

# The Identity of Existence (Being) and Presence in Suhrawardi's Thought

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## Abstract

Suhrawardi (1154/5-1191 A.D.) has founded his Illuminationist-Hikmatic system upon self and intuitive self-consciousness and his ultimate goal was reaching God. On the one hand, he finds the identity of self and its origins identical with "presence by oneself", and on the other, he explains the agency (origin-ness) and the other-consciousness of immaterial lights by illuminationist relation. According to those parts of the philosopher's instructive works which are devoted to the explanation of the identity and determination of the place of illumination and intuition in the spheres of existence and knowledge, one can conclude that existence and presence are identical in Suhrawardi's philosophy and the generality of this function can be proven based on the self-consciousness and other-consciousness of the Light of Lights. Thus conceived, any possible discontinuity between ontology and epistemology are systematically overcome. In fact, by tracing the acquired (mediated) knowledge back to presential (immediate) knowledge, Suhrawardi tackled the problem of known-by-itself/known-by-something-else incompatibility and founded human knowledge on necessity and certainty. Since his philosophy is systematic, any research concerning all or part of his ideas and their consequences is contingent on understanding each clear and hidden elements of the system as a whole. This essay seeks to assay the relationship between existence and presence from the horizon of illumination and intuition.

**Key words:** Illumination, Intuition, Existence, Presence, Suhrawardi

## INTRODUCTION

A critical mind would raise the question that if knowledge is "the justified true belief" and if according to correspondence theory of truth, a true proposition corresponds with the reality as such (Classic version of correspondence theory of truth cf. Plato's Complete Works, 2011, vol. 3: 1417; Aristotle, 1988: 119, 305-308.) and if each true judgement provided that the equal presence of the two terms of the judgement is by the one who issues the judgement, then if a philosophy considers the existence and entities independent of the knowing subject and has a representational notion of the subject's knowledge in acquired sense – i.e. mental notions and judgements mirror their objective references – the recognition of correspondence and non-correspondence of ontological proposition with the reality will not be

possible; because the knowing subject will not succeed to go beyond mind and the mental sphere in its approach to existence and touch the latter in an immediate fashion. In other words, though the truth criterion is distinguished from the identity of truth, defining truth as correspondence is an expression of a type of criterion; while the recognition of the correspondence with reality is contingent upon having access to reality that renders the need to the truth exam irrelevant (Javadi, 1995: 42). Thus, if an independent approach to belief and the reality that is represented by it is not possible, judgement of their correspondence or non-correspondence will not be possible either. On the other hand, the more on the independence of reality from the mind we insist, the more removed and out of access turns the reality (Shams, 2005: 107, 110). To dematerialize the self-consciousness of knowing subject, Suhrawardi offers an argument the criterion of which can be equally applied to every mental and mediated knowledge. In fact, if self-consciousness is mediated by mental form, then how subject would be able to know the representation of that form of itself? If it does not know that the form is a representation of it, it will not know itself and if it knows that the form is a representation of it, it has not known itself via that form (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 111; Surawardi, 2017<sup>h</sup>, vol. 3: 37).

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However, if the subject's encounter with the other is always mental and mediated, it will not be possible, for one subject in various times and for a number of subjects in a certain time, to recognize the identity, unity, continuity and judgemental generality of the form the perceptual continuity of which has been torn. Similarity or memory will not be a secure and sound backstay.

Thus, if we continue to support correspondence theory of truth in the face of other alternative theories (Coherence theory of truth and pragmatist theory of truth), and if existence and the existents are not presentially known or if we cannot trace the acquired representational mediated knowledge back to the intuitive immediate knowledge by presence, not only ontology, rather every other reality based knowledge would be engulfed in skepticism.

Then, the question of the relationship between existence and presence will be a question of the separability or inseparability of the station of actuality (existence) and the station of mentality (knowledge); because one of the major characteristics of presential knowledge is deliverance from the duality of truth and falsity. This is due to the nature of this type of knowledge that is not concerned of the concept of correspondence.... Another characteristic of the presential knowledge is its deliverance from the distinction between conceptual and extentsional knowledge.... Both of these options (concept and judgement) are among the essential features of conceptualization that belong to the system of sense and representation – not to the system of existence and objective reality (HaeriYazdi, 2000: 49-50).

