Nariman Aavani¹

(Harvard University, US)

PLATONISM IN SAFAVID PERSIA: MĪR DĀMĀD (d. 1631) AND ĀQĀJĀNĪ (ca. 1661) ON THE PLATONIC FORMS

Introductory Remarks

In this paper, I analyze the treatment of Platonic Ideas in the fifth *Qabas* (lit. "blazing brand," in this context a "chapter") of Mīr Dāmād's *Qabasāt*,² along with Āqājāni's³ commentary thereof. In this section, Mīr Dāmād first

³ We do not know much about the life of Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī Riḍā Ibn Āqājānī. All that we know about his life is that he finished his commentary on *Qabasāt* in 1661. We also know that he was a student of Mullā Ṣadrā and his thinking reflects so much of his teacher's thought. In his commentary on *Qabasāt* he praises Mīr Dāmād and considers his *Qabasāt* to be a great work of wisdom.

¹ nariman aavani@mail.harvard.edu

² For a survey of his life and the major tenets of his philosophy, see: H. Dabāshī, "Mīr Dāmād and the Founding of the 'School of Isfahān'," in: S. H. Nasr et al, History of Islamic Philosophy, London: Routledge, 1996, pp. 597-635; H. Corbin, "Confessions extatiques de Mīr Dāmād." In: Mélanges Louis Massignon. Damascus: L'Institut Français de Damas, 1956; idem, En islam iranien. 4 vols. Paris: Gallimard, vol. IV: L'Ecole d'Ispahan, pp. 9-123. S. A. Mūsavī Bihbahānī, Hakīm-i Astarābād Mīr Dāmād. Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1377 [A.H. solar]; I. Netton, "Suhrawardī's Heir? The Ishrāgī Philosophy of Mīr Dāmād." In: The Heritage of Sufism, vol. 3: Late Classical Persianate Sufism: The Safavid and Mughal Period, ed. L. Lewisohn. Oxford: Oneworld, 1999, pp. 225-246; A. Awjabī, Mīr Dāmād: Bunyān-gudhār-i hikmat-i yamānī. Tehran: Intishārāt-i Sāhat, 1382 [A.H. solar]; J. Jahānbakhsh, Mu'allim-i thalith; zindagīnāma-vi Mīr Dāmād bi hamrāh-i Risāla-vi tashīfāt-i wav. Tehran: Intishārāt-i Asāţīr, 1389 [A.H. solar]; S. Rizvi, "Mīr Dāmād's (d. 1631) al-Qabasāt: The Problem of the Eternity of the Cosmos," in: Kh. El-Rouayheb and S. Schmidtke, The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy, 1st ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 438-464. See also, M. Terrier, "Qutb al-Din Ashkevari, a Discrete Philosopher of the Safavid Renaissance." Studia Iranica, vol. 40, no. 2, 2011, pp. 171-210.

presents and evaluates Ibn Sīnā's understanding of the Platonic Ideas.⁴ He moreover rejects a certain interpretation of Platonic Ideas according to which Plato would supposedly hold that a quiddity *qua* quiddity can exist in the external world. Mīr Dāmād then proceeds to mention four interpretations of Platonic Ideas:

- (1) Platonic Ideas are un-conditioned natures that exist in an absolute way and without any accident in the external world.
- (2) Platonic Ideas are the objects of Divine Knowledge. (Fārābī's view)
- (3) Platonic Ideas are the lords of species (*arbāb al-anwā*'). (Suhrawardī's view)
- (4) Platonic Ideas are the "hanging (or suspended) forms" (*suwar mu'allaqah*). (Suhrawardī's view)

Mīr Dāmād explicitly refutes (1), accepts (3), and reinterprets and reincorporates (2) and (4) into his view. In the *wamīd* ("sparkle," used for "section") devoted to this topic, Mīr Dāmād attempts to prove why (1) is false and why its attribution to Plato must be rejected. Mīr Dāmād subsequently discusses and refutes two criticisms raised by Ibn Sīnā against the Platonic Ideas. He then introduces the views of Fārābī and Suhrawardī. He offers two levels of existence for Platonic Ideas, one intradeical and the other extradeical. First of all, Platonic Ideas exist in the form of unconditioned natures in the Divine Realm. Second, they exist extradeically and as distinct realities in *dahr* ("aeviternity").⁵ Finally, I will present Āqājāni's understanding. Since he rejects the notion of *hudūth dahrī* ("aeviternal origination"), he does not agree with what Mīr Dāmād says on this issue. Instead he understands the Platonic Forms to be immaterial instances of the unconditioned nature that exist in the immaterial realm.

⁴ Mīr Dāmād starts by quoting sections from *The Burhān* of *Shifā'*, in which Ibn Sīnā argues that things that are susceptible to change and corruption cannot be demonstrated through a demonstrative proof (*burhān*). He then discusses whether mathematical objects can be proven by a demonstration and elaborates on different views about this matter. He then introduces Platonic forms. Ibn Sīnā holds that Plato considers an immaterial form for any entity, even for natural things, and he calls them ideas, *muthul*, when they are not conjoined with matter, and when they take material accidents they are called "natural forms" (*suwar tabī'iyyah*). Mīr Dāmād also cites some passages from *ilāhiyyāt* of *Shifā'* in which Ibn Sīnā provides another account of the Platonic forms.

⁵ This issue has a long history in Western philosophy. See: H. A. Wolfson, "Extradeical and Intradeical Interpretations of Platonic Ideas." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1961, pp. 3–32. A. Madigan, "Syrianus and Asclepius on Forms and Intermediates in Plato and Aristotle." *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1986, pp. 149–171.

Preliminary Remarks on the Three i'tibārāt of Quiddity:

Due to the fact that much of Mīr Dāmād's analysis of the Platonic Ideas⁶ is dependent on the notion of the *i'tibārāt* ("considerations") of quiddity, it is necessary to say a few words about this concept so that we be prepared to engage with Mīr Dāmād's treatment of the issue in *Qabasāt*. The world *i'tibārāt* (sing. *i'tibār*) in this context refers to different points of views from which we could analyze a quiddity in our mind. As is the case with other forms of mental analysis, these considerations do not refer to distinct realities in the external world; rather, one or two of these considerations can apply to a single entity from different points of view. However, the fact that the *i'tibārāt* represent different points of view from which we can analyze a quiddity does not mean that they are purely subjective and notional.

As for the *i'tibārāt* of quiddity, sometimes we consider a quiddity from the point of view of it being characterized by individuating accidents. For instance, we think of a horse as being characterized by such qualities as color, height, weight, place, etc. A quiddity considered with this *i'tibār* occurs in the external world and its referents are individual instances. So, for instance, when I think of a horse that is of a German breed, brown, fast, etc., I can make it so specific such that only one actual horse in the external world corresponds to it.⁷

We can talk about this *i*'*tibār* in another way too. This *i*'*tibār* is one in which we consider a quiddity as characterized by matter. Matter is the principle of individuation, and therefore the instances of this *i*'*tibār* are all external instances. Mīr Dāmād calls this consideration the "qualified quiddity" (*māhiyyah*

⁷ For a useful discussion of these considerations, in particular within the context of Tūsī's *Tajrīd al-i 'tiqād* and its commentators, see: T. Izutsu, "Basic Problems of Abstract Quiddities," in: M. Muḥaqqiq, et al. *Manțiq wa-mabāḥith-i alfāz: majmū 'ah-yi mutūn va maqālāt-i taḥqīqī*, Tehran: Mu'assisah-yi Chāp va Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tihrān, 1992, pp. 1–25.

⁶ For a thorough study of the Platonic forms in the history of Islamic philosophy, see R. Arnzen, Platonische Ideen in Der Arabischen Philosophie: Texte und Materialien zur Begriffsgeschichte von Suwar Aflatunivya und Muthul Aflatunivya. Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2011. For original sources in Arabic, consult Ibn Sīnā, Burhān al-shifā', edited by S. Zāyid et al., Oum: Maktabat Āyatullāh al-Mar'ashī, 1404 [A.H. lunar], p. 233; and Ilāhiyvāt al-shifā', op. cit., p. 365; Abū'l-'Abbās al-Lawkarī, Bayān al-hagq bi dimān al-sidq, edited by S. I. Dībājī, Tehran: Mu'assisah-yi Bayn al-Milalī-yi Andīsha wa Tammadun-i Islāmī, 1373 [A.H. solar], pp. 164-165; Ibn Rushd, Tafsīr mā ba'd al-tabī'ah, Tehran: Insitishārāt-i Hikmat, 1377 [A.H. solar], vol. 3, pp. 1403-1405. Suhrawardī, Majmū 'ahy-i muşannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq, edited by H. Corbin, Tehran: Pajhūhishgāh-i Mutāli'āt-i Farhangī, 1372 [A.H. solar], vol. II, pp. 93–94; Shahrzūrī, al-Shajarat al-ilāhiyyah, edited by N. Habībī, Tehran: The Iranian Institute of Philosophy, 1385 [A.H. solar], vol. III, pp. 426-456; idem, Sharh hikmat al-ishrāq, edited by H. Ziai, Tehran: Pajhūhishgāh-i Muţāli'āt-i Farhangī, 1372 [A.H. solar], pp. 249–250; Mullā Şadrā, al-Hāshiya 'alā ilāhiyyāt al-shifā', Qum: Intishārāt-i Bīdār, n.d., pp. 132–137; idem., al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah, edited by S. J. Āshtiyānī, Mashhad: al-Markaz al-Jāmi'ī li'l-Nashr, 1360 [A.H. solar], pp. 154-172; idem., al-Astār, edited by M. R. Muzaffar, Qum: Intishārāt-i Mustafawī, 1368 [A.H. solar], vol. II, pp. 42-76.

bi-shart shay'), and sometimes the "fused quiddity" ($m\bar{a}hiyyah al-makhl\bar{u}tah$), i.e., the quiddity fused with matter.⁸

On a different level of analysis, we can think of a quiddity with the condition of not being characterized by individuating accidents or matter. From this point of view, we envisage "horse" as a reality bereft of any individuating characteristics such as color, weight, height, etc. Mīr Dāmād calls this a "quiddity qualified-by-negation" (*bi-shart lā*), and the "immaterial quiddity" (*al-māhiyyah al-mujarradah*). By "immaterial," in this context, one means something that is not characterized by the individuating matter. An instance of this kind of quiddity is the universal, which can be true of many and which exists only in the mind.

