



## **PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS OF IBN SINA IN QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS (ON THE EXAMPLE OF SURAH AL-IKHLAS)**

**Tukhtasinov Ruzimukhammad Nurmakhamad Ugli**

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Islamic Studies,  
Doctoral Researcher at Bukhara State University,  
Lecturer at Mir Arab Higher Madrasa  
ORCID iD: 0009-0006-2701-8122

<b>Article history:</b>	<b>Abstract:</b>
<b>Received:</b> 20 <sup>th</sup> February 2026 <b>Accepted:</b> 14 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	This article examines Abu Ali Ibn Sina's philosophical approach to the exegesis of the Qur'an, with particular focus on his interpretations of Surah Al-Ikhlās. Ibn Sina sought to explain Qur'anic verses on the basis of logical and philosophical reasoning, and his exegetical method was further developed by later commentators. In the course of the study, available sources and manuscripts related to Surah Al-Ikhlās were analyzed, and the relationship between Ibn Sina's concept of the Necessary Being (wājib al-wujūd) and the philosophical interpretation of this surah was explored.
<b>Keywords:</b> Ibn Sina, exegesis (tafsir), philosophy, Surah Al-Ikhlās, Necessary Being, Qur'anic interpretation, logical analysis.	

**Аннотация:** В данной статье рассматривается философский подход Абу Али Ибн Сины к толкованию Корана, в частности, его комментарий к Суре Аль-Ихлас. Ибн Сина стремился объяснить аяты Корана на логической и философской основе, а его метод толкования был впоследствии развит другими комментаторами. В исследовании изучены имеющиеся источники и рукописи, связанные с Сурой Аль-Ихлас, проанализирована связь между концепцией Важиб аль-Вуджуд и философским истолкованием этой суры.

**Ключевые слова:** Ибн Сина, тафсир, философия, сура Иклас, важиб ал-вужуд (обязательное существование), толкование Корана, логический анализ.

**Annotatsiya:** Ushbu maqolada Abu Ali Ibn Sinoning Qur'on tafsiriga bo'lgan falsafiy yondashuvi, xususan, uning Ixlos surasi tafsiriga bergan sharhlari tahlil qilinadi. Ibn Sino Qur'on oyatlarini mantiqiy va falsafiy asosda tushuntirishga harakat qilgan bo'lib, uning tafsir uslubi kelgusi asrlarda sharhlovchilar tomonidan rivojlantirilgan. Tadqiqot davomida Ixlos surasiga oid mavjud manbalar va qo'lyozmalar o'rganildi, Ibn Sinoning vojibul vujud konsepsiyasi bilan ushbu suraning falsafiy talqini bog'liqligi tahlil qilindi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Ibn Sino, tafsir, falsafa, Ixlos surasi, vojibul vujud, Qur'on tafsiri, mantiqiy tahlil.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Ibn Sina (980–1037) is recognized as a great scholar, philosopher, and physician who made an immense contribution not only to Eastern civilization but also to the development of world science. His scholarly legacy encompasses numerous fields, including medicine, philosophy, logic, mathematics, music, astronomy, and others. In particular, his views in philosophy and theology (kalām) played a significant role in the development of Islamic thought. Ibn Sina also produced interpretations of certain Qur'anic verses and surahs based on his philosophical perspective, among which his commentary on Surah Al-Ikhlās is considered one of the most prominent.

Surah Al-Ikhlās is one of the most important chapters of the Qur'an, presenting a clear and concise exposition of the unity and absolute nature of God. This surah occupies a central place in Islamic creed and expresses the principle of tanzīh (the incomparability and transcendence of God). In his commentary on this surah, Ibn Sina explains the concept of God as the

Necessary Being (wājib al-wujūd) through logical proofs, philosophical arguments, and metaphysical concepts.