Suhrawardi sets intuitive self-consciousness as the foundation of his illuminationist wisdom. On the one hand, he finds the identity of self and its luminar principles one and the same with “presence by self” and explains the agency (origin-ness” and other-consciousness of immaterial lights via illuminative relation, on the other. The present essay seeks to illustrate the nature of “relationship of existence and presence” from the horizon of illumination and intuition.

Using the word “existence” in the title and in the research question is somewhat loose; because Suhrawardi gives priority and originality to quiddities by denying the objective independency of existence from quiddity. The answer that is given to the research question of the current essay will be key to numerous epistemological difficulties like the question of “correspondence and the way we prove it”.

This research will prove that the existence of every existent (even the Light of lights) is either from its presence by itself or by its presence by the immaterial lights; a presence that finally leads to the presence of Light of lights.

## **FUNCTION OF EXISTENCE AND PRESENCE IN SUHRAWARDI'S THOUGHT**

### **The Scope of Illumination and Intuition in the Sphere of Human Knowledge**

#### *Acquired knowledge and presential knowledge*

According to Suhrawardi, intuition, or in other words, the outcome of “illumination” in the sphere of knowledge, is presential immediate knowledge that covers the whole primordial (One's consciousness of oneself and his subjective modes) sensory and mystical knowledge. Illumination or in more complete expression, “illuminative relation”, against “categorical relation” is only dependent on one side (either on the agent or the knower). In Suhrawardi's view, illuminational relation is of pivotal stance both in the sphere of knowledge and the sphere of existence. It seems that the acceptance of “rational intuition” by Suhrawardi is inconsistent with “secondary intelligible” and he has not himself discussed this issue in his works (Yazdanpanah, 2012, vol. 2: 45-50; 56-68).

“We have some perceptions in which we do not need any other form but the presence of the essence of perceiver”(Suhrawardi, 2017 p, vol. 1: 485).

Since presential knowledge does not tolerate the duality of essential known and the accidental known and is consequently purified of the separation of concept and judgement, correspondence is not propounded. In presential knowledge, the known is present by the knower with its certain specifications and does not need correspondence. But in acquired knowledge, besides the fact that the accidental known is always absent from the knower, the essential known (mental form) is continuously universal and needs correspondence (Suhrawardi, 2017 p, vol. 1: 489). Suhrawardi believes that “every form that is in the soul is universal; even if it is composed of many universals. Then mental form does not decline participation as such and if it declines it is due to other thing” (Suhrawardi, 2017 a, vol. 1: 70).

According to Suhrawardi, every conceptual acquired knowledge is based on observation (sensory and non-sensory intuition) and every judgemental acquired knowledge is founded upon self-evident realities, observations, and conjectures. To put it otherwise, every primordial (self-evident) and simple refers back to intuition and the outcome of intuition is certain (Suhrawardi, 2017 p, vol. 1: 369; Suhrawardi, 2017 t, vol. 2: 104, 40-43).

Thus, in the same way that in astronomy everyone trusts the observations of the astrologists, in wisdom we should trust the intuition of theosophers (Suhrawardi, 2017 p, vol. 1: 460; Suhrawardi, 2017 t, vol. 2: 13, 156).

### *Self-consciousness*

Intuitive self-consciousness (which can be collective in mystical sense) and its conceptual investigation is the rise of Suhrawardi's point of departure in his metaphysics of light and darkness that is featured as the Wisdom of Illumination.

"The best way that the man who is involved in the discussion of illuminative wisdom can trust, is that the man begins with his own knowledge of his essence and then ascend to what is nobler than him" (Suhrawardi, 2017 p, vol. 1: 484).

