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Articles

Janis Eshots

Unification of Perceiver and Perceived and unity of Being

Mahmoud Khatami

Sadraean Notion Of Consciousness: A Comparative Revision

M. Sanei Darebidy

Certainty and Innate Knowledge: a comparison of the theories of knowledge of Mullj ʿadri and Descartes

Seyed G. Safavi

God in Greek and Islamic Philosophy: A comparative study of Aristotle and Mullj ʿadri ShÇrjzÇ on the Necessary Existent

Reza Akbarian

Existence as a Predicate in Kant and Mulla Sadra

Mohammad Tahir Yusufi

Some notes on Independent Intellectual Perceptions (mustaqilljt –i ʿaqliyyeh) in Islamic law and theology

Sayyid Husain Waizi

The Degrees of the Soul According to Ibn ʿArabç and Mullj ʿadri

Book Reviews

Parviz Morewedge

Essays in Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Mysticism (Sajjad Rizvi)

Henry Corbin

The Voyage and the Messenger: Iran and philosophy

. tr. Joseph Rowe (Idris Hamid)

Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud

The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naguib Al-Attas, An Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization(Ernest Wolf-Gazo)

Parviz Morewedge,

The Metaphysics of Mulla Sadra

[being a translation of Kitab al-Masha'ir] (Sajjad Rizvi)

Unification of Perceiver and Perceived and unity of Being

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Abstract

The key idea of the paper is that, in order to understand properly Sadra's views on perception, one needs to study first his doctrine of Being. This is the unity of their being which makes possible the unification of the perceiver and the perceived as the impossibility of the unity of their concepts and quiddities is obvious.

Sadra believes this unification to take place by means of establishing an illuminative relation between the perceiver and the perceived. This relation which, according to Sadra, is in fact the relation between the agent of the form (i.e., the being of the thing) and its essence, could be called a "relation" only in a metaphorical sense because it consists of one side instead of two, the related thing being also the relation.

As perception itself is a kind of being, the particular rules which apply to it are derived from the more general ones which apply to the whole of Being, therefore the mystery of perception can only be understood through the mystery of Being.

Among the outstanding Iranian philosophers, Sadr al-Dîn Shîrâzî (Mulla Sadra) is perhaps most often reproached for lack of originality in his thought, sometimes being even treated as a mere compiler.¹ Indeed, to a superficial viewer it seems that most (if not all) of Sadra's principles and theories have simply been borrowed from a number of ancient and more recent philosophers. But is this really the case? The best answer probably is that Sadra's true views on a particular philosophical problem can only be understood if taken in their complexity and considered in the general context of his key principles, first of all, in the context of the principle of "the unity of being".

Sadra makes no secret that in his younger years he was a resolute and enthusiastic follower of Suhravardi's teachings and professed "the priority of quiddity" (asâlat al-mâhiya). As we know, according to Suhravardi, knowledge and perception is based on what he calls "illuminative relation" (al-idâfa al-ishrâqiya) between the perceiver and the perceived; this relation is to be understood as "an illuminated presence of the thing"² which "occurs in a durationless instant" (ân).³ When this "illuminated relation" between the knower and the known is established, the former grasps the essence of the latter because of its Evidenz. ⁴ As Suhravardi states, the rule applies to all levels of reality and all modifications of perception; regarding the outward sense perception the application of it is most explicit in Suhravardi's elaborate theory of vision (ibsâr). According to Shaykh al-Ishrâq, the act of vision "can only take place when the luminous object (al-mustanîr) encounters (muqâbala) a sound [healthy] eye⁵ and, thus, the following essential conditions are met:

the presence of light;

the absence of any obstacle or "veil" between the subject and the object;

the illumination of the object as well as the subject.

This is from where Sadra's objections to Suhravardi's understanding of "the illuminative relation" start. How could this be possible, he asks, that an external object which is necessarily "imprinted" in the prime matter, is perceived by the soul and its powers which are separated (abstracted) from the latter?

Moreover, Sadra continues, what is "imprinted" in the prime matter, cannot be essentially perceived at

all because, due to its impression in the prime matter, its essence is absent from itself and veiled from itself by means of this matter. The relation between something what has no position and something having material dimensions, goes on Sadra, can only occur by means of something having position - and such relation is no longer an illuminative relation "but rather a material and spacial one".⁶ Hence, one can only speak of an accidental perception of external things (like the heavens and the earth) belonging to the physical world. What the soul essentially witnesses in the act of vision, states Sadra, is the forms which arise from the soul, subsist through the soul, are present in the soul and appear in the world of the soul.⁷ Therefore, what "might most suitably be called" an illuminative relation⁸, is the relation between the soul and these forms, says Sadra.

But is there a relation at all? According to the traditional Aristotelian philosophy, "relation" (*idâfa*) is a kind of "encounter" (*taqâbul*). The latter, however, can only occur when there are two things which encounter each other. But can we say, there are such two things, given that the soul and the forms which emanate from it are actually one and the same thing, as far as their being is considered? Yes, they (the soul and the forms which emanate from it and are perceived by it) undoubtedly differ as concepts ("the perceiver" and "the perceived") or quiddities but we have already learnt from Sadra's theory of the priority of being that a quiddity is a mere mental limitation of Being, which does not have any outer reality at all. Hence, this is actually the being of the soul which perceives the being of the forms emanating in it. Another definition given by Sadra to "the illuminative relation" goes thus: "What most deserves the name of "the illuminative relation" is the relation between the agent of the form and its essence" (*nisba al-latî bain al-fâ'il al-sûra wa zâtihâ*).⁹ What he means by "the form of the thing" (*sûrat al-shay'*), Sadra explains elsewhere: "the purpose of "the form of the thing", according to us, is the being of this thing, not the universal concept of it".¹⁰ Further, the form (or "being") perceived by the soul, as we know, is separated from the matter and does not belong to the physical modality of being. But "every thing whose being is higher than the world of motion and synthesis (*tarkîb*) (i.e., the physical world - J.E.) is not separated from its End just like it does not differ from its agent".¹¹ Hence we can conclude that the illuminative relation for Sadra is a relation between the being which perceives (and, in the act of perception, actually creates what is perceived by it) and the being which is perceived, the first being relating to the second as an agent to its action (or as a cause to its effect) and, as such, not differing from it in its essence. Thus, because both the perceiver and the perceived is one and the same being, there is no real encounter of two different things in the "illuminative relation", therefore we can state that the latter is a metaphorical (*majâzî*), not a real (*haqiqî*) one.¹²

We suppose, this already gives us some evidence to suggest that Sadra's views on the nature of perception essentially differ from those of Suhrawardi: although they use one and the same term, what they mean by it, appears to be two distinct realities, one of which cannot be reduced to another.

In fact, according to Sadra, the relation between the perceiver and the perceived is a sort of "union" or "unification" (*ittihâd*) that suppose, first of all, their attribution to one and the same modality of being (as we know, Sadra distinguishes three such modalities - sensation, imagination and intellection - which differ from each other in their particular degree of separation (*tajarrud*) from the prime matter). Even a sensible thing enjoys some sort of separation from the matter, so "that its being in itself and its being sensible are really only one thing and do not differ at all".¹³ That means, it does not possess a mode of being with regard to which it is not sensible, because its "being" (*wujûd*) and its "being in sensation" (*mahsûsiyatihi*) is one and the same thing - which means, its state of being sensed and its being per se is one and the same thing: the sensed thing does not enjoy any other state of being, otherwise it could not be called "sensed" at all. In case there does not exist in the world a sensing substance which is separate from it (the sensed thing, i.e., the form existing in sensation) its essence in itself will be at once the thing

sensed, that which senses and that which is sensed 14 (the same rule applies to imagination and intellection).

This unification of the perceiver and the perceived, again, can be properly understood and explained, only if viewed in the context of the principle of "the unity of being". As we stated above, the concept of quiddity (being itself a particular limitation of being and, as such, nothing more than a mere mental abstraction) does not allow us to grasp the idea of such unification because the very concept (of quiddity) presupposes certain separation and distinction in the Whole of Being and, being itself nothing else but a limitation, vehemently opposes to the removing of other limitations, imposed on the Whole of Being by the mind." The unification of two things, different in number, and their becoming a single existent, is impossible," say those who profess the priority of quiddity. But this is a thing in which no one actually doubts. The question is whether the perceiver and the perceived are indeed two originally separate things, or are they rather a single essence which passes through different stages of perfection.

To answer properly this question, we must take into account another fundamental principle of Sadra's philosophy-namely, the principle of "the transubstantiation (tajawhur) of being "or" the transubstantial motion" (al-haraka al-jawhariya). According to it, none of the substances, existing in the physical world, can be regarded as a static and unchanging one: in fact, every particular entity, existing in the world, experiences a permanent change in its substance (hence we can conclude, the being of every particular thing is regarded by Sadra not simply as its "presence" (or rather "finding" the word which renders the literal meaning of "wujûd") in the world. Rather, his notion of "being" alludes to some sort of a perpetual mystical experience which is due to result in achieving a permanent state of noetic transcendence). The soul which is corporeal by its creation (jismâniya al-hudûs), begins its journey from the modality of sensation, where it, accidentally supported by the external forms, receives from the Giver of forms (Dator formarum) luminous hidden images (i.e., the forms of light) which are actually and essentially perceived by it - or rather we should say, quoting Sadra, that the soul itself creates these forms "by recalling them and summoning them forth (out of itself)".¹⁵

Now we should ask, whether there is any essential difference in the way and method by which the soul creates its forms in every particular modality of perception - sensation, imagination and intellection. It appears, there is not: what differs, is only the degree of their separation from the matter and the purity of being these forms enjoy. In turn, the strength of this separation and the purity of their being is determined by the changing intensity (shadda) of the soul's being.

Hence, we can say that perception can be regarded as a sort of transubstantial motion (which supposes the perceiver's elevation in its degree of being), the perceived forms serving as means of the perfection of their perceiver: as we already know from the teachings of Suhrawardi, the notion of illumination (ishrâq) is inseparable from that of gaining power (tasallut) over the illuminated thing and taking control (qahr) of it, which means, the perceived forms, created by the soul, take control of it and bid it to seek another illumination, a more perfect and more luminous one.

The highest stage of the unification between the perceiver and the perceived is "the unification of the intelligible and that which intelligises" (ittihâd al-ma'qul wa al-'âqil). The latter formula, which, as we know, has been attributed to Porphyry, was vehemently attacked by a number of the previous Islamic philosophers, especially by Ibn Sina¹⁶ (however, it was accepted by Neoplatonists and, later, by certain Sufis, including Ibn Arabi school). As Sadra explains, this criticism was caused simply by lack of understanding of Porphyry's purpose and inability to penetrate "to the crux of his approach".¹⁷ What Porphyry really meant, claims Sadra, was the perfection of a single essence and the increase of the

intensity of its being which allowed it" to become in its essence the basis of something for which it was not previously a basis, and the source of things that had not developed in it before".¹⁸ To say it otherwise, the unification in question is the result of the transubstantiation of being and, indeed, can be itself regarded as an act of transubstantial motion. Thus, for the soul its unification with the Active Intellect (al-'aql al-fa''âl) is, in fact, nothing else than "its becoming in its essence an intellect actually productive of forms".¹⁹ According to Sadra, this unification results in achieving the state of noetic transcendence, when the illuminated "knower" knows the things by their causes. In eschatological terms, achieving this state of noetic transcendence is called by Sadra "the Greater Rising" (al-qiyâma al-kubra).

What must be underlined once again, is that the idea of the unification of the soul with the Active Intellect can be understood properly (i.e., taken as a real unification (ittihâd), not just a conjunction (ittisâl)) only in the context of Sadra's key principle of "the unity of being": what Sadra actually means by this unification, is a gradual perfection of one and the same being which results in its total purification and cleansing from all impurities of non-being (or privation) ('adam), which were caused by its initial connection with the prime matter. To our mind, the main importance of the idea of the "unity of being" lies in the fact that it allows us to perceive and experience the world as a perfect Whole not as a mere collection of discrete entities (which is the ordinary experience of an unenlightened consciousness). The universality and comprehensiveness of Sadra's approach, which results from the principle of "the unity of being", together with two equally important principles – those of "the priority of being" and "the transubstantiation of being", allows him to resolve most of the difficulties experienced by the previous Islamic philosophers. Regarding perception, his key merit, as we see it, lies in his interpreting the Porphyry's formula of "the unification of the intelligible and that which intelligizes" both as an act and the result of the transubstantial motion of the soul. While, in general, agreeing with Suhrawardi on the illuminative essential character of perception, upon the revision of Shaykh al-Ishrâq's concept of "the illuminative relation" he shows the metaphorical nature of the latter (because, in regard to their being, both terms of the relation prove to be one and the same thing).

On the whole, as we stated above, Sadra's original and innovative approach to the problem of perception can only be understood if taken in the general context of his key principles, first of all, the principle of "the unity of being". To put it in another way, according to Sadra, the mystery of perception can only be understood through the mystery of Being, an essential and integral part of what it is.

Notes:

1-For more detailed account see: M.J. Shari'ati. "Is Mulla Sadra an Innovator or a Mere Compiler" (the article, written for the World Congress on Mulla Sadra (Tehran, 22-27 May 1999) is available in the Internet: <http://www.mullasadra.org/papers/shari'ati.htm>).

2-Suhrawardi. "Oeuvres philosophiques et mystiques". Reed. anastatique. Teheran-Paris, 1976.t.1, p.487.

3-H. Ziai "Knowledge and Illumination: a study of Suhrawardi's Hikmat al-Ishraq". Atlanta, 1990, p.141.

4-Ibid., p.150.

5-Ibid., p.160 (the English translation by H. Ziai), See the Arabic text in: Suhrawardi. "Opera..." t.II. Paris-Tehran, 1952, p.134.

6-J.Morris (transl.). "The Wisdom of the Throne", Princeton, 1981, p.136.

7-Ibid., pp. 136 - 137.

8-Ibid., 138.

9-Sadr al-Dîn al Shirazi. "Al-hikma al-muta'âliya fî-l-asfâr al-'aqliya al-arba'a" [Henceforth: 'Asfâr"]. 3rd edition. part 8. Beirut, 1981, p.182.

10-Ibid., part 3, p.332.

11-Sadr al-Dîn al Shirazi. "Mafâtîh al-ghayb". Beirut, 1999. V.2, p.367.

12-Cf. the note of Sadra's commentator H.Sabzawarî: "There is no linkage in the illuminative relation because the intelligible is nothing else but the illumination of the soul, [illumination] which subsists in its being on the soul and the soul [, in its turn,] subsists in its being on it [i.e., illumination - J.E.] ("Asfâr", part 3, p.316, n.1)

13-"The Wisdom...", p.114.

14-Ibid.

15-Ibid., p.244.

16-However, Ibn Sina seems to admit the validity of this principle regarding the Necessary Being. For more details see: Ibn Sina. "Al-mabda' wa al-ma'âd". Teheran, 1363/1984, pp. 6-10; also "Asfâr", part 3, pp. 337-342.

17-"The Wisdom...", p.115.

18-Ibid.

19-Ibid., p.116.

Sadraean Notion Of Consciousness: A Comparative Revision

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Abstract

I will briefly present a primary sketch of an existential theory of consciousness on the basis of the Sadraean illuminative tradition. Sadra, a Persian philosopher (b.1946), is the founder of the illuminative existentialism. Along with other interesting issues in his philosophy we may refer here to his theory of consciousness in particular. He has interpreted the preontological structure of the self as a unitary consciousness: there is no self in subjectivistic sense in the order of being; what there is, only a performative, current experience. In this article, I will examine this thesis in comparison with the contemporary existentialist's thesis of consciousness to see the probable novelty of the Sadraean thesis.

Sadra discussed the elements of his theory in four of the nine volumes (I, II, III, IIX) of his extensive and complex books so called *Asfar* 2 in a very sophisticated complex of logical, ontological, epistemological and mystical idioms, metaphors and abstract ideas. As it has been expressed by his commentators like Kompani, 3 it seems too difficult to catch the depth of his theory; perhaps because he sometimes goes beyond the conceptual, eidetic thought and requires us to sympathize with him in his apprehending the truth. In this article, I am not concerned with all aspects of his theory of the self, nor to detect all the elements of the Sadraean perspective. All that I want to do here is the examination of his description of the reality of the self, which is for him a unitary consciousness. For Sadra, the reality of self is hidden in its special mode of being.⁴

As Sadra says, and presupposes, man is the only full-hand script of God (*Noskhih i kamel i Ilahi*) among the beings, a microcosm in macrocosm, to this latter the former corresponding 5 by way of wisdom-- that is, the performative self's mystical experience of Being. In a Heideggerian manner, Sadra also maintains that it is only man that has this special being among the others, but unlike Heidegger who locates this specialty in the temporality of *Dasein's* nature, Sadra underlines on God's devotion of man to Himself; this is, Sadra believes, what makes man's existence special.⁶ However in agreement with Heidegger, Sadra holds that the nature of the self can not be grasped by analytically eidetic reflection. The reason is quite obvious from his perspective: the nature of the self is his special being and being cannot be caught by essential thought simply because being is not a category to be essentials and conceptualised then understood by the eidetic reflection. To apprehend the nature of the self, we need to leave the eidetic thought and to sympathetically come up in the light of Being; if so, we would then experience the being of the self. Otherwise, the nature of the self always remains mysterious, as easily seen in Husserl's phenomenology, far beyond our reflective understanding. This is why Sadra in his description of the nature of being, starts from the structure of Being itself not, as Heidegger does, from the analysis of the being of the self. Instead to see the being of man in the horizon of temporality, Sadra considers it in the context of Being itself. He considered that Being manifests itself in the form of beings in such a hierarchic (*Tashkiki*) manner that they are continuously everlastingly hanging on it so that, if it deprives them from its light they will nihilate. Applying this theory to the nature of the self, this manifestation implies a double nature for the self in particular: The self is hanging on (i.e., being illuminated in the illuminative terminology) and present to (i.e., being absorbed) Being at the same time. It is this double nature of the self that makes him special among the beings; that is, while all beings are manifested and illuminated entities from Being, it is only the self that is absorbed in Being at the same time. The reason is that the absorption is, according to him, an experientially sympathetically conscious presence before Being. It is its factual practice in everydayness (in Heidegger's term), and, in Sartrean terms, the unbounded unreflective consciousness. This kind of presence, that is, this kind of existential, non-reflective, unitary consciousness is what makes the self-distinct from the other beings. It is this consciousness, Sadra says, that is the basis of our actual life and the source of our concrete, social, moral aspects, as well as our intentional, reflective thought. Such a consciousness is already approved by the illuminative mystics when they spoke of their higher mystical experiences; however, it has not been theorized in a philosophical manner; nor has it been justified for our ordinary life while we are not mystics. It was Sadra who elaborated first such a mystical idea in the form of a philosophical theory so that he applied it to our experientially ordinary life. The nature of the self is this unitary consciousness which covers all aspects of the self's life simply because this consciousness is his special mode of being. We will see this point in following sections.

Sadra built up the reality of the self as a special being that thanks to its illuminative nature has a mere eternal dependency on Being. This, Sadra holds, allows us to consider the self as a factual presence

immersed and absorbed in Being itself rather than to consider it as a merely transcendental subject who stands beyond our consciousness--as one may see in Husserlian theory. Rather, Sadra moves in a similar way in which Heidegger and the existential philosophers move later. Dasein is introduced and defined by them as "being-in-the-world". Dasein cannot be distinguished from its existence in the world. Therefore, it makes no sense to suppose that we know ourselves better than we know the world (Being for Sadra and later Heidegger), and it makes no sense to say that we know about ourselves in a different way than we know about the world. We know the world and ourselves identically, for ourselves (as Dasein) and the world constitute a single phenomenon:

The compound expression 'Being-in-the-world' indicates the very way we have coined it, that it stands for a unitary phenomenon.⁷

Just as they consider the self as Dasein that is as a being-in-the-world who has an entic-ontological structure in the horizon of temporality, Sadra also considers the self as a being absorbed in-the-Being itself, that is as a being-present-before-Being who has preontological structure; and this implies the self to be in the world as a factual, live, vital and performing reality rather than as an abstract, transcendental (in Kantian, Husserlian sense) or epistemological presupposition as we may see in the modern subjectivistic philosophy. For Sadra, as for the existential phenomenologists, the self is already a being whose 'facticity' is a pure need to supply his perfection; and this implies the self to be already involved in the order of being before falling in the order of concept. The self is absorbed and immersed in Being through which the self journeys to discover its mysterious land. To be so is, for Sadra as for Heidegger, to be present: present before Being (in-the-world for Heidegger) which implies its present for itself. To this implication Sadra applies a special name: the unitary consciousness which will concern us from the next section onward. Instead we would now turn here to Sadraean notion of absorption, i.e., the presence before (or in) Being to depict its meaning a bit more so far as the reality of the self as unitary consciousness is concerned.

Through his detailed discussions, Sadra arrives at a position of understanding how to situate the self as presented before Being. As hinted, he uses the words "absorption" and "immersion" to indicate this peculiar situation of the self. When the whole reality of the self as an illuminative being is nothing but a pure existential dependency on Being, the state of "absorption" or "immersion" in Being does not seem odd, or, to use a stronger word, inconceivable for Sadra. The special dependency which indicates "hanging on," and being "held by," Being, is, according to Sadra, implies the self to be absorbed and immersed in Being. Such absorption is, for Sadra, a fulfilment to be achieved by the self through its preontological experiences. It is, Sadra holds, the whole existential feature of the self as a pure, illuminative existence to be "immersed in" Being. It is its very existence, which it is not even possible to think of except in the light of thinking of Being, which is its substantive ground for being.

From a subjectivistic point of view we may of course always think of our selfhood independent of thinking of any principle; and it clearly denies the validity of such a Sadraean analysis of the selfhood as a pure, illuminative existence absorbed in Being. This is so, a subjectivist may say, because if it were the case that the self, thanks to be totally dependent on another, could not even be independently understood and thought of, it would be impossible for us to ever have had the impression of our selfhood on its own. But the fact that we do have the idea of our selfhood on its own counts as sufficient reason for believing that the self is not totally dependent on another in this extreme sense of absorption.

Sadra answers such a point of view: this so-called impression of the selfhood is the introspective self which comes into the mind through the conceptualisation and introspection of the factual performative truth of the self. The illuminative reality of the self rather is the performative one which talks, feels, thinks, wishes, judges, decides, and has sensation, imagination, and intellection, and is acquainted with all these acts and powers of its apprehension. The performative self is that which always acts and perceives and is never acted upon, or perceived, by itself or by another, except through conceptualisation. Everyone can, by way of introspection, conceptualise the factual reality of his own selfhood as well as those of others. Despite this understanding, it should not be maintained that our impression of the self is the very reality of the self or even a real and truthful representation of it.

If we make a pedagogical statement by saying, for example, " 'by another' is a special phrase", the phrase 'by another', as the subject matter of this particular statement, is not really being used with its proper special nature. This is not a substitution instance of a preposition at all; and, for that matter, it cannot be a true representation of the objective reality of 'by another'. Rather, it is a merely introspective conceptualisation of that reality which we speak of in the factual circumstances of our ordinary language. But if I say, in a normal instance, that "I am sitting by the window," or "the self is dependent on Being," I have truly used these prepositions with their own objective meanings. This is because their reality is illustrated by given examples instead of by generalisation and conceptualisation.

If an illuminative being, such as the self, is expressible only in terms of a special phrase, e.g., "by" or "on" and so on, its reality, too, like any other preposition, Sadra argues, will not be understandable unless it is absorbed into the meaning of Being. An introspection and representation of a special phrase is a complete distortion and, in a way, a falsification of the objective truth of such a linguistic entity. Likewise, Sadra maintains, an introspection of the self is an illusory representation of its existential reality, and cannot be taken as its true representation. In illuminative language, the word "illusory" is frequently used to signify this, that is, to conceptualise and interpret the unitary truth of a reality which can never truly and exactly be represented.

It is worth of noting here that the illuminative philosophy denies that the self can ever know itself, and still less be known by others, through representation. Thus the independent impression that we may have from the selfhood of ourselves can never characterize the truth value of the reality of the self as it exists in another. This reality, as we will see, can only be apprehended through the unitary consciousness.