This article explores Ibn Sina's philosophical and logical approach to the exegesis of Surah Al-Ikhlās, his exegetical methodology, and the influence of his interpretation on later intellectual traditions. The main objective of the study is to analyze Ibn Sina's distinctive philosophical views in the field of Qur'anic exegesis, to demonstrate his logical interpretative method, and to evaluate his contribution to the development of tafsir studies.

### **RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE**

Islamic exegesis (tafsir) is generally divided into two main approaches: transmitted (naqlī, based on narration) and rational ('aqlī, based on reasoning). Ibn Sina belongs to the latter—the rational school of exegesis—where he sought to analyze the meanings of Qur'anic verses through logic, philosophy, and metaphysics. His exegetical method is closely connected with the discipline of kalām, as he endeavored to



demonstrate the nature and existence of God through philosophical arguments.

In the contemporary period, as research in Islamic philosophy, kalām, and tafsir methodology continues to expand, the study of Ibn Sina's exegetical views remains highly significant. This is because he established the principle of relying on logical and philosophical reasoning in interpreting the Qur'an, which later contributed to the emergence of philosophical schools of exegesis. Therefore, Ibn Sina's interpretive approach played an important role not only in the development of tafsir studies but also in the broader evolution of Islamic philosophy.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Ibn Sina's "Tafsir of Surah Al-Ikhlās" and his philosophical approach to Qur'anic exegesis have been examined in numerous scholarly sources. This section provides an in-depth analysis of the content, significance, and research methodologies of these works.

#### **1. Classical Sources and Their Significance**

##### **Ibn al-Nadīm – Al-Fihrist (Tehran, 1971, p. 242)**

This work is an important source illuminating the history of the development of Islamic sciences and Qur'anic exegesis. In *Al-Fihrist*, Ibn al-Nadīm classifies books across various scientific disciplines and notes that Ibn Sina engaged in tafsir. Although the source does not provide extensive details about Ibn Sina's exegetical activity, it offers important evidence regarding his philosophical thought and his involvement in Qur'anic interpretation.

##### **Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Ahmad al-Dawudi – Tabaqat al-Mufassirin (Cairo, 1972/1392, Vol. 1, p. 162)**

In this work, al-Dawudi categorizes exegetes and evaluates their methodologies. He does not place Ibn Sina among the classical mufassirs; rather, he refers to him as a representative of the philosophical school of tafsir. This confirms that Ibn Sina's exegetical approach differs from that of traditional commentators.

#### **2. Manuscripts and Their Scholarly Value**

##### **Chester Beatty Manuscript Collection (1/17–18 [(11) 3045], fols. 58b–62a, 699H/1299CE)**

This manuscript is one of the earliest written sources related to Ibn Sina's Tafsir of Surah Al-Ikhlās. A microfilm copy of this manuscript is also preserved at the Juma Al-Majid Library in Dubai. It is of great importance for understanding Ibn Sina's exegetical method and represents one of the earliest extant copies of the text.

##### **Princeton University Manuscripts (pp. 317–318, 1537, 1406CE)**

These manuscripts have been studied by Western scholars and provide valuable information about Ibn

Sina's philosophical approach to tafsir. The preserved copies and their analyses enable a deeper study of his exegetical methodology.

#### **3. Modern Studies and Their Scientific Importance**

##### **Ismail Pasha al-Baghdadi – Hadiyyat al-'Arifin (Ankara: Ministry of National Education, 1955, Vol. 1, p. 305)**

This work discusses Ibn Sina's scholarly legacy, including his role in Qur'anic exegesis. The author distinguishes Ibn Sina's tafsir from classical traditions and emphasizes his logic- and philosophy-based approach. This study allows for a comparative understanding of Ibn Sina's methodology in relation to traditional tafsir.

##### **Ahmad Hamdi Akseki – Ibn Sina's Tafsir of Surah Al-Ikhlās (Turkey: Selamet, 1949, Vol. IV, No. 11)**

Akseki is one of the key scholars who analyzed Ibn Sina's exegetical method on a scientific basis. He identifies Aristotelian logic as a central principle in Ibn Sina's interpretative approach. The study examines how Ibn Sina interprets Surah Al-Ikhlās through the theory of necessary and possible existence, attempting to demonstrate God's absolute essence and unity. This research is an important source for understanding Ibn Sina's methodology.