Suhrawardi has a presential knowledge of his own self-consciousness that is an essential part of his identity. In his words, if my knowledge of „myself“ is acquired and through a mental idea, then since my mental idea is an accident that occurs on my essence, any allusion to me will not be to me and this is to say that I have known an accident among my accidents while I did not have any knowledge of myself. Furthermore, since acquired knowledge is conditioned upon mental idea and whereas every mental idea is universal and even it cannot become particular and individual by adding any other mental idea, my personal knowledge of myself will not be achieved. In fact, if my self-consciousness is acquired and I am not informed of my mental idea's correspondence with my essence, I have not found indeed but an idea and if I am informed of the correspondence, I have already known myself via the mental idea (Suhrawardi, 2017 t, vol. 2: 111; Suhrawardi, 2017 p, vol. 1: 484).

### *Other-consciousness*

Suhrawardi turns to vision as an example of sensory knowledge and does not accept the then current notions of vision and insists on the role of light in vision. Accordingly, vision is not an impression of a form in one's lens rather it is the result of an illuminated object's encounter with eye due to which a presential illumination occurs to the soul (Suhrawardi, 2017 p, vol. 1: 486). "Every vision is itself an illuminative relation not a consciousness of an illuminative relation". That is to say, soul is present in the vision faculty and has illumination over it and attends the objective vision sphere and casts light upon it too (Suhrawardi, 2017 t, vol. 2: 213; Suhrawardi, 2017 p, vol. 1: 485).

Since Suhrawardi does not tolerate the impression of the major on the minor, he also does not accept the impression of imaginal forms on the physical faculty of imagination and their corporeality. In his opinion, imagination prepares the soul as a corporeal manifestation in order to equip itself for visioning the substantial imaginary and incorporeal forms in the realm of immaterial ghosts (Suhrawardi, 2017 t, vol. 2: 211-212).

"It is a mistake to assume that imaginary forms are stored in imagination; because if it is so, they will be present and known by the supervising light; while when man stops to imaginize, he does not find anything inside himself as known; rather when man feels one thing that is in harmony with him or he thinks of one of its causes his thought is transferred to Zeyd and he strives to acquire its form from the higher sphere. It is indeed the Supervising Light that governs the higher sphere (Suhrawardi, 2017 t, vol. 2: 209).

Thus, since sensory and imaginary perception realize in the sensible and imaginal spheres in an immediate fashion, the known by essence is the object that is in touch with the sensory organ and the known by essence in imaginary perception is the incorporeal ghost (separate imaginary substance) (Shirazi, 2004: 454). Furthermore, since Suhrawardi believes in the recording of all past, present and future events of physical bodies in the heavenly souls (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 237, 244) and argues that the heavenly souls are purified of forgetfulness, he explains the recollection of particular notions via insisting on the presential relationship of human soul with the heavenly souls. In Suhrawardi's view, memory is the faculty of recollection and transference to the heavenly souls; not a deposit of particular notions as imprinted on a physical place (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 211).

"When man forgets something, its recollection is sometimes difficult to him; insofar as he tries hard but he does not succeed. Then some other time he would easily recollect it.

The thing that he recollects in his mind is not identical with what he finds in his physical faculties; otherwise he would not be absent from the supervising light after a great deal of search.... The quaster is a governing light that is not purgatorial that would be stopped by the bodily faculties.... Then recollection is not but from the world of invocation and it is a prerogative of the chief heavenly lights that never forget anything" (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 208).

Although Suhrawardi has stipulated the importance and priority of vision over other key human senses, with generalization of his explication of the reality of vision and considering his approach to the relationship between soul and body, one can conclude that soul is present in all of its stages and is identical with it. According to Suhrawardi, body and bodily faculties are the manifestations and modes of soul (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 205, 206). Then, "all that is perceived by the soul should be divided into certain types: universal perception due to their impression on the soul is contingent on the presence of form. Understanding the particulars is also dependent upon the presence of their essences and the soul's illumination or upon the impression of their forms on something that is present by

the soul that the soul's illumination has occurred to them" (Suhrawardi, 2017p, vol. 1: 487). Thus, besides conceiving self-consciousness as a presential process, Suhrawardi also deems vision, imagination and recollection, soul's consciousness of its faculties (whether imprinted on a body or not), body and bodily faculties in a presential manner. Suhrawardi argues that the self-consciousness and other-consciousness in every substantial light is basically presential. According to him, every mental form is in itself universal and the acquiredness of soul's consciousness of body and bodily faculties require the universality of that consciousness and this universality requires management of body and bodily faculties (Suhrawardi, 2017p, vol. 1: 484, 485). Thus, "man is not perceiving himself and his body and bodily faculties via a form or idea" (Suhrawardi, 2017p, vol. 1: 485). Soul with illumination and its presential consciousness of body and bodily faculties is the sense of all senses. Each one of the bodily actions and reactions in the sensation process are mediums through which the soul attends the realm of sensibles.