There is a third way we could think of a quiddity. We could examine it not from the point of view of it being characterized by matter or from the point of it not being characterized by matter, but rather from the point of view of quiddity *qua* quiddity (*min haythu hiya hiya*), or "sheer quiddity" and "unconditioned quiddity" (*māhiyyah muţlaqah*). In this *i'tibār*, we consider a quiddity regardless of whether or not it has any characteristics. Ibn Sīnā famously writes, human being *qua* human being is nothing but itself; it is neither a universal or a particular, nor existent or non-existent. This is the state of the neutrality of quiddity in itself, which can be combined with both the affirmation and negation of characteristics. The unconditional quality of quiddity *qua* quiddity allows it to become qualified by attributes in the external world, and to remain bereft of any qualities as a universal in the mind.

To make this point more lucid, if horse-ness *qua* horse-ness possessed the quality of particularity in itself then we would not be able to speak of the universal of "horse," since a universal of horse in that case would lack an essential quality of "horse-ness"—i.e., particularity—and would no longer be a horse. In the same way, if universality were to be an essential quality of horse-ness, we could not have a particular instance of "horse," since in that case a particular horse would lack an essential quality of horse-ness and therefore would not be a horse. Ibn Sīnā calls the un-conditioned quiddity a natural universal (*kullī*

⁸ For the three considerations of quiddity, see: Ibn Sīnā, *Shifā': Ilāhiyyāt*, edited by I. Madkūr, Cairo: al-Hay'at al-'Āmmah li Shu'ūn al-Maṭābi' al-Amīriyyah, 1960, vol. I, pp. 195–206, in particular, p. 20; ibid., vol. I, pp. 65–68. See also: Bahmanyār, *al-Taḥşīl*, edited by M. Muṭahharī, Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1393 [A.H. solar], pp. 499–502; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyyah*, Qum: Intishārāt-i Bīdār, 1370 [A.H. solar], vol. II, pp. 358–359; idem., *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, edited by 'Alī Ridā Najaf Zādah, Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār wa Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 1384 [A.H. solar], vol. I, pp. 286–289. Naşīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, Qum: Daftar-i Nashr al-Kitāb, n.d., vol. I, pp. 370–371. It is important to note that Ibn Sīnā discusses these considerations in connection with the problem of the universals and quiddity's three types (natural, logical and mental). Later on, figures such as Mīr Sharīf Jurjānī, introduced another division of quiddity into *muțlaqah, mujarradah* and *makhlūțah*. Although what Ibn Sīnā discusses is, strictly speaking, different from Jurjānī's classification, Mīr Dāmād manages to combine them both and uses them almost interchangeably.

 $tab\bar{t}$ ^{(\bar{t}).⁹ There has been much discussion about the existence of the natural universal in the external world, and the issue of Platonic forms is directly related to it.¹⁰ Since it is beyond the scope of our study to deal with this complex question, I will briefly recapitulate the three considerations of quiddity and move on to Mīr Dāmād's analysis:¹¹}

We can consider quiddity in three ways: (a) "without any condition," that is, neutral with regard to having or not having any qualities (unconditioned); (b) "conditioned with matter" (*bi-shart shay*'); and (c) "not conditioned with matter." These three considerations are also respectively called "absolute" (*mutlaqah*), "immaterial" (*mujarradah*), and "fused" [mixed] (*makhlūtah*).¹²

Mīr Dāmād's Argument against the Popular View on the Platonic Ideas

"So, what we are about to do is [to prove the falsehood of the view that Platonic forms are the unconditioned natures that exist in the external world.] First, [this is the case] because the unqualified nature existing in the external world $(a'y\bar{a}n)$ is inevitably mixed with the existence in comparison to which it [i.e., the unqualified nature] in its unqualified-ness $(irs\bar{a}lih\bar{a})$ —i.e., nature *qua* nature—is without any condition $(l\bar{a}\ bi-shart)$. And it is impossible to strip off and distinguish [existence] from [nature] unless it is by the intellect observing it from the point of its essence being unqualified $(l\bar{a}\ bi\ shart)$, by an innate necessity $(bi'l-dar\bar{u}rah\ al-fitriyyah)$; and if its detachment and separation from the bodily accidents and material adjuncts $(al-law\bar{a}hiq\ al-hay\bar{u}l\bar{a}niyyah)$ were to be

¹² See: Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, Sharh al-manzūmah, edited by H. Hasan Zādah Āmulī, Tehran: Nashr-i Nāb, 1369 [A.H. solar], vol. II, pp. 338–340.

⁹ See: Bahmanyār, al-Tahşīl, edited by M. Muţahharī, Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1393 [A.H. solar], pp. 499–502; Quţb al-Dīn al-Rāzī, al-Ilāhiyyāt min al-muḥākamāt bayn sharhay al-ishārāt ma'a ta'līgāt al-Bāghnawī, Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 1380 [A.H. solar], p. 125; Mullā Şadrā, Mafātīḥ al-ghayb, edited by M. Khwājawī, Tehran: Mu'assisah-yi Muţāli'āt-i Farhangī, 1363 [A.H. solar], vol. I, p. 404.

¹⁰ For a useful study of the issue of natural universal in Islamic philosophy with an emphasis on Mullā Şadrā, see: M. Faruque, "Mullā Şadrā on the Problem of Natural Universals," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 2017: *27*(2), 269–302.

¹¹ It is important to note that Mīr Dāmād has a slightly different view on the *i'tibārāt* of quiddity. For him there are four *i'tibārāt*: (1) unconditioned quiddity, (2) quiddity conditioned by unconditioned-ness, (3) quiddity conditioned by negation, and (4) finally, quiddity conditioned by a positive consideration. The difference between the first and the second consideration lies in the fact that, unlike the first consideration that has no condition, the quiddity in the second consideration is conditioned by the condition of unconditionality. Moreover, the first consideration can be combined with one of the instances in a given instance, whereas the second one cannot be combined with other considerations. However, for the purpose of our study, since Mīr Dāmād does not make any use of the second *i'tibār* in his discussion of the Platonic Ideas, I use the more known tripartite classification to avoid any unnecessary confusion.

possible, then, how could its existence be conceived in the external world with its sheer unqualified-ness and its clear absolute unconditioned-ness?"¹³

 $\bar{A}q\bar{a}j\bar{a}n\bar{n}$ in his commentary states that Mīr Dāmād here wants to emphasize the grandeur of Plato as a philosopher and that he would never have adhered to such an obviously false view. This is why the idea that Platonic Ideas are unconditioned quiddities that exist in the external world is a false understanding of Platonic Ideas.

Mīr Dāmād dismisses the view that Platonic Ideas are unconditioned quiddities for the following reasons:

For a quiddity to exist in an unconditioned way in the external world is meaningless, since a quiddity in itself is neutral with respect to existence or non-existence. Therefore, to say that a quiddity in an unconditioned way exists in the external world is to say that it is both neutral towards being and is not neutral towards being at once, and this is a contradiction.¹⁴

Moreover, anything that exists in the external world is colored by particularizing attributes and features, such that it is impossible for a thing not to be a particular thing and yet exist in the external world. In other words, it is impossible to strip off the individuating characteristics from things in the external realm. So, how would it be possible for Plato to hold the view that unconditioned quiddities can exist in the external world?

In other words, let us suppose that it is possible to take away all the particularizing accidents from a thing; even then, what would it mean for that unconditioned quiddity to exist in its absoluteness? In order to understand this point, let us consider the following philosophical principle: "an un-individuated thing cannot exist" ($m\bar{a} \ lam \ yatashakhkhas \ lam \ y\bar{u}jad$).¹⁵ According to this principle, existence is co-extensive with particularity. For instance, even if I combine hundreds of universals together, it does not result in an individual instance, for the resulting concept is capable of being true of many. It is with existence that a thing becomes a particular thing, and it is inconceivable to speak of a being that is not individuated. This is the case because for a thing to exist means for it to exist as a particular and specific thing, and if something does not possess individuating characteristics then it is not fully a thing such that it could exist.