##### **Abdullah Abdurrahman al-Khatib – Tafsir Surat al-Ikhlās by Shaykh Abu Ali al-Husayn ibn Abdullah ibn Sina (Turkey: Majallat al-Shari'a wa al-Dirasat al-Islamiyya, 2002, Vol. XVII, No. 51, p. 51)**

This study analyzes the distinctive nature of Ibn Sina's philosophical tafsir and its relationship with Islamic philosophy. Al-Khatib compares Ibn Sina's approach with that of theologians (*mutakallimun*), demonstrating how he employs logical proofs and philosophical reasoning to interpret divine unity through metaphysical concepts. This work is an important source for examining the influence of Ibn Sina's method on both *kalam* and tafsir traditions.

##### **Manuscript Fund of the Abu Rayhan Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences (Inventory No. 2385)**

This manuscript is a significant source for studying Ibn Sina's exegetical legacy. It presents the distinctive features of his methodology, including his approach to interpreting Qur'anic verses and his use of logical arguments. The manuscript contains a philosophical interpretation of Surah Al-Ikhlās, aiming to demonstrate the absolute unity and essence of God through logical and philosophical reasoning.

Preserved in Arabic, this manuscript employs a distinctive terminological framework. Ibn Sina attempts to analyze Qur'anic verses not only from religious and mystical perspectives but also through logical



demonstration. This manuscript has been studied by modern scholars and provides valuable insights into Ibn Sina's philosophical approach to Qur'anic exegesis.

#### **4. Modern Studies on Ibn Sina's Exegetical Approach**

##### **Muhammad Abduh – Tafsir al-Manar (Cairo, 1900–1908)**

Although this tafsir, authored by Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, is not directly based on Ibn Sina's philosophical method, it represents an important stage in the development of rational exegesis. Muhammad Abduh criticized Ibn Sina's rational and philosophical approach, arguing that relying solely on logical methods in tafsir may limit the multiple layers of meaning within the text. Nevertheless, his works contain significant discussions related to Ibn Sina's exegetical approach.

##### **Muhsin Mahdi – Ibn Sina's Approach to Qur'anic Exegesis (New York University, 1957)**

This study examines Ibn Sina's approach to Qur'anic interpretation from a philosophical perspective. Mahdi emphasizes that Ibn Sina's exegetical method was shaped under the influence of Western philosophy, particularly Aristotle and al-Farabi. He analyzes Ibn Sina's methodology and demonstrates his reliance on logical and metaphysical proofs.

##### **Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd – Philosophy and Tafsir: The Experience of Ibn Sina (Cairo, 1998)**

In this work, Abu Zayd analyzes Ibn Sina's philosophical and theological (kalām) approach to Qur'anic exegesis. He argues that Ibn Sina's method is grounded in logic and metaphysics and highlights that his tafsir is primarily based on demonstrative (burhānī) reasoning.

The above analysis shows that Ibn Sina's "Tafsir of Surah Al-Ikhlās" differs significantly from traditional exegetical methodologies. In interpreting Qur'anic verses, he employs:

1. **Philosophical-logical approach** – Ibn Sina relies on the philosophies of Aristotle and al-Farabi.
2. **Metaphysical proof** – He establishes the unity of God through logical and philosophical arguments.
3. **Influence of Sufism and kalām** – His method incorporates certain elements of both Sufism and theological discourse.

The findings of this study indicate that Ibn Sina's exegetical approach is oriented not toward traditional narrative-based interpretation, but toward rational and philosophical demonstration. For this reason, his method later served as a foundation for philosophical schools of tafsir, particularly those influenced by Illuminationism (Ishrāqī) and Neoplatonism.

