpoints into a new and unified framework.<sup>22</sup> According to Jalaluddin Rahmat, Mulla Sadra's concept of transcendent theosophy (*al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*) from an epistemological perspective is based on three principles: intellectual intuition, rational proof, and Sharia. Thus, wisdom (*hikmah*) is knowledge obtained through spiritual enlightenment, presented in the form of rational arguments, and realized by following the rules of Sharia.<sup>23</sup>

*Al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*, a unique and comprehensive system of Islamic thought, was developed by Mulla Sadra through the profound integration of three sources of knowledge: *Bayani* (textual revelation), *Burhani* (rational reasoning), and *Irfani* (intuitive knowledge). The first integration, *Bayani*, is deeply rooted in Islamic tradition. Sadra had a profound understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith, using them as the spiritual foundation

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<sup>21</sup> Miswari Usman, "The Establishment of Mulla Sadra's Philosophy: Main Concepts on Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah," *At-Ta'fikir* 15, no. 2 (October 23, 2022), 144.

<sup>22</sup> Syaifan Nur, *Mulla Shadra; Pendiri Madzhab Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah*, ed. Zubair Ahmad, 1st ed. (Jakarta Selatan: Penerbit Teraju, 2003), 34-35.

<sup>23</sup> Soleh, Achmad, *Filsafat Islam; Dari Klasik Hingga Kontemporer*, 173.

and context for his philosophical understanding.<sup>24</sup> The second integration, *Burhani*, provides a logical framework for understanding reality. Sadra synthesized various Islamic epistemological schools and believed that knowledge could be acquired through logical analysis, empirical experience, and the synthesis of various sources.<sup>25</sup> The third integration, *Irfani*, acknowledges that the highest form of knowledge comes from spiritual experience. Sadra developed the concept of *'Ilm Hudhuri* (knowledge by presence), where knowledge flows downward through unity with the knower. *Irfani* knowledge, originating from the highest spiritual experience known as *kashf* (unveiling), represents the ultimate achievement in Sadra's theosophical philosophy.<sup>26</sup>

In his work *al-Asfar al-Arba'ah*, Mulla Sadra states:

"إِنَّ العلم الحقيقي لا يُنال بالحجج العقلية فقط، بل بالشهود الروحي والتصفية الباطنية."

"Indeed, true knowledge is not attained solely through logical argument, but requires spiritual witnessing and inner purity. Reason serves as a guide, but illumination comes through *dhawq* (spiritual taste) and *kashf* (unveiling)".<sup>27</sup> Epistemologically speaking, *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* is based on three principles: intuition (*irfani*), logical reasoning and deductive syllogistic proof (*aql* or *istidlal*), and the sacred texts from God (*wahyu*). The philosophy of wisdom constructed by Sadra is a form of wisdom attained through spiritual enlightenment, intellectual intuition, and can be articulated through rational reasoning, all supported by logical arguments. Sadra's philosophy of wisdom not only generates intellectual enlightenment but also establishes a transformative relationship that alters the existence of the one receiving the enlightenment. Realizing the acquired knowledge is not solely through rational thinking but also through adhering to religious law based on revelation.<sup>28</sup>

*Al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*, from the perspective of Islamic epistemology, reaches the highest position, serving as the meeting point of the three main epistemologies: *bayani*, *burhani*, and *irfani*. The reasoning framework constructed by Sadra is not merely a combination of the three previous epistemologies but an independent and unique

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<sup>24</sup> Nur, *Mulla Shadra; Pendiri Madzhab Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah*, 34-35.

<sup>25</sup> Agung Gunawan, "Pemikiran Mulla Sadra Tentang Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah Dan Relevansinya Dengan Pendidikan Islam," *Tsamratul Fikri | Jurnal Studi Islam* 13, no. 2 (November 3, 2019), 165.

<sup>26</sup> Ahmad Trisno and Syaiful Bakri, "Model Penalaran Epistemologi Irfani; Filsafat Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah Mulla Shadra," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Philosophy* 01, no. 02 (2022), 291.