¹³ Mīr Dāmād, *Kitāb al-qabasāt*, edited by M. Muḥaqqiq, M. Mūsawī Bihbahānī and T. Izutsu, Tehran: University of Tehran Press, 2nd edition, 1988, p. 160 [henceforth, *Qabasāt*].

¹⁴ Āqājānī, Sharh al-gabasāt, in: Āshtiyānī and Corbin, Anthologie des philosophes iraniens: Depuis le XVIIe siècle jusqu'à nos jours. Textes persans et arabes choisis et présentés par Sayyed Jalâloddîn Ashtiyânî. Introduction analytique par Henry Corbin (Bibliothèque iranienne; no. 18–19). Teheran: Département d'iranologie de l'Institut franco-iranien de recherche. 1971. Vol. II. pp. 337–338 [henceforth, Sharh al-gabasāt].

¹⁵ For a detailed treatment of this principle, see: 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī, *Shawāriq al-ilhām*, edited by Akbar 'Alī Zādah, Qum: Mu'assisat al-Imām al-Ṣādiq, 1425 [A.H. lunar], vol. II, pp. 160–180.

The idea that Mīr Dāmād presents to us is very similar: if an unconditioned quiddity were to exist in the external world, it would have to be bereft of any individuating accident. But existence in the external world implies individuation. So, how "could its existence be conceived in the external world with its sheer unqualified-ness and its clear absolute unconditioned-ness?"¹⁶

Mīr Dāmād explains the second reason as to why Platonic cannot be unconditioned quiddities existing in the external world as follows:

"And secondly, it became clear to you that the degree of existence is identical to the degree of individuation, so when the unqualified nature comes into existence, it is definitely fused with individuation in its existence. So, how can its existence endure in the external world in its unqualified-ness and unconditionedness while it is distinct from the individuated identity and as something that is not mixed with individuation? And moreover, in that case its unity in number would be an individuated numerical (*'adadiyyah*) unity and the common nature [i.e., a universal] in its unity will be an ambiguous (*mubhamah*) [unindividuated] numerical unity. How can this be? So, beware."¹⁷

The second argument against the view that Platonic Ideas are unconditioned auiddities existing in the external world deals with two main ideas. The first idea is very similar to the previous argument in that Mir Damad wants to show that un-conditioned-ness and existence in the external world are two opposite ideas that cannot exist in a given instance. The unique aspect of the second argument is that it explicitly emphasizes the relationship between individuation and existence. Mir Dāmād holds that existence and individuation are coextensive and, therefore, it is impossible for something to exist and not be individuated. However, an un-conditioned nature by definition is something that is neutral towards particularity or universality. So, if it exists, an un-conditioned nature has to be at once neutral and non-neutral towards particularity, and this is a contradiction. Therefore, it is impossible for something that is simultaneously both absolute and unqualified to exist. Moreover, he makes a reference to the kind of unity that an unconditioned quiddity should possess, and to the kind of unity that existence in the external world requires. Here again, these two kinds of unity are not compatible. This is the case since the unity of an un-conditioned quiddity must be such that it could encompass all of its instances, whether those qualified by matter or immaterial ones. Mīr Dāmād calls this kind of unity the "ambiguous unity." This, however, is evidently in opposition to the unity required by existence in the external world. As we explained earlier, only individual things exist in the external world, and as a result the proper kind of unity for

¹⁶ Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, p. 160.

¹⁷ Ibid.

something in the external world is individual unity. An individual unity is such that each individual is fully itself and only itself, and also fully distinct from other instances. But if an un-conditioned quiddity were to exist in the external world it would have to be ambiguous and individual at once, and this is a contradiction.

Turning to the third reason, Mīr Dāmād states:

"And thirdly, the unqualified nature, when it is in itself in a way that it acquires individuation without being covered with corporeal accidents and material adjuncts, as is the case with the immaterial things, it is impossible for it to be in need of matter for its individuation, as Plato has argued in refuting an immaterial dimension. In sum, just as it is impossible for a single nature to be [at once] different in terms of being a substance or an accident, in the same way an actualized species (*tabī'ah muḥaṣṣilah naw'iyyah*) cannot be different in immateriality and materiality."¹⁸

If an unqualified nature were to exist as an individuated entity without any dependence on matter and material accidents, it should never need any matter for individuation. This is the case because a nature existing in the world cannot possess two opposing qualities in itself. Moreover, we observe that things that exist possess material accidents. This means that it is impossible for natural things to exist in the external world without being characterized by matter.

Moreover, just as it is impossible for a thing to be a substance and an accident at once, it is also impossible for a quiddity to be both independent of and dependent on material accidents simultaneously.

Turning to the final reason, Mīr Dāmād states,

"And fourthly, since one single quiddity will exist twice distinctively in aeviternity (*dahr*), once in aeviternity without time and space, and another time in aeviternity from the aspect of its existence in time and space. And since aeviternity is a vessel for times and places with all that is in them and with them, no straight mind and balanced nature would accede to this."¹⁹

Each spatial and temporal thing in the external world has a corresponding reality in aeviternity (*dahr*), since aeviternity is the existential entity that encompasses all that is in time and space. So, if a quiddity were to exist in the external world without accidents and individuating characteristics, this would lead to the view that there would have to be two instances for each kind in aeviternity: one for the individuated and particular instance, and one for the unindividuated and absolute un-conditioned quiddity.

¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 160–161.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 161.

 $\bar{A}q\bar{a}j\bar{a}n\bar{n}$ deems this argument to be doubtful. He writes that the whole question concerning Platonic forms amounts to whether or not it is possible to have multiple levels of individuation for a particular entity, that is to say, to have both a material and an immaterial instance for a given species. So, to say that a single quiddity will exist twice in aeviternity by itself does not refute their position, because this is exactly the point under discussion. Thus, instead of saying that no sound mind accepts this view, he should have explained why this view must be abandoned.²⁰

A Critique of Ibn Sīnā's Understanding of Platonic Forms

After discussing why Platonic forms are not un-conditioned quiddities existing in the external world, Mīr Dāmād moves on to discuss Ibn Sīnā's views on the topic. I am going to present both of their views in order as two separate claims:

- 1. Ibn Sīnā: Those who argue for the existence of Platonic Ideas confuse unconditioned-ness with being conditioned by negation and reduce the former to the latter.
- Mīr Dāmād's response: It is possible for an unconditioned quality to possess a quality co-incidentally and remain un-conditioned, since the possession of an accidental attribute does not affect the essence of an entity.

Ibn Sīnā's Critique of the Platonic Forms

If an un-conditioned quiddity were to exist in the external world, it is necessary that it exist without any adjuncts and individuating attributes in order to maintain its absolute status. This means that it has to exist with the condition of not being characterized by any attributes or qualities, for if it were to have any particular characteristics it would lose its un-conditioned status and would become a particular quiddity conditioned by particular characteristics. Consequently, in order for an un-conditioned thing to exist in the external world, it has to be a quiddity conditioned by the negation of individuating attributes. Therefore, when they talk about the existence of a Platonic form that is unconditioned, they confuse unconditioned-ness with the state of being conditioned by negation.²¹ To make Ibn Sīnā's argument more lucid, I think it would help to consider an example. Let us think of an unconditioned apple. If it were to exist in the external world as an unconditioned reality, it has to be bereft of

²⁰ Āqājānī, Sharh al-qabasāt, pp. 339-340.

²¹ Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, p. 161. See also: Āqājānī, *Sharḥ al-qabasāt*, pp. 340-341.

any accidents; for if it is red for instance, it would not be unconditioned anymore. This means, according to Ibn Sīnā, that it has to be conditioned by negation of any individuating character. Thus, to say that an unconditioned apple exists is to say that it exists with the condition of not being qualified by any attribute.

Mīr Dāmād provides another exposition of Ibn Sīnā's position. According to him, Ibn Sīnā thinks that when proponents of Platonic Ideas speak of an unconditioned quiddity they are interpreting a simple negation as a negatedpredicate proposition ($ma'd\bar{u}lah$). A simple negation is a statement in which the predicate is negated of the subject, as in the sentence: "John is not German." However, in a $ma'd\bar{u}lah$ proposition, a negative concept is predicated of the subject, as in the statement "John is non-German." Thus, the simple negation is a negative statement, whereas the negated-predicate proposition ($ma'd\bar{u}lah$) is an affirmative statement.

Now, let us go back to Mīr Dāmād's analysis. He thinks that, according to Ibn Sīnā, the Platonists' assertion of a simple negation (*salb*) leads to an '*udūl*, i.e., the composition of a negated-predicate (*ma*'*dūlah*) proposition. Platonists hold that a quiddity in itself exists in the external world. This means that the quiddity is not conditioned by anything (a simple negation). However, what they finally assert is that the quiddity is non-conditioned by individuating characters, which is a negated-predicate (*ma*'*dūlah*) statement. This is problematic because in trying to prove that an un-conditioned quiddity exists in the external world they assert that it is conditioned by negation.