Since the reality of the self is nothing but a special being, that is, an existential presence before Being, the self then is hanging on Being which is eternal and absolute perfection. That is to say, the self cannot be thought of accurately as distinguished from Being which is the principle of its being. Such as it is, this existential reality of pure dependence upon Being gives rise to the notion of a kind of existential "absorption." This means that the reality of the self as an illuminative entity is to be known as some thing "over-absorbed" in Being. As Sadra analysed, this illuminative sense of absorption is, therefore, directly derived from the existential meaning of the special truth of emanation, namely, "dependence on", "issuing from," "held by," and so on. However, Sadra maintains that the self outstands-- in a Heideggerian term-- amongst the beings due to its presence before Being; that is, the self absorbed in Being can experience its illuminative being so that through its everydayness it can catch its reality in an absolutely mystically preontological apprehension called 'the unitary consciousness'.⁸

Therefore, absorption in Being, which is presence before Being, as ultimately understood by Sadra, is a living, performative, non-reflective and preontological experience which in its high form shapes the

mystical apprehensions and in its ordinary form shapes our commonsensical experiences and inspirations throughout our everydayness life. This current experience of Being, 'the unitary consciousness', that the self possesses by its absorption in Being (or, to borrow Heidegger's phrase, by its being-in-the-world), builds up the factual reality of the self as a being-toward-perfection (al wojood al taleb li al kamal):

Through going ahead toward perfection, the self become unitary, then this unitary is practical (factual) and is consciousness.⁹

Sadraean 'self' then like Heideggerian 'Dasein' and Sartrean 'for-itself' continuously is in the process of realising its existential potentialities. It is for Sadra the authentic root of all what we have, do and know,¹⁰ and since Sadra maintains that absorption is experience of the very illuminative being the self is, then it can easily be seen that this experience, i.e., the unitary consciousness is identified with the being of the self. Not only this, since the illuminative reality of the self can only be grasped in this unitary consciousness, then the unitary consciousness, it can be concluded, is the being of the self. In this relation Sadra clearly writes that this consciousness:

... is neither a negation nor a relation; rather it is existence; however, not any sort of existence. It is an actual special being which is pure [i.e., non-eidetic].¹¹

He ultimately says that we can not logically define this consciousness, just as we can not define our special 'being'.¹² We only grasp it in our living experience of Being, because there is no representation of this consciousness.¹³ However, it does not deprive us to reflectively assign a conceptual essence to it and think of it. This reflective thinking of it, however, can not show its reality to us, because such thinking itself is grounded by that existential consciousness.¹⁴

Sadra does not believe that in the order of being there is an interruption between the self and the unitary consciousness.¹⁵ In this respect Sadra writes:

Every body who is conscious of himself necessarily is that consciousness of himself and this consciousness is currently continuously the self for ever.¹⁶

And after attempting to demonstrate this thesis, he concludes that the reality of him- self is "his existence, and his consciousness of his individual (Shakhsi) existence is realised only by presence of this existence".¹⁷

The self and the unitary consciousness are separating from each other only metaphorically, as when we introduce the notion of the self 'behind' such a consciousness. ¹⁸ The unitary consciousness which is a factual experience of and an preontological presence before Being consists the being of the self; in other words, it is the self simply because it is, indeed, the experience of no-self (self in its subjectivistic sense) or, to use a mystical term, of "emptiness" (fana).¹⁹

In such a discussion Sadra may again be regarded as a forerunner of existential phenomenologists in rejection of the subjectivistic notion of consciousness and the transcendental self.²⁰ Just as in Heidegger and Sartre,²¹ we already found in Sadra that both notions of 'consciousness' and 'self' fell with the denial of the transcendental subject, as we found in Kant, Hegel, and Husserl (all after Descartes) that the affirmation of the cogito was at the same time an affirmation of both the existence of consciousness and the self. A comparison between Sadra and Sartre here may make the case more clear.²² Sartre, in

particular, takes the existence of consciousness as his beginning. His denial of the transcendental self is not a denial of consciousness or existential self which as Sadra he seems to identify as 'for-itself'. This consciousness seems to be for Sartre as for Sadra existential and an openly performative practical experience. For both of them, the acts of consciousness provide us with a describable starting point; there are no acts of an 'underlying' or transcendental self. Consciousness is analysed not as a knowing consciousness or as a primarily reflecting consciousness, but rather as an active, 'living' consciousness. While Sadraean thesis rejects Descartes', Kant's, and Husserl's theory which takes thinking and knowing as the essential conscious acts, it somehow agrees with Sartrean position underlying that consciousness is first of all a perceiving, feeling, mobile consciousness. Consciousness is first of all a practical, a 'non-reflective' consciousness. As already indicated, the unitary consciousness is, according to Sadra 'preontological', meaning that it is existentially primordially a factual lived experience. In a more or less same manner, we may see a similar tone in Heidegger and Sartre. For Heidegger and Sartre practical or 'ontic' acts are more 'primitive' or 'original' than acts of 'ontological' cognition. In Sadra, this insistence on precognitive intentional performative experience, i.e., the unitary consciousness is carried through consistently and persuasively; in his analysis, the traditional dualisms between mind and body, subject and object are discarded in favour of the notion of being-present-before-Being-- a notion which sounds like the Heideggerian conception of "being-in-the-world".

In the light of the above remark, it may easily be seen that the "intentionality" which is the crucially central keystone in Husserlian eidetic consciousness finds no room in Sadraean preontological unitary consciousness simply because the latter belongs to the order of being in which the unitary consciousness, the experience of Being, genetically existentially acts, not intentionally that bears a subjectivistic tone. The Husserlian concept of 'intentionality', if has any meaning for Sadra at all, should be, in agreement with Sartre, stripped of its Husserlian heavily cognitive connotations and becomes equivalent to the concept of 'mobility'. The self, according to Sadra, is conscious, not of his being, but through his being. This is why he says that the unitary consciousness is an existentially building up of the being of the self; a currently continuously process of going ahead toward perfection (sayrorat ila al kamal). The paradigm of an intentional act, then, in agreement with Sartre, is not "I think" or "I know," but "I can."

However, like Sartre who believes that the existential consciousness is dependent by its nature,²³ Sadra also goes on, as already seen, to say that consciousness is absolutely nothing apart from its source, i.e., Being, and it always remains dependent, 'unfulfilled', and 'incomplete' (in Sartre's word: "decompression of Being"). This leads Sadra to maintain, with Heidegger, Sartre and post-Heideggerians like Rorty, Derrida and Foucault,²⁴ that the existential consciousness can have no 'contents'²⁵ and can have no independent existence, no existence apart from Being. It would further follow that there can be no intelligible thesis of idealism, which relies on its dependency. With this analysis, the traditional notion of subject (in Cartesian-Husserlian sense) is altered radically. There is no subject or self 'in' or 'behind' consciousness; the self, as already hinted, is simply the unitary consciousness itself: Self is not relative to experience as we may see in subjectivistic approaches; rather it is this experience. Consciousness, being an existential experience, is no longer the subject in Kant's meaning of the term, it is subjectivity itself or in Sartre's words, the immanence of self in self.

There is further room here to compare Sadra with Sartre. As often mentioned, the unitary consciousness should be regarded as an existential experience. We would underline the word 'experience' here. The word 'experience' here indicates, for Sadra, a creative relation to Being which puts the self in absorption. Therefore, it does not mean, in superficial positivistic sense, the scientific experience. Rather, it is a purely existential experience for Sadra. Such an experience, according to Sadra, is the

hermeneutic content of mysticism ('irfan). However, since it is the being of the self, we, even being non-mystics, also live with a special degree of such an experience. It is the root of all aspects of our acts. Now if we take the word 'perception' in its existential sense as seemingly used so by Sartre and the existential phenomenologists like Merleau-Ponty who maintain that it is the content of phenomenology, we may, then, find more similarity here. In a similar manner, Sadraean 'experience' and Sartrean 'perception' perception need not be analysed as a primarily cognitive notion (as we find in Husserl). Such an existential experience and perception may be viewed more broadly as the general relations of consciousness and Being or as the original relation of consciousness to being. Accordingly both Sartre and Sadra take such an existential perception and experience as the nature of consciousness. For both Sadra and Sartre such an experience and perception to be analysed as 'primitive'. In this case, both also begin with the doctrine that the existence of consciousness itself is known simply by virtue of its existence. What Sartre and Sadra concur over this latter doctrine is that self-knowledge (in its subjectivistic sense) is not the defining characteristic of the existential consciousness, for it ignores the 'non-reflective consciousness' or 'preconscious intentionality'. It may be said from this perspective that Cartesian cogito is true and necessary only on a reflective, articulate 'level' of that existential experience or perception. The definition of "consciousness" thus focuses on this-- that is, its always being existentially an experience inside Being. According to these authors, consciousness, it seems, is this existentially factual experience; it is not an object itself or an object for itself. Sadra determined this by insisting that the truth of this experience can never be accessible for the reflective thought; then it is, to use a mystical term, 'empty' for the reflective thought. Sartre also points out that this consciousness is 'nothing'.

The Sadraean thesis provides him with another idiom which we can call "preontological touch", and by which he was able to say that the illuminative self in his process of experiencing Being is at home with the reality of beings and can then catch their existential truths. One can say, on this perspective, that Sadra may have maintained that the existential experience of the unitary consciousness has a twofold task: to be the experience of its very being as well as of the beings at the same time. Though the unitary consciousness is by its illuminative nature as a self is, in Sadra's term, being-for-the other (i.e., Being which is in-itself), that is, it has no independent being apart from its special, hanging being, however, the unitary consciousness is "being-for-itself" (al wujood li nafseh)²⁶ in the sense that it is present-before-Being and experiences both its being and the other being with which it is in a preontological touch. If so, we may see a similarity in Sartre: Though the twofold task of Sadraean unitary consciousness may seem different in nature from Sartrean task of consciousness, some similarities may, however, come in force here. Sartre arrives at a distinction between two very different kinds of Being: the being of objects for consciousness (beings-in-themselves) and the being of consciousness (being-for-itself). Consciousness is dependent, for Sartre, on its objects just as for Sadra on Being for its own existence. To avoid any postulation of consciousness as an object of some sort distinct from its objects, Sartre introduces a convention of parenthesising the (of) in the expression "consciousness (of)". This locution is similar to Sadra's characterization of "being present before Being" (or in Heideggerian term "being-in-the-world") In both cases, the point of the linguistic innovation is to prevent us from separating different components of the expression, specifically, from attempting to logically distinguish consciousness (or the illuminative self) from its objects (Being). "Consciousness (of) objects" is thus to be taken as a primitive for Sartre just as presence before Being, the unitary consciousness is a primitive for Sadra. Both expressions carry enormous philosophical thrust, for they are basic rejections of Husserl's basic distinctions between cogito and cogitation, noetic act and noema, subject and object. On the basis of this characterization of consciousness as an existential experience or perception, in a more or less similar way, these authors recharacterise the sense in which this existential consciousness which is being-for-itself, is self-knowing (in Sadra's words ma'refat al-nafs). The existential consciousness is

essentially aware of itself as well as the other beings with which it is, holds Sadra, in an preontological touch. 27According to both Sadra and Sartre, this is even a necessary 'ontological' (preontological) feature of consciousness. It is not, then, to be confused with the reflectivity of the Cartesian cogito. There is no self (in subjectivistic sense) in this existential consciousness, and all of this is still non-reflective. The cogito is based on reflective thought-experiment. Consciousness can then be characterized as "being-for-itself" (in Sadra: al wujood li nafseh) because its existence consists in its dependency on objects (Being for Sadra), its non-reflective knowledge of its own dependency on objects, and the possibility of explicit recognition of itself in the Cartesian cogito.

Much of the characterization of being-for-itself (al wujood li nafseh), however, must be made in contrast to Being-in-itself (al wujood fi dhateh). The key to the distinction between the two kinds of being is, says Sadra in a Sartrean tone, the centrally important recognition that Being-for-itself can never be dependent on any thing except itself; that is to say, its being comes from within itself not from without; in Heideggerian words it is groundless; rather it is the ground of the beings. Whereas the being-for the other, the illuminative self as the unitary consciousness, is absolutely dependent on Being (the objects for Sartre).

Though the above comparison shows the similarities between Sartre and Sadra, it must not however be taken that the aim or nature of their discussion are simply one and the same. While Sadra intends to catch a theory to cover all implicit, tacit knowledge (ma'refah) from a commonsensical everydayness to the higher mystical apprehension, from the naive sensual intuition to a huge invisible kernel, Sartre avoids any involvement in invisible field and mystical apprehension. Moreover, while Sadra following the illuminative mystics in suggesting the unitary consciousness as an existentially current experience, avoids any subjectivistic idiom in this particular case (when for example he speaks of the experience of non-self (fana al dhat) considering it as "emptiness" ('adam), Sartre who strains to follow Husserl in his analysis of consciousness, constantly falls back into traditional subject-object language; this may easily be seen in his division of consciousness in two kinds one of which is the object for the other. Although he intends to support Heidegger in his rejection of Cartesianism, the dualism between consciousness and one's own body is never rejected, even though he insists that one's body is not simply "another object." In spite of his rejection of Husserl's transcendental ego and his epoch, Sartre does not seem to succeed in ridding himself of those Cartesian elements which he most needs to reject according to his own methodology.

Trying to present the self as an unitary consciousness whose nature is an illuminative being, the Sadraean thesis seems to helpfully aid us to answer some major problems risen from modern Western thought. Let us refer to two original problems here: the being of the subject and the subject-object relationship. Concerning the first problem, the being of the subject considered by this philosophy as an illuminative entity who is absorbed and situated in the Being. In this stage, correctly speaking, there is no subject, no mind (in the Cartesian-Husserlian sense); the subject is only a self as unitary consciousness. On this basis, the second problem is regarded. To be sure, we all commonsensely feel that the self is somehow a source of thought, intentions and will, and an "end" which, by its nature, defines and embodies important values and goals. Identifying the self and the unitary consciousness, this theory tried to show how the unitary consciousness, devoid of structure, activity, and intentions, could be related to the reflective knowledge whose structure is intentional and correspondence of object-subject.

Understood as unitary consciousness, the self has a twofold act: on one hand, since it is an illuminative entity and situated in the context of Being, it has a pre-ontological touch with the beings-- i.e., the

objects-in-themselves for the reflective thought; their beings are immediately present for the self. Then, as concluded, the self has access to the reality of the beings through the eidetic touch.²⁸ On the other hand, the self creates and grounds the reflective thought by an illuminative relation. It means for this philosophy that the self as unitary consciousness ascertains the correspondence of the mental objects-- i.e., the concepts or representations which are presented in the mind --with their external objects-- i.e., the external example and instance of those concepts and representations.

So understood, this theory also eliminates the triple consequence of the modern subjectivism as well: scepticism, idealism and solipsism. Scepticism arises from the gap between the mental concept or representation and its external object to which, it is supposed by subjectivism, the subject has no access. Then, the problem here is who we can be sure of our knowledge from the external world. The same gap renders idealism; since if the subject has no access to the external world, then all the subject concerns with is nothing but concepts and representations. We presupposed an external world only as a supposed reference point for our concepts and representations. Now, this idealism ends up with solipsism: the subject is that on which the world as a whole dependent; every subject ultimately is a monad.²⁹

The Sadraean theory seems to avoid these implications. Since the self apprehends the reality of the beings-in themselves through the eidetic touch, then, there is no room for the scepticism; it is because what (i.e., the object-in-itself) is supposed to be absent in our reflective thought is present for the self by its being: I am already pre-ontologically in touch with the pen by which I am writing, not in an intentionally consciously manner of representative, reflective knowledge-- rather, through hybridation of my being and the being of pen; in the sense that its being is present for my unitary consciousness, i.e., my being. The reality of pen is not totally absent for me to raise scepticism; the pen is present by its being for my being. Then I catch its reality as it is in itself. It is the transcendental self/ego, not the unitary consciousness that is in hallucinative dream of 'thing-in-itself'. This refutation of scepticism in this way is supported by another Sadraean thesis explaining that the unitary consciousness is free from being false; in other words, there is no error in the unitary consciousness because it is pure being. Then, when the unitary consciousness picks up the reality of a being like pen, it does not make an error. The error may however take place in the level of reflection while conceptualising that reality.

In addition, this theory puts us in a way to avoid idealism. This is because firstly the unitary consciousness is, according to this philosophy, a lived experience manifested as self in everyday exercising to be; in other words, it is a living experience of Being in/by/with Being. Secondly, the gap by which idealism arises is filled up by the Sadraean theses of the pre-ontological touch and the illuminative relation. Since we can pick up the reality of beings, the things-in- themselves, through the unitary consciousness by means of the pre-ontological touch and the illuminative realization, idealism whose trap is hidden in dismissing the external reality of things-in-themselves, automatically removed. I am not living only with my representations, rather, already with their actual facts.

Again this theory enforces us to escape from solipsism. Solipsism arises if we confine ourselves to the subject as possessor of only representations and concepts and isolate knowledge from being-- namely; disregard the real nature of 'being' of the subject. Contrary to this, Sadraean theory emphasizes two points here: first, it starts from Being not knowledge, reducing the subject to his source, then, interpreting knowledge as a kind of being. Secondly, it considers the subject as an illuminative entity whose nature is a pre-ontological unitary consciousness and then he is in touch with other entities. Therefore, I apprehend the reality of the beings in the world-- including other selves-- in their beings. Since there is no room for error in this touch, I reach the reality of each entity with which I am in touch.

Since the pre-ontological structure of human beings (not of course their capacities and potentialities) is one and the same, the nature of this touch is also one and the same for every self; then, every self reaches the same reality as the other selves do. Hence, it can be concluded from the Sadraean thesis that there is no solipsism. What comes first is being and the self is a fellow of it. My pre-ontological path to catch reality is like others'. We, the selves, are on common site to reach the reality. What makes us, the selves, different in our reflective interpretation of that reality is our differences in the degrees of strong ness or weakness of our faculties by which we translate that reality in the language of the reflective thought?

Notes:

1-His full name is Sadr al-Din Mohammad Shirazi; born in Shiraz - Iran (1964); entitled Sadra, Sadr al-Mutaallehin. Concerning him in English see: Nasr H., Sadr al-Din Shirazi: His Transcendent Theosophy(Tehran 1978);Also Morris J.W. 'An Introduction to the Philosophy of Sadra' in his translation of Sadra's The Wisdom of the Throne. Fakhry M., A history of Islamic Philosophy, Colorado, 1970,pp339-370. For more bibliography on Sadra in European languages see: Nasr, Op.Cit . pp. 99-100.

2-Al Hekma al-Mota'aliyah fi'l-Asfar al-'Aqliyyah al-Arba'ah.ed. by S.M.H. Tabatabaai, Tehran 1983(Hereafter Asfar);for a description of this book in English see: Nasr,Op.Cit.,pp.55-69.

3-See: Mudhaffar's 'Introduction' to Asfar, V. I, p. 6.

4-Asfar, V.8, p343.

5-Ibid., I, p.20.

6-Sadra, Sharh al Usul al Kafi, ed. Khajavi, Tehran 1985,p.90. It must be mentioned here that Sadra holds that the self access to and may possess all gradation of perfection which stand under his divinic authority (God's Caliph) through generating in an existential process of the substantive movement. He has discussed all ontological, psychological and epistemological aspects of this thesis in detail.(See for example: Asfar Vols. 8-9). Since we are in this study confined to the preontological aspect of the self, we only consider the self in its final humanistic state, that is what Sadra calls 'Discursive self' or the logos of the self (al-nafs al-natiqah)(see ibid, V.8, 260ff) the nature of which is the unitary consciousness.

7-Heidegger M., Being and Time, trans. J. Macquarrie and Robinson, Oxford 1988, p.78.

8-The official term used almost by the Illuminationists and Sadra is " al 'ilm al shuhudi (or al hudhuri or al ishraqi)"(Asfar, V.III, pp.447ff). Perhaps, the phrase, 'the unitary consciousness' is the best to convey the meaning; however, the word 'consciousness' has its own difficulty because of its employment in the reflective, eidetic field. As we will see soon in this chapter, this word has no eidetic, reflective or intentional for our employment of this word here in the illuminative context.

9-Sadra, Shawahid, ed. Ashtiyani, Tehran 1983, p.200.

10-Ibid, p.172, 157-8.

11-Asfar, V.III, p.297, see also: p.382.

12-Ibid, pp.278-9.

13-Ibid, 280ff.

14-Sabzewari note no.2 in: Ibid., p.466.

15-Asfar, V.III, p.465-87.

16-Ibid, p.465.

17-Ibid., p.466.

18-See: Shawahid pp. 242ff; also Asfar, V.III, p.312ff; also Sadra's treatise on ittehad al 'aaqel wa al m'aquul,in Rasa'il.

19-Asfar, V.II, pp.339-43.

20-See: Gurwitsch A., 'A Non-egological Conception of Consciousness' in Glynn S. (ed), Sartre: An Investigation of Some Major Themes, (Averbury 1987).

21-A point should be remind here: Heidegger unlike Sartre does not like to use the term 'Consciousness'. In explaining why he does so, see; Olafson, Heidegger and the philosophy of Mind,(New Haven,1987)pp,14, 262 n.20. For Sartre: Gorwitsch A., A Non-Egological Consciousness.; For Heidegger's influences on Sartre see: Rockmore, Heidegger and French Philosophy(London 1995) Ch. 3,pp. 40-58.

22-Like Sadra, Sartre similarly denies the transcendentalising the self or the ego in its 'primitive' status, even in phenomenological analysis. For Sartre's theory of the self see specially his book Transcendence of Ego, trans. Williams, New York 1957.For more discussion see also: 'Sartre on the Transcendental Ego' in Glynn (ed.), Sartre, pp.1-21; also: Solomon, Continental Philosophy since 1750 (oxford 1990), Part 12.

23-See Sartre, 'consciousness of self and knowledge of self' in Readings in Existential Phenomenology, ed. N.Lawrence and D. O'Connor (NJ 1967) pp.113-142; See also: Danto A.C., Sartre, (London 1991), Ch.2, pp.35-70.

24-For Rorthy see his book: Philosophy and the mirror of Naturep.70ff; for Faucoult and Derrida see: Solomon R. C., Continental Philosophy Since 1750: The Rise And The Fall Of The Self, Oxford 1990, 'Supplement: The End Of The Self'.

25-Sartre J. P., Being And Nothingness, trans. H. Barnes, New York 1966, p. xix.

26-Asfar, V. I, pp.78-82.

27-Ibid, V.III, pp.312ff.

28-Asfar, V. III, pp.312ff.

29-Our description of scepticism, solipsism and idealism depicts their general spirit as commonly understood in modern philosophy. There are, however, different versions, expressions and formulations for these terms depended on the peculiar angle from which the cases are seen.

Certainty and Innate Knowledge: a comparison of the theories of knowledge of Mullī ʿadrij and Descartes

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Abstract

Mulla Sadra's theory of knowledge is based on immateriality, that is spirituality, of the soul. Every spiritual substance knows itself by itself. In other words, a spiritual substance is present to itself and knows its essence necessarily. So spirituality presupposes presence because materiality is the cause of self-alienation in every existing substance. If any entity has an immaterial existence, it is present to itself and knows its essence necessarily by itself. Thus in every spiritual substance, knowledge and consciousness are immanent in its essence. If the foundation of knowledge is immanent in the very nature of a conscious substance, it means that knowledge is innate to it and the only necessary condition of certainty is the clarity of the objective entities that are present in the mind. Both Western and Islamic philosophers, whether rationalists, idealists or mystics, throughout the ages have accepted this theory. In Western thought, Aristotle and Descartes, and in Islamic philosophy Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) (d. 1037), Suhrawardī (d. 1191) and Mullī ʿadrij (d. 1641) all held that a spiritual substance knows by nature its essence. In this study, I intend to compare Mulla Sadra with Descartes on this issue with some background remarks, from a historical point of view, on Aristotle, Suhrawardī and perhaps some Cartesian philosophers like Leibniz and Spinoza. Mullī ʿadrij believes that knowledge emanates from the soul. Knowledge does not come, as the empiricists suggest, from without the soul; rather, its movement is intrinsic to the soul. This is like the theory of 'innate ideas' in Descartes' philosophy. Both Mulla Sadra and Descartes believe that the only possibility for the solution of the problem of 'certainty' is that we must disregard external experience and return to the mind itself, because the external or empirical world has no authoritative originality to give certain knowledge. Certainty is intuitively based in the mind itself and certain knowledge must intuitively emanate from the essence of the soul.