"In the same way that all human senses are rooted in a single unique sense, i.e. common sense, all these faculties are also originated in a unique faculty that is its very illuminated essence. ... Then, all these faculties are shadow of the thing in body that is in the chief light and verily body is its secret.

These things are not absent from the soul; rather they are revealed to it by a form of manifestation. ... Since the chief light is governing them all and is informed of the fact that it has particular faculties, the supervising light dominates its essence and is the sense of all senses. Whatever that exists in the body is rooted in one thing in the chief light and the latter is illuminating over the imaginary ideas and is needless of the form in vision" (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 213-216).

According to Suhrawardi's critical remarks of the logical rules of definition, if a definition is informative and substantial it should be consisted of the essential parts of genus and differentia which are known either by sensory or unsensory intuitions (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 20, 21). Furthermore, he does not accept something to be objectively simple but in mind to be composed of the essential parts of genus and differentia; because if mental affair is posited by reason, it will be representing the whole objective reality. In other words, it does not leave it neither in mind nor in reality (Corbin, 2017, vol. 1: 195; Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 71). What is simple in reality, is also simple (undefinable) in the mind and can only be known by way of intuition. Therefore, "there is no tracing back but to the sensible things or those things that are revealed superficially" (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 21); (it seems that the other way refers in this context to unsensory intuition in mystical sense). The physical substances and

compound affairs are known and defined by means of their constituents. This definition will not have any knowledge for the one who does not have intuitive notion (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 73, 74, 104). The definition of the term in compound varieties is known as the great community of accidents; the accidents that change in them leads to a change in the response of "what is?" (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 86). Sha'zzurī describes "the smile of a broad-rendered right-wing writer" as a definition for man.

Suhrawardi finally disregarded the truth of the body by denying the prime matter of the prepatetics, he reduced the body to a self-sustaining extension, and denies the substantiveness of the forms of species or the necessity of the constitution of the substance by substance. (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 88-85, 83). He construes each of the planets, elements (soil, water and space) and compounds (minerals, plants and animals) in terms of the development of perceptible qualities in the essence of matter (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 193, 190, 88, 87), and thus, traces the forms of species back to the accident. Consequently, since each accident is tangible and appreciable, it is obvious that the recognition of a form is not only inseparable, but also evident.

### **The Scope of Illumination and Intuition in the Sphere of Existence**

#### *Metaphysics of light and darkness*

Suhrawardi does not accept the definition of the substance as the "being not in the subject"; because, on the one hand, the existence (being) is being conceived as something posited by the mind and, on the other hand, does not tolerate the definition of the affirmative as the negation. Suhrawardi understands the concepts of substantiality and accidentality in the general and mental sense (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 62). He ultimately traces the substantiality back to perfection of quiddity in its independence and returns the accidentality to the defects of quiddity in its dependent nature. (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 167, 70; Suhrawardi, 2017b, vol.1: 156). In his view, the sum of substantiality or perfection of every objective quiddity is not an extra explanation besides its substantiality. For example, the objective substantiality of the soul, unlike its substantiality which is in the mind, is superfluous, though it is compatible with its simplicity and does not have much of it, but itself is the objective identity of the soul.

Since the existence is mentally posited, then the accidental quiddity is subject to the substantial quiddity, and since the objective nature is existentially by a cause, which itself is also an objective quiddity (Suhrawardi, 2017p, vol. 1: 402, 348; Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 186, p. 66), the priority of a substantial over the substantial effect is out of quiddity

and substantial. Therefore, the cause of its primacy and its perfection in its consistency is more intense and more severe than its effect (in essence). (Suhrawardi, 2017p, vol. 1: 302, 301, 227).