Mīr Dāmād's Response

Mīr Dāmād holds that just as coincidental accidents do not change the essential quality of an entity, in the same manner the absence of these accidents also does not change the essence of an entity in itself. So, for example, a human being *qua* human being is a rational animal. Being American or Italian does not change the essence of humanity. So, the essence of humanity remains the same even when it is characterized by attributes such as "American" or "white." In the same way, if a human being is not white, it does not affect its state of being a human. As I stated earlier, the unconditioned quiddity is neutral towards having accidents or not possessing them. This means that it is capable of taking accidents co-incidentally and maintaining its status. So, the fact that an unconditioned quiddity does not have any adjuncts does not change its un-conditioned nature, because the adjuncts are accidental with respect to its nature.²²

Mīr Dāmād subsequently deals with Ibn Sīnā's reasoning as to why Plato and Socrates held that natural universals exist un-conditionally (*lā bi-shart*

²² Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, p. 161.

shay') in the external world. Ibn $S\bar{n}\bar{n}$ thinks that Plato and Socrates held this position because they thought that when we consider an entity in our minds such that it is bereft of any material accidents, it follows that it has to exist as an immaterial existence in the external world. Let us explain it with an example. When I think of a table in my mind so that I do not think of anything other than it, it follows that it has to exist without other things surrounding it in the external world. Or when I think of a human being, since there is no mention of a body in its definition, it means that it must exist without body in the external world.

Mīr Dāmād criticizes this interpretation: he writes, "how did you get to know that they held such an abominable view?"²³ All that they say is that quiddities *qua* quiddities in themselves are neutral towards adjuncts. So, they exist in the external world as united with the individual instances; and yet since they are in themselves distinct from the individuating adjuncts, we could say that they also exist as distinct from them.

Mīr Dāmād and Fārābī's Interpretation of Platonic Ideas

A discussion of Fārābī's view of Platonic forms as understood by Mīr Dāmād and Āqājānī is in order. As I said in the introduction, Mīr Dāmād both rejects and accepts Fārābī's view. We owe this understanding to Āqājānī, who explicitly highlights the disagreement, showing that Mīr Dāmād rejects Fārābī's view in one place²⁴ and considers his interpretation to be correct in another.²⁵

Mīr Dāmād begins his discourse on Fārābī by pointing out that that in *al-Jam' bayn ra'yay al-ḥakimayn*, Fārābī rejects the popular interpretation of Platonic Ideas attributed to Plato and states that Aristotle and Plato share the same view on this issue.²⁶ ²⁷ Having made this point, Fārābī proceeds to discuss the views of Aristotle on the forms. He writes that in *The Book of Letters (Metaphysics)* Aristotle argues against the existence of Platonic forms, asserting that if one affirms that there is an idea for everything that exists in the material realm, it would lead to the undesired result that there should be immaterial lines and bodies in the immaterial world—a consequence that Aristotle deems impossible.^{28 29}

²³ Ibid, p. 162.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 160.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 164.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 162.

²⁷ Fārābī, al-Jam' bayn ra'yay al-hakīmayn, edited by A. N. Nādir, Tehran: Intishārāt al-Zahrā', 1405 [A.H. lunar], pp. 105–107.

²⁸ For Aristotle's critique of the Platonic forms, see: *Metaphysics* I.9: 991a8–991b9; VIII.6:1045b7–12; XIII.7:1082b3–4. G. Fine, *On Ideas: Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's Theory of Forms*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

²⁹ Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, p. 162.

This is how Mīr Dāmād elucidates this. In his *Theology*, however, Fārābī explains that Aristotle talks about the Ideas and affirms their existence, and explicitly utters that they exist in the Divine realm. As a philosopher, Fārābī tries to make sense of this apparent contradiction, offering three possible ways of understanding this incongruity:

- (1) One possibility is to say that Aristotle contradicts himself in these works. Fārābī finds this unacceptable, since theology and immaterial forms are of utmost importance to Aristotle's philosophy and he was a great philosopher, so it seems quite unlikely that he would contradict himself in such an obvious way regarding as important a matter as the question of the existence of Ideas.
- (2) Another way of resolving this problem is to consider one of these works to be pseudo-Aristotelian and not in fact authored by him. Quite interestingly, Fārābī finds this solution to be more improbable than the first, since these two works are so famous among scholars as works of Aristotle that it is not reasonable to regard one of them as pseudo-Aristotelian.
- (3) The last way out of this dilemma for $F\bar{a}r\bar{a}b\bar{b}$ is to resort to hermeneutical interpretation (*ta'wīl*).³⁰ This means that the views represented in these two works are outwardly distinct and even contradictory, but when understood in their proper contexts, their inner meanings (*bawāțin*) are in agreement.

In what Mīr Dāmād quotes of his works, Fārābī does not address the way to reconcile the apparent contradiction between *The Metaphysics* and the so-called *Theology of Aristotle*, a work that we now know is a paraphrase of Plotinus' *Enneads*. Instead, he addresses Fārābī's attempts to make sense of the Platonic forms, which is precisely the point at stake in my inquiry.

Mīr Dāmād begins his discussion by making it clear that an ascription of such a false view to a philosopher as great as Plato is something that an intelligent mind must reject entirely. This is the case since the thought that Platonic Ideas amount to the existence of un-conditioned natures in the extra-mental world would lead to the result that there would have to be two essentially contrary kinds of existence for each nature, one being temporal and material and the other immaterial and a-temporal. He then argues that the kind of existence that each quiddity possesses informs us of the nature of the quiddity. Therefore, to say that a single nature possesses two contrary kinds of existence in the external world means that it must have contrary or even contradictory qualities, and this is something that no sound mind would uphold. So, the prevalent view

¹²³

³⁰ Ibid, p. 163.

about the Platonic Ideas must be due to mistranslations from Greek to Arabic, or misunderstandings of those who did not understand his philosophy properly.³¹

In his comments on this section of Qabasat, $\bar{A}q\bar{a}j\bar{a}n\bar{n}$ raises an objection which adds a new dimension to the question of the Platonic Forms in the context of Islamic philosophy. He objects that Mīr Dāmād's analysis in this section rests on the assumption that quiddity enjoys primacy over existence,³² for when he says that existence reveals the qualities of an essence, and two kinds of existence in the external world imply the presence of contrary qualities in the essence (an undesired result), this means that quiddity is primary and prior to existence. But if one holds that existence is primary and quiddity is secondary and a concomitant of existence, this issue does not arise.³³

For instance, fire in the external world burns, but fire in mind does not burn, and this does not lead to the existence of contrary qualities in the essence of firehood. No one denies that we have a concept of fire in our mind, and in this context at least, both sides agree that it is the actual nature of the thing that comes to mind and not merely its likeness (*mithl* or *shabah*). Moreover, no sound mind doubts that the fire in the mind does not burn, but this does not mean, according to $\bar{A}q\bar{a}j\bar{a}n\bar{n}$, that fire possesses contrary qualities in its essence. So, according to $\bar{A}q\bar{a}j\bar{a}n\bar{n}$, M $\bar{n}r$ D $\bar{a}m\bar{a}d$ needs to explain within the perspective of the primacy of quiddity, why fire manifests both the qualities of burning and non-burning.

If one considers existence to be primary, then this problem does not arise; for different degrees of intensification in being result in different qualities, and thus there is no contradiction. A problem would have arisen if being were to manifest contrary qualities on the same level, but this is not the case.

Āqājānī then seeks to explain his view in another way. He says that each thing is itself by virtue of its form, since it is by virtue of its form that it is *in actu*. On the contrary, a thing is not itself by virtue of its matter, since it is with respect to it that a thing is potential. Given that the form is the true reality of a thing, he states that, when existing in a material realm, a form is conjoined with matter and its qualities. But being conjoined with matter is not an essential property of any form, and therefore it is possible for a form to exist in the immaterial realm without matter, and this is what Plato means by Ideas; i.e., forms that exist in the immaterial realm without matter. I shall refer to his further clarifications of his view while discussing Fārābī's solution and Mīr Dāmād's understanding thereof.

It is noteworthy that, in the beginning of his treatment of Platonic Ideas, Mīr Dāmād mentions four interpretations for the Platonic Ideas and deems four of them to be impossible and refuted by rational arguments. (1) The first interpretation is that Ideas exist in the external world as unconditioned quiddities, a view

³¹ Ibid, pp. 163–164.

³² For the issue of the primacy of being see: I. Kalin, "Crisis and Maturity: Introducing Şadrā's Ontology." In: *Mullā Ṣadrā*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 54–98.

³³ Āqājānī, Sharh al-qabasāt, pp. 367-368.

represented and criticized by both Ibn Sīnā and Mīr Dāmād. (2) The second interpretation is that Platonic Ideas are suspended forms beyond space and time, which is a view held by Suhrawardī.