I: The Historical Background

The discussion of certainty, based on the substantial spirituality of the soul, has a historical background in Western philosophy, a background that begins with Plato and Aristotle. In the history of Islamic philosophy before Mulla Sadra, both Avicenna and Suhrawardī posed the question. Before we consider the views of Mulla Sadra and Descartes, it is necessary to review this historical background. Thought is inseparable from and essential to spiritual substance; for, according to Aristotle, non-material substance especially intellect "is not now thinking, now not."¹ Spirituality, that is non-materiality, is the same as divinity in Aristotle's view:

Since the object and subject of thought do not differ for all things that do not have matter, the divine thought and its object will be the same and thinking will be one with its object.²

Thus, non-material substance thinks by itself of itself and in itself.

Therefore, it must be of itself that the divine thought thinks (since it is the most excellent of things), and its thinking is a thinking on thinking.³

Thought is the essential attribute of the thinking substance because non-materiality or spirituality is the same as thinking in the fullest sense with that which is best in the fullest sense.

In apprehending its object thought thinks itself. For it too becomes an object for itself by its contact with, and thinking of, its object, so that the thought and its object are one and the same.⁴

Therefore, we can see that in Aristotle's philosophy non-materiality, spirituality, divinity and knowability are all identical. Belief in innate ideas and essential knowledge arises from Platonism and the Platonic theory of anamnesis. In the history of Islamic philosophy, there is a development of the belief in innate ideas and essential knowledge. Suhrawardi, perhaps more than Avicenna, emphasises that everything that has an essence that is conscious, is non-material because it is present to itself. It can not be a corporeal accident or accidental darkness (in Suhrawardi's terminology) to any thing other than itself; because accidental light (i.e. accidental spirit) is not light for itself rather than accidental body. So it is pure, unmixed and separable light.⁵ So in Suhrawardi's view, like that of Aristotle, non-materiality or spirituality presupposes consciousness and knowability. Mulla Sadra, later, invokes this position as a fundamental basis for explaining certainty.

II: Mulla Sadra's View

A: The identity of separability (non-materiality) and knowability

Mulla Sadra says:

Any non-material being must know itself. We can prove this easily if we recognise exactly the essence of knowledge...Matter cannot perceive itself because knowing is possible only through [grasping] the form and natural form cannot perceive itself because its essence is mixed with non-being and privation...So, no corporeal being perceives its essence because its essence is hidden from itself. Any non-corporeal [spiritual] being is present to itself because its essence is not hidden from itself. So it can recognise itself because knowledge or perception is the very being only if it is not hidden from itself. Here there is really no veil except non-being and the privation of the veil refers to the power of being. So there remains no weakness because weakness is the same as non-being.⁶

But this identity is conditioned to the unity of that which is percipient and that which is perceived.

Mulla Sadra says:

Every perception is gained by the unity of percipient and percept and the intellect that perceives all things is itself all things...We recognised that there is no presence for any body or any part of body to another body or another part of body. [This is] because every body is absent in every body, for body is a dark dead substance. Any corporeal thing, while it belongs to body, is absent from itself and is really dead. The soul, as long as it comes from material potentiality to rational actuality, becomes alive and rational potentiality to rational actuality, becomes alive and rational. When it becomes the actual intellect, it will be the very life of everything other than itself.⁷

B: Knowledge is not an impression

Mulla Sadra says that to hold that

Knowledge is an impression (of material things) on the soul is absurd. First, because if intellection is by way of perceiving an idea we can not perceive ourselves. Second, if perception is the perceiving of the idea of a thing (not the thing itself), we know certainly that these essences are concretely associated with bodies but these cannot perceive them. So the very perceiving of an essence by an entity (or actualising of a quality by a substance) does not mean that it really has a perception of it.⁸

So the actualisation of perception is not by something coming extrinsic to the soul. But we can say that God created the soul so that it can bring about the ideas of the thing, material or non-material because the soul is from the angelic world and the world of power. The souls of the angelic world have a power to create rational ideas by themselves and generate worldly ideas, that is physical ideas, based on matter and bodies. Each idea which is emanated from its agent, the agent perceives it; rather (we can say) that the actualisation of this idea consists in its being perceived by its agent. To be perceived by something is not conditional upon being extrinsic.⁹

Sadra believes that the relation of ideas to the soul is that of unity and identity. There is, as it were, no duality between the agent and its act of perceiving if they are both non-material. This what is referred to from Aristotle to Mulla Sadra, as the unity of percipient and percept.¹⁰ Sadra says that

If perception is actualised, separated from matter, based on itself and the soul also, what does it mean to be an idea in the soul, and how can one of them be in the other? How can one of them be the container and the other be the content? [This is] because the containing of something by something else is possible only between bodies.¹¹

C: Knowledge is the Very Actualisation of the Soul Itself.
So far we have had three important propositions:

Knowledge is not an impression and cannot be extrinsic.

Non-materiality and spirituality are identical to knowability and perception.

The soul is the creator of its ideas as rational entities.

Now from these premises, we come to the conclusion that the actualisation of the soul and the perceiving of the ideas are the same thing. The more ideas it perceives, the more complete is the soul.

The existentiating of the soul is the same as perceiving its ideas. In another word, the evolutionary movement of the soul, in its becoming separate and non-material is proportional to its perceiving its ideas.

Sadra says:

All of man's real perceptions and all of his knowledge, intelligible or sensible...are not separable from its essence and distinct from its existence. But its percept is essentially just its very existence. So the potentiality of the soul is the potentiality of its rationality. As much as it perceives its actualisation, all its perceptions become actual. Therefore, we can say that the soul is, at the beginning of its nature potential and mere ability.¹²

D: Existence of perception or knowledge is more powerful and more intensive than that of material being.

Now we come to the intensification of existence in the philosophy of Mulla Sadra. Substances are more intense than accidents in their existence, and intelligible substances are more intense than sensible ones. The movement of existence from sensibility to intelligibility is through intensification and power. The more intelligible the being, the more powerful and intense it is. Mulla Sadra believes that bodily existence or corporeal being is mixed with privation because any part of a body presupposes the absence of the other parts in the same place. So its essence is mixed with privation.

But the powerful existence, which is pure, and is not mixed with privation is perception.¹³

Generally,

Knowledge is not a negative affair, such as an abstraction from matter. Nor is it a relative thing. But it is an affirmative being and not any being, but actual being without any potentiality. And not any actual being, but pure being unmixed with privation. Its purity and knowability is related to its non-contamination with privation.¹⁴

III: Descartes' View

A: Priority of consciousness (perception) to existence

Before analysing Descartes' position on certainty, we need to remind ourselves of some important principles of his philosophy.

Priority of rationality to sensibility. Rationality is, in all respects, above sensibility and value of any rational in all respects is more than any sensible one.

Priority of consciousness to existence, not vice versa.

There is no mediation between knowledge (consciousness) and being; so that where there is a consciousness there is necessarily something. Existence belongs immediately and primarily to conscious beings and secondarily to unconscious beings.

In Descartes's philosophy, knowability is related to non-materiality. Descartes says, at the beginning of Meditation IV,

I have noted carefully that so little is perceived reliably [with certainty] about physical things, and that much more is known about the human mind, and even more again about God Himself.¹⁵

About this point Descartes says in his Principles of Philosophy.

Although we do not comprehend the whole nature of God, nevertheless we can understand more clearly [His supreme perfections]... Because being more simple and because they are not obscured by any limitations, they fill our thought better. The very knowing proves that there is something other than my body.¹⁶

Descartes mentions the following example of a necessary proposition:

I know, therefore I have a mind distinct from my body.¹⁷

The priority of consciousness, knowledge, perception and so on, to material being, is the priority of Divinity to any worldly existence or cosmic being.

For the human mind has in it something that we may call Divine, wherein are scattered the first germs of useful modes of thought.¹⁸

B: Duality of Soul and Body

But this priority is only defensible and based on the duality of soul and body. Knowledge is, in Aristotelian terminology, an accident, which cannot depend on corporeal substance; but its substance must also be non-corporeal, that is spiritual. So the duality of soul and body is the logical conclusion of the priority of consciousness. Non-materiality is the common aspect and the identity of the soul and consciousness. This duality, based on thought, is the fundamental principle of Descartes' philosophy. Descartes mentions the identity of the soul and thought in many places in his works. Here I mention only some examples:

Now, in order to explain how our mind can be known not only prior to and more certainly than our body but also more evidently than our body, it should be noted that it is very well known by the natural light of reason that nothingness has no attributes or qualities and that nothing can happen to it. Therefore, whenever we encounter some qualities, there is necessarily some thing or substance to which they belong, and the more qualities we find in some thing or substance the more clearly we know it. That we find more qualities in our mind than in anything else is obvious from the fact that nothing can make us understand anything other than ourselves, without at the same time bringing us a much more certain knowledge [consciousness] of our own mind.¹⁹

The relation of thought to soul is that of necessity. Thought cannot be separated from the essence of the soul. Descartes says in his Meditations,

It is thought. This alone cannot be detached from me. I am, I exist; that is certain. But for how long? As long as I think, for it might possibly happen if I ceased completely to think, that I would thereby cease to exist at all.²⁰

Even doubtful phenomena such as hearing, seeing and other feelings, when there are objects of thought, are certain.

I am the same subject who senses, or who notices physical things as if through the senses; for example, I already see light, hear sound and feel heat. Those are false because I am asleep. But I certainly seem to see, to hear and to get warm. This cannot be false. This is what is meant, strictly speaking, by me having a sensation and, understood precisely in this way, it is nothing other than thinking.²¹

C: Intuitive and Deductive Knowledge

Descartes, after denying the authority of sensible knowledge, divides certain knowledge to intuitive and deductive. Intuitive knowledge is direct, immediate, simple and most authoritative; deductive knowledge is, on the contrary, indirect, composite, mediated and, relatively to intuition, less authoritative. Of course,

We must not fancy that one kind of knowledge is more obscure than another; since all knowledge is of the same nature throughout; and consists solely in combining what is self-evident.²²

But in any case

Intuition is the undoubting conception of an unclouded and attentive mind, and springs from the light of reason alone; it is more certain than deduction itself, in that it is simpler; though deduction cannot by us be erroneously conducted.²³

We cannot even know sensible corporeal objects unless we understand them intuitively. For

What should be noticed is that perceiving it [the wax] is not a case of seeing, touching or imagining, nor was it ever such although it seemed that way earlier, but it is an inspection [intuition] of the mind alone.²⁴

D: Certain Knowledge is Innate Knowledge

Finally, it is observed that in Descartes's thought, certainty presupposes innateness. This idealistic position is common among all Cartesian philosophers and Mulla Sadra; for certain knowledge cannot be extrinsic.

As regards ideas of physical things, there is nothing in them that is so great that it seems incapable of having been derived from myself...

Insofar as some features of our ideas of physical things are clear and distinct, they seem to have been partly borrowed from the idea of myself – for example, from the idea of substance, duration and number and, possibly, others of the same kind...

All the other features of which the ideas of physical things are constructed, namely extension, shape, position and motion, are not formally contained in me since I am nothing but a thinking thing. However, they are merely modes of a substance, whereas I am a substance, and therefore it seems possible for them to be in me eminently.²⁵

Again Descartes emphasises the innateness of certain ideas, even physical ones, in Meditation V.

All these things, considered in this general way, are not the only things that are clearly perceived and known; by paying attention, I also perceive innumerable particular things about shapes, number, motion and so on, the truth of which is so open and so accommodated to my nature that, when I first discover it, I seem not so much to learn something new as to remember things I already knew or to notice for the first time things that were in my mind for a long time even though I had not previously turned my attention to them.²⁶

IV: Comparison and Conclusion

We can enumerate a few central points of comparison by way of conclusion.

Certainty is, from a psychological point of view, an inward attribute. Because it must, first, be immediate and intuitive. Second, it is, because of its identity with the spirituality of the soul, non-material. Third, it must essentially be immanent in the soul so it cannot be extrinsic. The material world cannot give us certain knowledge; for the very essence of certainty presuppose its immediacy and its identity with the essence of the soul. Originally in the Cartesian period, in the philosophy of Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza and especially Berkeley, the idea of the 'external world' was strongly criticised. As much as it is relevant

to the philosophy of Mulla Sadra, this conception is a return from the external world into the internal one; from the physical cosmos into the Divine universe, from the material world into the world of Ideas, and lastly from creation into the creator.

The soul, as the locus of knowledge, must necessarily be a non-material substance. Concerning the non-materiality of the soul, there is an important distinction between Mulla Sadra's position and that of Descartes. In Descartes' philosophy, soul and body are two distinct substances whose 'real difference' is only known by God. This real difference is the root of the Cartesian problem of the relationship between soul and body. But Mulla Sadra believes that there is no substantial difference between soul and body because the soul is corporeal in its event and spiritual in its continual.²⁷ So the spirituality of the soul, in the philosophy of Mulla Sadra is to be realised in its gradual substantial evolution. The spiritual substantiality of the soul is not, at the beginning, actualised. It is a gradual process, which becomes complete at the end. This very gradual evolutionary process is identified with its growing self-consciousness. The rationality of the soul, its spirituality, its self-awareness and its completion are one and the same. Another difference is about the meaning of innate ideas: Certain ideas, true propositions and innate knowledge entail, according to Descartes, that the soul has these as the 'first germs of useful modes of thought'²⁸ that are divine in itself; but, according to Mulla Sadra, the soul can produce ideas. So it is, as it were, the creator, like its own creator, God, of ideas.

Certain knowledge is relevant to the separability, non-materiality and divinity of the soul. In analytical philosophy, the essence of scientific knowledge is reduced to probability. Certainty is the same as necessity, and certain knowledge means necessary knowledge. But certain knowledge, as Aristotle believes, belongs to substance; and if the object of our knowledge is not a substance we cannot have necessary or scientific knowledge. In contemporary phenomenological and analytical philosophy the substance, both corporeal and spiritual is reduced to a set of phenomena, without any firm foundation. The denial of substance, from one side, and doubt of the existence of God from the other side, renders all certain knowledge to a set of probable statements about variable and unstable phenomena. In Cartesian philosophy and in philosophy of Mulla Sadra, spiritual substantiality of the soul is the firm foundation of certain knowledge.

Notes:

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2-Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1075a 4, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, London: Penguin 1998, pp. 383-83.

3-Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1074b 33, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, p. 383, modified.

4-Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1072b 17, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, p. 374.

5-Suhrawardī, *°ikmat al-Ishrīq*, eds./trs. H. Ziai & J. Walbridge, Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University Press 1998, pp. 79.

6-Mullī ʿadrij Shāriḥ, *al-°ikma al-mutaʿīliya fī l-asfīr al-ʿaqliyya al-arbaʿa*, eds. R. Luṣfī et al, Beirut: *Dir iʿlīyīʿ al-turīth al-ʿarabī* 1981, vol. III, p. 447.

7-Mullī ʿadrij, *Al-Shawḥid al-rubʿbiyya fī l-manḥij al-sulʿkiyya*, ed. S.J. ʿshtiyjīnī, Mashhad: Mashhad University Press 1967, p. 244.

8-Mullī ʿadrij, *al-Asfīr al-arbaʿa*, vol. III, p. 288.

9-Mullij ʿadrij, al-Asfijr al-arbaʿa, vol. I, p. 264.

10-Fazlur Rahman, The philosophy of Mullij ʿadrij, Albany: State University of New York Press 1975, p.236-44. Cf. Aristotle, De Anima [On the Soul] 430a, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, pp. 204-5.

11-Mullij ʿadrij, al-Asfijr al-arbaʿa, vol. I, p. 287.

12-Mullij ʿadrij, al-Shawjihid, p. 203.

13-Mullij ʿadrij, al-Asfijr al-arbaʿa, vol. III, p. 299.

14-Mullij ʿadrij, al-Asfijr al-arbaʿa, vol. III, p. 297.

15-Descartes, Meditations and other metaphysical writings, tr. D.M. Clarke, London: Penguin 1998, Meditation IV, p. 44.

16-Descartes, Principles of Philosophy in Meditations and other metaphysical writings, tr. D.M. Clarke, Principle XIX, p. 119.

17-Descartes, Rules for the Direction of the mind in The philosophical writings of Descartes, vol. I, tr. E. Haldane, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1968, Rule XII, p. 43.

18-Descartes, Rules for the Direction of the Mind, Rule IV, p. 10.

19-Descartes, Principles of philosophy, Principle XI, p. 115.

20-Descartes, Meditations, Meditation II, p. 25.

21-Descartes, Meditations, Meditation II, pp. 26-7.

22-Descartes, Rules for the Direction of the Mind, Rule XII, p. 47.

23-Descartes, Rules for the Direction of the Mind, Rule III, p. 7.

24-Descartes, Meditations, Meditation II, p. 28.

25-Descartes, Meditations, Meditation III, pp. 36-8.

26-Descartes, Meditations, Meditation V, pp. 51-2.

27-Jismijniyyat al-ʾudfith wa rʿijniyyat al-baqiʾ – see Mullij ʿadrij, al-Asfijr al-arbaʿa, vol. VIII, pp. 346, 380.

28-Descartes, Rules for the Direction of the Mind, Rule IV, p. 10.

God in Greek and Islamic Philosophy: A comparative study of Aristotle and Mullī ṭadrī Shḥrīzī on the Necessary Existent

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Abstract

The nature of God, or the demiurge-creator and designer of the cosmos, is a venerable subject in philosophy and natural theology. Most medieval and religious discourse about God and the ontological and cosmological proofs for His existence in the Abrahamic faiths within a philosophical context stem from the famous proof for the Prime Unmoved Mover in the Physics of Aristotle. It was this proof alongside later more ontological proofs associated with Anselm and Avicenna that underpinned medieval philosophical theology. It is instructive to trace the development, hence, of philosophical theology from Aristotle through to the more sophisticated forms of arguments about God, namely in the later Islamic tradition because one can see the creative thought of monotheists talking about God within a broadly Aristotelian context with Aristotelian axioms. The present paper attempts to do so, first, by presenting Aristotle's theology, his concept of God and His attributes, and then compares this architectonic foundational theology with the later theology of Mulla Sadra that represents a sophisticated, richer concept of God indicative of a mature and confident Islamic philosophical tradition.

God in Aristotelian philosophy

The lack of an explicit discourse or even concept of 'God' distinguishes Aristotelian philosophy. This seems all the more unusual given that the medieval discourse of God relies upon an Aristotelian philosophical system. There are serious differences among commentators and scholars of the Aristotelian corpus regarding Aristotle's views on God, especially whether by 'the Prime Mover' and the 'Active Intellect' he meant the One God or not.¹ The issue was further complicated in monotheistic traditions in which the exclusivity of the One God was stressed while there seemed little sympathy in Aristotle's world for monotheism as opposed to more widespread polytheistic and henotheistic practices and beliefs.² It was only in late antiquity and beyond that the Near East and its sphere of Hellenising philosophy was won over to monotheism, a trend that actually prefigures the coming of Islam.³

We shall begin this inquiry by considering the proofs for establishing the existence of God according to Aristotle, and then study the attributes and properties of the Aristotelian deity. The most well known proof for the existence of God attributed to Aristotle is the proof of "the prime mover". In this proof, Aristotle begins his discussion from physics. This proof is based on five principles:

Motion (kinesis, haraka) requires a movent⁴ (muḥarrik)

Both the movent and motion are simultaneous, meaning that it is impossible to conceive a temporal separation between the two.

Every movent is either in motion (mutaḥarrik) or stationary (thabit).

Every physical entity is in change (mutaḡhayyir) and motion (mutaḥarrik)

Infinite regress (tasalsul) is impossible.

The conclusion drawn from the aforesaid five principles is that the chain of entities in motion ends at a mover, who is not in motion.⁵

The first proof- The prime mover

Aristotle in books VII and VIII of his *Physics* has elaborate discussions on motion.⁶ He discusses certain characteristics of motion, and then, employing some of these, and other primary fundamental concepts, he proves the existence of a mover who is unmoved. He enumerates the following premisses:

Every motion has a movent

Both the movent and motion are necessarily simultaneous

Motion is both pre-eternal and eternal

Thereafter he says:

Since everything that is in motion must gain motion by means of an agent, let us take the case in which a thing is in motion, and is moved by an agent that is itself in motion; and that agent too gains its movement from another agent, which is likewise in motion; and this latter agent too gains its motion from another thing; and this continues up until a certain point. Obviously, this chain cannot have an infinite regress; rather, there must be a Prime Mover...For the movements must reach an end [given the impossibility of Infinite Regress].⁷

The prime movent that is unmoved is Eternal and One.

Since motion must always exist without any pause, there must be a first agent of motion which is eternal and unmoved.⁸

Since motion is eternal, then the first agent of change (which is one) would also be eternal. (We should assume that there is one first agent rather than a plurality, and a finite number rather than infinitely many)...We do not need to assume that there are more than one and since it is eternal and the first unmoved agent of motion, it will be the source of motion for everything else.⁹

The second proof- The priority of actuality over potentiality and the latter's dependence on the former

This proof can be extrapolated from Aristotle's discussion on potentiality (*dunamis*) and actuality (*energeia*). The temporal and logical precedence of actuality over potentiality can be employed to prove the existence of an essential entity which is Sheer Actuality.

The proof is as follows: Every thing comes into existence from potentiality to actuality, and due to one reason or another, requires an entity other than itself that transfers it from potentiality to actuality. It requires a sufficient reason or a preponderator to bring it into being.¹⁰ It is necessary, after all, for the entity that transfers something from potentiality to actuality to end causally at an entity that is actuality in all its dimensions, so that it does not depend on another entity; otherwise it would lead to a vicious circle or infinite regress. That entity which is actuality in all its dimensions is the Necessary Existent or the Mover that is not in motion.¹¹

The third proof- The chain of causes cannot regress infinitely

In his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle says:

But evidently there is a first principle, and the causes of entities are neither infinite as a series or in a perspective. For neither the derivation from matter nor relative terms can sustain an infinite regress, nor can the source of change. Similarly final causes cannot sustain an infinite regress. And the case of formal causes [or essences] is similar. For in the case of the intermediates, which have a posterior and a

prior term, the prior must be the cause of things that come after it. For if we had to say which of the three is the cause, we should say the first; surely not the last, for the final is the cause of nothing; nor even the intermediate, for it is the cause only of one thing. But of series which are infinite in this way, and of the infinite in general, all the parts down to that now present are like intermediates; so that if there is no first there is no cause at all...

Further, the final cause is an end, and that sort of end which is not for the sake of something else, but for whose sake everything else is; so that if there is to be a last term of this sort, the process will not be infinite; but if there is no such term, there will be no final cause...

At the same time it is impossible that the primary existent, being eternal, should be destroyed. For since the upper creation is not limited, it is necessary that, since it is not itself eternal, it be generated from some non-destroyed primary thing. And since that for the sake of which it is a final cause, it would be the sort of thing that would not be for other things, but rather other things for it, so that if there were to be some such final cause, there will be no regress, but if there is no such thing, there will not be that for the sake of which, but those who posit the infinite will, without realising it, have removed the nature of good.¹²

Some of the principles upon which this Aristotelian proof is based are as follows:¹³

The entities that return to the same origin possess a "foremost" which has an independent essence and is pre-eternal, and is the most complete and perfect form of the origin. Hence, motion must return to an origin that is an Unmoved Mover, and actuality likewise must return to a level of "actuality" that is sheer actuality and pre-eternal.

The chain of causes cannot infinitely regress,¹⁴ since causality is a phenomenon that does take place in the world and its infinite regress is impossible.¹⁵ Hence, there must be a First Cause.

Another issue that particularly concerns this section is that the ultimate end does exist, one to whom all the ends are inclined to comprehend. That prime cause, or the cause of all the other causes, and the ultimate end, and the mover who is not in motion and sheer actuality are different dimensions of the same entity, whom we know as God.¹⁶

The fourth proof- The principle of the possibility of the nobler

This principle explains the intelligible truth that whenever a less noble contingent entity is found, necessarily, a nobler contingent entity must have preceded it in existence. In other words, the existence of a less noble contingent entity reveals the precedence of a nobler contingent entity. Therefore, if the less noble contingent entity, which is the world of matter, exists, the possibility of its existence heading in the ascending order toward the existence of God, Who is Sheer Actuality and the Absolute Being, is essential. This principle is found in an introductory format within the texts of Aristotle's works.

This entails a hierarchy of value and of truth. Contingent truths are predicated upon necessary truths. Investigating causes of things is an inquiry into their truth. Thus the cause of causes is identified with the ultimate necessary truth.