Of course, Suhrawardi, in some cases, even qualifies substantiality according to his definition as a mentally posited reality, and since the objective abundance of any mental item affirms its meaning, he finds the common stance of the divine presence with the contingent substances in their innate richness consistent. (Suhrawardi, 2017b, vol.1: 188, 187). In fact, Suhrawardi considers mentally posited facts of two types: that which does not belong or does not fall under the category (such as being and unity), and the category that falls within or categories (such as substance, number and relation). Furthermore, he states that some categories or categories fall into categories (such as relation and numbers), and some others are real (such as blackness).

Thus, the objectivity the described can not be a reason for the objectivity of the description, since a mental title could have been assigned to that particular object. (Suhrawardi, 2017a, vol. 1:48) Of course, while derivative is always mental that simple can easily be objective or mental. (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 74). However, Suhrawardi in some positions does not explain the essence of a concept based on its mentally positedness, but he ignores this implications in positions too.

From Suhrawardi's point of view, while no quiddity is identical in its definition, (Suhrawardi 2017b, 1: 155) every quiddity is either light or darkness. Suhrawardi does not accept that light is the principle, and darkness, features its absence. In his view, darkness is the absolute lack of light and the contradiction. (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 108, 107). However, the concepts of light and darkness are mental and universal, but each of their examples are objective and distinct. (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 128; Suhrawardi, 2017b, vol. 1: 335; Suhrawardi, 2017b, 1: 162, 161).

Every light and darkness is also either substantial or accidental (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 117, 107). In contrast to the accidental light (pseudonym), substantial light besides its appearance in essence, also appears to itself. While the accidental light is either physical, or incorporeal (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 138). Substantial light is always incorporeal.

“Anyone who has an essence of which he is not neglectful, is laminated because of the appearance and the presence of his being to himself, and the commission of the darkness is not in itself, because [even] the enlightened body is not of light for its essence, let alone to the darkness. So it is a

pure incorporeal light that does not refer to it [sense]” (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 111, 110).

Thus, although any substantial and accidental light is a light in itself, but the light is a light for itself and accidental light is a light for the other. Since the body is not light in itself, it will not be light for itself or for the non-self. Physical body is darkness in itself and pure abstention. The light of lights and each one of the supervising and chief lights are pure and incorporeal. Each elemental and celestial body is a dark substance, and each of the fourfold accidents, i.e. quantity, quality, relation and movement, is accidental. (Substantial lights are purified of the accidents of darkness). The sunlight and the fire light are the accidental and physical lights that have occurred onto the dark and dead substances. In the same way that the physical light makes the substantial light to occur on the substantial darkness (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 121, 108), the accidental incorporeal light is manifested by the substantial light.

Moreover, every incorporeal accidental light differs from one another due to the rank of the subject and the other (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 128). Each accidental physical light is also distinguished from the other by its source of illumination and its dark place. Thus, the substantial illumination of light, the appearance of its accidental light and its illumination, leads to the appearance of a single body or the appearance of physical light. Suhrawardi considers the Illumination of Light as a permanent manifestation of the incarnation of light and makes it conditional to the receptive talent. (Suhrawardi, 2017p, vol. 1: 466).

Hence, the single light that has arisen out of a unique occasion in the substantial light can be proliferated; and this proliferation does not lead to the plurality of the substantial light. Suhrawardi explains the multiplicity of substantial lights in intensity and weakness solely by the multiplicity of subject matter and the intensity of the light-headedness with its illuminating nature. (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 127) The light of lights is the ultimate light and infinite light. (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 168).

Light illumination is not a detachment of light; because the connection and the detachment do not exist in the incorporeal things. Illumination of light will not be a transference of accident, because, in addition to the fact that the transmission of the accident is impossible, the Light of Lights is also purified of every accident. The illumination of light is instant, without the emitted light depart the source. (Suhrawardi, 2017, vol. 2: 129, 128) The radiation and emergence of any light (even sunlight) is simply an illuminationist relation. The cause of the impoverishment of any illumined light is due to the illumination of light, the origin of evil and the darkness.