(3) Next, Mīr Dāmād speaks of the world of *mithāl* (a term derivative of the word for "idea" in Arabic), as an isthmus between the material and the immaterial world. We can find traces of this understanding again in Suhrawardī's thought. (4) Finally, he speaks of Ideas as the lords of species, as angels that govern the affairs of the individual instances under their sovereignty in the temporal world.³⁴

Mīr Dāmād thinks that when these statements are taken according to their literal meaning, the first three are refuted by reason. However, this does not mean that Mīr Dāmād completely rejects these views. As we will see, he interprets and incorporates all but the first view into his philosophy. Hence, we need to make a distinction between the literal meaning of these views on the one hand (which is sometimes the view actually held by the philosopher to whom this view is attributed, and sometimes is not), and the interpretation that Mīr Dāmād makes of these views on the other. So, let us begin by considering Fārābī's views as presented by Aqājānī in his commentary on this section of *Oabasāt*, bearing in mind that Mīr Dāmād does not present Fārābī's views on their own in this section. Agājānī writes that the Second Teacher, in his Reconciliation of the Views of Aristotle and Plato, presents Platonic Forms as accidents inhering in the Divine Essence. According to Aqājānī, Fārābī considers knowledge to be an accident of the Divine Essence that inheres in It in same way that other accidents inhere in their subjects, and considers the Platonic Forms to be the objects of His knowledge (a knowledge that Aqājānī considers to be husulī and not hudurī).³⁵ If we take this to be what Fārābī actually says about Divine knowledge, we can already see how Mīr Dāmād would disagree with it, since on the one hand Divine Knowledge would be husūlī, and it is difficult to see how, after Suhrawardī's attacks on such a view and his view of knowledge by presence. Mīr Dāmād would still take up this view. Moreover, as famously pronounced by Ghazālī, this view would lead to great difficulties in explaining the nature of God's knowledge of particulars.³⁶

According to $\bar{A}q\bar{a}j\bar{a}n\bar{n}$, in order to provide the context for defending Platonic Ideas, $F\bar{a}r\bar{a}b\bar{n}$ writes that when God wills to create the world it is necessary that He possesses the forms of things that He wants to create before creation, since otherwise His creation would be aimless and random (*jazāf*), and this would imply that He does not have any purpose in mind for it. Therefore, in order to

³⁴ Mīr Dāmād later in his discussions on the Platonic Ideas discusses what he thinks to be Aristotle's views in his *Theology* to which we shall refer shortly. See: *Qabasāt*, pp. 165–167.

³⁵ Āqājānī, Sharh al-qabasāt, pp. 363-364.

³⁶ For the issue of the Divine Knowledge of particulars, see: P. Adamson, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1 January 2005, Vol. 105, pp. 257–278; F. Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 101–105.

avoid this pitfall, Plato and his followers considered these Ideas and forms to be the objects of Divine Knowledge, such that God knows them in an undifferentiated and universal way. After introducing Fārābī's views, he proceeds to show why Mīr Dāmād rejects this interpretation and why this view must be abandoned. He writes that the view that the Platonic Ideas are the objects of Divine Knowledge prior to creation goes against many sayings of Plato and the Platonists; for although they hold that God knows things before creation, they also speak of the Forms after creation, and not only the objects of His knowledge before creation. For instance, Hermes famously states that he had an encounter with his "perfect nature" (*tibā* ' *al-tāmm*) in this world, or Plato explains his encounters with luminous beings on his spiritual journey.³⁷

Suhrawardī's Views on the Platonic Forms

Since Mīr Dāmād incorporates both the views of Fārābī and Suhrawardī with certain modifications into his view on Platonic forms, I will first consider the original position of Suhrawardī that Āqājānī offers in his commentary along with passages from *Qabasāt* in which Mīr Dāmād presents Suhrawardī's views. This will help us to understand more fully what Mīr Dāmād achieves in his philosophical synthesis.

To begin with, it would be a good idea to remind ourselves once again that three of the interpretations that Mīr Dāmād enumerates as the popular views on Platonic Ideas in the beginning of his discussion on this subject have something to do with Suhrawardī. These views are (1) Platonic Ideas understood as "suspended forms" (al-suwar al-mu'allagah), (2) Platonic Ideas as residing in the mundus *imaginalis* (*'ālam al-mithāl*), which itself is more an understanding of the locus of the Ideas than the Ideas themselves, and (3) finally Platonic forms as the lords of species (arbāb al-anwā') or the "Governing Angels" (malā'ikah al-muwakkilah).38 As Suhrawardī has elaborated extensively in his works, the lords of species are the angels that exist for every single species in the material realm. He considers these Angels to be identical with the Hermetic "Perfect Nature" (al-tibā' al-tāmm), the Zoroastrian guarding angels (*amshāspandān*), and finally with the Platonic Ideas. All the instances of each species are governed and controlled by the Angel particular to them. Early on Mīr Dāmād declares the understanding of Platonic Ideas as the Lord of Species to be the only view among the prevalent views on the Ideas that reason does not reject. However, at least in Qabasat, there is no explicit exposition as to what Mīr Dāmād understands by considering the Platonic forms to be identical with the lords of species.³⁹

³⁷ Āqājānī, Sharh al-qabasāt, pp. 363-364.

³⁸ Sayyid Ahmad al-'Alawī, *Kashf al-haqā'iq*, edited by A. Awjabī, Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 1385 [A.H. solar], pp. 759–763.

³⁹ Āqājānī, Sharh al-qabasāt, pp. 365-366.

As for the hanging forms, Mīr Dāmād simply asserts that both Suhrawardī (in *Hikmat al-ishrāq* and *al-Muṭāraḥāt*)⁴⁰ and Shahrazūrī (in *al-Shajarah al-ilā-hiyyah*)⁴¹ deny the idea that Platonic Ideas are unconditioned quiddities that exist in the external world in an unqualified way. He, then, immediately states that they accept the three other meanings, in particular Platonic forms as the suspended forms for material and mathematical entities. This is all that Mīr Dāmād says about them in this section. On the contrary, Āqājānī explains in some detail what Suhrawardī means by these suspended forms and why this view is problematic.⁴²

Āgājānī begins by showing the place of the hanging forms in Suhrawardī's cosmology. He writes that these hanging forms are quantifiable configurations (alashbāh al-miadārivvah) that exist on a level between the material and the immaterial worlds. On the one hand, they have some of the features of the material world such as shape and color, but lack other qualities such as density or weight. These forms exist in a realm called the *mundus imaginalis* (*'ālam al-mithāl*), which is the isthmus between the material and the immaterial worlds. These forms exist without locus or time, and that is why they are called "the suspended forms." All the things that exist in the material realm have a corresponding suspended form in the *mundus imaginalis*. Āgājānī then criticizes this view by saying that these forms are ultimately of a corporeal nature, and this view definitely cannot be what Plato and his followers had in mind. Mīr Dāmād is also aware of this problem, but he tries to find a way to absolve Suhrawardī. He states that those who believe in the existence of Platonic Ideas consider them to be immaterial, and lacking all the material qualities such as time, place, extension, etc. However, what Suhrawardī and his followers suggest possesses some of these attributes and therefore this cannot be in accord with Plato's views. He then offers a solution: if we take immateriality to be the most important characteristic of Platonic Ideas, then we could say that the suspended forms also enjoy a certain level of immateriality in so far as they are bereft of such material qualities as density and weight. So, Plato held that the Ideas are immaterial, and Suhrawardi's view is congruent with this, since in his understating the suspended forms are also immaterial, though they are not fully so-i.e., their immateriality (tajarrud) pertains to that appropriate for the isthmus (i.e., it is *barzakhī*).⁴³ However, this explanation is not sufficient, and Mīr Dāmād himself criticizes it in his other works.44

⁴⁰ See Suhrawardī, *Majmūʻay-i muşannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq*, edited by H. Corbin, Tehran: Pajhūhishgāh-i Muţāli'āt-i Farhangī, 1372 [A.H. solar], vol. II, pp. 92–93.

⁴¹ See, Shahrzūrī, *al-Shajarat al-ilāhiyyah*, edited by N. Habībī, Tehran: The Iranian Institute of Philosophy, 1385 [A.H. solar], vol. III, pp. 426–456, especially pp. 435–436.

⁴² Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, p. 163.

⁴³ Āqājānī, Sharh al-qabasāt, p. 366.

⁴⁴ It seems that Mīr Dāmād reduces Suhrawardī's understanding of the Platonic forms to the "suspended forms." It is true that the "suspended forms" are not immaterial, and yet they are to be distinguished from the Platonic forms in Suhrawardī's philosophy in so far as they are conceived to be purely luminous and immaterial. See: Suhrawardī, *al-Talwī*, *in*:

Mīr Dāmād and the Question of the Aeviternal Origination (*hudūth dahrī*) of the Platonic Forms

Perhaps we find the most innovative manifestation of Mīr Dāmād's treatment of the Platonic Ideas in the notion of aeviteral origination (*hudūth dahrī*), stating that the Platonic Ideas exist in *dahr*. But, before going into detail about this theory, we must say a few introductory words about the doctrine of origination (*hudūth*)⁴⁵ and also Mīr Dāmād's tripartite division of temporality into *sarmad* (eternity), *dahr* (aeviternity) and *zamān* (time).^{46 47 48}

⁴⁵ By *hudūth* and *hādith* in this context is meant anything whose existence is preceded by non-existence. Now, this non-existence can be interpreted in a temporal sense in the sense that (a) did not exist in time (x1) and then its efficient cause brought it into existence in time (x2). Or it could mean ontological precedence. A contingent entity is neutral towards existence and in this sense its non-existence precedes its existence.