In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle says:

We do not know the truth without the cause. This is all the more true in each case in which synonymy arises, so that it is more true in each case that the earlier thing is the cause. And so it is necessary that the principles of the eternally existing things are most true so that as each thing is related to being so is it to truth... A thing that imparts a certain characteristic to other things, itself enjoys a better degree of the characteristic. Similarly the cause of the truth of other things must be most true.¹⁷

Being, truth and causation are ontological scales within reality. From the above statement of Aristotle, we can understand that all the limited perfections in the end spring from the Absolute Perfect Being, the First Cause and the Ultimate end. At least this is how the late Antique traditions that filtered into Islam regarded the issue by Neoplatonising Aristotle and identifying scales of perfection and reality when no such explicit arguments are found in the Aristotelian corpus.¹⁸

The fifth proof- knowledge and thought

Because knowledge exists, and its reality does not depend on an infinite series of entities, knowledge and thought necessitate a beginning and an end, since that which can increase and regress infinitely cannot pass through a limited duration. Hence, the chain of existents, the weakest of which begins from matter, must end with sheer perfection or the cause of all causes.

Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* says the following in this regard:

However, essence cannot either be taken to another definition which is fuller in expression. For the original definition is always truer, and not the later one. And among the series of definitions, if the first definition lacks the intended characteristic, the next would be likewise. This theory destroys knowledge. For it is impossible to have this until one reaches the simple [unanalysable] terms. And knowledge becomes impossible; for how is it possible to have cognition of infinite things?... But if the kinds of causes had been infinite in number, knowledge would still be impossible. This is because we think that we have attained knowledge of something only when we have cognition of their causes; but that which is infinite by addition cannot be gone through in a finite time.¹⁹

Therefore this chain of causes does have an end, since 'knowledge' does exist.

The sixth proof- The active intellect

In contrast with Plato, Aristotle does not believe in the actual existence of intelligibles. Rather, he comprehends them as entities which must be considered to be the product of sensibilia and imaginalia, and are separable. The intellect itself, while creating actual intelligibles, also becomes active. Hence, here too, in the actualization of the creation of the concepts according to Aristotle's world of universal fundamental concepts, we must believe that the totality of potentiality comes from actuality, or matter from form, or the efficient cause from the influenced cause. In other words, we must believe in either two distinct intellects or two distinct dimensions of the intellect, one of which the commentators of Aristotelian philosophy have called 'the possible intellect' ('aql mumkin) or 'the influenced intellect' ('aql munfa'il), and the other as 'the active intellect' ('aql fa'al).²⁰

In this connection, due to the obscurity that exists in the works of Aristotle, since antiquity there opinions have differed among the commentators of Aristotle's views. The commentators can be divided into three different groups: the first and second group consist of those who believe the active intellect to be separate and extrinsic to the human soul. These are further sub-divided into two groups. First, those who believe the active intellect to be the One God, like Alexander of Aphrodisias. Second, those who believe the active intellect to be from the metaphysical entities and outside the human soul, and not God.²¹ This group, which includes al-Farabi (d. 950) and Avicenna (d. 1037), was known in the scholastic West as the adherents of Averroes' (d. 1192) position. The third group which believed in the unity of intellect and its residence in the human being are known as Thomists, after Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), who had held the view.

The discussion on the active intellect in the De Anima does not exceed sixteen lines; 22 and Aristotle in book Lambda of his Metaphysics has also mentioned some of the characteristics of the active intellect.²³ Anyhow, if one holds like Alexander of Aphrodisias that the active intellect is the One God Himself, we have attained our objective. Nevertheless, even if we were to agree with the opinions of Averroes and Aquinas, we can demonstrate, through other proofs that we already mentioned, such as the principle of the possibility of the nobler, the impossibility of the chain of infinite causes, and so on, and by means of the existence of the active intellect, the necessity of the existence of God.

The attributes of the Aristotelian Deity

1. The prime mover who is not in motion is Eternal and One

Aristotle says in his Physics:

Since motion is eternal, then the first movent, if there is but one will be eternal also...We do not need to assume that there are more than one.²⁴

He then proves that motion is an eternal phenomenon, that it depends on a movent, and that the chain of movents must end at a movent which itself is unmoved, for infinite regress is impossible. Thus such an unmoved movent, which is the agent of eternal movement, must itself be eternal, for the cause precedes the effect.²⁵

In his Metaphysics, he says:

Since there were three kinds of substance, two of which are physical, and the third unmoved, regarding the latter we should say that there must be a kind of eternal unmoved substance. For substances are prior among existing entities, and if they are all destructible, all things are destructible. However, it is not possible that motion and time should either have come into being or cease to be, for it must always have existed.²⁶

2. God is sheer actuality

Aristotle in the Metaphysics says:

But suppose that there is something which is capable of moving things or acting on them, but is not actually doing so, there will not necessarily be movement, for that which has a potentiality need not exercise it. There is no advantage at all from the admission of eternal substances, as in the theory of Forms, unless there is among them a principle capable of moving something else. Not even this is not enough, nor is another substance besides the Forms enough, for if it is not active, there would be no movement. Further, even if it carries out any action, this will not be enough if its essence is potentiality. For there will not be eternal movement; since a potentially existing entity can also not exist. Thus, there must exist such a principle whose very essence is actuality.²⁷

In book Zeta of the Metaphysics he says:

...there is something which moves other entities without being moved, being eternal, substance and actuality...²⁸

Further on he says:

Substance is simple and exists actually.²⁹

3. The life of God

Having established that God is sheer actuality, he turns to prove the life of God, for that which resides in the foremost station of actuality necessarily possesses the most intense degree of life and lives eternally.

God also has life, since the actuality of thought is life, and He is that actuality. God's essential actuality is supreme, eternal life. We say, therefore, that God is a supreme and eternal living being, so that to God belong life and continuous and eternal duration.³⁰

4. God has knowledge of himself only

For Aristotle, the knowledge that God possesses cannot be the knowledge that necessitates change or sensation nor can it be noetic. Therefore, God in the course of an eternal act apprehends His own self-consciousness and comprehension. This is how Aristotle introduces God as the 'Thinking of the thought'. God is that self-independent thought that contemplates eternally. Furthermore, God cannot have any object of thought beyond Himself, for that would mean that he has an end beyond Himself. Therefore God only knows Himself.³¹

Concerning this, Aristotle says in the Metaphysics book Lambda:

The intrinsic object of thought is what is intrinsically best, and the intrinsic object of absolute thought is the absolutely best [i.e. God].³²

5. God is not the creator, but rather the ultimate cause of the universe

In Greek thought, creation was not posited. The world was considered to be pre-eternal, and not created from pre-eternity nor dependent upon a creator. God is the first mover of the universe and the source of the eternal movement and He bestows upon the world a form, and being the ultimate cause, invites the universe toward Himself- an act which is the source of motion in the universe. If God, as the efficient cause had been the cause of motion, and controlled the universe, He would necessarily have to undergo change. Thus, He is an agent, as a final cause.³³

6 God is neither worshipped nor does he understand the whisperings of (his servants)

According to Aristotle the prime mover is not the object of worship, and does not understand the worship and whisperings of His servants, since He has no knowledge of the deeds of His servants. Aristotle³⁴ in his Magna Moralia states:

Those who think that God is someone who can be loved are mistaken, since God cannot attend to our love, and in no state can we say that we love God.

Therefore, neither is God in communication with His servants, nor can man establish (any) communication with Him, so that He beholds their presence. The reason for this is that, according to Aristotle, this would result in a flaw in the sheer actuality and ultimate cause that beholds other than itself.

7. How can the multiplicity of unmoved movents be reconciled with divine unity?

In some of his works, Aristotle enumerates the number of unmoved movents to be 55 or so, and on the other hand considers an unmoved movent to be God.³⁵ How can this matter concur with Divine unity?

In his *Metaphysics* he says:

Although there are numerous unmoved movents, God is one, and one of these movents is the first.³⁶

All Muslim philosophers, as well as Christian scholastic philosophers, unanimously believe that according to Aristotle, God is one. They have propounded numerous interpretations on this matter. Nevertheless what is certain is that Aristotle had not explained how the numerous unmoved movents were linked to the first unmoved movent, and left this matter in ambiguity.

God in the Transcendent Philosophy of Mulla Sadra

Muhammad bin Ibrahim al-Qawami al-Shirazi (d. 1641), famously known as Mulla Sadra, the founder of the Transcendent Philosophy (al-hikma al-muta'aliya) school of thought has presented distinctly innovative philosophical principles.³⁷ Among these innovations is his special method of proving the Necessary Being, which is well-known as the 'proof of the highly veracious' (burhan al-siddiqin). He himself introduces it to be the most apposite and sacred of the proofs for the existence of God. Mulla Sadra, after briefly explaining that there exist different methods of proving the Necessary Being, introduces the method that he had devised, as the best, from which various principles could also be drawn.

Transcendent Philosophy is the most important and exalted philosophical system that dominates Muslim philosophical circles, especially in Iran. By establishing this philosophical school of thought in the 17th century, slowly and gradually, the philosophical schools of thought such as the Peripatetic philosophy of Avicenna, the Illuminationist philosophy of Suhrawardi (d. 1191), the gnosis of Ibn 'Arabi and scholastic theology, were partially eclipsed by this philosophical system founded by Mulla Sadra. As a system, it contained the outstanding and important points of the four aforementioned schools of thought, and formed a synthesis of them all. At the same time, it also consisted of profound, new insights and was disseminated in religious and intellectual circles open to philosophy and speculative theology, where it prevails.

1. On proving the existence of a necessary being through "the proof of the highly veracious" (burhan al-siddiqin).

Mulla Sadra in his *Asfar*³⁸ says:

Know that the paths that lead to Allah are numerous, because He possesses numerous virtues and dimensions. However, some of these are more firm, sacred and radiant than others. And the most apposite and sacred of proofs for His existence is that whose middle term in reality is none other than Himself. Hence, the path toward the objective here would be the objective itself. And this is the path of the highly veracious (siddiqin), who prove the existence of Allah by His exalted Self, and then prove His Attributes through His Essence, and His Acts through His Attributes, one after another. And other than these (such as the scholastic theologians (mutakallimin), the materialists and others) seek help to know God and His Attributes by means of taking into consideration other than Him [such as the contingency of

essence (mahiyah), the createdness of creation, the motion of the material body, and other such matters]. These too are proofs of His Essence and evidences of His Attributes; however, this method is more firm and sacred.³⁹

There are many ways of proving the existence of God, since God is possessive of ample virtues and dimensions. However, some of these ways are more firm (ahkam), sacred (ashraf) and radiant (anwar). The firmest and best proof of God's existence, is a proof whose middle term (hadd al-wasat) is not other than the Necessary Being (meaning that by contemplating on the (nature of the) Divine Essence, we come to know of the existence of a Necessary Being, and not by contemplating entities other than Him.) Therefore, the path towards proving the existence of the Necessary Being, is the Necessary being Himself. We reach our objective through our objective.

This is the method of the highly veracious (siddiqun), who, by contemplating the reality of existence, find God, and having proven the Divine Essence, prove His Attributes through His Essence, and then His Acts through His Attributes, one after another. Those other than the Siddiqun such as the scholastic theologians, materialists, and others prove the Necessary Being by means of other than God, such as the contingency of essence, the incipience (huduth) of the creation, and the motion of the material body, and other such matters. These also are proofs of the existence of the Necessary Being and witnesses of His Attributes. However, the method of the highly veracious is more firm and sacred.

A brief elucidation of the proof of the highly veracious

The sages of the realm of Lordship (al-rabbaniyyin) behold existence and affirm its reality, and comprehend that it is fundamental in everything. Then, after [accurately] searching for the reality of existence, they realize that it is necessarily existent. As for contingency (imkan), need, being-an-effect (ma'luliyah), and so on, they are attributed to it, not due to the nature of its reality, but because of the deficiencies and nonentities beyond the essence of its reality. Then, after contemplating upon that which necessitates essentiality (wujub) and contingency (imkan) they understand the unity of His Essence and Attributes, and likewise comprehend His Acts from His Attributes. And this is the method of the Prophets.⁴⁰

The rabbaniyyin and divine scholars look at existence, study it, and come to understand that existence is the very nature of every entity. When they painstakingly search for the reality of existence, they find that that the reality of existence is necessary in its essence; and sheer existence is the Necessary Being. The reality of existence in itself is free from imperfection and not exposed to contingency, need or being-an-effect. However, in case of its imperfection, it is dependent.

A lower degree of existence, however, is contingent; otherwise existence itself is neither nor dependent. Then, taking into consideration the necessary consequent of necessity and contingency, and having understood that completeness is inherent in necessity, and the Necessary Being possesses no imperfection, they conclude that the Necessary Being possesses no partner in His Essence and Attributes. This is the method of the Prophets.

Having briefly expounded the "proof of the highly veracious", he starts presenting the same in a logical format, which is based on the following four premises:⁴¹

The fundamentality of existence (asalat al-wujud)

The unity (wahid) of existence and not its heterogeneity (mutabayin).

The graduation (tashkik) of existence
The simplicity (bisata) of existence
A logical exposition of the proof of the highly veracious

Indeed [concrete] existence, as explained earlier, is a one (wahidah) and simple (basitah) tangible reality, whose extensions (afrad) have no difference, save in perfection and imperfection, strength and weakness or in additional matters (umur za'idah), as is the case with the extensions of a generic essence (mahiyah naw'iyah); and the ultimate perfection of existence is when none can surpass it in completeness, and it is one that does not depend on others. And what surpasses it in completeness cannot be comprehended, for every imperfect entity depends on other than itself, and is in need of completeness; and it was also made clear earlier that completeness precedes incompleteness, actuality precedes potentiality and existence precedes non-existence. It is also clear that the completeness of a thing is the thing itself and what is in addition to itself. Hence, existence is either independent of other than itself, or essentially dependent on other than itself. The former among these two is the Necessary Being and Sheer Existence, whom nothing surpasses in completeness, nor does any kind of nullity and imperfection stain Him; and the latter are all existents other than Him, such as His Acts and Effects, and there is no support for other than Him save by Him.⁴²

Hence, a summary of the above-mentioned proof of the highly veracious is as follows:

According to the fundamentality of existence,

Premise 1: because concrete existence is fundamental and real,

Premise 2: and because it is one (wahid) not heterogenous (mutabayin)

Premise 3: and because it has graduated unity (wahdah tashkikiyya) and not individual [hypostatic] unity (wahdah shakhsiyya)

Premise 4: and because of its simplicity (bisata), and the fact that its plurality reverts to its unity, meaning that all the pluralities and distinctions revert to existence (this exposition in reality portrays the very spirit of the graduation of existence, even though it is discussed in a different context from that of graduation)

Conclusion: hence, we say that every entity is either Necessary or reliant upon a Necessary Being. If it were sheer existence and possessed the highest degree (of existence) and no imperfection could be comprehended for it, meaning that it did not depend on other than itself, it would then be Necessary; however, if it was not sheer existence, but imperfect, it would essentially depend on sheer existence.

Mulla Sadra then mentions a short reminder that depicts the essence of the proof of the highly veracious (which says) that the reality of existence is the very Necessary Being, in order to establish a basis for proving the Oneness of God and other Attributes of His Essence and Beautiful Names, for by means of the proof of the highly veracious, not only can the Necessary Being itself be proved, His Unity and other Attributes too can be established.

In this short reminder in the Asfar, Mulla Sadra says:

The light of truth has dawned on the horizon of this exposition (the proof of the highly veracious) which has pricked up your ears....That is that sheer existence that is not attributed to deficiency and inability, due to its simplicity (for save existence, there is nothing to add to existence and necessitate its composition), neither depends on an existential support, nor possesses an essential definition (muhaddad mahuwi). Hence, that reality is the very Necessary Being that possesses the highest degree of perfection, the intensity of which has no end.

Every degree [of existence] other than that highest degree is not sheer existence, since it is a nonentity; and existence in its sheer-ness has no shortcoming or deficiency; rather, whenever it is an effect (ma'lul) and 'unknown' (majhul), it is imperfect and inadequate. Imperfection and inadequacy are the essentials of the secondary stages of existence, and not the essentials of existence [in the absolute sense].⁴³

This is where the logical exposition of the proof of the highly veracious on establishing the existence of the Necessary Being ends.

2. God's oneness is not numerical

Imperfection and inadequacy are the essential [properties] of the secondary stages of existence and not essential to existence itself. The meaning of 'secondary stages' does not mean the existents that reside in the second stage of existence. Rather 'secondary' here stands for 'that which is not the first,' even though it may be in the third or fourth stage of existence. The Almighty Necessary Being Who is the First Absolutely Absolute is Sheer Existence and free from imperfection and not possessive of any essential definition. He is not made and created, and nothing more complete than Him can be assumed. An imperfect and poor entity is the result of effusion (ifṣāḥ) and concoction (ja'l).⁴⁴

The important issue that can be concluded from the above extract, is that the word "first" that is used for the Necessary Being, does not mean that He possesses 'a second,' for He is that first whose second is the very first. Hence a series of numbers such as first and second is out of the question. Number is a distinction of the world of contingency and is found in the lower stage of effusion (fayd).

3. Proving the oneness of the necessary being

Indeed the existence of a Necessary Being has been proven by this demonstration, and by it, His Unity is also established, since existence is a one reality which imperfection cannot overcome, due to its nature and essence, and no multiplicity can be conceived in his Infinity.⁴⁵

In reality, Mulla Sadra derives the Oneness of the Necessary Being from the essence of the 'proof of the highly veracious', since it was established that the Exalted Necessary Being is Sheer Existence and Utter reality, and not the existence that is admixed with imperfection and need, and also because of the fact that 'a thing in itself' cannot be replicated'.

Since the Necessary Being is Infinite, and that which is so, cannot allow any alterity to stand besides it, there is no room for assuming multiplicity. It is possible for an entity to be pure and Infinite, the necessity of which would be the sheer-ness of infinity; that is, not only does it not possess a partner, rather there exists no alterity beyond Himself, since He is Infinite and there is no room for another entity to occupy. If another being is taken into consideration, it means that both of the beings are limited, and none of them is necessary.

Obviously, the effusions (fuyudat) also, that exist in the universe, would not be other than God; rather, they are His manifestations and signs and the facet of the degrees of that Sacred Entity.

Divine attributes in the Transcendent Philosophy

1. Universal discussions pertaining to divine attributes

The discussion on Divine Attributes in the sadraian philosophy is of two kinds: (1) a discussion on universals (kulliyat), and (2) a discussion on particulars (juz'iyat).⁴⁶

As is the case with universal divinalia, where at the onset, a series of complete and all-inclusive discussions that form the primary issues are propounded, the discussion on the attributes of the Necessary being, likewise is preceded with similar discussions. That is, first, universal issues related to the subject such as the attribute (sifah) and its difference from the name (ism), and the distinction of each from the Essence, the division of attributes into positive (thubuti) and negative (salbi), essential (dhati) and active (fi'li) and intellectual ('aqli) and sensory (hissi), the relation of the attribute with the Essence, the correlation of attributes with one another, and their reversion to a single attribute and vice versa, and the judgment of the reversion. Then, specific Divine attributes would be discussed.

2. Classifications of the attribute

Mulla Sadra says in the Asfar:

An attribute is either positive (iajbiyyah) or negative (salbiyyah) and sacred (taqdisiyyah)...God in the Holy Qur'an is qualified as 'the Possessor of Majesty and Splendor'⁴⁷ (dhi l-jalal wa l-ikram) meaning that the most sacred Divine Essence is more exalted than to be like others, and in having the attributes of Beauty and Perfection, possesses Splendor (karama).⁴⁸

The verse ('None is as His Likeness'⁴⁹) is inclusive of all the negative and majestic attributes of Almighty God, and [also] embraces all the positive and beautiful attributes of Almighty God... 'And Allah's are the most beautiful Names.'⁵⁰

3. The negative attributes

Mulla Sadra says in the Asfar:

The first group (of Attributes) are negative and majestic, which negate deficiency and nihility, and all of the negative attributes return to one negation; and that is the negation of contingency [from His Exalted Essence].⁵¹

This is because all deficiencies and nonentities revert to contingency. This statement of Mulla Sadra clarifies three things:

That which is negated (maslub) by negative attributes is the non-existence or deficiency of the Divine Essence.

All the negations revert to one negation

That negation is the negation of contingency

What is meant by contingency, according to the rest of the philosophers, is the contingency of essence (imkan mihwi), while Mulla Sadra believes it to be 'the contingency of poverty' (imkan faqri).

The real (haqiqi) and relational (idafi) attributes, positive (thubuti) or actual (fi'li)

The second group (of attributes) are the positive attributes and the attributes of beauty, which are subdivided into 'real' and 'relational'. The real attributes are those in which 'a relation with other than His Essence' is not taken into consideration such as life and the knowledge of the Essence about Himself;

whereas, a relational (or actual) attribute is that in which a connection with 'other than the Divine Essence' is taken into consideration such as creation (khliqiyah), sustenance (riziqiyah), and so on, each of which cannot be deduced from the Essence alone; rather, in their deduction there is no option but to consider another entity together with the Essence.

Mulla Sadra in his Asfir says:

The second group is classified into 'real attributes' such as knowledge and life, and 'relational attributes' such as creation, sustenance, precedence, and causality ('illiyyah). And the source of all the real (or positive) attributes is the necessity of existence, i.e. the emphasized existence (wujud mu'akkad), whereas the source of all the relational attributes is a relational attribute which is the relational attribute of (existential) preponderance (qayyumiyyah).⁵²

4. Returning the multiplicity of the attributes to the oneness of the essence

Mulla Sadra says in the Asfar:

Verify it here in this way, so that by bringing back all the multiplicities to One, the One reality of the Necessary being would not break up, for God is loftier than that the sanctuary of His simplicity and Sheer-ness is broken by the entry of multiplicity.⁵³

5. The difference between attributes of the essence & attributes of act

Mulla Sadra in his Asfar says:

In the same way as all the real attributes of the Necessary being are a single reality, and not additional to His Essence, although the concepts (mafhumat) of the attributes are distinct, otherwise their words would be synonymous, all the relational attributes of the Necessary being likewise are a one relation and posterior to the Essence and additional to it, even through they conceptually differ from one another.⁵⁴

What Mulla Sadra meant by the above, is that the distinction of the attributes of the Essence from the attributes of act is not in unity and multiplicity, since both the source of the attributes of the Essence is one reality and the attributes of act themselves refer to a singular reality. The only distinction between them is in their unity or addition to the Essence.

6. God's Attributes are His Very Essence

Mulla Sadra in the first section (al-mashhad al-awwal), and third emanation (ishraq) of al-Shawahid al-Rububiyyah says the following on this issue:

The attributes of the Necessary Being are not additional to His Essence, but rather the existence of the Necessary Being which is the very Essence, in its reality is a manifestation of all the attributes of perfection, without necessitating multiplicity (kathra), passivity (infi'al), acceptance (qabul) and activity (fi'l) in His Essence, and the difference between His Essence and His Attributes is like the difference between existence and the essence of the entities that possess essence (meaning that the attributes are the detailed level of the Essence, in the manner that essence in contingent entities is the specification and definition of the degree of essence of the entity) save the fact that the Necessary Being has no quiddity, for He is sheer I-ness (inniyyah), from whose beginning-less source have sprung the rest of the inniyyat (I-nesses) and existents. Thus, in the manner that existence in its essence and in its reality is existent, and essence in itself and its essence is non-existent, but rather gains existence by means of

existence, likewise are the Divine attributes and names which in themselves and in their essential meanings are non-existent, but rather, exist in the sense of the reality of simplicity (haqiqat al-ahadiyya) (which mean the absorption of the names and attributes in the (exalted) state of the Essence.⁵⁶

The seven essential attributes – ‘The Seven Leaders’

The principal attributes of God: life, knowledge, power, will, hearing and speech, are called "the seven leaders,' out of which some call the following three attributes: life, knowledge, and power, the positive attributes of the Essence, and the other three: hearing, sight, and speech, the attributes of act. Our philosopher has propounded the attribute of God's love for his creation too, both in the *Asfjr* and the *Shawjihid*.