#### **Research Objectives and Tasks**

The main objective of this study is to analyze Ibn Sina's commentary on Surah Al-Ikhlās from philosophical and logical perspectives and to elucidate the distinctive

features of his exegetical method. To achieve this aim, the following tasks have been set:

1. To examine Ibn Sina's exegetical approach from the standpoint of general scientific principles;
2. To analyze the logical and philosophical arguments employed in his interpretation of Surah Al-Ikhlās;
3. To identify the differences between Ibn Sina's method and classical tafsir traditions;
4. To evaluate the influence of his interpretation on the development of later intellectual thought;
5. To highlight Ibn Sina's impact on contemporary studies in tafsir and philosophy.

#### **Research Methodology**

This study is conducted based on the following methods:

1. **Historical analysis** – studying the origins and sources of Ibn Sina's exegetical methodology;
2. **Source criticism (manuscript studies)** – comparing available manuscripts and sources related to the tafsir of Surah Al-Ikhlās;
3. **Logical-philosophical analysis** – examining the philosophical approaches applied in Ibn Sina's method of interpretation;
4. **Comparative analysis** – comparing Ibn Sina's tafsir with interpretations of other exegetes.

#### **ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

During this study, Ibn Sina's commentary on Surah Al-Ikhlās and his philosophical approach to Qur'anic exegesis were examined in depth. The results of the research include the following key aspects:

##### **1. Ibn Sina's Exegetical Method and Approach**

Unlike the traditional methods of tafsir, Ibn Sina sought to interpret Qur'anic verses through logical and philosophical analysis. His approach is characterized by the following features:

**Logical foundation** – His tafsir is based on the principles of logic, where definition (ta'rīf), proof (dalīl), and syllogism (qiyās, deductive reasoning) are widely applied. The late Ahmad Hamdi Akseki (d. 1951) describes this as follows: "This philosopher, who reformed and systematized Aristotelian logic, measured every statement in this work—as in his other writings—by the scale of logic, and each sentence requires separate interpretation..." [2:1].

**Use of metaphysical concepts** – Ibn Sina employs concepts such as the Necessary Being (wājib al-wujūd), the Possible Being (mumkin al-wujūd), and unity (wahdāniyya) to explain the meanings of Qur'anic verses.

**Use of allegorical interpretation (ta'wīl)** – Beyond the apparent (zāhir) meaning of the Qur'anic text, he attempts to uncover its deeper, inner (philosophical) meanings.

Thus, Ibn Sina did not limit tafsir to a purely traditional religious perspective but sought to harmonize it with



philosophy, logic, and metaphysics. For this reason, his tafsir gained particular recognition among theologians (mutakallimūn) and philosophers.

## 2. Philosophical Interpretation of Surah Al-Ikhlās

Surah Al-Ikhlās is one of the central chapters of the Qur'an affirming the absolute unity of God. Ibn Sina interprets this surah through a philosophical and metaphysical lens. Manuscripts of his Tafsir of Surah Al-Ikhlās are preserved in several libraries worldwide, including the main manuscript collection of the Abu Rayhan Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies (Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences), under inventory number 2385 [7:118–119].

Below is a brief summary of Ibn Sina's interpretation of each verse based on manuscripts and modern editions: بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ [Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm] – "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful."

2.1. قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ [Qul huwa Allāhu Aḥad] – "Say: He is Allah, One." [9:604]

Ibn Sina connects the term Aḥad (One) with Aristotelian and Neoplatonic philosophy. According to him, it signifies the absolute unity and indivisible essence of God.

This unity is not numerical but essential (dhātī): God is not composite, does not consist of parts, and nothing resembles Him.

2.2. اللَّهُ أَصَمُّ [Allāhu al-Ṣamad] – "Allah, the Eternal Refuge (Self-Sufficient)." [9:604]

Ibn Sina interprets al-Ṣamad through the concept of the Necessary Being (wājib al-wujūd). God's existence is necessary—He must exist—yet He is in need of nothing. All other beings are contingent (mumkin al-wujūd) and exist only through Him. This idea parallels Aristotle's concept of the Prime Mover and the Neoplatonic notion of the One.