 46 For a discussion of the understanding of the trifold division of temporality prior to Mīr Dāmād and generally the philosophical significance of it, see: Ibn Sīnā, 'Uyūn al-hikmah, in: Ibn Sīnā, Rasā'il al-Shaykh al-Ra'īs Abī 'Alī al-Husayn Ibn 'Abd Allāh Ibn Sīnā, Qum: Intishārāt-i Bīdār, 1980, vol. I, p. 42; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Matālib al-ʿāliyah fī ʿilm al-ilāhī*, edited by Ahmad Hijāzī al-Saggā', Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1987, vol. V, pp. 78-85, Samīh Daghīm, al-Mustalahāt al-Imām al-Fakhr al-Rāzī, Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān Nāshirūn, p. 333; Shahristānī, *al-Milal wa al-nihal*, edited by A. H. Fā'ūr et al, Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1995, vol. II, pp. 411-412; Ibn Rushd, al-Kashf 'an manāhij al-adillah fī 'aqā'id al-millah, edited by M. J. 'Ābidī, Beirut: Markaz al-Dirāsāt al-Wahdah al-'Arabiyyah, 1998, pp. 103-123; Mīr Dāmād, Nibrās al-divā', edited by Hāmid Nājī Işfahānī, Tehran: Mīrāth-i Maktūb, 1376 (A.H. solar), pp. 59–60. See also: H. Hasan Zādah Āmulī, Hazār wa vak kalamah, Tehran: Daftar-i Tablīghāt-i Islāmī, vol. VI. pp. 113-120. For a discussion of the classification of dahr into al-dahr al-asfal, al-dahr al-aysar, al-dahr al-ayman, al-dahr al-ayman, see: Muhammad Taqī Āmulī, Durar al-fawā'id, Qum: Mu'assasay-i Ismā'iliyān, vol. I, pp. 252-279, in particular pp. 253–255; also, Sayyid Ja'far Sajjādī, Farhang-i ma'ārif-i islāmī, Tehran: Intishārāt-i Kūmash, 1373 [A.H. solar] under dahr; Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī [attributed], Hādī al-mudillīn, Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār wa Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 1383 [A.H. solar], p. 266.

⁴⁷ For the meaning of *dahr* and *sarmad* within the Shi'ite context and their philosophical significance, see: Mullā Sadrā, *Sharḥ Uşūl al-Kāfī*, edited by M. Khwājawī, Tehran: Mu'assisa-yi Mutāli'āt-i Farhangī, 1370 [A.H. solar], vol. II, p. 391 and III, pp. 6–10; Abū Ja'far Khurāsānī, *Hidāyat al-ummah ilā ma'ārif al-a'immah*, Mu'assisat al-Bi'thah, pp. 333–

Majmū ay-i muşannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq, edited by H. Corbin, Tehran: Pajhūhishgāh-i Muţāli āt-i Farhangī, 1372 [A.H. solar], vol. I, p. 68. See also: his *Hikmat al-ishrāq*, ibid., vol. II, p. 230; Shahrzūrī, *Sharḥ ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, edited by H. Ziai, Tehran: Pajhūhishgāh-i Muţāli āt-i Farhangī, 1372 [A.H. solar], pp. 548–552; Qutb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, edited by M. Moḥaqqiq, Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār wa Matākhir-i Farhangī, 1383 [A.H. solar], pp. 355–358; Shahrzūrī, *al-Shajarat al-ilāhiyyah*, edited by N. Ḥabībī, Tehran: The Iranian Institute of Philosophy, 1385 [A.H. solar], vol. III, pp. 426–456, especially pp. 435–436. Arnzen thinks that Mīr Dāmād is most probably influenced by later *ishrāqī* thinkers such as Ibn Kammūnah. See: R. Arnzen, *Platonische Ideen in der Arabischen Philosophie: Texte und Materialien zur Begriffsgeschichte von Suwar Aflatuniyya und Muthul Aflatuniyya*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2011, pp. 196–197.

One of the perennial questions that has occupied the minds of philosophers since Plato and Aristotle is the question of the eternity of the world.⁴⁹ Is the world eternal or does it have a beginning in time? In Plato, the Demiurge does not create the world but rather, while contemplating the eternal forms, grants order to the pre-existing chaos. In Aristotle, too, the coming into being of the cosmos is not *ex nihilo*. The eternity of the world found one of its most significant expositions in Proclus' *De Aeternitate Mundi*, which triggered John Philoponus to write his famous *Against Proclus on the Eternity of the World*.⁵⁰ In the Abrahamic religions, the Creator God is believed to have created the world from nothing, and many Christian and Jewish philosophers have confronted this issue throughout history. Islamic philosophers and theologians, too, had their share in tackling this issue, and in fact one of the four views of the philosophers (in particular Ibn Sīnā) that Ghazālī, arguably the most influential Islamic theologian, deems heretical is the eternity of the world.

According to the rule of causation, it is impossible for an efficient cause to exist without producing an effect. If one takes God to be the efficient cause of the world, since He is Eternal, the world (the effect) must also exist from eternity, a view that seems incompatible with religious beliefs. Islamic philosophers, as a response to this issue, had introduced the concept of essential origi-

334; Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ al-asmā' al-ḥusnā*, edited by N. Ḥabībī, Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1385, pp. 722–725, in which Sabzawārī connects the tripartite division of temporality to the Shi'ite notion of *sarmad* in his commentary on $Du'\bar{a}' al-jawshan al-kabīr$.

⁴⁸ The question of time and eternity and its relation to creation has a long history in Western philosophy that goes back as far bas as to the Pre-Socratics, Plato and Aristotle. This question finds its way to later Greek and Medieval philosophers as Boethius, for instance, distinguishes between the eternity of God (*aeternitas*) and the everlasting duration of the heavens (*sempiternitas*). The Greek Platonist of Late Antiquity also made a distinction between αίόν (eternity) ἀιδιότης (everlastingness). Cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 37c–38b; Aristotle, *On The Heavens*, 279a18–22; Plotinus, *Enneads*: 3.7 and 5.8; Augustine, *Confessions*, book 11; James G. Wilberding, "Eternity in Ancient Philosophy" in: Y. Melamed, *Eternity: A History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 14–54; P. Adamson, in *op. cit*. pp. 77–113; C. Steel, "The Neoplatonic Doctrine of Time and Eternity and Its Influence on Medieval Philosophy," in: *The Medieval Concept of Time: Studies on the Scholastic Debate and Its Reception in Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. P. Pasquale, Leiden: Brill, 2001, pp. 3–31. R. Sorabji, *Time, Creation, and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986.

⁴⁹ For a thorough study of the development of the question of the eternity of the world from Plato and Aristotle up to the school of Işfahān, see: M. Terrier, "De L'Éternité ou de la nouveauté de monde: parcours d'un problème philosophique d'Athènes à Ispahan." *Journal Asiatique* 299 (2011): 369–421. This study deals with the notion of aeviternal origination yet it does not elaborate on its influence on Mīr Dāmād's understanding of the Platonic forms.

⁵⁰ H. Lang. "Perpetuity, Eternity, and Time in Proclus' Cosmos." *Phronesis*, vol. 50, no. 2, 2005, pp. 150–169. I. P. Sheldon Williams, "The Reaction against Proclus," in: *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967, pp. 473–491; J. Philoponus, *Philoponus: against Proclus on the Eternity of the World 1–18.* 4 vols., Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

nation, which basically means that although there has been no time in which this world did not exist (since its cause has been present from eternity), origination is nevertheless an essential quality of creation due to the fact that all the created things are contingent, and a contingent entity is in need of its cause for its origination and for its endurance in every moment. Thus, origination ($hud\bar{u}th$) is not a point in time when things that did not exist come into existence, but rather it is an ontological status that is an essential attribute of all created things. All created things are contingent, and each contingent entity is originated essentially, in the sense that its essence is neutral with respect to existence and non-existence and needs a cause to bring it out of this neutrality.

Islamic theologians, the most prominent among them being Ghazālī, did not find this explanation to accord with the teachings of the Quran, considering that it would imply that the world is coeval with the Divine. The theologians' alternative view was that there was a time when God was and there was no creation, and then God decided to create the world. However, since time is an adjunct of creation they called the time in which God was but no world existed with him an indeterminate time (*zamān mawhūm*). This solution also presents its own difficulties, since it would imply that there was a time that God did not fully possess His qualities (since, for example, He was not a creator), and that there was a time that the most perfect cause was present but had no effect. Also, the idea of a time before time creates many complications.⁵¹

It is in this connection that we must understand the doctrine of $hud\bar{u}th \ dahr\bar{i}$ (aeviternal origination).⁵² Mīr Dāmād was neither content with the theologians'

⁵¹ For the difference between the views of the philosophers and the *mutakallimūn* on the nature of time, see: Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-maqāṣīd*, edited by A. 'Umayrah, Qum: al-Sharīf al-Radī Publication, 1412 [A.H. lunar] vol. II, pp. 187–198.