7. Power & knowledge of the necessary being about His Essence

Mulla Sadra in his *Shawahid* says:

The power of the Necessary being is the emanation of the entities from His Essence, by sheer will, and the will that is the very Essence, and not additional to the Essence. And the knowledge of the Necessary Being about His own Essence which is this very pre-eternal consideration means the revelation of His Essence for the Essence in a manner that all the good and virtues are emanated from His Essence for His Essence (meaning that His Essence is the beginning and real source of all virtues, perfections, and excellences of existence.⁵⁷

The point that must be noted concerning Divine power is that it is infinite and embraces every contingent entity. However, the contingency of an entity does not necessitate its existence, and only those things come into being that God intends. In other words, being powerful does not mean that one can do anything. Rather, it means that one can do whatever he intends. Hence, essential impossibilities (*muhalat-i dhati*) are outside the ambit of things that His power can bring about, and the question that whether they can be created by God's power or not, is absurd. On the other hand, not all contingent entities are intended by God and come into existence. Thus, the scope of the existents and entities intended by God is narrower than that of the entities that can be created by Him.⁵⁸

8. The Knowledge of the Necessary Being about Other than Himself

Mulla Sadra in *al-Mabda' wa al-Ma'jd* classifies those who believe in the knowledge of the Necessary being about other than Himself into eight groups. ⁵⁹Among these are: the *Mu'tazila*, a group of Sufi masters, the adherents of Plato, *Shaykh al-Ishraq* [*Suhrawardi*], a group of Peripatetic philosophers such as *al-Farabi* and *Avicenna*, *Porphyry*, and so on. He then delves in criticizing their views, and introduces their method as incomplete. Thereafter he starts expounding his own opinion and says:

The evidence that the Almighty Necessary Being has knowledge of His Essence, necessitates that He also has knowledge of all the existents of the Universe, for His Essence is the necessitating cause (*'illah mujibah*) of every thing and the origin of every comprehension, be it intellectual or sensory; and (it) is (also) the source of the manifestation of every entity, be it mental or external. And all of them, directly or through mediation are emanated from Him; and the complete knowledge of the necessitating cause necessitates complete knowledge of the effect of the said cause, and this necessitates that the Almighty Necessary Being knows all the existents, and the Holy Qur'an says: 'Doesn't that Who created Know, while He is the All-Subtle and All-Aware. ⁶⁰ It says that does not the Creator have knowledge? This

means that He is the cause of the effects and at the same time a being who is All-Subtle, i.e. non-corporeal (mujarrad), and All-Aware, i.e. 'He has knowledge of His Essence'.⁶¹

He continues saying:

Know that as His perfection in causing things is due to the completeness of His existence and the intensity of possession in a manner that all the existents and good emanate from him, and not in attributing the entities to Him and His relation to them; that is, this relative meaning is not meant, for this is posterior to the degree of His existence, magnificence, and sublimity; rather the ultimate end behind the bestowal of grace and causation is His very Sacred Essence; and He is Needless of other than Himself; likewise, His perfection in His knowledge is not merely in that the essences of things or their forms are in His presence, so that if their essences and intellectual forms were not in the degree of His Essence, but rather, posterior to His Essence, which is the case in reality, it would necessitate His lack of perfection in a degree posterior to His Essence, and thereby necessitate that He would gain perfection by means of other than Himself, after being imperfect in His Essence, highly exalted is Allah from that.⁶²

9. The Life of the Necessary Being

Having proven the knowledge and power of God, the concomitant of the two, which is life, is also established. Furthermore, it is impossible for a cause that bestows existence to lack the perfection which it bestows upon its creation.

Mulla Sadra in his *Asfar* says the following concerning the life of the Almighty Necessary Being:

The life that we possess in this world is actualized through comprehension and action. And comprehension with relation to most animals is non other than sensation. And likewise is the case with action, which is none other than spatial movement (al-tahrik al-makani), originated from an urge; and these two effects spring from two different faculties, one of which is the faculty of comprehension (mudrikah), and the other the faculty of execution (muharrikah). Therefore, whosoever possesses a faculty of comprehension more sacred to sensation, such as intellection (ta'qqul) and the like, and its action was higher than spatial movement, such as creation and the like, it would be more apposite to be referred with the name 'life'. Furthermore, if the very origin of comprehension were also to be the origin of action, without (there being) any difference (between the two), so that its very comprehension would be its action and creation, it would likewise be apposite to be referred to by this name, due to its purity from composition, for composition necessitates contingency and poverty, due to the dependence of the composite entity in its subsistence on other than itself. Contingency is an example of nihility ('adam), which is the opposite of existence, and death is the opposite of life, and extinction is the opposite of subsistence. Thus, the truly living entity is that in which no composition of faculties exist; and it has been verified that the Necessary Being is a Simple reality, single in Essence and Attribute, and the sole possessor of power and strength, and that His very comprehension of the entities is their emanation from Him, and also the meaning of Him being Singular and Simple is that he is the universal intellect and the origin of every entity. Hence he is more apposite to possess the attribute of life than every living entity. Why not, while He is the Giver of life and Bestower of Existence and perfection of existence, such as knowledge and power, to every possessor of existence, knowledge and power?⁶⁴

10. The Will of the Almighty Necessary Being

Will is used in two senses: one is to love, and the other is to decide. To love and decide to carry out one's own voluntary action is called the generative will (*irada-yi takwini*) and to love and decide that another agent performs a voluntary act is known as the legislative will (*irada-yi tashri'i*). However, the will to issue a command and establish law is the will to legislate (*irada-yi tashri'*), and not the legislative will (*irada-yi tashri'i*); and legislation itself is a generative (*takwini*) act.

For this reason, the divine generative will can be taken in two senses: one is the sense of love intended for his own voluntary acts, which is a simple pre-eternal essential attribute identical to the essence, whose relation to actions and objective entities is like essential knowledge, which is of the sacred divine essence and subordinately of His effects. Likewise, divine love basically is directed toward His own sacred essence and subordinately toward the effects of His existence in that overflow from the Divine goodness and perfection, and this is why it is known as will.⁶⁵

Mulla Sadra in section six of his *al-Mabda' wa l-Ma'ad* elucidates the above summary.

11. The Audition and Vision of the Almighty Necessary Being

God is the All-Hearing, meaning, that he has presential knowledge (*'ilm huduri*) of auditories and He is (also) All-Seeing, that is that He has presential knowledge of visibilities. And this is what "*huwa al-sami' al basir*" (He is the All-Hearing and the All-Seeing) actually means.

Mulla Sadra, after analyzing the views of Shaykh Abu l-hasan al-Ash'ari (d. 935) and Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (d. 1274) in his *Asfar and al-Mabda' wa l-Ma'ad*, and criticizing the same, establishes his view in the following manner:

The concept of audition and vision is other than the concept of knowledge; and these two are a particular kind of knowledge additional to knowledge in the absolute sense.⁶⁶

Having established that the condition of inclusion (*manj\$ al-juzi'yyat*) is either sensation, and that is impossible without a medium, or illuminative intuition (*mashhud ishraqi*) and that is not incongruous with immateriality from body and purity from matter; and it was also established that God knows all the particular entities in their particular and material qualification, out which are the auditories such as the letters, sounds, and visibilities such as the radiant and colorful bodies. Hence God's knowledge about all of these entities is illuminative (*ishraqi*) and presential (*hudhuri*); and it is an intuitive and radiant disclosure that is grasped by itself. Hence His Essence is audition and vision in this respect without any interpretation (*ta'wçl*).

Hence, if it is said that the knowledge of the Almighty Necessary Being returns to His Sight, and not that His Sight to His Absolute Knowledge, it is better and nearer to the truth, as has been said by *sahib al-ishraq* [Suhrawardi].⁶⁷

A critical comparison between the views of Aristotle and Mulla Sadra

1. Proof for the existence of God

The most important and well-known proof of Aristotle on the existence of One God, the "one" being obscure as we had noticed, is the proof of motion (*burhan al-haraka*), from which we come to know of a

prime unmoved movent. This proof possesses characteristics, which we would like to allude to here-below:

Firstly, in itself, it is not a proof of the existence of God, but rather, a proof of the existence of a metaphysical realm.

Secondly, it depends on the impossibility of infinite regress.

Thirdly, one can perceive shortcomings in some its premises, especially taking into consideration the view propounded by Modern Physics on the law of gravity in movement.

Fourthly, the Cause is understood by means of effect and other entities.

Fifthly, it rests on several premisses.

By sharp contrast, the path traversed by Mulla Sadra in proving the Necessary Being known as the proof of the highly veracious surpasses the proof of motion from various angles:

Firstly, we come to know that the exalted Creator is a Necessary Existent Being from the reality of existence.

Secondly, by contemplating over existence we have found that God is a peerless one and leaves no room for other than itself, so that a peer may be presumed for Him.

Thirdly, the rest of the attributes of God are established from the core of this very path.

Fourthly, it does not depend on the impossibility of infinite regress or a vicious circle.

Fifthly, there is no need to consider the middle term to be other than Almighty God to prove the existence of Almighty God.

Mulla Sadra in his *Asfar* and *Shawahid* explains the reasons of the superiority of the proof of the highly veracious over the other proofs of the existence of the Almighty Necessary Being, as follows:

This path that we have traversed is the firmest and most sacred of paths, for in order to know the Essence, Attributes, and Acts of the Almighty Necessary Being it is not necessary to place any other entity as the middle term (*hadd awsat*), nor does it depend on nullifying infinite regress or the vicious circle. Rather, we can know, from the reality of existence, the existence of the Necessary Being, which is (also) the reality of existence, and from, the Oneness of the Almighty Being...

From the core of this path, the signs and acts of God are also known. However, not everyone possesses a powerful aptitude to infer ample laws from the fundamental facet of unity. Hence, other ways must also be shown, although none of these paths, save this, can make the spiritual traveler (*salik*) reach the ultimate end.⁶⁸

According to the late 'Allamah Tabataba'i in his gloss on the *Asfar* on this very discussion, all of the proofs for the existence of Almighty God have an exhortative (*tanbihi*) dimension, due to the fact that the existence of the Almighty God is a pre-eternal and essential issue, and means the existence of the reality which is the border line between sophistry and philosophy.

2. The Aristotelian God is a deistic God and Mulla Sadras God is a theistic God

This is one of the most important differences of the God of Aristotle and Mulla Sadra, for deism is belief in God without accepting a religion. This belief-system holds that divine attributes are quite separate from the divine essence that is the cause of the cosmos and the cosmos itself. However, divine being does not have a direct effect on events, which in fact, leaves no room for the existence of relations between man and God. On the other hand, theism stands for belief and acceptance of religion, which is a direct relationship between human entities and the world.

3. The knowledge of the necessary being about other than Himself

Aristotle negates this issue and considers that it entails imperfection and defect in the Divine Essence. By sharp contrast, Mulla Sadra holds the contrary and presents those who believe that God's knowledge does not comprehend other than His Essence, as ignorant.

Of course, this is a subtle and difficult issue of philosophical theology that Mulla Sadra, as was seen here before, proves by means of his unique method, a summary of which is as follows:

God's knowledge about His Essence is according to His Essence, and not something else. Hence, he would also have the same essential knowledge that is according to the Essence. Thus, because His Essence Itself is the origin of the knowledge of all the entities, and by Its disclosure to Itself, all the other entities with their essences are divulged for His Essence, even though in consideration of the knowledge of the entities, they are in a degree, posterior to the Knowledge of the Essence.⁶⁹

4. Audition and vision

In Aristotelian philosophy, due to the reason that God has no knowledge of other than Himself, He is not All- Hearing or All-Seeing. However, in transcendent Philosophy God does possess knowledge of other than His Essence. God is All-Hearing (Sam'ī), which means that he has presential knowledge about auditories (masmu'it) and is All-Seeing (Basir), meaning that he has presential knowledge about visibilities (mubsirat).

However, due to the fact that Mulla Sadra,

does not consider God's Attention to that which is beyond Himself to necessitate imperfection in the Essence,

comprehends all the existents to be attributed to God,

and holds that God ardently loves His Essence;

consequently, He also loves the effects emanated from His Essence.

In fact, the love of God for His servants is at least based on four premisses, that have been established before in the transcendental Philosophy, and Mulla Sadra, based on these pre-established premisses, strengthens his view.

Mulla Sadra in his Shawahid starts his proof with the verse of the Holy Qur'an that says 'He loves them, and they love Him' and says:

The Sacred Essence of the Necessary Being is an Entity, Whose happiness and delight for His own Essence is of the highest degree of intensity. This is because in the state of Self-comprehension, He is

the greatest being who comprehends in the highest degree of comprehension, Himself, who is the most beautiful of all existents; and the knower ('alim), the known (ma'lum) and knowledge ('ilm), are the same as His Essence; also, all the three are in the highest of their levels and degrees.

In sensory beings, pleasure means the comprehension of a perfection that reaches the power of sensation on the condition that no veil exists. However, that meaning of pleasure which is apposite for the level of the Necessary Being, although pleasure in that sense is not (normally) referred to as pleasure, but rather as joy (bahjah) and sublimity ('ali').

Therefore, the Necessary Being is a superior and more exalted being who ardently loves His own essence as well as the entities other than His Essence. This love has no bounds in its intensity, for, one who is the ardent lover of another, is (also) an ardent lover of every thing related to himself, because of the (very) relation.

Earlier in the discussion of existence it was proven to you and known that the self-existence (wujud fî nafsih) of every entity that emanates from the Necessary Being and is attributed to His Essence, is the very existence and emanation from the Necessary Being, without there being any difference between the two existents.⁷⁰

The love of God's creatures for the Necessary Being is as follows:

First, the Almighty Necessary Being placed ardent love in all the entities of the universe, including the human being. The most intense degree of this ardent love is in man.

Second, since God is All-Hearing and All-Seeing and possesses knowledge of other than Himself, He comprehends the love of His servants and receives the same.

Mulla Sadra in his Shawahid says:

There is no entity but that it possesses a perfection that it seeks or volitional or natural love peculiar to itself, or a voluntary or innate desire and impulse that makes it attain the perfection when it separates from the same; and this is his share of the sacred grace, which is a mercy on it from the Lord of the pre-eternal providence.⁷¹

6. The God of Aristotle is not a Creator whereas Mulla Sadra's God is a Creator

Generally, in Greek thought, there is no discourse of creation; and Aristotle too, from the very beginning considers the world to be pre-eternal. A theology of creation is very much a product of a monotheistic temperament. Nevertheless, in the Sadrian philosophy too, both God and the universe are pre-eternal. However, the universe is a creation of God, and dependent in its entirety upon a Being who is Independent.

7. The Attributes of Act

The God of Mulla Sadra has positive and actual attributes. However, the God of Aristotle has no such attributes such as audition, vision, speech, creation, sustenance. The God of Aristotle has no knowledge of the present world, and there is no divine design or providence that unfolds in the world. Hence, in short, the God of Aristotle compared to that of Mulla Sadra is very primitive, both in the method of proving God's existence and introducing His attributes.

Conclusion

The God of Mulla Sadra, single, and merely cognizant of His essence, whereas, the is a sophisticated and rich concept. As the highest degree of existence, He is sheer existence, absolute perfection, the efficient, ultimate, and sufficient cause, the creator, God, and beloved of the inhabitants of the universe; and God's grace is pre-eternal and eternal. He is aware of all the apparent and hidden secrets of the world.

The God of Aristotle is the prime unmoved movent, the ultimate cause, sheer actuality, eternal, beautiful God of Mulla Sadra is the first existent, the complete entity, rather, more exalted than "completeness" and "perfection". He is a God who does not lack any perfection or attributes of perfection. He is an entity who is complete actuality, and is prior to every other entity, and is one and absolute, and is simple from every dimension, and is actuality from every side, and His essence is possessive of all the attributes of perfection.

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Note:

1-There is an ongoing debate about whether there really is any theology in Aristotle: is he merely a secular thinker whose discourse of 'god' or 'gods' is a certain *façon de parler*, or is he serious proto-Thomist or Avicennan thinker who mediates on such matters? See J. Barnes, *Aristotle*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999, pp. 102-4; J. Owens, *The doctrine of being in the Aristotelian metaphysics*, 3rd edition, Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies 1978, pp. 49-62.

2-Henotheism is the belief in a paramount single but not exclusive god.

3-G. Fowden, *From Empire to commonwealth. Consequences of montheism in late antiquity*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1993, pp. 5-11.

4-Movent, n. That which moves anything.. See Webster's 1828 Dictionary (Indexed Apr. 20, 1998) on the following website: http://www.christiantech.com/cgi-bin/webster.exe?search_for_cgi-in_texts_web1828=movent

5-Metaphysics 1072a 21-26; Physics 241b ff; J. Barnes, "Metaphysics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. J. Barnes, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995, pp. 104-5. For some useful discussions, see G. Verbeke, "L'argument de livre VII de la Physique," in *Naturforschung bei Aristoteles und Theophrast*, ed. I. Düring, Heidelberg 1969; H.J. Easterling, "The unmoved mover in early Aristotle," *Phronesis* 16 (1970) pp. 252-65; H.S. Lang, "God or soul: the problem of the first mover in Physics VII," *Paideia* 7 (1978) pp. 86-104; J.L. Ackrill, "Change and Aristotle's theological argument," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* suppl. 1991, pp. 57-66; H. Davidson, *Proofs for eternity, creation and the existence of God in medieval Jewish and Islamic philosophy*, New York: Oxford University Press 1987, pp. 237-40; Lloyd Gerson, *God and Greek philosophy: studies in the early history of natural theology*, London: Routledge 1991, pp. 96-120. This proof was articulated early on in Islamic philosophy by al-Kindī (d. after 866) – see al-Kindī, *Oeuvres philosophiques et scientifiques d'al-Kindī volume II: Métaphysique et cosmologie*, Leiden: Brill 1998, pp. 33-37, 97, 169; Netton, *Allah Transcendent*, Richmond: Curzon Press 1994, pp. 47-55; F. Klein-Franke, "al-Kindī," in *History of Islamic philosophy*, eds. S.H. Nasr & O. Leaman, London: Routledge 1996, I: 167-69. On a discussion of proofs from motion in Islam, see Davidson, *Proofs for eternity, creation and the existence of God*, pp. 237-84.

6-Aristotle, *Physics*, tr. R. Waterfield, London: Penguin 1996, pp. 167-231. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics 1072a-1073a*, tr. H. Tancréd-Lawson, London: Penguin 1998, pp. 373-75.

7-Aristotle, *Physics 242a 49-57*, tr. R. Waterfield, p. 168, modified. Cf. Gerson, *God and Greek philosophy*, pp. 116-17.

8-Aristotle, *Physics 258b 10-12*, tr. R. Waterfield, p. 207, modified.

9-Aristotle, *Physics 259a 6-12*, tr. R. Waterfield, p. 209, modified.

10-Cf. *Metaphysics 1049b 18-25*; J. Barnes, "Metaphysics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, pp. 94-96.

11-Mullī ʿadrij, *al-Mabda' wa l-Ma'ūd*, ed. S.J. ʿashtiyjīnī, Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy 1976, p. 11.

12-Aristotle, *Metaphysics 994a-b*, tr. H. Tancréd-Lawson, London: Penguin 1998, p. 45-7, modified.

13-For a discussion of this proof and its cognate proof in Islamic systematic theology (*kalīm*), see Davidson, *Proofs for eternity, creation and the existence of God*, pp. 117-27, 336ff, 407-8.

14-This is an Aristotelian axiom – see Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics I.3*; Smith, "Logic," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, p. 57.

15-Because infinities cannot exist in causal reality but can only be mentally-positated.

16-Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1037a 6, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, p. 209; J. Owens, *The doctrine of being in the Aristotelian metaphysics*, 3rd edition, Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies 1978, p. 171.

17-Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 993b-994a, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, pp. 44-5, modified.

18-There is, however, an Aristotelian fragment from his 'On Philosophy' reported by Simplicius that argues from the imperfect to the perfect:

In general among things where there is a better, there is also a best. Since, then, among existing things one is better than another, there is also something that is best, which will be divine.

See *Aristotelis fragmenta selecta*, ed. W.D. Ross, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1955, fr. 16; cf. Gerson, *God and Greek philosophy*, p. 91; Plato, *Phaedo* 74b-75b.

19-Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 994b, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, p. 47.

20-Davoodi, 'Aql dar mukmat-i Mashhi', Tehran: Intisharj-i Dehkhodj 1349 Sh, p. 80.

21-Cf. H. Blumenthal, "Neoplatonic elements in the *de Anima* commentaries," in *Aristotle transformed*, ed. R. Sorabji, London: Duckworth 1990, pp. 312-321 – Ed.]

22-Aristotle, *De Anima* III.5, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, London: Penguin 1986, pp. 204-5; Gerson, *God and Greek philosophy*, pp. 122-23.

23-Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1074b-1075a, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, pp. 382-83.

24-Aristotle, *Physics* 259a 6-12, tr. R. Waterfield, p. 209, modified.

25-Cf. A.C. Lloyd, "The principle that the cause is greater than the effect," *Phronesis* 21 (1976) pp. 146-56.

26-Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1071b, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, pp. 368-69. Cf. Gerson, *God and Greek philosophy*, p. 121.

27-Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1071b, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, p. 369. Cf. Gerson, *God and Greek philosophy*, pp. 124-5.

28-Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1072a, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, p. 373.

29-Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1072a, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, p. 373.

30-Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1072b, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, p. 374.

31-Cf. A.H. Armstrong, *An introduction to ancient philosophy*, London: Methuen & Co., 1947, pp. 88-9.

32-Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1072b, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, p. 374. Cf. Gerson, *God and Greek philosophy*, p. 127.

33-Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 983a 6-9, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, p. 10; J. Barnes, "Metaphysics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, pp. 102-3.

34-Aristotle, *Magna Moralia* 1208b 27-30, tr. St.G. Stock in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. J. Barnes, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1984, vol. II, p. 1913, modified.

35-Cf. Gerson, *God and Greek philosophy*, pp. 132-33.

36-Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1074a, tr. H. Tancred-Lawson, pp. 379-80. Cf. Armstrong, *Ancient philosophy*, p. 90.

37-Cf. H. Ziai, "Mulla Sadra: his life and works," in *History of Islamic philosophy*, ed. S.H. Nasr & O. Leaman, London: Routledge 1996, vol. I, pp. 635-42; John Cooper, "Mulla Sadra Shirazi," in *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, gen. ed. E. Craig, London: Routledge 1998, vol. VI, pp. 595-99. The best general study on him remains Fazlur Rahman, *The philosophy of Mulli ĩadri*, Albany: State University of New York Press 1975.

38-His magnum opus on which see, Fazlur Rahman, "al-Asfĳr al-arba'a," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* vol. II, pp. 744-47.

39-Mulli ĩadri, *Al-ĳikma al-Mutaĳliya fĳ I Asfĳr al-Arba'a*, ed. R. Luĳfĳ et al, 3rd edition, Beirut: Dir i'yi' al-turĳth al-'arabĳ 1981, vol. VI, pp. 12-14.

40-Mulli ĩadri, *Asfĳr*, vol. VI, p. 14.

41-Cf. Rahman, *The philosophy of Mulli ĩadri*, pp. 125-38.

42-Mulli ĩadri, *Asfĳr*, vol. VI, pp. 14 –15.

43-Mulli ĩadri, *Asfĳr*, vol. VI, pp. 23 –24.

44-Mulli ĩadri, *Asfĳr*, vol. VI, p. 24.

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46-Cf. Rahman, *The philosophy of Mulli ĩadri*, pp. 141ff.

47-Qurĳn al-Raĳĳmĳn [55], v. 78.

48-Mulli ĩadri, *Asfĳr*, vol. VI, p. 118.

49-Qurĳn al-Shĳri [42], v. 11.

50-Qurĳn al-Aĳrif, v. 180.

51-Mulli ĩadri, *Asfĳr*, vol. VI, p. 118.

52-Mulli ĩadri, *Asfĳr*, vol. VI, p. 119.

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54-Jawīdī ʿamīlī, *Sharḥ-i mukmat al-Mutaʿiliya*, Tehran: Intishārit-i Zahrijʿ 1996, part II of v. VI, p. 339.

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56-Mullī ʿadrij, *al-Shawḥid al-rubʿbiyya*, ed. S.J. ʿashtiyinč, Mashhad: Mashhad University Press 1967, p. 38-9. [Cf. Mullī ʿadrij, *Asfīr*, vol. VI, pp. 125-49.]

57-Mullī ʿadrij, *al-Shawḥid al-rubʿbiyya*, ed. S.J. ʿashtiyinč, Mashhad: Mashhad University Press 1967, p. 39. [Cf. Mullī ʿadrij, *Asfīr*, vol. VI, p. 149ff; Rahman, *The philosophy of Mullī ʿadrij*, pp. 167-74.]

58-Miʿbiʿī -i Yazdī, *ʿamīzesh-i Falsafa*, trs. M. Legenhausen & A. Sarvdalir as *Philosophical instructions*, Binghamton: SSIPS with Global Publications, Binghamton University 1999, p. 531.

59-Cf. Mullī ʿadrij, *Asfīr*, vol. VI, pp. 180 ff.

60-Qurʿān, *al-Mulk* [67], v.14.

61-Mullī ʿadrij, *al-Mabdaʿ wa l-Maʿid*, p. 90.