Gradation in substantial lights requires their differentiation, not to be in species and differentia, but rather in the intensity and weakness of their light identity, and this intensity and weakness should not be detached from their essence. (Suhrawardi, 2017p, vol. 1: 397; Suhrawardi, 2017a, 1: 22). For example, the near light (Bahman) is distinguished either by the accidentality of the Light of Lights or the accidentality of the darkness. Adoption of every accident in the light of lights is incompatible with its essential richness. Admitting any kind of darkness in the light of lights will lead to the acceptance of two bright and dark directions in the light of lights, which is incompatible with its inconsistency. (Although Suhrawardi considers the near light purified of every dark accident, he describes its need and dependency on the light of lights darkness.) Hence, the distinction between light of lights and near light is only a function of intensity and weakness in their lightness. Although the mental nature of light is not essentially of defect and perfection, the objective identity of the light of lights is a function of its own essential intensity, without adding anything to its brightness from the intensity. The objective identity of the weak light is a function of its essential weakness, without weakening or diminishing its intensity.

Suhrawardi traces the appearance of motion and heat back to two elements of heavenly and elemental purgatories, and in the same way that he links the motion and the heat to light and life, links stagnation with darkness. Each motion and heat arises from the light and predisposes the receiver to accept the next light. (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 195, 193). For example, motion and heat prepare human temperament to receive Speffer's light that gives water the pleasure of leaving the economy. The light of the breath flies the mass of the flask, and this movement, the ghost, is susceptible to getting light from the sky.

### *Self*

Suhrawardi finds his self-consciousness in a presential manner and describes his identity as "presence by oneself". According to him, if my self-consciousness is acquired and I know in my own consciousness of my own idea, then since the recognition of anything is preceded by its proof, my identity will be constituted by knowledge which comes after it. On the other hand, if I get to know my own idea of self-consciousness in my own consciousness, then this awareness will not be my awareness of myself and will not be able to be my identity. The ability to recognize my non-self can also not be my identity, because talent is wisdom, and after it becomes inherent in it. (Suhrawardi, 2017A, vol. 1: 116, 115) Suhrawardi, therefore, recognizes his identity and its origins as "light", which reveals the light in its essence and expresses its non-existence.

"The light must, in fact, be apparent its own manifestation, and its essence should manifest other things. The emergence of accidental lights is not due to things that are extraessential. It is not so that the light is obtained, then the appearance comes is not enough to say that "my identity is what its appearance brings with it, and that thing is hidden in itself"; it is itself the emergence and the nearness. So whoever perceives his essence is pure light, and every light to its essence is its appearance and evidence of its essence." (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 114, 113).

Therefore, if anything that appears does not require definition, and if the notion of an obvious definition is not necessary, then the notion of light is obvious and does not require definition. (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 106). In fact, light (whether physical or incorporeal) is observable, and Suhrawardi makes any observation (whether conscientious, sensual or mystical) obvious. The evidence comes from the intuition, and light is recognized only by observation. If one goes along with the dispossession of the body to the intuition of his essence, or if he contemplates his presence in the body when he belongs to the body, he will find himself light and in presence that is distinct from all nature to himself and to his individual identity. He will not only recognize the body (whether it is purgatorial or ideal) and his body parts, but also his mental states in his self-awareness, and will recognize his identity as a superset of any combination. Hence, no hidden component of self-consciousness can be considered as its own. (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 244, 113, 112).

"I abandoned my being and I looked at it, so I found identity and the Being. To the additions and to the affiliation of the body, I came out of it. [Substantiality] is also a negative matter. If I have a different meaning, while I do not get it that I get in my body, and I'm non-existent, I do not have any differentia. I know my essence because I am always informed of it, because something is not closer to me than me, and I do not see in detail the detail of anything except Being and Perception. Anyone who perceives his essence as a "me" and does not find himself in the form of detail and contemplation, except for being, is the same, and "me" is something like "me" (in the way that it covers the necessary and unnecessary) which perceives its essence. So if for the "me" there is a truth [other than me], "I" will be accidental for it, and I will perceive this accident because of my presence, which is absent from my existence and this is impossible. When I perceive "I", what is additional to it [and yet] is unknown, in relation to "me", "him" and outside of me "(Suhrawardi, 2017 A, vol. 1: 116, 115).