2.3. لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ [Lam yalid wa lam yūlad] – "He neither begets nor is born." [9:604]

Ibn Sina explains this verse through the distinction between necessary and contingent existence. Everything that is born must depend on a prior cause. If God were born, He would not be self-existent but dependent on another cause, which contradicts His status as the Necessary Being. Likewise, if He were to beget, it would imply the production of another being from His essence, which conflicts with the principle of absolute unity.

2.4. وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ [Wa lam yakun lahu kufuwan aḥad] – "And there is none comparable to Him." [9:604]

Ibn Sina interprets this verse through the concept of absolute unity (wahdāniyya). If God had an equal, there would have to be two necessary beings, which is logically impossible. Therefore, God possesses absolute unity, and there exists no being equal or comparable to Him [1:51].

## 3. Ibn Sina's Concept of the Necessary Being and Its Influence on His Exegesis

One of the fundamental principles of Ibn Sina's philosophy is the concept of the Necessary Being (wājib al-wujūd). This concept influenced his interpretation of Surah Al-Ikhlās in the following ways:

1. **God's existence is necessary in itself** – He does not require any external cause, as His existence is inherent to His essence.

2. **God's attributes are absolutely perfect** – He is free from any نقص (deficiency) or need.

3. **All beings depend on God** – Only God is the Necessary Being, while everything else is contingent (mumkin al-wujūd) and brought into existence by Him. This approach later played a significant role in the development of Islamic philosophy and theology.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Ibn Sina stands out in the history of Qur'anic exegesis due to his distinctive philosophical approach. In his interpretation of Surah Al-Ikhlās, he elaborates on key philosophical concepts such as necessary and contingent existence, absolute essence, and divine unity. The depth of logical and philosophical analysis in his tafsir, his use of analogical reasoning (qiyās), and his clarification of the distinction between essence and existence set him apart from other exegetes.

In interpreting Qur'anic verses, Ibn Sina drew upon the philosophical traditions of Aristotle and al-Farabi, adapting them to the framework of Islamic exegesis. As one of the earliest scholars to compose an independent commentary on Surah Al-Ikhlās, he introduced a philosophical dimension into tafsir methodology, which continued to develop in later centuries.

His exegetical approach had a significant influence on later commentators and theologians, including scholars such as al-Dabbāghī, al-Khādīmī, and al-Dawwānī. In his tafsir, Ibn Sina presents profound logical and philosophical arguments concerning the absolute nature of God, His oneness and incomparability, and the relationship between divine attributes and existence.

Due to its reliance on logical demonstration and philosophical reasoning, his tafsir extends beyond the scope of Qur'anic studies alone and holds great importance in the fields of theology (kalām), philosophy, and metaphysics.

Ibn Sina's commentary on Surah Al-Ikhlās represents a significant intellectual legacy from the perspective of philosophical approaches to Qur'anic exegesis. Therefore, the following recommendations can be proposed:

1. **Further in-depth study of Ibn Sina's influence on tafsir and kalām** – His exegetical methods should be compared with those of other commentators, particularly in relation to later philosophical tafsir traditions.



2. **Critical study and publication of manuscript copies** – Existing manuscripts of his tafsir preserved in world libraries should be critically edited, annotated, and translated.

3. **Comparative analysis with modern tafsir methodologies** – His logical and philosophical approach should be examined in relation to contemporary analytical methods of Qur'anic interpretation.

4. **Preparation of specialized monographs** – Dedicated scholarly works should be written on Ibn Sina's philosophical approach to tafsir to better understand his methodology and intellectual influence.

5. **Promotion of academic research in universities and research centers** – Special academic programs should be developed to advance studies on Ibn Sina's Qur'anic exegesis, particularly for researchers in Islamic philosophy and tafsir studies.

Implementing these recommendations will contribute to a deeper understanding of Ibn Sina's contribution to Qur'anic exegesis and promote the broader dissemination of his intellectual legacy.

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