62-Mullī ʿadrij, *al-Mabdaʿ wa l-maʿid*, p. 121. Cf. Mullī ʿadrij, *Asfīr*, vol. VI, pp. 110-18.

63-i.e. non-composite

64-Mullī ʿadrij, *Asfīr*, vol. VI, p. 413.

65-Miʿbiʿī -i Yazdī, *ʿamīzesh-i Falsafa*, pp. 535-36. Cf. Mullī ʿadrij, *Asfīr*, vol. VI, pp. 334ff.

66-Mullī ʿadrij, *Asfīr*, vol. VI, pp. 421-24.

67-Mullī ʿadrij, *Asfīr*, vol. VI, p. 422-423.

68-Mullī ʿadrij, *Asfīr*, vol. VI, pp. 13-14.

69-Mullī ʿadrij, *Asfīr*, vol. VI, p. 281.

70-Mullī ʿadrij, *al-Shawḥid al-rubʿbiyya*, ed. S.J. ʿashtiyinč, Mashhad: Mashhad University Press 1967, p. 145.

71-Mullī ʿadrij, *al-Shawḥid al-rubʿbiyya*, p. 147.

Existence as a Predicate in Kant and Mulla Sadra

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Abstract

The question of "existence as a predicate" enjoys an outstanding significance from the historical and comparative point of view.

Kant, the eminent German philosopher, claimed that existence could not be a real predicate for its own subject, since existence is not a concept that could add anything to an object. According to Kant, existence in its logical sense is, merely, copula (rabit), rather than either of the terms. The copula of the proposition, on the other hand, does not indicate something that owns a real referent. Its exclusive role is, rather, to establish a nexus between the predicate and the subject.

Mulla Sadra, the great Muslim Philosopher, has acknowledged the concept of being (wujud) as an independent and predicative concept. His remarks concerning the contents of the simple proposition, i.e. "A is existent" are similar to that of Kant in some respects and different from them, in others. In so far as the content of the proposition signifies the subsistence and the realization of the subject, rather than the subsistence of something for the subject, their respective remarks are quite similar; however in so far as Mulla Sadra, on the basis of his philosophical stance, i.e. "the principality of being" demonstrates that what is principle in external reality is "existence" rather than "quiddity", he is quite different from the philosophical viewpoint of Kant. Quiddity, in his opinion, is mentally posited (itibari) i.e. either abstracted from the limits of being, or it is the manifestation of the limits of being within the mind.

A comparative study of Mulla Sadra's and Kant's views concerning existence as a predicate, or any other issue in general, without taking into account their whole systems as well as the basic principles of Mulla Sadra's ontology, will be impossible. The being that is applied by Mulla Sadra, like other Muslim philosophers -as a predicate in the existential proposition- is totally different from that of Kant. Mulla Sadra, just as his predecessors, examined the concept of being-God- and reality from an aspect wholly different from that of Kant. Accordingly, Kant and Muslim philosophers, despite their similar methods of applying the concepts in their philosophical arguments, believe in two exactly distinctive worlds. Therefore, to compare them, it is not possible to consider certain concepts such as "being" or "necessity", and ask about the soundness of either one. However, the chief aim of this paper is to carry out a comparative study of the philosophical systems of the two philosophers.

The present paper is a comparative study of Kant's denial of existence as a real predicate, on one hand, and Mulla Sadra's acknowledgement and demonstration of such predicates, on the other. Hopefully, this study will pave the ground for an inquiry into one of the most important philosophical problems, and the way for a study of the "reality of being" in Mulla Sadra's philosophy will be prepared through the demonstration of such philosophical propositions.

The study of Kant's doctrines on existence as "predicate" and comparing it with that of Mulla Sadra - who believes in the reality of philosophical concepts- who presents an account other than that of Kant, in order to prove the reality of philosophical propositions are of paramount importance. Kant, the famous German philosopher, claims that existence cannot be a real predicate for its subject; for the existence is not (such) a concept which can add something to a thing. According to Kant, and in logical terminology, existence is, in fact, only a copula of the proposition and neither of its sides. The copula of a proposition does not tell us a thing, which may have a real referent. The only task of it is to connect the predicate to the subject.

The highly respected philosopher of the Islamic world, Mulla Sadra, accepts existence as an independent and predicable concept. His words on the simple proposition "A exists" are similar to that of Kant's, in a way, and different in another way. The content of this proposition is the affirmation and realization of the subject, and not the affirmation of something for the subject; in this way, he is unanimous with

Kant; but since -relying on the primacy of existence- he proves that what has reality in the external world is existence, and not quiddity, here he differs from Kant. According to him, quiddity is a mentally-positing thing, which is either abstracted from the limits of existence or it is the manifestation of the limits of existence within the mind.

A comparative study between Mulla Sadra's point of view about predicative existence -and in general, every issue- and that of Kant would be impossible without taking their intellectual and philosophical systems into account and also disregarding Mulla Sadra's ontological doctrines. The "existence", regarded by Mulla Sadra and the other Muslim philosophers as a predicate in the "existential proposition", is totally different from what is intended by Kant. Kant deals, in effect, with the relatively empirical concepts of "existence", "reality" and "necessity". It is not surprising that, with these conceptual restraints, it is impossible to prove the necessity of the existence for God; and Kant, whilst seeking to reject the ontological argument, refers to the point that existence is not a real predicate.

Like his predecessors, Mulla Sadra has dealt with the concepts of "existence", "God" and "reality" in a totally different way to that of Kant. That is, despite interesting similarities in their methods of incorporation of concepts in arguments, Kant and Muslim philosophers, as regards their philosophical theologies, belong to two entirely different worlds. Thus, to make a comparison between them, one cannot take a particular concept such as "existence" or "necessity" and enquire as to which of them is right. What is needed is a comparative study between the intellectual systems and an accurate examination of both.

In this paper, we are to study Kant's expressions on the denial of predicative existence and those of Muslim philosophers, in a comparative way, so that we can examine one of the most important philosophical issues, and subsequently, make grounds for a study of the "reality of existence", which is the most important issue in Mulla Sadra's philosophy, through affirmation of the "existential proposition" and other philosophical propositions.

Predicative existence according to Farabi's theology and comparing him with Kant

Those who are familiar with the main texts of Islamic philosophy know that this issue has been debated since olden times by Muslim philosophers. The first founder of Islamic philosophy, Hakim Abu Nasr Farabi, has paid attention to this issue and has discussed it in some of his treatises such as "Risalah fi Masa'il e Mutafarraqqah" (Treatise on various issues).

Farabi thinks that if one looks at objects and examines the natural arrangements, from the point of view of a naturalist, he will not regard existence as a real predicate in the propositions. However, if he does not restrict himself within the framework of nature and looks at the object from an "ontological" viewpoint, he has to admit that existence is a real predicate, and every proposition whose predicate is the existence is among the most authentic propositions. Farabi's words are as follows:

And the proposition that whether "man exists" is predicative or not, is an issue debated on by the earlier and later ones. Some of them have maintained that it is a predicative one and some of them have said it is not. We think that both of them are right, in a way. For, such propositions, if looked at from the point of view of a naturalist, who scrutinizes the things, are not predicative ones, for the existence of the thing is not other than the thing itself, and the predicate should be a concept whose addition and negation from the thing is judged. In this way the proposition has not a predicate. If it is looked at from the point of view of a logician, however, it is consisted of two words, which are its two terms, and this proposition

can be affirmed or denied. In this way, thus, the proposition has a predicate. And both opinions are, in a way, right.¹

The arguments, which Farabi adduces to on behalf of the deniers of predicative existence, are totally similar to those, which are interjected in Kant's introduction in his "Critique of Pure Reason". In this regard he says:

" Being" is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing. It is merely the positing of a thing, or of certain determinations, as existing in themselves. Logically, it is merely the copula of a judgment.²

According to Kant, existence is not predicative at all. For if this was the case, it would be required to add something to the concept, when posited. The problem, here, is that we have not posited the same thing which represents our imagination, i.e. that which is posited is not equivalent with that which is in the imagination, but it has something added to it.

Then Kant gives an example: there is no discrepancy between the \$100 which exists and the \$100 which does not exist; that is conceptually there is no discrepancy between a possible \$100, i.e. the \$100 which does not exist³ at all, and the \$100 which I possess. Conceptually there is no discrepancy; for if the \$100 which I have is a real \$100 which corresponds with its concept, it cannot be different from the concept of \$100 in any case. The discrepancy between the imaginary \$100 and the real \$100 is that the imaginary \$100 has no real referent, while the real \$100 does have a real referent.

So far, there is no discrepancy between Farabi and Kant. Farabi, also, accepts that in the proposition "the man exists", the predicate of existence does not add something to the concept of man and, thus, it is not regarded as a real predicate for it: whether the man exists or not, nothing will be changed within the concept of "man"; i.e. for the imagination, there is no difference between the man who exists, in the mind, and the man who exists in the external world. The discrepancy between the subjective man and the objective man is not in their concepts; the discrepancy, in fact, lies between the concept and the referent. (In fact the predicative existence leads the study from concept to referent and its referred one).

What makes Farabi's thought distinct from that of Kant's is that the former studies the predicativity of existence, in a proposition, from two angles: one, that of natural sciences and, the other, is a metaphysical viewpoint. In Kant, however, we do not find such a distinction. According to Farabi, Man at one time, seeks to know an object and understand its natural causes, from a naturalist's point of view, and at another time, he wants to know them from a metaphysician's viewpoint and find knowledge of its existential causes. Farabi regards both viewpoints as necessary with respect to the recognition of reality.

According to the first viewpoint, the naturalist considers objects as a subject for his philosophical study only in terms of their natural reality. Then, like for Kant, according to Farabi, existence is not regarded as a real predicate for a proposition; for when we say "the man exists" we add nothing to it, and if having said this sentence we have added something to its imagination, then we are not speaking of what we had imagined of it, but, rather, we are speaking of a new thing.

In the second viewpoint, the philosopher does not confine himself to nature; he looks at nature from an extended and fundamental point of view. The question of existence is a fundamental one; the

philosopher always seeks to philosophically contemplate on existence, and pave the way to reach its solution. In this view, existence is present as a real predicate within the existential propositions, making them meaningful and providing causes for their being true.

Discrepancy between Kant and Farabi has its roots in a more important issue. What distinguishes Kant in his opposition to the Christian, Jew, and Muslim philosophical theology is that he regards "existence" as a mere empirical thing. In Kant's philosophy, we are confronted with two important empirical rules, which- if not taken into- will lead to inexcusable errors in comparative studies between Kantian and Muslim philosophers. The first: the assignment of existence to the object should be justified, based on empirical evidences; and secondly; the concepts are different, according to their empirical differences. When Kant says that existence is not a real predicate and argues that it does not add to the concept of a thing, his focus is only on the empirical discrepancies i.e. discrepancies of the sort of sense qualities or quantities which are related with the object- or its sense results. Kant's expressions- in the above-mentioned argument that the real \$100 has nothing in addition to the possible \$100- suggest our above-mentioned claim. In addition, Kant stipulates that all Man's perceptions of "existence" are based on sense experience; hence, it will be more suitable if we assume that Kant is speaking of a special sort of existence- which could be called "empirical existence". His method in crediting, determining, and distinguishing is, in effect, an empirical one.

Farabi, and subsequently, other Muslim philosophers cannot accept such an opinion. According to Farabi, the distinction between "quiddity" and "existence" is an intellectual- philosophical one. He takes existence as standing 'personality' and classifies the existents into "necessary" and "possible". According to him, the "necessary" is pure existence and the "possible" is dependent on the "necessary". If Farabi had discussed "empirical existence", Kant would certainly have been right. According to Farabi, Man is aware of his existence, but not through sense experience. He can speak of existence but not through essential sensory concepts.

Farabi, Ibn-Sina, and Mulla Sadra do not seek to prove the "empirical existence" of God. In fact, to prove the existence of God through argumentation- and even the claim that the existence of God can be proved through such argumentation-are similar to accepting that the existence of God is non-empirical and free of empirical content, and thus separate. In addition, to prove the reality of existence- whether through the philosophical method of Farabi and Ibn-Sina which leads to the sameness of existence and 'personality', or in Mulla Sadra's philosophical way which is expressed as "the primacy of existence"- is the best argument, suggesting that the cognition of existence and its accidents is out of the realm of sensation and experience.

The non- analyticity of existential propositions

Kant believes that every existential proposition- a proposition whose predicate is existence- is compositional, not analytical. Hence, since these propositions are compositional ones, their truth or falsehood are related with the external world and do not originate from (their) definitions.

According to Kant, existence is not a part of the concept of something; rather, when we say that something exists, we only posit the subject with all its predicates. Hence, if we negate the existence of something, it does not mean to negate a predicate from a certain subject; rather, we are negating, in our mind, the subject with all its predicates, thoroughly, and thus no contradiction will arise. In his Critique on Pure Reason, Kant writes: "If its existence is rejected, we reject the thing itself with all its predicates and no question of contradiction can then arise".⁴ For example if one says: "God does not

exist", he does not negate existence in order to retain its predicates such as absolute power, absolute knowledge, absolute wisdom; rather he negates all the predicates and with them, the subject.⁵ Thus claiming that "God exists", even if it may be false, does not require any contradictions. The contradiction will occur if we regard a part of a proposition as being affirmed and the other part as rejected.

According to Kant, propositions such as "God is absolute perfection", "God is Omnipotent" and "God is Omniscient" are essential necessary propositions.

That is, if we admit the existence of God, these kind of predicates and attributes will be needed, but if one rejects the subject, then none of these predicates and attributes will be required, and all of them will be negated through the negation of the subject, and thus there will be no contradiction.⁶

Mulla Sadra, also, does not regard the existential propositions as analytic ones. He believes that the predicate of "existence" has not been considered in the definition of the subject. Just as "existence" which can be predicated; of the subject, "non-existence" may also be predicated; and the one who predicates the non-existence of a quiddity, does not contradict himself.

Muslim philosophers are unanimous in that the concept of "existence" is not an analytic part of quiddity and synonymous with it. There cannot be found a [Muslim] philosopher who rejects this point. In this regard, Mulla Sadra says:

And otherwise "man" and "existence" would be synonymous, and there would be no use for the proposition "the man exists", and the contents of the propositions "the man exists" and "man is man" would be identical, and one of them could not be considered, neglecting the other...⁷

Also, in Khwajah Nasir-al-Din Tusi's Kalam we read:

If the concept of the existence was identical with the concept of man, then the opposite concept [i.e. non-existence] should not be predicated of it, and we could not say, " man is non-existence."⁸

As it is seen, these expressions are similar to those of Kant's, and both of them believe that the existential propositions are non-analytical and thus compositional. From the propositions' being compositional Kant, however, does not come to the conclusion that in these propositions, the predicate is real; though stipulating that "the predicative existence takes the discussion from the realm of the concept to the realm of reference; that is, makes the proposition compositional, ⁹ he does not regard existence as a real predicate for any quiddity or concept.

Criterion for the reality of the predicate, according to Kant

Kant has determined a criterion to discriminate distinction between the real and non-real predicates, which according to him, is a logical predicate. According to him, in order to construct a predicative proposition everything can be used as predicate; even the thing, itself, can be regarded as the predicate to construct a logical proposition, such as "man is man"; in the real predicates, however, this is not the case; for a predicate can be a real predicate for its subject only when it adds something to the subject and enlarges it in a way.

But a determining predicate is a predicate, which is added to the concept of the subject and enlarges it.¹⁰

Thus, the real predicate is only the predicate, which is not considered in the nature of the subject, but is, perfectly, an added predicate. Therefore, there is an objectivity and reality for the predicate, other than the realization of the subject. For example, when it is said, "a certain body is white", bodyness has a reality other than that of whiteness; the former is a substance and the latter is an accident. In the proposition "A exists", however, the predicate and the subject are not two separate concepts. They are, in fact, two concepts with a common external individuation and determination.

According to Kant, this is not specific possible things. In all things, God or otherwise, when the of an object is interjected, the relation between the subject and the predicate should not be regarded as an analytical or additive relationship.

Kant believes the "existence" is not a predicate by way of adherence, and it is not a special thing, which is able to add to something else and enlarge it; this is, however, among the primary principles of Islamic philosophy. Under the headings "the simplicity of existence" and "addition of existence on to quiddity" Mulla Sadra has discussed these issues in detail.¹¹ According to him, existence is the simple reality; by simplicity of reality, it is meant that no additive is admitted in it. The thing, in which no additive is admitted, has no limit, and since there is no limit, there is no quiddity with- which is the limit or of things. He does not deem existence as a kind of quiddity: he believes that existence is not a quiddity among quiddities, but is essentially, a substance, rather than an accident.

Although he does not regard the predicate of existence, as an additive one, Mulla Sadra is not in agreement with Kant. He considers existence neither as an analytic part of the subject nor as a predicate by way of adherence; he has accepted, however, 'predicative existence' and takes it as one of the most important doctrines in his philosophy.

In general, according to Mulla Sadra the predicate is not restricted to the predicate by way of adherence. For him, the predicate is classified under the "predicate by way of adherence"(bil zamimah) and "predicate by way of intimacy"(bil samimah).¹² In the "predicate by way of adherence", when it is said, "a certain body is white" bodyness has a reality other than that of whiteness. In the "predicate by way of intimacy", by which the abstract predicate is meant, however, when it is said, for example, "man is possible", one can suggest that the possibility is neither among the man's essential attributes- leading- the proposition to an analytic one- nor has it a reality other than that of the man- so that it can be regarded as a predicate by way of adherence; but it is a predicate, which is abstracted from Man's interior and predicated of it. That is, since the existence and non-existence are equally related with Man's essence and the possibility has no meaning other than this equality i.e. with regards to the negation of the necessity of existence and non-existence, then it, itself, is an origin for abstracting the predicate. Therefore the possible predicate is an abstract predicate and the intended proposition is an abstract and analytical proposition.

According to Mulla Sadra, the objective attributes- whether abstract or additive- exist both in and out of the mind, their modes of existence, however, vary. As a result, three kinds of attributes and, thus, three kinds of concept can be identified: (i) the additive attributes, which are included in the primary intelligibles, though Mulla Sadra does not use these terms; (ii) the abstract attributes which include philosophical concepts such as necessity and possibility, and (iii) consists of the logical concepts or the secondary intelligibles, in their particular application.

If we are to identify the class of the predicates, according to the primacy of existence of the existential propositions- they could not be regarded as amongst the class of the extracted predicates, as well. For example when it is said "the man exists", we cannot say that the predicate is extracted from the subject, since according to the primacy of existence, we should say that the subject is a mentally-positing thing and it is the predicate which is the original and the origin of the abstraction. Thus, it should be said that in Mulla Sadra's philosophy, where the quiddity is the subject of the proposition and the existence is its predicate, we come to a fourth kind of predicate which is neither an isagogical predicate of existence, nor predicate by way of adherence and nor an extracted one. In such propositions, the predicate suggests original existence and the existential relations and also the imperfections and non-existential things, and it is not an indicator of a particular quiddity.

The contents of the existential propositions according to Kant and Mulla Sadra

Mulla Sadra's expressions on the contents of existential propositions are, in a way, similar to those of Kant; and in some ways, it is different from them. Mulla Sadra maintains a difference between the simple proposition "the man exists" and the other propositions. In this proposition, according to him, what is important is the affirmation and the realization of the subject and not the affirmation of a thing for the subject; that is, in this proposition, the predicate i.e. the existence and the subject (i.e. the object) are externally realized through the same existence. In the other propositions, such as "the object is white", however, the whiteness has an accidental existence and the object has a substantial existence.¹³

In opposition to Bahmanyar- who does not make a distinction between "existence" and "quiddity" on the one hand, and "accidents" and their "subjects" on the other hand- Mulla Sadra explicitly says:

Verily the relation between existence and quiddity is not same as relation between accidents and their subjects. Existence and quiddity are externally, as well as mentally, the same; therefore, there is no receptacle and no received one involved. Unless we consider, in our mind, two concepts for the existent: the existence and the quiddity, in this way, they are more similar to the matter and form, rather than the subject and the accident. The mechanism of this qualification is as follows: reason considers quiddity and abstracts it from all existences and even from this consideration, since this consideration itself is a mode of existence, then it describes it by means of the existence through which this quiddity exists.¹⁴

It is not only Mulla Sadra who expresses these issues. Ibn-Sina also admits this same thing. After proving his own opinion, Mulla Sadra recurses to an expression of Ibn-Sina and says:

Among the things which confirms that the simple existential proposition "Zayd exists" is intended only to suggest Zayd's existence and not existence of something for Zayd (as it is stipulated by some researchers), is Ibn-Sina's expressions in some of his books: "the existence which can be maintained for the object is same its existness, and not, say, whiteness in the white object, since the whiteness does not suffice to an object's being white." That is, for the truth of the predication of any predicate (other than the existence) of the object, we have to have an essential concept for the predicate, and it should have an existence in the subject, even its essential existence may be same as its existence for the object. Therefore, here, three things are involved: The existence of the subject, the concept of the predicate, and a copulative existence between the two. In our expression "the object exists", however, the object and the existence suffice, and there is no need to the third thing.¹⁵

As we have already said, Kant agrees with the opinion of Muslim philosophers that "existence is same as the realization of the thing". According to him "existence is not a concept which can add something to the thing". This led him to say that the proposition "A exists", since its predicate is existence, is not a real proposition which makes us aware of a certain reality; but it is only in the form of a proposition and not its reality; and, in addition, it is a form which cannot be matched with a certain reality...

The nature and possibility of the existential propositions

According to Muslim philosophers, the nature of "existential propositions" is other than the objective reality of these propositions, in the external world. In the external world, the objective reality of these propositions is, in fact, the affirmation of the object. This reality, when it is reflected in the mind, however, is reflected as the simple existential proposition, which consists, at least, of two concepts: nominal and independent. One of them which is usually expressed in terms of a subject is an essential concept and can be regarded as a conceptual frame in which the external thing is suggested. And the other, which is expressed in the terms of a predicate, is the concept of the "existent" which is among the philosophical secondary intelligibles, and suggests the realization of the referent of the thing. In this way, two different concepts are derived from the same objective reality; each of them has its own characteristics.

Like every other proposition, the existential propositions also consist of two parts: subject and predicate. The subject and the predicate are imagined only to suggest that which is beyond them. By the imagination of a particular thing or a universal concept, their corresponding realization is not meant. The representativeness of the imagination will turn to actuality only when it is turned to a proposition, including the statement and representing the belief in its contents. For example, the concept of "man" does not suggest the realization of the man; only when it is combined with the concept of existence and when their identical relation turns them into a posited knowledge, will it actually indicate the external world; that is, the proposition "the man exists" can be regarded as a proposition, suggesting the external world. Even simple knowledge by presence (such as intuition the thinking), which is in no way combined, once they are reflected in the mind, at least two concepts can be derived: one, the essential concept of the "thought" and the other, the philosophical concept of "the existence", which, via their combination we are led to the proposition "thought exists" and sometimes, through adding some other concepts, it turns to "I think" or "I have a power of thinking".

Unlike Muslim philosophers, Kant regards existence, logically, merely as a copula between the subject and the predicate, in the proposition. Thus, he believes that if we ascribe the existence to a subject- whatever it may be- and say that "something exists", we have only ascribed its objective reality to its imaginary concept. This relation between the objective reality and imaginary concept is the same thing, which is derived from the term "is". For example, in the proposition "God is Omniscient" the term "is" is neither in the side of the subject, nor is it on the side of the predicate. The only use of the term "is" is the ascription of the predicate of "being omniscient" to the subject of "God", and makes "being omniscient" which is among the attributes of God realized for him. If we regard the subject- God- with all its attributes, including "being omniscient" as being realized, and say that "God exists" or "there is a God for the universe", we have regarded, in fact, a reality which is attributed with all the attributes of perfection, as a referent for our own mental concept, i.e. "God"; and here by "existence" it is meant that this objective referent is related (corresponds) with this mental concept.

The equality maintained between the concept and referent by Kant, from which he concluded that the term "is" in this equality is, in fact, a relation between two sides- while being in none of them- is the

same as the equality maintained by Ibn-Sina's disciple, Bahmanyar, i.e. between the abstract concept of existence and the subject of the proposition, leading him to a conclusion completely different from that of Kant. According to Bahmanyar, the truth of the proposition "A exists" is conditioned to the realization of, at least, one referent for "A".¹⁶ The proposition "the man exists" is true, since there are some referents for man. The proposition "Socrates exists" is true if and only if there is a referent for Socrates; that is, if, and only if, Socrates" correlates with something.