If Suhrawardi finds himself in his consciousness and generalize it to his origin, he may not seem consistent with his fundamental approach to being and insisting on its

mental state. But he states that the existence of perceiver is the same as “life” and “presence to oneself.” (Suhrawardi, 2017 B, 1: 190, 187).

Suhrawardi uncovers two elements of “presence to oneself” and “revealing others” in his discussions of the soul and its illuminative origins. He reduces the first component to “science” and the second component to “power” and declares the innate instincts and “life” one and the same. “Life is the presence of something by itself.” “Living being” is the same active perceiver” (Suhrawardi, 2017, vol. 2: 117). Thus, what remains hidden to itself is also deprived of life, and gradation in the nature of light leads to the gradation of components or effects of life (perception and action). The sphere of bodies is thoroughly engulfed in death and darkness, because it does not have any physical appearance and is hidden to itself.

### *The others*

Suhrawardi transcends himself and begins to recognize his identity as his identity, self-consciousness and presence.

“If it is understood that the soul is not combined, but its nature is simple and perceiving, then its subject must [also] be a perceiver, and he is more subtle and superior to the first reason.” (Suhrawardi, 2017 B, c. 1: 186).

Suhrawardi, who reaches the light of lights in ascension arc, reaches in the descending arc, to light of lights, horizontal supervising lights, and incorporeal ghosts, so as to reach out to chief lights, he is fully aware of how he is ordained in the system of light and darkness. While the sphere of supervising lights is light and presence thorough and thorough, the realm of bodies (whether a celestial or elemental one) is all darkness and absence. Because it belongs to the domain of light in view of its essence and is connected to the domain of darkness from the perspective of its actions and body. (Suhrawardi, 2017, vol. 2: 185, 146, 145) (the soul does not exist in the body so it turns physical due to its place) Then all four worlds (Suhrawardi, 2017, vol. 2: 232) are reduced to light and darkness. Chief light, sunlight, and fire light are signs of the light of lights and the supervising lights. Each of the human souls, single ghosts, and the celestial spheres (with the exception of the eighth and ninth sphere), is managed by a beam of light from a gleam of illumination.

Substantial lights are present by each other in addition of their self-presence. (The perceptual presence of accidental lights is not accepted by Suhrawardi and he only appropriates intuition for the substantial lights.) However, even though they reveal dark bodily substances too, they are deprived from their intuition. Moreover, although the

intensity of light does not conceal an inferior light beyond the lower intrinsic matrix, it does away with the inferior light from the intersection of the light. (Suhrawardi, 2017, vol. 2: 214, 213, 141, 140, 136, 135, 133) (Intuition is the cause, conditional on the physical disability). Each human being, despite a natural and unique light, with anxious and charming senses, they redefined the intuition.

The higher substantial lights illuminate the lower lights by their sovereignty. The inferior substantial lights, too, with their love, intuit the perfection of the higher substantial lights. Because every higher light is independent of the inferior lights, and since the light of lights does not have a light beyond itself and its presence is more intense than any presence, the dominance of the light of lights in all comprehensive. (Suhrawardi, 2017, vol. 2: 148, 136).

Every stronger light is more sophisticated and ever closer. Although the light of lights is closest to itself and to the other, only those lights are to it that are more luminous. Substantial lights are present in the inferior lights because the inferior lights need the higher lights from the essential perspective (Suhrawardi, 2017, vol. 2: 170, 153)

### **Self-Consciousness and Other-consciousness of Light of Lights**

Although the substantial and accidental light and transverse light are commonly present in the original, but the light (unlike the transverse light) is present to itself, and this does not have much to do with its essence. (Suhrawardi, 1396, c. 2: 124) Moreover, the illumination of an insignificant structure is distinguished by its illumination on the grave, which, in addition to intentionality, involves a summons. Thus, everybody is ready for the Illumination of the Light of lights, and he is also present in the presence of his being with all. (By turning oneself with the light of lights one wants to remove the veil from his own self.) Suhrawardi explains the presential knowledge of the light of lights of substantial lights with illuminative relation with them and the presential knowledge of light of lights to the dark corporeal entities with illuminative relation too (Suhrawardi, 2017t, vol. 2: 152, 153).