⁵² For scholarly literature on *al-hudūth al-dahrī*, see: F. Rahman, "Mīr Dāmād's Concept of Huduth Dahri: A Contribution to the Study of God-World Relationship Theories in Safavid Iran." Journal of Near Eastern Studies, vol. 39, no. 2, 1980, pp. 139-151; Christian Jambet, "La question du fondement de l'étant: du Raffermissement de la croyance (Taqwīm al-īmān) de Mīr Dāmād aux Clés de l'invisible (Mafātīh al-ghayb) de Mullā Sadrā," Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études (EPHE), Section des sciences religieuses, 122: 2015, pp. 177-182; S. Rizvi, "Between Time and Eternity: Mir Damad on God's Creative Agency." Journal of Islamic Studies, vol. 17, no. 2, 2006, pp. 158-176. S. Rizvi, "Mīr Dāmād's (d. 1631) al-Qabasāt: The Problem of the Eternity of the Cosmos," in: Kh. El-Rouayheb and S. Schmidtke, The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy, 1st ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 438-464; idem, "Mīr Dāmād In India: Islamic Philosophical Traditions and the Problem of Creation." Journal of the American Oriental Society, vol. 131, no. 1, pp. 9-23. K. Brown, "Time, Perpetuity, and Eternity. Mīr Dāmād's Theory of Perpetual Creation and the Trifold Division of Existence: An Analysis of Kitāb al-Qabasāt: The Book of Blazing Brands," 2006, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. Tavakkuli, Nazariyva-vi pavdāyish-i jahān dar hikmat-i yamānī wa hikmat-i muta 'āliya, Mashhad: Bunyād-i Pazhūhish-hā-yi Islāmī, 1389 [A.H. solar]. M. Terrier, "De L'Éternité ou de la nouveauté de monde: parcours d'un probléme philosophique d'Athènes à Ispahan." Journal Asiatique 299 (2011): 369-421.

concept of an indeterminate time nor with the essential origination of the peripatetic philosophers. In order to solve this problem, he made use of an already existing tripartite division of temporality into Eternity, aeviternity, and time. Each existent thing has a particular receptacle; eternity is the abode of God, aeviternity is the abode of things that are immutable and not susceptible to measurement, and time is the existential locus for mutable and measurable things. There is a hierarchy among the three levels, eternity being on the summit followed by aeviternity and then time. Things that exist in time do not exist in aeviternity in so far as they are fused with extended temporality. So, in this sense, their existence in time is preceded by a non-existence in aeviternity, and the non-existence is not merely in an indeterminate time (the theologian's view) or merely a mental consideration (what he considers to be ultimately the view of the philosophers), but is rather a "real non-existence." As for immutable things, their existence is preceded by an eternal non-existence ('adam sarmadī), in so far as they are non-existent on the Divine realm. So, for something to be aeviternal in this context means that it is something beyond time, which is nonexistent on the Divine level (sarmad)—at least as a separate entity. It is in this sense that it is originated, since its existence is preceded by a real non-existence on the higher level.^{53 54}

⁵³ See: Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, p. 10.

⁵⁴ Although Sadrā's philosophy overshadowed Mīr Dāmād's thought in general in Persia, we still find quite a number of philosophers who defended in different degrees the notion of aeviternal origination after Mīr Dāmād. See, for instance, [not arranged in a chronological order]: Mīr Sayyid Muhammad 'Alawī 'Āmilī, 'Alāqat al-tajrīd, edited by H. Nājī Isfahānī, Tehran: Anjuman-i Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 1381 [A.H. solar], vol. I, p. 653; Qādī Sa'īd Qummī, Sharh tawhīd al-Şadūq, edited by N. Habībī, Tehran: Wizārat-i Farhang wa Irshād-i Islāmī, 1415 [A.H. lunar], vol. I, pp. 153, 378-379 and III, pp. 8-10; idem, al-'Urwat al-wuthqā, in: Āshtiyānī and Corbin, Anthologie des philosophes iraniens: Depuis le XVIIe siècle jusqu'à nos jours. Textes persans et arabes choisis et présentés par Sayyed Jalâloddîn Ashtiyânî. Introduction analytique par Henry Corbin, (Bibliothèque iranienne; no. 18-19). Téhéran: Departement d'iranologie de l'Institut franco-iranien de recherche, 1971. vol. II. pp. 87–88. He defends hudūth dahrī of the Platonic forms; Āgā Husayn Khwānsārī, al-Hāshiyah 'alā hāshiyat al-Khafrī 'alā sharh al-tajrīd, edited by Ridā Ustādī, Qum: Mu'tamar al-Muhaqqiq al-Khwānsārī, 1378 [A.H. solar], pp. 311–313. He attempts to justify aeviternal origination. His explanations here seems to be at odds with his view on indeterminate time and it requires a comprehensive study of his works before we could fully understand his stance on this issue. Mulla Mahdī Narāqī, Jāmi 'al-afkār wa nāqid al-anzār, edited by Majīd Hādī Zādah, Tehran: Intishārāt-i Hikmat, vol. I, pp. 219-221. He shows a favorable view of aeviternal origination. idem, al-Lama'āt al-'arshiyyah, edited by A. Awjabī, Karaj: Intishārāt-i 'Ahd, 1381 [A.H. solar], pp. 468-490; Mullā Shamsā Gīlānī, Risālah fī ithbāt hudūth al-'ālam, in: Āshtiyānī and Corbin, Anthologie des philosophes iraniens: Depuis le XVIIe siècle jusqu'à nos jours. Textes persans et arabes choisis et présentés par Sayyed Jalâloddîn Ashtiyânî. Introduction analytique par Henry Corbin (Bib-

Now let us see how Mīr Dāmād uses this tripartite division to address the kind of existence the Platonic Forms enjoy. He thinks the Platonic Forms exist as "Divine Forms" (*muthul ilāhiyyah*) in *sarmad* with a "Divine being prior to any multiplicity."⁵⁵ In this sense they are subject to Divine Knowledge [not in the sense that God knows things through the Platonic Forms but rather in the sense that the essence of each thing is present eternally to Him],⁵⁶ and since God's Knowledge is active knowledge (*'ilm fi'lī*) it does not imply any multiplicity in the Divine.⁵⁷ As he explains elsewhere, by active knowledge he means a kind of knowledge in which the knower and that which is known are

liothèque iranienne; no. 18-19). Téhéran: Département d'iranologie de l'Institut francoiranien de recherche, 1971, vol. I, p. 460; idem, Hudūth al- 'ālam, edited by Gh. Dādkhāh et al., Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2015, pp. 52-77. Qādī Sa'īd Qummī, Hāshiyah 'alā Uthūlūjiya, in: Āshtiyānī and Corbin, Anthologie des philosophes iraniens: Depuis le XVIIe siècle jusqu'à nos jours, vol. III, pp. 102-105, 197-204. Although he does not talk about aeviternal origination in this context, he nevertheless uses the notion of aeviternity to account for the existence of immaterial entities. Mulla Isma'ıl Khwaju'ı, Risalah fi'l-huduth al-dahrī, in: Āshtiyānī and Corbin, Anthologie des philosophes iraniens: Depuis le XVIIe siècle jusqu'à nos jours, vol. IV, pp. 314-364. Mullā Nazar 'Alī Gīlānī, Kitāb al-tuhfah, in: Āshtiyānī and Corbin, Anthologie des philosophes iraniens: Depuis le XVIIe siècle jusqu'à nos jours, vol. IV, pp. 813-814. Mullā Ismā'īl Isfarāyanī, Anwār al-'irfān, edited by S. Nazarī Tawakkulī, Qum: Būstān-i Kitāb-i Qum, 1383 [A.H. solar], pp. 92-111.Though the two doctrines are not identical, Sabzawārī seems to be influenced by Mīr Dāmād's hudūth al-dahrī in his theory of al-hudūth al-ismī. But Mīrzā Mahdī Āshtiyānī in his glosses on Sharh al-manzūmah considers hudūth ismī to be a unique innovation of Sabzawārī to be differentiated from other types of hudūth. See: Mīrzā Mahdī Āshtiyānī, Ta'līqah 'alā sharh al-manzūmah, edited by T. Izutsu et al., Qum: Daftar-i Tablīghāt-i Islāmī, 1376 [A.H. solar], pp. 350-351. Abu'l-Hasan Rafī'ī Qazwīnī also considers hudūth dahrī as a defendable position. See also: Jamāl al-Dīn Afghānī, Ta'līqāt 'alā sharh al-Dawānī li'l- 'aqā 'id al- 'adudiyyah, edited by H. Khusraw Shāhī, Cairo: Maktabat al-Shurūq al-Dawliyyah, 2002, pp. 220–222. Afghānī deals with the relationship between existence and the trifold division of temporality, not directly related to the question of aeviternal origination.