<sup>27</sup> Shadra, *Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah Fi Al-Asfar Al-'Aqliyah Al-'Arba'ah*, 54.

<sup>28</sup> Nurul Khair and Muhammad Thaha, "Treating Religious Differences: Hikmah Muta'aliyah as An Alternative to Ethical Crisis in Contemporary Era," *NALAR: Jurnal Peradaban Dan Pemikiran Islam* 4, no. 1 (June 30, 2020), 90.

development in his epistemological philosophy. This demonstrates that the philosophy of wisdom developed by Sadra is not simply a form of syncretism, but an epistemological discourse in philosophy with its own distinct characteristics.<sup>29</sup>

**Table 1 Wisdom *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah***

<i>Al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah</i>	- Intellectual intuition	- Obtained through spiritual enlightenment
	- Rational proof	- Presented in the form of rational arguments
	- Shari'a	- Realized by following the rules of the Shari'a

The integration of the three main approaches in Islamic epistemology—*bayani* (revelatory), *burhani* (rational), and *'irfani* (intuitive)—is explicitly exemplified by *Mulla Sadra* in his *al-Asfar al-Arba'ah*. When discussing the existence of God, Sadra begins with the bayani approach through the verse: “*Huwa al-Awwalu wa al-Akhiru wa al-Zhāhiru wa al-Bāṭinu*” (QS. Al-Hadid: 3). He then constructs a *burhani* (rational argument) by developing the theory of *wājib al-wujūd* (Necessary Being) based on the principle of contingency. Sadra states:<sup>30</sup>

“الوجود هو الحقيقة الوحيدة، وكلّ ما سواه فهو اعتبار.”

(“Existence is the only reality; everything else is merely a relative appearance.”)

Finally, Sadra completes his argument with the *'irfani* approach (through unveiling and taste), asserting that true knowledge is only attainable through inner witnessing:

“العلم الحقيقي لا يُنال بالحجج العقلية فقط، بل بالشهود الروحي.”

(“True knowledge is not acquired solely through rational arguments, but through spiritual witnessing.”)

In this way, Sadra not only unifies the three epistemologies in theory but genuinely practices them in the structure of his philosophical argument.

### **Methods of Obtaining the Epistemology of *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah***

Mulla Sadra believed that true knowledge can only be attained through the method of *kashf* (unveiling), which is supported by revelation and does not contradict reasoning. For him, such authentic knowledge can only be obtained through direct teaching from God, with the aid of the light of prophethood and the purity of the heart. To achieve this,

<sup>29</sup> Soleh, Achmad, *Filsafat Islam; Dari Klasik Hingga Kontemporer*, 226.

<sup>30</sup> Shadra, *Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah Fi Al-Asfar Al-'Aqliyah Al-'Arba'ah*, 54.



one must purify the heart from desires, distance oneself from worldly temptations, reflect on the verses of God and the Hadith of the Prophet, and emulate the behavior of the righteous. When a person realizes their own weakness and believes that they possess nothing, they must awaken their spirit with determination and illuminate their heart with divine light. It is at this moment, by God's grace, that the secrets of certain divine verses and convincing evidence will be revealed to them.<sup>31</sup>

The issue of divinity requires an understanding of the foundational principles and fundamental concepts. According to Sadra, this understanding can be obtained in two ways: first, through intellectual intuition and swift movement, and second, through conceptual thinking and slow movement. Sadra believed that in order to assess the truth of reason and prevent it from error, it is important to use the scale of revelation. For him, wisdom must be rooted in religion, and anyone who lacks a deep understanding of the essence of something is not worthy of being called a scholar of wisdom. Just as *burhani* (demonstrative reasoning) is always in harmony and never contradicts religion, so too is religion always in accordance with reason.<sup>32</sup> Mulla Sadra, in his *Syarh al-Ushul min al-Kafi*, stated that to reach the true guidance, it is not enough to rely solely on religious teachings without investigation and reasoning. A harmonious combination of religion and reason is required, as they complement each other. True religion will never contradict certain knowledge, and when religion is accompanied by reason, it becomes Light upon Light.<sup>33</sup>