The discrepancy between Bahmanyar's viewpoint and that of Kant should be looked for, in the ontological interpretation of the real referent of the concept of existence. Both Kant and Bahmanyar maintain a real referent for the existent; according to his own existential doctrine, inherited from Farabi and Ibn-Sina, however, Bahmanyar proves that what is externally real is either necessary or possible; while Kant restricts himself to a particular kind of reality which can be called "empirical reality".

What Bahmanyar says on existence, is noted by Khwajah Nasir-al-Din Tusi, the mediated disciple of Bahmanyar, at the beginning of his fourth Namat of Ibn-Sina's Isharat.¹⁷ Evidently, Mulla Sadra's critique on Bahmanyar's argument holds for Khwajah Nasir's demonstration to prove the accidentality of the concept of the existence, as well.¹⁸ Though accepting the gradation of the concept of existence, that is accepting that the concept of the existence applies gradationally on the referents, Mulla Sadra does not accept that the graded concepts supervene on their referents.

Relying on the primacy of existence, Mulla Sadra proves that what is externally real is the objective reality of existence i.e. the concept taken by Kant as the original side of the equality cannot be other than the real existence of the concept which is same as the predicative existence. Therefore, Mulla Sadra claims that, when we take the concept, according to Kant's equality, as the referent and construct a proposition in which the "referent" is regarded as the subject, the "imaginary concept" as the predicate and "is" as the copula, the "real referent" and the "essential individual" of the thing are nothing but the objective reality of existence. He says:

Whenever it is said that a concept, e.g. man, has reality, or is existent, by this it is meant that in the external world, there is something on which this concept can be predicated, and it is said to be man. It is the case for the horse, heaven, water, fire and other concepts, which have external individuals as well; and those concepts can be predicated on these individuals. And by the fact that these concepts are realized or have reality, it is meant that these concepts are, essentially, and not accidentally, true for something...

This is also the case for the concept of reality and the concept of existence; these concepts are, certainly, the concepts, which can be predicated on something, so that one may say: this is the reality and this is the existence; that is, these two concepts should be essentially true for something...therefore the existence requires a referent in the external world on which this title can be essentially and commonly predicated, and what is a referent for a concept in the external world is the individual of that concept, and this concept is realized in it. Then it is affirmed that there is, regardless of the reason and the mind, an individual, who has the objective and external form, for the concept of the existence...¹⁹

According to Mulla Sadra's understanding of existence, one cannot, like Kant, claim that the existent has no primary and essential referent, in the external world; the "primacy of existence" suggests that what is externally real is the existence and not quiddity; and quiddity, according to two different interpretations of the primacy of existence is either abstracted from the limits of the existence or it is the manifestation of the limits of existence, in the mind.

This expression is not restricted to Mulla Sadra; in Ibn-Sina's philosophy also we can maintain an acquired meaning for the "existential proposition" and take the existent as implying "existence"; it should be taken into account that Mulla Sadra considers the "essence of existence" as the referent of the "existent" and thus believes in the mentally-posedness of quiddity. Ibn-Sina, however, classifies the existent under the "necessary" and "possible". The existence of the "possible" depends on other than itself, and the "necessary" grants existence to the possible. On the subject of the necessary, it is said that, "the Truth has not quiddity". Thus, both Ibn-Sina and Mulla Sadra accept that quiddity, devoid of existence, cannot be called the real referent of the "existent"; in both cases, whether the referent means the existent quiddity or the essence of existence, the real existence is taken in the referent.

It is exactly because of such an approach that Muslim philosophers, unlike Kant and the like who deny the "predicative existence", regard the concept of "existence" as an independent and predicable concept.

The discrepancy between Kant and Muslim philosophers cannot be regarded as restricted to a logical-conceptual issue, and thus one cannot conclude that "existence" adds nothing to "quiddity", and hence, it (the existence) has no nominal meaning and cannot be taken as the subject or the predicate of the proposition. The reason that Kant has not considered "existence" as a real predicate, and the simple existential propositions as propositions, is arises from confusion between the concept and referent; that is, the logical statements which hold true in the domain of concepts are generalized to the domain of objective realities. As we have said, if Kant intends to say that the predicate indicates only the realization of the subject in the simple proposition, this is an accepted opinion; on the other hand if he means that the simple existential propositions are not proposition at all, this is of course an unreasonable expression. The root of this false imagination is that he thinks every proposition must be a referent of the "realization of something for a thing", and since the existential propositions imply the "realization of the thing", then they are not propositions.

Our predecessors also were confronted with this problem and each have found a solution for it. Finally, Mulla Sadra, according to the "primacy of existence", has divided the propositions and said that it is not a necessary condition that the proposition suggests always "the realization of something for a thing", but it should be noted that propositions are of two kinds: the divisible proposition and indivisible proposition; the former suggests "the realization of something for the thing" and thus it is covered in the principle of presupposition, and the content of the latter is "the realization of the thing", and it is not included in the principle of presupposition.²⁰

The principle of presupposition holds when it makes "something" realized for "some other thing". In the indivisible propositions, in which the predicate of the proposition is the existent, "nothing" is realized for the "other thing". These kinds of propositions realize only the thing in the external world.

The principle of presupposition holds in two places: in the mind and in the external world. When Mulla Sadra says, "existence is the realization of the thing" he means that in the external world, existence is not something added to quiddity so that it may be included in the principle of presupposition. This is why it is said that "predicative existence" does not describe a quality of the subject, and it is not as predicate by way of adherence, but it is only an indicator of the realization, objectivity and externality of the subject.

Kant's point of view is similar to the doctrine of Mulla Sadra that regards the "realization of the thing" as the content of the simple "whether-ness". These two opinions can be regarded in a loose way as being

close. The point that Mulla Sadra like other Muslim philosophers has taken into account, and of which Kant is unaware, is that Mulla Sadra believes that the existence in the external world is not an added thing to the quiddity; in the mind, (that is, in an intellectual analysis), however, it is supervened onto the quiddity:

By the addition of existence on the quiddity, we do not mean an addition in the external world, because the researcher philosophers as well as those who believe in addition of the existence on the quiddity did not maintain that this addition appears in the external world. They maintained that this addition occurs in the mind, through contemplation and with pain... externally, the existence and the quiddity are the same, in the mind, however, the existent and the quiddity are different.²¹

The mechanism of the occurrence of the existence on the quiddity and the qualification of the quiddity with the existence

Just like other Muslim philosophers, Mulla Sadra believes that in the existential proposition there is no consistency between the qualification of the quiddity with the existence and the Occurrence of the existence on the quiddity: qualification is an external issue, and Occurrence is a mental issue. If there is not a quiddity, which is realized in the mind, that is if the quiddity is not imagined in an intellectual analysis, the existence is not possible to supervene onto it.

As far, we have not describe the mechanism of the qualification of the quiddity with the existence in the mind, taking the Occurrence of the existence on the quiddity into account; this mind itself is a mode of the modes of existence in the world of the fact-itself... and this is because of the cause that every attributed and every supervened on which something is supervened, should have a level of the existence.²²

This statement of Mulla Sadra is not restricted to the existential proposition. In all philosophical propositions, whose predicates are the secondary philosophical intelligibles, the container of the qualification is other than that of Occurrence. That is, the Occurrence of the philosophical secondary intelligible, on the subject, is conditioned to the realization of the subject, in the mind; and the predicate supervenes on the subject in the mind-even if the subject is attributed with the predicate in the external world, and it is in the external world where the subject is attributed with the predicate. For example, in propositions such as "the man is possible" or "the man is caused", the qualification of the man to the "possibility" or "causedness" will not be an external qualification unless "the man" exists externally; and the "possibility" or "causedness" will not supervene on the man unless he is realized in the mind. This does not require the realization of the realizing things, i.e. the "possibility" or the "causedness" in the external world. For the possibility of the qualification, only the realized thing, i.e. man must exist, and not the realizing thing, which is the attribute, is needed.

In Asfar, Mulla Sadra says:

Qualification of the thing with an attribute does not suggest that, that attribute has an independent existence; but it implies that the attributed thing exists.²³

Hence, Mulla Sadra believes in two kinds of composition: composition by way of unification and composition by way of annexation. Like all the philosophical propositions, the existential propositions suggest the "realization of the thing" and this is a composition by way of unification, and it is not consistent with the composition by way of annexation and what is suggested by the principle of

presupposition (the realization of something for a thing). The term "is" which is employed in composition by way of unification and suggests the judicial identitive relation, is other than the copula between the two sides in composition by way of annexation.

Kant has confused the judicial identitive relation with the copulative relation, which is the existence of the copula, or at least, he has not made a distinction between them. The relation is, however, other than identity, in the same way that the proposition is other than the statement:²⁴ the existence is, in fact, a copula between the subject and the predicate of the proposition. The judicial identitive relation is the relation, which suggests only the identity of the subject and the predicate. The identity declared through these judicial relations is the main cause and the true criterion of the predication in all-predicative propositions, whether the propositions are of the kind of indivisible predicative propositions or they are divisible ones. In the indivisible predicative propositions, this identity is a real one and in the divisible ones, it is mentally-positated.

Hence, the discrepancy between the existence of the copula and the judicial relation can be described as follows: in divisible predication- which suggests the existence of the copula- the relation neither suggests the existence of the realizing thing nor does it imply the existence of the realized thing directly; and this is a relation which indicates only the belong-ness and dependence of the realizing thing to the realized one. In the divisible proposition- in which the contents of the existence are predicative-the thing which is real, is the same predication and identity which should be realized in all predicated things, commonly, and it indicates the existential identity of the reality of existence and predicate, in the external world.

Thus if we assume a composition for the subject and the predicate of the proposition, this composition cannot be the same in all conditions, since the composition which is made between the quiddity and the existence, is a composition by way of unification, and out of the mind the existence has nothing other than the quiddity. The composition of the accidents with their subjects, however, cannot be regarded as a composition of unification; for even if this is established, due to the predication, a sort of "identity" between the subject and the predicate-it is still not a real relation between them.

Concerning Mulla Sadra's view on the relation between quiddity and existence and the mechanism of the qualification of the quiddity with existence it is different to Ibn-Sina's. According to the doctrine of the primacy of existence, though not entirely rejecting the reality of the "qualification" outside mind and accepting that the "qualification" occurs in the external world for the existence, he says that the external qualification goes in an opposite direction; for instance, when it is said "the man is existent", unlike what it may seem, the existent is not the predicate of the proposition, but it is the subject. The correct form of the proposition, then, is as follows: "the existent is the man"; that is, the "absolute existent" or the "reality of the existence" is determined through particular human determination. Therefore, in the propositions in which the reality and the existence of things and their perfect being are reported, "the reality", "the existent" or "the existence" are, according to the primacy of existence, the real subjects of the propositions, and hence, predicating the concepts of the "existent" or "the existent" of them is, in fact, in opposite direction of predication; that is, instead of the quiddity's being attributed with existence, it is the existence which is attributed with the quiddity. Therefore, even if in the domain of the concepts, and in an intellectual analysis, the existence is an accident which supervenes on the quiddity and onto the quiddity is a receptacle for the accident, in the external world, the existence is not an accident; on the contrary, it is a real thing and the quiddities are nothing but the determinations, limitations or modes of the single reality of existence.

Notes:

1-Farabi, Abu Nasr, the collection of philosophical treatises of Farabi, Risalah fi Masa'il al- Mutafarraqah, Heydarabad Dakan, 1345(A.H, lunar), p. 9.

2-Immanuel Kant, Critic of Pure Reason, Norman Kept Smith, tr., (London, Macmillan Press, 1973), p. 504, A598/B625.

3-Ibid. p.505, A599/B627.

4-Ibid. p.502, A595/B623.

5-Ibid. p.501, A594/p.622.

6-Smith, K., p. 502/1985.

7-Quoted in Sadr al-Din Muhammad Shirazi, al-Masha'ir, Tehran, Tahoori Publication, 1363 A.H. al-Fatihah, al-Mash'ar al-Khamis, p.29.

8-Muhaqqiq Tusi, Tajrid al-l'teqad, al-Mas'alah al-Thalithah fi innal Wujud Za'id 'alal Mahiyyat, p.7, (the third question on the existence supervened on the quiddities).

9-Kant, ibid. p.505, A599/B627.

10-Ibid. P. 504, A598/B626.

11-Sadr al-Din Muhammad Shirazi, al-Shawahid al-Rububiyah, Tehran, University publication center, 1360 A.H. al- Mashhad al-Awwal, al-Shahid al-Awwal, al- Ishraq al- thani wa sadis, p. 6&8; al- Masha'ir, as no. 7, al- Mash'ar al-Awwal, p.7.

12-Al- Shawahid al-Rububiyah, al-Mashhad al-Awwal, al-Ishraq al-Sadis, p.9.

13-Ibid. p.10.

14-Ibid. p.9.

15-Ibid. p.12.

16-Bahmanyar, al-Tahsil, edition introduction and research M. Mutahhari, Tehran University, pp.272, 286.

17-Ibn-Sina, al-Isharat wal Tanbihat, Book Publication Office, vol. 3, p.2.

18-Al- Shawahid al- Rububiyah, al- Mashhad al-Awwal, al-Shahid al-Awwal, al-Ishraq al-'Ashir, p.17.

19-Al-Masha'ir, al-Fatihah, al-Mash'ar al-Thalith, al-Shahid al-Awwal, pp. 10-11.

20-Sadr al-Din Muhammad Shirazi, *al-Asfar al-Arba'a*, vol. 1, pp.43-44; *al-Masha'ir*, p.27; also see Mulla Muhsin Fayd Kashani, *Usul al-Ma'arif*, p.6.

21-*Al-Masha'ir*, *al-Mash'ar al-Khamis*, pp. 29, 31.

22-*Al-Masha'ir*, *al-Mash'ar al-Khamis*, p. 30.

23-*Al-Asfar al-Arba'a*, vol. 1, p. 414.

24-A statement is a simple sentence, which suggests one's belief in the identity of the subject and predicate. What is stated in a statement is judicial identitive relation. A statement, which is the act of the soul, will not be realized unless there is such a relation.

Some notes on Independent Intellectual Perceptions (*mustaqillit –i 'aqliyyeh*) in Islamic law and theology

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Abstract

One of the most controversial and subtle issues of Islamic thought pertains to the link between intellectual judgment and the Divine Law. Can intellectual judgment reveal the Divine law or not? This issue has a venerable genealogy tracing back to early Greek speculations and attempts to demonstrate ethical laws in a logical manner. Later, European and Muslim scholars continued these attempts but in different ways. Among the well-known Western philosophers who struggled on this path, Spinoza's name comes to the light. His *Ethics* is an expression of such a struggle. In the Islamic world, perhaps the zenith of this struggle can be found in the Shi'ite school of Islamic thought that believed in the complete harmony between intellectual comprehension of good and evil and the Divine moral law. Various schools of Islamic thought, however, have differed either completely or partially in this determining and instructive issue. The proponents defined the truth of the matter through a logical demonstration of the syllogism, whose propositions after being intellectually established, can prove the 'good' or 'evil' of a specific entity or action. Some, like the Ash'arites, completely opposed this method of reasoning and contended that there is nothing like the essential goodness or evil of a thing for the intellect to judge. They also disapproved of the essential and necessary correlation between intellectual judgment and Divine law. Others, like the Maturidites, whose opinions are considered as moderate by some scholars, only believed in the minor proposition (*Sughra*) of the syllogism that the proponents of 'the revelation of the Divine law by the intellect' expound. They believed in the essential goodness or evil of things, but disapprove of the intrinsic necessity between intellectual judgment and Divine law.

Introduction

The subject of this brief study is 'independent intellectual perceptions' (*mustaqillat-i 'aqliyyeh*) in Islamic legal and moral philosophies. This discussion in Islamic law has an important bearing upon our understanding of natural and moral laws in later European philosophy.

Many ancient thinkers held that there were some principles and values of the Law, which were universal and equally observable in all societies. These Platonists had complete faith in the real and intelligible nature of ethics (*akhlaq*). Moral law had an ontological foundation for them.

One of the great innovations of Socrates was his effort in proving the logical nature of the origins of ethics without relying upon faith-based arguments. Socrates believed that wherever it is possible, one ought to harmonize the principles of ethics by presenting them in a rational and logical manner so that everyone may follow them by the sheer judgment of the intellect, without belief in metaphysical entities and their authority.¹

This, however, does not mean that Socrates did not believe in the Necessary Being or in revelation. Rather, this step was an attempt at returning ethics and sublime humanistic values to Greek society.

The central claim of these Platonizing philosophers is that ethical shortcomings and commission of crimes and consequently bad deeds stem from improper understanding of the propositions; were the people to understand the realities of things, they would not commit ethical mistakes. In short, these philosophers consider cognition to be the source of all (ethical) virtues and states of piety. Plato, in his *Theaetetus*, ventured to cover this profound and abstruse discussion, and has dealt with it in particular depth and readiness of mind.² We must point out here that this group of philosophers did not believe in the (constitutional) authority of the intellect per se. Rather, they held that the intellect has only disclosed the best system and one ought to act accordingly. This movement attained the zenith of its influence with Rousseau.

The proof presented by Rousseau and his followers concerning this issue is based on emotion. Kant's reasoning, on the contrary, is logical. And if one would like to know the logical presentation of these opinions, one must refer to the works of Kant.³ Kant propounded this philosophy in extreme detail and profundity. He went so far as to say that in order to prove theoretical issues related to metaphysics, one must also seek recourse from the practical intellect ('aql-i 'amali).⁴ This is in complete contrast to the method employed by Socrates and Plato, for they considered the theoretical intellect ('aql-i nazari) to be a basis for the action of the practical intellect. However, Kant believes that the practical intellect without intellectual demonstration is the best judge, by means of which the principles of speculative wisdom (hikmat-i nazari) must be proved.

Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* considers all the intellectual proofs for the existence of God to be weak.⁵ He thus says that moral laws that have been bestowed in the nature of man and which are discovered by the practical intellect are the greatest proof for the existence of the One God.⁶

After Kant, the discussion of the laws of human nature has had a checkered history. Up to a certain extent, Kantian principles were accepted, albeit more for its practical dimensions, the call for human rights being one of its manifest forms. Nevertheless, from its philosophical aspect, philosophers after Kant have dealt with this issue in a different way.⁷

The discussion so far has been a propaedeutic and as we said in the beginning, our endeavor in this treatise is to consider Islamic law and legal ethics, and therefore we would like to refrain from evaluating the opinion of Western philosophers. The discussion on independent intellectual perceptions (mustaqillat-i 'aqliyyeh) in Islam is itself an instructive subject. Its discussion and analysis from the philosophical perspective as well as its legal aspect in Islamic law is very profound, and may contribute to our understanding of European discussions on the relationship between the intellect and moral law.

Independent Intellectual Perceptions (mustaqillat -i 'aqliyyeh) in Islam

The discussion on independent intellectual perceptions consists of the following three principles:

Are actions and entities essentially 'good' or 'evil' or not?

Assuming that they are essentially so, does the intellect have the power to discover that or not?

Assuming that the intellect does have the power to discover the essential 'goodness' or 'evil' of all or even some of the things, does it also reveal the Divine law?

As we can observe, the nature of this discussion is more philosophical than it is legal. Nevertheless it is among those philosophical issues that legal experts and jurists considered. That is why many scholars from different Islamic sects have paid attention to it. It can be said to be one of the most controversial and important subjects discussed in Islamic theology. If there exists a difference of opinion between the two major groups of Islamic (Sunni) theologians, that is, the Ash'arites and Mu'tazilites,⁸ on some very important irreconcilable issues, the issue of the intellectual and essential goodness or evil is undoubtedly among one of the most important thereof.

The discussion on independent intellectual perceptions was first propounded among theologians and thereafter slowly and gradually it entered the domain of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and its principles (usul). The most notable scholars of the principles of jurisprudence up until the 5th Muslim century mostly came from the theologians (mutakallimun) of the Shafi'i and Hanafi legal traditions within Sunni Islam. For example, works such as al-Mustasfa' of al-Ghazali (d. 1111), al-Mahsul of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 1209), al-Bayan of Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwayni (d. 1085) were and are some of the most important books of usul al-fiqh (principles of jurisprudence). These scholars usually paid special attention to philosophical issues. The most important scholars of the Maliki legal school such as Averroes (d. 1198) and Abu Ishaq Ibrahim al-Shatibi (d. 1388) both had mastered philosophy.⁹ Averroes himself was one of the great Islamic philosophers, while Shatibi was well versed in philosophy. This is precisely why the question of the intelligibility of goodness and evil possesses special importance among the scholars of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence. The first authors of Shi'ite usul al-fiqh such as al-Sayyid al-Murtada (d. 1044) and Shaykh al-Tusi (d. 1067) were also well versed in systematic theology ('ilm al-kalam). The necessity of an acquaintance with theology, since it was then considered to be a politically significant weapon, drove a majority of Islamic jurists (fuqaha) towards philosophical issues. That is why Shaykh Tusi himself, while being a great authority in jurisprudence, was also reckoned to be a great theologian. Fundamentally, during that specific era it was impossible to propagate a school of thought of Islamic jurisprudence without paying any heed to the theological issues of Sunni Islam.

First of all, we must examine logical inference in matters of law. According to logicians in the Islamic traditions, the human mind has three ways of arriving at the conclusion of things:

Syllogism (qiyas)

Induction (istiqrā')

Analogy (tamthil)

From the above three methods, what is certain is that 'induction' cannot reveal the Divine law.¹⁰ Such is also the case with analogy, which is the same as the term 'qiyās' in the discipline of the principles of jurisprudence (Usul), whereas it is termed as 'tamthil' in logic.¹¹ It is also a method of inference that has been widely discussed; and while some schools of thought uphold its evidential nature (hujjiyyat), others deny the same. However, the only method of intellectual demonstration (istidlal) accepted by all the schools of Islamic thought is the logical syllogism, which in the language of jurisprudence and its principles is called burhan (proof).

As is well known, the syllogism consists of two premisses: the major premiss (kubra) and the minor premiss (sughra) [and a conclusion].¹² The propositions that form the premisses of the syllogism are a priori or proven: either the truth of both must have been proved by religious evidence [that is, revelation], in which case, it is accepted by all Islamic schools of thought. If the premisses, however, are based on intellectual proof, then two probabilities can be assumed. First, one of the premisses is based on religious evidence (shar'i) whereas the other relies upon intellectual proof. This discussion concerns what are famously known as istilzamat-i 'aqliyyeh (intellectual implications). In such a syllogism the intellect proves the intrinsic necessities (lawazim) of an Islamic law. This method of intellectual demonstration also is accepted by all the schools of Islamic thought, whether Shi'ite or Sunni. Second, both of the premisses are purely intellectual and the intellect without seeking aid of revelation can state an Islamic law. This is the arena of controversy between the different schools of Islamic thought. Such a syllogism consists of two premisses:

First: the Minor Premiss (sughra) – which deciphers and judges the essential good or evil of an entity.

Second: The Major Premiss (Kubra) – which expounds the intellectual truth that the thing that is good or evil according to the intellect ('aql) is likewise according to the Divine Legislator (Shari').

Conclusion: The conclusion that "a specific entity is [a] 'good' (husn) or 'evil (qubh) according to the Divine Legislator" is arrived at from the above two premisses.

Let us take 'oppression' as an example. According to rational beings,¹³ oppression is evil (the minor premiss); we then say, 'Whatever is evil according to rational beings is evil according to the Divine Legislator, that is, God (the major premiss). Consequently, we conclude that 'oppression' is evil according to the Divine Legislator (conclusion). As we can observe from the minor premiss, the essential good or evil nature of an entity is comprehended, and from the major premiss the intrinsic necessity (mulazamah) between intellectual judgment and the law of the Divine Legislator is attained. This is the same as the famous statement: 'Whatever the religion commands, the intellect commands, and whatever the intellect dictates the religion commands.'¹⁴

Proving the truth of the minor term is the task of theology and philosophy whereas verifying the major term is the task of the science of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence ('Ilm usul al-fiqh) and Law. However, all the legal experts who have considered this issue have been compelled to discuss the truth or falsehood of the minor term as well.