“If it is right [and possible] that the illuminationist science not by form and work, but rather merely by a special relation which is the same as the presence of the object (if it is for soul), then [this explicit knowledge], if necessary, is the first foremost in the Necessary Being. Therefore, the Necessary Being [also] does not perceive its essence with something superfluous in its nature, and has the knowledge of objects with the illumination of its presence” (Suhrawardi, 2017, vol. 1: 487).

It seems that Suhrawardi is convinced that if his explanation of the truth of vision is correct, then all substantial lights in their knowledge, in particular in the knowledge of light of lights, his own self is also true in the first way, and thus, the science of light of lights returns to his vision. (Suhrawardi, 2017, vol. 2: 150) Indeed, in the same way that when there is no veil, the soul sees the body with its illumination in the sphere of the body, the light of light also illuminates the objects (whether light or dark) by its illumination and intuition. (Shirazi, 2004, 453, 452). Therefore, every luminous and temporal identity is a science that is known to be the presence of light of lights.

Although the illumination of the light of lights is attributed to actual essences, however, since the past and future have been decided in the heavenly realm, the addition and surroundings of the Enlightenment to the celestial population and the rational basis, the knowledge of the presence of the past, and the future of the physical world, are also explained. (Suhrawardi, 2017, vol. 1: 487).

Although with any change and plurality in the known, the illuminative relation to it also varies and multiplies, but since the illuminative relation is an essential part of the universe, the change and plurality in the superstructure does not lead to a change in the nature of the light of lights. (Suhrawardi, 2017, vol. 1: 488, 153)

## CONCLUSION

Taking what has been said into consideration, one can define knowledge as presence (manifestation) of one thing (whether physical or incorporeal objective entity or a universal subjective form) by the incorporeal substance. In Manamyeh, Suhrawardi quotes Aristotle to have said “intellecion is the presence of one thing by an entity that is away from the matter” (Suhrawardi, 2017 a, vol. 1: 72). The known can be as such knowing or unknowing and the former represents an incorporeal entity while the latter represents the body. Since Suhrawardi reduces every objective substance to either light or darkness and considers them a function of the occurred substance, we can conclude that every objective substance is either present by the other or in addition to it, it is present by itself too. While every substantial light is present by itself and other substantial species, every darkness is absent from itself and the other substances; a presence that is due to the call that comes from other luminary substances. Then, every bodily substance is known presentially by the light of lights and other substantial lights. Every luminar substance and every luminar body are also the essential known by the substantial light and light of lights. Light

of lights is presentially known by itself and the inferior substantial lights.

Since the question of the originality and mentally positedness of existence or essence is not within the scope of this research we can claim that the originality is for the existent or being and Existence is reduced to the presence. Accordingly, existent exists due to its presence. But if and only if presence entails perception and relation some phrases of Suhrawardi could challenge the function of being and presence.

“The identity of the external is not being acquired by means of the perception of a perceiver.... Verily its nature is not as such an idea representing another thing” (Suhrawardi, 2017p, vol. 1: 331-332).

Although the above phrase insists on the independence of existence from perceptuality and perceptibility, Suhrawardi has been only focused on acquired perception; perception is conditioned to mental idea and correspondence with the objective thing. Considering the centrality of illumination and intuition in the Illuminationism one may conclude that though the existence as a whole is independent from the presential knowledge of every limited knower but the existence of every existent is revealed to the light of lights; this known-ness is tantamount to the effect-ness based on the substantial illumination. As a result, the absolute existence of light of lights is his perfect presence by itself and others substantial lights because it is both self-conscious and other-conscious and is of an incorporeal essence.

The reduction of acquired knowledge to presential knowledge and reduction of existence to presence, according to Suhrawardi's ideas, not only fills the gaps between existence and essence, rather it also resolves the problems around the question of correspondence by founding human knowledge upon evidence rooted in intuition.

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