⁵⁵ Mīr Dāmād, *Qabasāt*, p. 164.

⁵⁶ It is important to note that Mīr Dāmād in various places rejects the idea that God's knowledge of the particulars is through the Platonic Forms. This may seem contradictory with what he is saying in this chapter. But I am not convinced that this is necessarily the case. What he is affirming here is that the essence of the things, which in this context means the Divine forms, is eternally present to God and this does not mean that He knows things through them (i.e., through the Platonic Forms).

⁵⁷ Cf. Mīr Dāmād, *Muşannafāt-i Mīr Dāmād*, edited by A. Nūrānī, Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār wa Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 1381, vol. 1, pp. 176–177. Platonic Ideas cannot be the objects of Divine Knowledge. Idem, *Muşannafāt-i Mīr Dāmād*, edited by A. Nūrānī, Tehran: Anjuman-i Āthār wa Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 1381, vol. II, pp. 444–445. Mīr Sayyid 'Amad 'Alawī, *Sharḥ kitab al-qabasāt*, edited by. H. Nājī Işfahānī, Tehran: Mu'assisa-yi Muṭāliʿāt-i Islāmī, 1376 [A.H. solar], pp. 114–115; 377–381. one and the same, as opposed to passive knowledge, in which what is known is impressed upon the senses from without. Next, these Platonic Forms also exist on the level of *dahr* and enjoy an aeviternal existence and in this sense they are aeviternally originated, but this time as distinct entities. He calls these forms "the suspended spiritual forms" (*al-şuwar al-rawhāniyyah al-mu* 'allaqah).⁵⁸

In *al-Ufuq al-mubīn* Mīr Dāmād provides a simple definition of Eternity, aeviternity and time. Eternity is the relationship between immutable and immutable, aeviternity the relationship between immutable and mutable, and time the relationship between mutable and mutable. The unconditioned natures in themselves, which are represented as Platonic Ideas here, are the immutable objects of the Divine Knowledge, objects that God knows with an active knowledge. So, they are eternal since they are of the nature of the relation between immutable and immutable.

On the next level, we have the temporal and material particulars, and the relationship between them and God is aeviternal, in the sense that God knows them as intelligible entities in so far as He knows their causes and encompasses all the moments and loci all at once. Mīr Dāmād calls these intelligible entities that exist on the level of aevitenity "the suspended forms" (*al-suwar al-mu 'allaqah*).

Finally, the temporal entities with respect to those who know them in time are temporal things. It is very significant to note that he explicitly mentions that all things that are material and sensible (with respect to our knowledge) are intelligible and aeviternal from another point of view (with respect to God), and this shows that aeviternity also plays an important role in God's knowledge of the particulars. However, he again insists that even then God's knowledge of particulars is not of the nature of aeviternity, but rather is an active knowledge beyond it.

To recapitulate, Platonic forms exist in the Divine realm prior to any creation and multiplicity, and by prior I do not mean temporal priority but rather another tempo-ontological priority. Then Platonic forms exist on the level of aeviternity as suspended forms that are aeviternally originated in the sense that their existence in *dahr* is preceded by non-existence in Eternity (*sarmad*). These hanging forms are intelligible and beyond time. Finally, we have things that exist in time and particulars. So, Platonic forms possess both an intra-deical and an extra-deical existence.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Mīr Dāmād, Qabasāt, p. 164.

⁵⁹ He also provides another explanation to clarify his point. He writes that particular things that exist in time, from the point of view of their unconditioned natures, are immaterial entities and these unconditioned natures are Platonic Forms that exist in Divine knowledge. As for particular individuations of the unconditioned nature, they are sensible for those who know them by a passive and temporal knowledge but immutable and intelligible for the one who knows them by an active knowledge.

Let us consider three points before turning to $\bar{A}q\bar{a}j\bar{a}n\bar{n}$'s view on Platonic Forms: First, Mīr Dāmād also discusses Plotinus' view on the Ideas in the so-called Aristotle's *Theology*, but since his analysis does not add much to what I have already said I will not discuss it in detail. The only interesting point that he mentions is that the sensible things are symbols for intelligible realities.

Second, although Mīr Dāmād does not make it explicit, we could say that he considers three modes of existence for a quiddity: (1) unconditioned (*bi sharț lā*) as essences that are present to God eternally (*dawām al-muthūl bayn yaday 'ilmihi wa iḥāṭatihi*), and this is what he calls Divine Forms (*al-muthul al-ilāhiyyah*) which exist in *sarmad*; (2) then there is quiddity bereft of matter and extension (*bi sharț lā*) that he calls "suspended spiritual forms" (*al-şuwar al-rawḥāniyyah al-mu'allaqah*) that are originated in *dahr*; and finally, (3) there is quiddity conditioned by material adjuncts (*bi sharț shay'*).

Third, I think it is imperative that I say a few words about the way Mīr Dāmād incorporates and yet transcends the views of Fārābī and Suhrawardī, in particular the former, since he explicitly says that the true manner of interpretation is that which Fārābī carried out in *Reconciliation*. As for Fārābī, if we take what Āqājānī narrates of Fārābī to be an accurate depiction of his views, his doctrine is similar to Mīr Dāmād's in so far as both philosophers consider Platonic Forms to be the object of Divine Knowledge before creation, but they differ in so far as Mīr Dāmād considers Divine Knowledge not as an accident but rather as one with the Divine, and also considers the suspended forms as extradeical instances of Platonic Forms. As for Suhrawardī, Mīr Dāmād accepts the suspended forms, but he considers them to be immaterial and not of a *mithālī* nature.

In order to understand $\bar{A}q\bar{a}j\bar{a}ni$'s view, we first must bear in mind that he rejects the notion of *hudūth dahrī*, a point that he discusses at length in his commentary. Second, it is important to note that, in his view, there are two worlds in which unconditioned quiddities exist: the immaterial and the material worlds. In each of these worlds, the unconditioned nature exists through its particular instances: in the material realms through the particular material instances, and in the immaterial world through immaterial instances. Moreover, he calls the immaterial instances of the unconditioned quiddities in the immaterial realm "Platonic Forms." He also paraphrases his view in another way: he writes that the form in the sense of an actualized thing can exist in two forms; in one form, it is in need of matter for its existence, and in another form it is empty of any matter. The second form is what he calls a Platonic Form, but he again and again emphasizes that Platonic Forms are particular instances of the unconditioned quiddities themselves exist-

ing in the external world, such as would lead to the undesired view that $M\bar{n}r$ Dāmād rejects.⁶⁰

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to do two things: first, to reiterate very briefly what I discussed in this inquiry, and, secondly, to raise questions for further investigation. In this study, I analyzed Mīr Dāmād's views in the fifth *Qabas* of *Qabasāt*. In this chapter, Mīr Dāmād criticizes and rejects the notion of Platonic Ideas as unconditioned natures existing in the external world. We then addressed how Mīr Dāmād criticizes Ibn Sīnā's criticism of the Ideas. Subsequently, I presented both the views of Fārābī and Suhrawardī along with the way Mīr Dāmād both agrees and opposes their views. In discussion of each of these figures my account was complemented by insights from Āqājānī. I then showed how Platonic Forms exist in God on the level of Eternity and as originated realities in aeviternity. Āqājānī manifests a Sadrean understanding of Platonic Ideas according to which an Idea is an immaterial instance of a quiddity in the immaterial realm.

What remains to be carried out is a thorough evaluation of the consistency of Mīr Dāmād's view both with respect to his theory of aeviternal origination as well as the way it is related to Platonic Forms. The most basic criticism that opponents make is that Mīr Dāmād's view negates causality, since it amounts to the idea that the Eternal God was present yet there was no entity with Him. This implies that even when the efficient cause was present there was no effect, and this is problematic. However, I think that this criticism is based on an ontology which differs substantially from Mīr Dāmād's understanding. In his view, ontology is closely tied with a unique understanding of temporality, in which each level of existence has distinct properties. So, if the cause lies in eternity and the efficient cause must be reinterpreted, since the effect does not exist on the same level and therefore the idea of the coexistence of the efficient cause and the effect finds a unique sense.

On another note, the relationship between primacy of existence versus quiddity and Platonic Forms must be further explained and investigated. As I mentioned earlier, Āqājānī rejects one of Mīr Dāmād's arguments for the impossibility of two kinds of existence for a single quiddity, asserting that his view rests on the primacy of quiddity. However, he does not discuss in detail the implications of the primacy of being for the notion of Platonic Forms. For one, he mentions that Platonic Forms are the immaterial instances of the unconditioned na-

⁶⁰ Āqājānī, Sharh al-qabasāt, pp. 368-369.

ture, but if that is the case, either nature is different from quiddity, in which case he has to explain why they are different, or else unconditioned quiddity is real through its instances. Moreover, it is important to clarify in what sense it is notional. Or again, if existence enjoys primacy over quiddity, why does he not speak of *i'tibārāt* of existence rather than quiddity. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, Platonic Forms are directly tied with Mīr Dāmād's understanding of universals, and one must clarify how his understanding of Platonic Ideas must be situated in relation with his understanding of universality as well as predication.