Mulla Sadra stated that another method that leads a person to true knowledge is *kashf* (unveiling), which is a form of spiritual illumination. He emphasized that true understanding of wisdom is attained through *'Ilm Ladunni* (knowledge directly given by God). Sadra asserted that a person cannot be considered a true scholar of wisdom unless they have reached this level of understanding. He explained that there are two ways to attain knowledge: first, through personal effort in learning and following the teachings of a mentor, and second, through direct teaching from God without intermediaries. This is what is known as *'Ilm Ladunni*, which can only be acquired through *dzauq* (taste) and

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<sup>31</sup> Mulla Shadra, *Mafatih Al-Ghaib*, ed. Muhammad Khajawi (Teheran: The Islamic Academy of Philosophy, 1984), 204.

<sup>32</sup> Nur, *Mulla Shadra; Pendiiri Madzhab Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah*, 34-35.

<sup>33</sup> Shadra, *Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah Fi Al-Asfar Al-'Aqliyah Al-'Arba'ah*, 54.

*wijdan* (spiritual intuition).<sup>34</sup> In *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, Sadra writes: “العلم نور يقذفه الله في قلب عبده المخلص”.

“*‘Ilm ladunni* is a light that Allah casts into the heart of His sincere servant.

Thus, there is no other path to wisdom except through self-purification, adherence to the Sharia, and drawing closer to the Source of Light”.<sup>35</sup>

Just like reason, all achievements of *kashf* must be measured by religion, and *kashf* is meaningless if it does not align with the standards of religion. Moreover, knowledge obtained through *kashf* cannot be explained to others except through *Burhan* (demonstrative reasoning). Therefore, in *al-Hikmah al-Muta’aliyah*, knowledge of *Burhan*, the intuitive witnessing of the truth through *kashf*, and a strong commitment to religion are required.<sup>36</sup> From Mulla Sadra’s perspective, *hikmah* (wisdom) does not contradict religion; in fact, both have the same goal. Those who consider them to be different do not understand the harmony between religious decrees and the proof of wisdom. Knowledge of this can only be acquired with God’s assistance, a complete understanding of wisdom, and insight into the secrets of prophethood.<sup>37</sup>

**Table 2 Method of *al-Hikmah al-Muta’aliyah***

	Method	Result
First	Through intellectual intuition and fast movement	Direct teaching from God ( <i>Ilmu ladunni</i> )
Second	Through conceptual thinking and slow motion	Try to study on your own and follow the teacher's teachings

### The Influence of *al-Hikmah al-Muta’aliyah* on Islamic Epistemology

Before further discussion, it is important to emphasize that the focus of this study is epistemology, not ontology. Although concepts such as *ashālah al-wujūd* (primacy of existence), *tasykīk al-wujūd* (gradation of existence), and *al-ḥarakah al-jawhariyyah* (substantial motion) frequently appear in Mulla Sadra's philosophy, this study limits its

<sup>34</sup> Nur, *Mulla Shadra; Pendiri Madzhab Al-Hikmah Al-Muta’aliyah*, 34-35.

<sup>35</sup> Shadra, *Mafatih Al-Ghaib*, 90.

<sup>36</sup> Kholid Al Walid et al., “Al-’Ilm Al-Ḥudhūrī: Philosophical Epistemology and Sufism Common Ground,” *Jurnal Fuaduna : Jurnal Kajian Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 7, no. 2 (December 30, 2023), 298.

<sup>37</sup> Nur, *Mulla Shadra; Pendiri Madzhab Al-Hikmah Al-Muta’aliyah*, 34-35.

discussion to these concepts only insofar as they are directly related to the structure of knowledge, and does not make them the main topic.

Mulla Sadra's theory, known as *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*, is indeed rooted in metaphysics, which is why Mulla Sadra's position, as written by Mulyadhi Kartanegara, is regarded as that of the greatest thinker after Ibn-Rusyd due to his successful synthesis of three major schools of Islamic thought: Peripatetic, Illuminative, and Mystical. Sadra even succeeded in establishing his own school, the consequence of his synthesis, known as transcendental theosophy (*al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*).<sup>38</sup> According to Jalaluddin Rahmat, Mulla Sadra's concept of transcendental theosophy (*al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*) from an epistemological perspective is based on three principles: intellectual intuition, rational proof, and *syari'ah* (divine law), so that wisdom (*hikmah*) is knowledge obtained through spiritual enlightenment, presented in the form of rational arguments, and realized by following the rules of *syari'ah*. From an ontological perspective, *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* is based on three principles: the principle of existence (*wujud*), the gradation of existence (*gradasi wujud*), and substantial motion (*gerak subtansial*).<sup>39</sup>

According to Jalaluddin Rahmat, the foundation of Mulla Sadra's system of thought can be traced to three major influences. First, the thought of Ibn Sina provides the foundation for Sadra's entire philosophical framework, although Sadra also critiques and modifies certain aspects of Ibn Sina's philosophy, particularly in the area of epistemology. Second, the philosophy of Illuminationism (Ishraq) by Suhrawardi shaped Sadra's distinctive ideas, especially in his concept of existence as the essence of reality and *tashkik al-wujud* (the gradation of existence). Third, the thought of Ibn Arabi made a significant contribution to three major Islamic philosophical issues, such as the contingency of essence and the eschatological-psychological role of the realm of images. Thus, Sadra's system of thought not only unites the main philosophical schools but also represents a true synthesis based on the key philosophical principles of Ibn Sina, Suhrawardi, and Ibn Arabi.<sup>40</sup>

Regarding the characteristics of *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*, its distinctiveness becomes clearer when compared to each branch of other Islamic sciences. Through this

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<sup>38</sup> Mulyadhi Kartanegara, "Pengantar" *Pemikiran Islam Kontemporer*, ed. Khudori Soleh, Achmad (Yogyakarta: Jendela, 2003), viii.

<sup>39</sup> Jalaluddin Rahmat, "Hikmah Muta'aliyah Filsafat Islam Pasca Ibn Rusyd," *Al-Jami'ah*, 1993, 78.

<sup>40</sup> Soleh, Achmad, *Filsafat Islam; Dari Klasik Hingga Kontemporer*, 173.

comparison, the uniqueness of Mulla Sadra's school of thought can be seen among the Islamic intellectual traditions that preceded it. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration nor without reason to say that this school represents something new in the intellectual heritage of Islam.<sup>41</sup> Sadra's influence on Islamic epistemology is highly significant. His contributions paved the way for new ideas on how humans acquire knowledge about the world and about God. Sadra's emphasis on spiritual experience as a legitimate source of knowledge has sparked a broad discussion on the relationship between reason and revelation in Islam. Sadra's epistemology highlights the importance of aligning rational knowledge with spiritual experience and affirms that both dimensions can complement each other and deepen human understanding of reality.<sup>42</sup>

For example, a person is faced with an ethical dilemma, such as whether they should lie to save someone's life. They use *Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah* to help them make a decision. They consider revelation (Islamic teachings on honesty), reason (the consequences of lying and not lying), and their own spiritual enlightenment (inner guidance on what is right and wrong). This enables them to make a decision based on strong moral principles and thoughtful consideration. As a result, the influence of *Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah* on Islamic thought has opened the door to various studies and discussions on epistemology, inspiring new thinkers to explore the relationship between religion and philosophy in the pursuit of truth.

**Table 3 The Influence of *Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah* on Islamic Epistemology**

Previous Philosophers	The Results of Its Influence
Ibnu Sina	Epistemology
Suhrawardi	The concept of existence and <i>tasykik al-wujud</i>
Ibnu Arabi	Philosophical issues of Islam

In addition to its ontological contributions, Mulla Sadra's theories of *tashkik al-wujud* (gradation of existence) and *al-Harakah al-Jawhariyyah* (substantial motion) also carry significant epistemological implications. According to Sadra, existence is neither

<sup>41</sup> Nur, *Mulla Shadra; Pendiri Madzhab Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah*, 34-35.

<sup>42</sup> Sayyed Mahdi Emami Jomeh and Sayyed Mehran Tabatabaei, "The Relationship Between Curriculum and Learning Methods of Mulla Sadra's Philosophy," *Interchange* 53, no. 3-4 (December 30, 2022), 583.

static nor uniform, but rather graded in accordance with levels of existential perfection. This principle of gradation not only shapes an ontological view of reality but also influences the means by which knowledge is acquired. The higher the degree of an entity's existence, the greater its epistemic potential. Thus, true knowledge is attained not solely through logic and rationality, but also through higher existential experiences such as spiritual intuition (*irfani*).<sup>43</sup>

Similarly, *al-Harakah al-Jawhariyyah* emphasizes that substance undergoes continuous essential transformation toward perfection. In an epistemological framework, this implies that the process of acquiring knowledge is not a static event, but a spiritual and intellectual evolution. Each stage of substantial motion reflects an increase in the human cognitive capacity to grasp the essence of truth. Therefore, Mulla Sadra's epistemology is neither linear nor final, but progressive and dynamic, in harmony with the internal transformation of the epistemic subject.<sup>44</sup>

## Discussion

As explained by Sayyed Hossein Nasr, there are two factors that underlie why Sadra's disciples and the broader society associate the term *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* with Mulla Sadra's doctrine.<sup>45</sup> First, the title of the book *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* indirectly refers to the existence of a school of thought and worldview, within which the metaphysical doctrines of Mulla Sadra are outlined. Second, there is the oral teaching of Mulla Sadra, which indicates that the concept of *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* not only refers to the title he wrote, although this reason is not supported by written documents. However, confirmation from traditional Persian scholars accepted it as a valid argument, which is strongly linked to Mulla Sadra himself.<sup>46</sup>

Sadra created a new school of Islamic philosophy by integrating various philosophical currents that were developing in the Islamic world during the Safavid period. There were four main schools that influenced Islamic thought during this time:

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<sup>43</sup> Soleh, Achmad, *Filsafat Islam; Dari Klasik Hingga Kontemporer*, 173.

<sup>44</sup> Sayyed Hossein Nasr, *Shadr Al-Din Shirazi and His Transcendent Theosophy* (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1978), 86.

<sup>45</sup> Muhammad umar Hasi, "Theoretical Framework Pemikiran Mulla Sadra Dan Aktualisasinya Dalam Pendidikan Islam," *Journal Of Alifbata Journal of Basic Education (JBE)* 3, no. 1 (February 28, 2023), .

<sup>46</sup> Nasr, *Shadr Al-Din Shirazi and His Transcendent Theosophy*, 86.

peripatetic philosophy, illumination, *tasawwuf irfani* (mystical Sufism), and theology.<sup>47</sup> From these schools, Sadra developed his own philosophy by studying several key figures and concepts. First, he studied peripatetic philosophy, influenced by Aristotle and Neoplatonism, which was developed by al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. He then examined the philosophy of illumination from Suhrawardi and his followers, such as Jalal al-Din Dawani and Qutb al-Din al-Syirazi. In addition, he delved into the theosophical thought of Ibn Arabi and the spreaders of Ibn Arabi's philosophical doctrines, such as Sadr al-Din al-Qunyawi, Ayn Qudat Hamdani, and Mahmud Syabistari. Finally, he studied the *Ilm al-Kalam* (theology) of Shi'a Imamiyyah.<sup>48</sup>

The emergence of the epistemology of *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*, which combines the synthesis of *bayani* (textual revelation), *burhani* (reason), and *irfani* (spiritual intuition), has had a significant impact on the development of Islamic thought. *Al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* reconciles the conflict between revelation and reason, demonstrating that both complement and strengthen each other. Revelation provides the foundation for absolute truth, reason helps to understand and analyze revelation, and spiritual enlightenment provides direct experience of the truth of revelation.<sup>49</sup>

In addition, the epistemology of *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* also has practical implications in the lives of Muslims. The integration of the aspects of revelation, reason, and spirituality enables the development of a more comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges of daily life. This can assist Muslims in making better decisions, solving social, economic, and political problems, and strengthening moral and spiritual values within society. Thus, the birth of this epistemology not only impacts the development of intellectual thought but also brings tangible benefits in shaping the social and spiritual order of the Muslim community.<sup>50</sup>

The concept of *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* remains highly relevant to modern Islamic philosophical discourse because it offers an epistemological synthesis of reason (*burhānī*), spiritual intuition (*'irfānī*), and revelation (*bayānī*). Mulla Sadra places

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<sup>47</sup> Nafise Mostafavi and Zahra Arefinia, "Substantial Motion: From Mulla Sadra's Philosophy to Physics," *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding* 8, no. 10 (October 2, 2021), 86.

<sup>48</sup> Happy Saputra, "Konsep Epistemologi Mulla Shadra," *Substantia* 18, no. 2 (2016), 183–96.

<sup>49</sup> Jari Kaukua, "Mullā Ṣadrā," in *Encyclopedia of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022), 2271.

<sup>50</sup> Hery Prasetyo Laoli, "Eksistensi Tuhan Dalam Pandangan Suhrawardi Dan Mulla Shadra," *Aqlania* 13, no. 2 (January 10, 2023), 223–46.

revelation at the heart of truth, while reason and intuition serve to interpret and actualize it. In this way, he addresses the dichotomy between reason and faith through an integrative approach that stays firmly rooted in Islamic spirituality. In the face of today's epistemological crisis, shaped by the dominance of rationalism and materialism, Sadra's framework provides a vital alternative. It stresses not only intellectual attainment but also existential transformation through *kashf* (unveiling) and *dhawq* (spiritual taste). This perspective creates space for an Islamic philosophy that is both logical and transcendent, bridging the divides among *kalām*, *taṣawwuf*, and philosophy within contemporary Islamic scholarship.<sup>51</sup>

Regarding the characteristics of *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*, its distinctiveness becomes clearer when compared to each branch of other Islamic sciences. Through this comparison, the uniqueness of Mulla Sadra's school of thought can be seen in contrast to the previous schools. Looking at the teachings of the Sufis, especially Ibn Arabi and his school, it can be said that the Sufi metaphysics, which is the result of their spiritual vision, was transformed by Mulla Sadra into an intellectual vision.<sup>52</sup> There is also a difference between *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* and *al-Hikmah al-Ishraqiyyah* (the philosophy of illumination) by Suhrawardi. Sadra quotes verses from the Qur'an in his philosophical works and strives to harmonize the meaning of those revealed verses with philosophical principles. The most fundamental difference lies in the issue of existence (*wujud*) and essence (*mahiyyah*). Sadra developed the principle of *asalat al-wujud* (the primacy of existence), while Suhrawardi was a primary proponent of *asalat al-mahiyyah* (the primacy of essence).<sup>53</sup>

Turning to Ibn Sina and *al-Hikmah al-Masysya'iyah* (Peripatetic Wisdom), the fundamental difference between Ibn Sina's doctrine and Mulla Sadra's can be seen in their approach to ontological issues. Sadra understands existence as a reality that is gradational yet singular, while Ibn Sina acknowledges that existence is something fundamental to everything that exists. Thus, he denies the existence of "*substantial motion*" (*al-Harakah al-Jauhariyyah*), which is one of the key teachings of Mulla Sadra.<sup>54</sup> In relation to *kalam*

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<sup>51</sup> Gunawan, "Pemikiran Mulla Sadra Tentang Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah Dan Relevansinya Dengan Pendidikan Islam", 165.

<sup>52</sup> Hüsnü Aydeniz, "Molla Sadrâ'da Allah'ı Bilmenin İmkânı ve O'nun Hakkında Konuşmanın Sınırları," *Hitit İlahiyat Dergisi* 20, no. 1 (June 30, 2021).

<sup>53</sup> Nur, *Mulla Shadra; Pendiri Madzhab Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah*, 34-35.

<sup>54</sup> Ibnu Sina, *Uyun Al-Hikmah* (Kairo, 1326).

(theology), Sadra strongly opposes the methods and approaches used by the *mutakallimin* (theologians). He believes that they are incapable of solving the various issues addressed to them. Meanwhile, *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah* solves the problems of *kalam* with an approach that is more metaphysical than theological.<sup>55</sup> Thus, both the concepts of *tashkik al-wujud* and *al-Harakah al-Jawhariyah* expand the horizon of Islamic epistemology toward a more spiritual, transcendent, and integral direction. They demonstrate that reality and knowledge are two interwoven dimensions within the hierarchy of existence, in which true knowledge can only be attained by a subject who actively moves toward the perfection of being.

Several contemporary studies reinforce the significance of Sadra's epistemology in the modern context. Hosseinzadeh, in his study on intellectual universals, demonstrates that Sadra successfully refutes the Avicennian dualism of form and matter through a synthesis of reality and knowledge.<sup>56</sup> Fathul Mufid and Subaidi even assert that Sadra's epistemology serves as a framework for reconciling reason, revelation, and intuition in response to the crisis of rationalism and spirituality in contemporary Islamic philosophy.<sup>57</sup> The research of Mostafavi and Arefinia is also relevant, linking Sadra's theory of substantial motion with modern cosmological models, thereby highlighting the adaptability of Sadra's epistemology in bridging science and philosophy.<sup>58</sup>

## Conclusion

The study indicates that the epistemology of *al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah*, as developed by Mulla Sadra, is not merely a synthesis of the *bayani* (revelation-based), *burhani* (rational), and *'irfani* (spiritual-intuition-based) approaches, but rather constitutes a significant innovation within the tradition of Islamic epistemology. Sadra presents an epistemological framework that situates knowledge as an existential process, primarily through the concept of *'ilm ḥuḍūrī*, a form of direct, immediate knowledge present in the soul as a result of spiritual witnessing and ontological illumination. Thus, Mulla Sadra's contribution goes beyond the methodological level; it represents a paradigm shift in Islamic theories of knowledge, integrating the cognitive, religious, and spiritual

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<sup>55</sup> Nur, *Mulla Shadra; Pendiri Madzhab Al-Hikmah Al-Muta'aliyah*, 34-35.

<sup>56</sup> Hosseinzadeh, "Mullā Ṣadrā on Intellectual Universal."

<sup>57</sup> Fathul Mufid and Subaidi, "Demystifying The Islamic Thought Reconciliation Model Of Mullah Sadra's Transcendent Theosophy", 228.

<sup>58</sup> Mostafavi and Arefinia, "Substantial Motion: From Mulla Sadra's Philosophy to Physics", 86.



dimensions of knowing. He succeeds in transcending the limitations of Ibn Sina's epistemology, which heavily emphasizes rational abstraction, and complements Suhrawardi's epistemology, which tends to be esoteric and symbolic, by offering a more comprehensive and argumentative approach.

This study also underscores the importance of directly engaging with Mulla Sadra's primary texts, such as *al-Asfār al-Arba'ah* and *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, as essential foundations for understanding his transcendent epistemological system. Consequently, future research could explore comparative analyses between Sadra's epistemology and modern philosophies of knowledge, such as Husserl's phenomenology or the concept of intuition in existentialism. Moreover, further inquiry into the contemporary relevance of Sadra's epistemology, particularly in areas such as technological ethics, Islamic science, and spiritual education, could broaden the impact of his contributions within the discourse of contemporary Islamic philosophy. With a reflective and contextual approach, Mulla Sadra's intellectual legacy may continue to serve as an epistemological foundation that is not only historically significant, but also applicative in addressing the challenges of the modern era.

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