Fundamentally, belief in the decree of the intellect revealing the law of religion is due more to the fact that the human beings always thought that intellectual laws do not undergo change with the change and transformation of different societies, and that the formulation of laws by governments cannot affect the authority and eternity of such laws. Belief in the innate and natural laws is such. However, never has an Islamic thinker proceeded in this course to the extent that he can be compared with a physiocrat.¹⁵

Of course, as we had pointed out in the beginning, this belief has been found in every society and has ebbed and flowed. Nevertheless, in the end some thinkers, despite the changes of the societies and legislative organizations, have often believed in the existence of laws that have a kind of permanence. However, there is no consensus on the kind of existence that such laws possess or the scope of their applicability. The law strives to bring about a kind of justice in the societies; and this criterion is a relation between experimental and transient issues and the laws of spiritual and ethical values.

It is due to this very belief that the criteria of the law up to this level have an important expression in syllogism. By discovering the syllogism, the proponent of syllogism does not wish to extrapolate from the principles of specific laws to all other instances. It is here that the Imamites, despite their rejection of qiyas authenticated the 'expurgation of the definite criterion' (tanqih-i milak-i qati).

Belief in the intellect revealing the Divine law is a product of the belief in the existence of permanent principles, which are characterized in societies and in the presence of intellect as 'good' and 'evil'. If any rational human being, belonging to any society or era, were to understand clearly the correct form of the problem, he would make the same judgment as the others have done. After having accepted this matter, it is certain that whenever rational men were to agree intellectually on something, the opinion of the Divine Legislator would be the same. Or in subtler terms, the unanimity of rational men reveals the truth of the law and its concordance with the law of the Divine Legislator, otherwise there would be no unanimity among rational men.¹⁶ Islamic thinkers in relation to this issue are divided into three groups:

1) The Ash'arites fundamentally do not believe in the intellectual comprehension of 'good' and 'evil'. Instead, they opine that nothing or no action possesses essential 'goodness' or 'evil' so that one can intellectually discover the same. Rather, the 'good' and 'evil' of things depends on the law of the Divine Legislator.¹⁷

2) The Maturidites¹⁸ believe in the essential good and evil of things but do not approve of the intrinsic necessity between the Divine Law and judgment of the intellect. The Shi'ite Akhbari scholars in general,¹⁹ and the author of *al-Fusul al-muhimma*²⁰ among the usuli scholars, believe that the views of the Maturidites, among the immoderate and contradictory views of the Ash'arites and Mu'tazilites, have mostly taken a moderate and middle course. On this issue, between the Mu'tazilites' unquestionable rationalism and the dogmatic movement of the Ash'arites which oppose the intellect, they have taken the middle course.²¹

3) The Mu'tazilites and the Imjmites fully accept the essential and intelligible nature of the good and evil of things,²² and believe that rational men agree that the goodness and evil of a thing reveals the Divine law of the act or thing. Among the Mu'tazilites, some thinkers have more extreme rationalist positions than others, whereas the Imjmites are not unanimous on the issue of the essential goodness or evil of an entity. Besides the Akhbaris and the author of *al-Fusul* who have plainly rejected the intrinsic necessity between the intellect and the Divine Law, many Imamite scholars have not declared a position. Their silence suggests that they do not have complete faith in the intrinsic necessity between the judgment of the intellect and the Divine Law.²³

Notes:

1-Cf. A.H. Armstrong, *An introduction to ancient philosophy*, London: Methuen & Co., 1947, pp. 30–1.

2-Cf. Terence Irwin, *Classical thought*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1989, pp. 88–9.

3-Immanuel Kant, *Naqd al-'Aql al-Mujarrad*, tr. A'!mad Shaybjnç, Beirut 1965. Kant, *Critique of Pure reason*, eds./trs. P. Guyer & A.W. Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998. Cf. Sebastien Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, London: Routledge 1998 and idem, 'Ta'sçs Mitjphizçk al-

Akhlīq', tr. 'Abd al-Ghaffīr Makīwī, Beirut 1965. Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, ed./tr. M. Gregor with an introduction by C.M. Korsgaard, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998.

4-Kant, Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, pp. 17–18; idem, Critique of Pure Reason, pp. 672–90.

5-Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, pp. 563–69.

6-Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, pp. 683–84.

7-Arguably much moral philosophy seems to consist of discussion within the Kantian framework or at least in dialogic relationship to it. A seminal example of a work of moral philosophy concerned with the language of rights within a Kantian framework is John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1971. However, some moral philosophers consider the Kantian system to be an entire failure and would like to revert to forms of communitarianism associated with Aquinas and even Aristotle. See Alisdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: a study in moral theory*, 2nd edn., London, Duckworth 1985.

8-That is, followers of the school of Abū l-ḥasan al-Ash'arī (d. 935) and a group of theologians who held a rationalist position on theology and legal philosophy. s.v. *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, gen. ed. E. Craig, London: Routledge 1998.

9-On the former, see Dominique Urvoy, *Averroes*, London: Routledge 1991; Oliver Leaman, *Averroes and his philosophy*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1988. On the latter see Muhammad Khalid Masud, *Islamic Legal Philosophy: A study of Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi's life and works*, Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute 1977.

10-On the Aristotelian discussion, see Robin Smith, "Logic," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. J. Barnes, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995, pp. 30–3; on the Islamic discussion, see Muhammad Taqi Misbah-i Yazdi, *Amuzesh-i falsafa*, trs. M. Legenhausen & A. Sarvdalir as *Philosophical instructions*, Binghamton: SSIPS in association with Global Publications, Binghamton University 1999, pp. 59, 62.

11-Cf. Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Principles of Islamic jurisprudence*, Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society 1991, pp. 198–9.

12-Robin Smith, "Logic," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, pp. 29–30, 34–5.

13-It is common in Islamic philosophical arguments to appeal to some common axioms, principles and beliefs which are deemed appropriate for rational human beings to hold.

14-Cf. Bernard Weiss, *The search for God's Law*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press 1992, 84–93.

15-s.v. *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, gen. ed. E. Craig, London: Routledge 1998.

16-Fawitī' al-Ra'āmī, Cairo 1322 [AH lunar], p. 25.

17-A. Kevin Reinhart, *Before revelation. The boundaries of Muslim Moral thought*, Albany: State University of New York Press 1995, pp. 161–72.

18-That is, followers of the Central Asian school of Abū Manẓūr al-Mīturīdī (d. 942).

19-That is, Shiʿite traditionalists who are suspicious of rationalist forms of inference.

20-That is, ‘Allīma Jamīl al-dīn Yūsuf Ibn Muṣahhar al-ḥillī (d. 1325).

21-A. Kevin Reinhart, *Before revelation*, pp. 51, 54.

22-B. Abrahamov, *Islamic theology: traditionalism and rationalism*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1998, p. 36; Richard Frank, "Several fundamental assumptions of the Baṣra school of the Muʿtazila," *Studia Islamica* 33 (1971) pp. 5–18; G.F. Hourani, "The rationalist ethics of ‘Abd al-Jabbār," in *Reason and tradition in Islamic ethics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1985, pp. 98–108.

23-A. Kevin Reinhart, *Before revelation*, pp. 39–43; W. Madelung, "Imamism and Muʿtazilite theology," in *Religious schools and sects in medieval Islam*, London: Variorum reprints 1985. But there was no unified Muʿtazilite position; Basrans and Baghdadis differed and the school contained a wide spectrum of opinions centered around a few key issues such as intellectual perception of good and evil.

The Degrees of the Soul According to Ibn ‘Arabī and Mullī ḥadī

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Translated by Reza Shah-Kazemi and Mohammad Khalfan

Abstract

This article examines the nature, function, and degrees of the soul, with particular attention being given to the relationship between the soul and the body, on the one hand, and the affinity between the soul and the spirit, on the other. Certain key aspects of the perspectives on the soul as found in the writings of Ibn ‘Arabī and Mulla Sadra form the basis of this brief exposition on the dynamics that propel the soul, the very substance of the individual, towards the purely intelligible and spiritual realm, enabling it to become disengaged from the realm of matter in which it is accidentally enmeshed. The objective analysis of the development of the soul, from a state of pure potentiality to spiritual actuality, is closely intertwined, in this perspective, with the spiritual means that bring about this actualisation; the relationship between spiritual practice and theoretical understanding is thus stressed in this article.

The nature of the attachment of the soul to the body

The attachment of the soul to the body, in regard to its existence and individuation (*tashakḥḥus*), is of a transient and not subsistent order. In its initial stages of being, and in respect of its temporal origination, the soul is dependent on matter, but in its subsistence, it is beyond all such dependence.

The soul, at the outset, resembles the other faculties that are of a material nature, and dependent thereupon— a form of matter that is obscure and unspecified, that is, the very body itself. Although this body undergoes change and transformation throughout one's lifetime, the soul is always attached to this undetermined and obscure body. That is it is in terms of the soul that the human being possesses a

single personality, in contrast with the body of the soul, which is not identical, being in a constant state of change and transformation.

In reality, the attachment of the soul to the body pertains to the weakest kind of attachment. It is like the attachment of a carpenter to his tools, without which he cannot perform his work. The soul likewise cannot perceive existent entities and sensible objects without tools, and its apprehension is dependent upon on bodily instruments. After some time, as a result of the repetitive usage of these instruments, a certain habitual power (*malakeh*) is created in the soul, by means of which one is capable of producing in oneself the image of any sensible object, in any form one chooses, without needing the assistance of bodily instruments, whereas initially such a phenomenon is impossible.

Therefore, at its inception, the soul is devoid of every perfection and form, be it sensible, imaginal or intellectual. However, ultimately, it reaches a point where it can disengage any form—particular and universal—from its matter and perceives it or beholds it within itself.

The soul, then, at the outset, is a potential being, devoid of completeness, a sheer nonentity; and it bears considerable resemblance to the body. In other words, it is the final bodily stage and the initial spiritual stage, at which point it is neither pure body nor pure spirit; rather it is bodily perfection and spiritual potentiality; and in its final stages it attains to pure disengagement (*tajarrud -e-ma'î*) from matter and independence from the body.¹

Every bodily action is in reality the action of the soul, such as seeing by the eye, hearing through the ear, and the like; despite the fact that these phenomena come about through sense perception, the true agent of such acts is the soul itself; thus, it is the soul that in reality is the hearer and the seer (as well as being distinct therefrom)², employing the faculties of perception.

Our soul itself is the perceiver of every particular concept or sense-impression; it is the mover of every animated or natural motion that is related to our faculties, especially those among them which are nearer to the horizon of the realm of the soul.

Hence, the soul itself is the faculty of vision in the eye, the faculty of hearing in the ear, the sense of touch in the hand, the ability to walk in the legs; it is thus the very essence of the faculties inhering in all the other parts of the body, and it is through these parts that it sees, hears, touches, walks, and performs other actions. The soul, despite its unity and its separation (*tajarrud*) from the body and its faculties and parts, is not absent from any of the parts of the body, the superior or the inferior, the dense or the subtle; and it is also not separate from any of the faculties, be they faculties of comprehension or movement, of the 'animal' or the natural order. That is, the faculties in themselves do not possess any identity (*huwwiyah*) other than the identity of the soul; and the identity of the parts of the body and the rest of the faculties are dissolved in the identity of the spirit and its 'I-ness' (*inniyyah*).³

The humanity of a person resides in his soul

The individuation of the human body takes place through the soul in a distinct and clear way. The subject of the quantitative motion (*Harkat -e-kammi*) of the human being—such motions as his material growth (*numuww*) and development (*rushd*)—is also his very personality, which arises from a single soul. The individuation of the human being is brought about by means of the soul, a soul that is the form of his essence and, which remains constant when the bodily parts come to an end; the constancy of the

single, specific body, from childhood through maturity to old age, is derived from the constancy of the soul.

The individuation of the body and its parts, along with the life flowing through them, comes from the soul, whereas the individuation of the soul comes about by its very essence. The individuation of the body can be understood in the light of the following two factors:

It is the body of this very soul;

It is a reality within itself, and a substance (jawhar) from the world of matter.

According to the first factor, the body is subsistent and constant through the subsistence of the soul, the soul which is the form of this essence and its existential cause ('illat -e-wujudi); as a result of the second factor, however, it is subject to corruption and transformation, and is susceptible of augmentation and diminution. Therefore, if one were to ask: Is the body of this person the same as it was in his youth, the reply would be both yes and no—yes in terms of the first, and no as regards the second of the two factors noted above. In the light of the first factor, since the transformation from one body into another occurs concurrently with the subsistence of the soul, it is true to say that it is in essence the same body; for the present body is identical with the previous one possessed in childhood insofar as the personality and specificity of the individual, from the origin of his human existence to the end of his old age, subsists as such, and is constant, even whilst his bodily existence has undergone change.

The first consideration is true insofar as we can affirm that, while the body has been changed into another body, the soul remains the same in both, since the later body is exactly the same as the earlier body possessed in childhood and maturity; this is true since because the personality of the person, together with his individuation from the beginning of his existence up until the end of his old age, is subsistent and perpetual while his body has undergone change.

In view of the above, certain principles can be established:

a) The affirmation of bodily resurrection (ma'ad-e-jismani) and revivification of the body;

b) The resurrection (Hashr) of some people in the forms of different animals even though they retain the same individual personalities which they possessed on earth.

c) The human being, even though separated from matter and body, still possesses individuation. His personality, whether he be separate from or attached to the body, is not nullified, and in all these states he retains a single personality.⁴

The body is a mount for the soul

The soul, even though it hails from the exalted realm and now resides in this world, possesses a mode of unification with its faculties; and the fact that it is in the body and united with its faculties does not contradict its innate transcendence of matter and its being distinct from materiality. Hence at times it possesses a mode of being which is distinct from matter and independent of everything other than God, and at other times it descends into the material faculties and is attached to them. Hence, we can say that the soul has two dimensions, one facing the higher realm, and another facing the lower world.⁵

Ibn 'Arabi says:

The body possesses a proximity to the spirit, since it is the place into which the spirit and intellect was blown; and the intellect is the first being that was created by the Real. God has said in this regard: ...And I blew therein of my spirit.⁶ Thus, the soul is higher than the body and lower than the intellect, and a field for the cultivation of the spirit (rûḥ). And the seed that God, by means of the spirit, has sown in the field of the soul yields more than [mere] imaginations, desires and other such things. Hence all the sciences, thoughts and actions are attained through a seed sown and cultivated by God, through the spirit, in the soul and body. This is how the soul has an aspect turned towards the higher realm and an aspect turned towards the lower realm.⁷

In terms of this description, man is a compound (murakkab) of body and spirit. The body resembles the mount (markab) and the spirit the rider (râkib), and the destination of this journey is the Hereafter and the divine Proximity. Hence the best of actions for the body is to perform those deeds that bring about this proximity for the spirit, through veneration of God and through service to Him. This is the first stage of the felicity of the human being and the [fulfillment of the] wisdom of creation.

The best of the deeds of the spirit is communion with the Real and detachment from other than Him; as a result of persisting in this manner, the spirit attains a state of disengagement and independence from [material] attachments; and for it the lights of the unseen domain are manifest.⁸

Despite the soul being the rider of the body, it cannot directly influence the elemental material parts of the body. A vehicle therefore is necessary for this special feature, and this vehicle is a luminous and subtle body known as the vaporous spirit (ruh-e-bukhari).⁹

It is this spirit that penetrates the parts of the body and the nerves of the brain; and the more subtle (latif) its existence, the closer it is to actuality (fi'liyyat) and the further it is from passivity (infi'al) and from being affected [by extraneous elements], and conversely: the more dense (kathif) it is, the closer it is to potency (quwweh) and the more passive it is. Thus the instinctive or bukhîri spirit is lower in degree than the soul and higher than the body, being the interface and mediator between the body and the soul. Evidently, between the two of them other mediators are necessary, such as the intermediate realm of similitudes (barzakh –e-mithali) which is a mediator between the rational soul (nafs-e natiqeh) and the animal spirit (ruhe haywani), or like the rest of the parts of the body which are connected to the vaporous (bukhari) spirit through the presiding part of the body.¹⁰

According to Ibn 'Arabî, the combination of the hidden and the manifest rational animal is what is called a human being. Thus, with the passing away of the spirit and the soul, which comprise this very dimension of rationality in the human being, the remaining form is no longer named a human being; and there would be no longer any difference between man, animal, tree and the like.¹¹

Thus, regarding the soul's need of the body, Ibn 'Arabi and Mulla Sadra in two different expositions, subscribe to the same belief. Ibn 'Arabi considers the body to be a field of cultivation for the soul, while Mulla Sadra sees the body as the mount of the soul; both images convey the sense of the soul employing the body for its own actions.

Natural Death

The soul is the carrier of the body, and not vice versa. This is in contrast to what most people surmise, and even tend to think that the soul was created from the body, and can be strengthened by its nourishment. On the contrary, the soul itself is the [mediate] cause of the existence of the body and it is

this very soul that traverses different paths and stages and governs the body, and even directs it in ways that are contrary to the body's own natural inclinations. For example, the body, due to its nature, is inclined to descend, while the soul that causes it to ascend and move to higher realms.

Ascending to the exalted realm through this elemental and crude body is intellectually impossible. The body must be radiant and in conformity with the realm of the spirits; and this condition is realized after the freedom of the soul from the material body. In principle, the human being, in traversing the higher stages of being, is too lofty to be subservient to his material body. Rather, it is the body that follows the soul in certain of the lower stages of development. Thus, by accepting this point, both reincarnation (tanasukh) is negated as well as the idea that death is the result of the weakness and exhaustion of the faculties of the body. When the soul attains development and no longer needs the body, how can it be possible for it to occupy another body? Accepting this proposition would result in a completed or perfected entity becoming incomplete once again without any reason.

In view of the above, then, reincarnation is impossible; in reality, at death, the soul acquires independence from the body, and subsequently its control over the body comes to an end. Hence the natural weakness of the body in old age is simply a transformation of the [bodily] essence and comes about with the approach of the soul to the domain of the Hereafter.

The relation of the soul to the body is like a strong ship, together with all the tools and equipment that make it operative, sailing the waters of the sea.¹² The ship is under the influence of God and travels in the shore-less waters of existence. The soul here is like a wind, which, by its currents, moves the ship; and the soul's volition and governance can be compared to the direction of the wind moving the ship. Thus, if the soul becomes detached from the body, and the flow of the wind and the currents of volition and its command over the ship of the body subside, the ship's movement also diminishes.

Hence, in reality it is the wind that carries the ship, and the ship itself has no power whatsoever to retrieve the wind; and reincarnation is a return of the perfected soul to the world of imperfection, which means a return of the wind to the ship. Thus reincarnation and the transfer of the soul into another body are impossible, since it is the soul that gathers together the body and establishes the harmony of its parts: it is not the case that the soul is a mere concomitant of the body and its primary elements.¹³

That of the body which subsists with the soul

When the human soul leaves the body, a very small element of the body remains with the soul, which in the traditions, is known as 'ajb al-dhanb, and the 'trail and root of the tail'. There are different interpretations given for the meaning of this terminology: 'primary matter' (Haylaye ula), 'material intellect' ('aql Hayulani), 'the primordial elements of the human being', 'the posthumous dimension of the soul', 'the individual substance', 'the second dimension of the soul' and 'the immutable essences or entities ('a'yan- e- thabite)' are some of the interpretations given of these terms.

Mulla Sadra believes 'ajab al-dhanb to be the 'faculty of imagination' which is the last element acquired from the natural, vegetational, and animal faculties, and is attained along with the matter necessary for the body in this world. This imagination is the first level of the domain of being of the Hereafter and the final level of the world of matter, for nothing in its actual state, whatever its matter, form, or faculty can move from this world to the Hereafter except after undergoing certain transformations and reproductions. The human being is not prepared for resurrection (hashr) save by a faculty of perfection which is the final form of his existence, since all the faculties that he possesses, such as seeing, hearing,

tasting and so on, are like the radiations of his existence which store the cognitive and imaginal forms of the outer material entities in the imagination, such that if these entities are lost, their forms are [inwardly] retained. This is akin to the subsistence of the soul after the destruction of the body. This faculty is the very faculty which retains the immaterial forms of the outer entities, entities that remain subsistent in the form of ideas after the extinction of the body and which reside in the realm of the Hereafter; they are regarded as the roof of the world and the carpet of the Hereafter.¹⁴

Hence, the human soul, during its separation from the body possesses a faculty of imagination which enables it to comprehend the hidden dimension of the sense-impressions of this world in their particulars, and also to influence them. This very comprehension is the principle of sense-gratification in this world; however, in very many cases these different sense-impressions are like primary matter (hayulij) and are supported by this body. Nevertheless, all of them are located in a single place, for it is a single soul supports them.

Now it is by death that man is separated from the world and its attachments, whereas he subsists with that faculty of conception, and with this very faculty he forms a conception of his own essence. This essence is separate from the world, and the soul can form in its imagination the form of the dead and buried human being; the soul does so in such a manner that it experiences in sensible mode the pains of tangible punishment; this condition is called 'the punishment of the grave'.

If the soul be destined for felicity, it conceives its essence in the form of the angels, along with the promised rewards, and this is known as 'the reward of the grave'.

The phenomena that the human being beholds after death, such as the states of the grave and resurrection, are imaginal entities that do not exist in concrete form. Hence for the soul, the experience of the phenomena of the Hereafter—whether supra-formal or formal—will be determined by the soul; both types of phenomena arise through the perceptions of the soul, one of which comes about through bodily instrumentalities and the other through the soul's own essence.

Thus, this world and the Hereafter are two states of the soul, and the Hereafter in reality is the departure of the soul from the dust of the corporeal realm. The cause of natural death too is the actualization of the soul and its trans-substantiation (tajawhur) and transformation (taqallub) into the realm and the order to which it properly belongs, leading to its return to God. In this return it either experiences the bliss of reward, or the pain of punishment. As a result, the lesser the attachment of the soul to the body in this world, the greater the purity and disengagement of the soul from matter, material entities and the body in the intermediate realm (barzakh) and the Hereafter; [this process continuing until] a stage is reached whereby it can assume the state of the pure intellect.¹⁵

The governance of the body by the soul

The human body is like a dense weight and heavy mass, whereas the soul resembles a subtle light; and by the grace of the Lord, a bond is created between the soul and the body, though in an ultimate sense they be poles apart. From a drop of semen, God created the obscure body, and from the subtle substance of this drop, a subtle heart was engendered, and from the purity of the heart, the spirit was brought into being.

In its subtlety and purity, the spirit is akin to the celestial spheres (aflak). God made the spirit a nest for the rational soul, so that it may attain perfection in the way leading to its return [to God], and made the body a means for the perfection of the spirit.¹⁶

When the soul gains attachment to the primary elements of the body—such as the heart—the body becomes ‘ensouled’ (nafsani); and at this moment the soul gives life to the ‘animal’ by means of the heart, and thereby creates a harmony and balance in the faculties and parts of the body. The heart is the presiding part of the material body; and it is by means of the heart, and the governance of the soul, that the perfection of the other parts of the body is attained. It is for this reason that the animal body possesses a soul, and that the rest of the parts serve it.

The rapport between the body and the soul is essentially correlative (‘aljqeye luzumiyeh). This rapport is of a specific, determined nature, pertaining to a type of reciprocity between the two elements (du amre mutadayif) or a mutual attachment; it is not a relationship (rabti) [between two factors that, apart from this particular rapport, are independent agents]; rather, the rapport between the body and the soul is like that which brings together two essentially correlative entities such as ‘matter’ and ‘form’, each standing in need of the other. The body needs the soul for its actualization—not some particular soul, but a soul as such; and the soul likewise needs the body for its own specific attachment and for the formation of its own identity. Hence the precedence of the soul over the body is of an essential, and not temporal, nature; for the soul temporally comes into existence together with the body. Thus the existence and the subsistence of the soul go hand in hand with the body, and that [spiritual substance] which remains after the death of body is of a different nature.

That which gives the soul its very ‘soul-ness’ (nafsyyat) is the fact that it functions as such within a body, and acquires perfection therein as the station of the perfect ‘form’ of the body. The compounding of these two elements is of a natural kind, and thus cannot be definitively set apart from the realm of matter. That is why, so long as the body has a soul and a ‘form’, the soul does not possess an existence that is totally separate from matter. However, with time, its substance becomes perfected and independent of matter, attaining an intellectual mode of being; and it is the intellectual being that subsists and which does not degenerate with the degeneration of the body.¹⁷

Note:

1-Mullij ʿadrij, al-Asfjr, v.8, pp. 326-329

2-Translators’ note: In other words, the soul is the agent of the acts of seeing and hearing, but is not reducible to this aspect of its agency. It is therefore at once the true agent of these acts, and other than the agent of these acts.

3-Ibid., v.6, pp.377-379

4-Mullij ʿadrij, Tafscr al-Qurʿjn al-Karçm, v.5, pp. 372-375

5-Mullij ʿadrij, al-Shawjhid al-RubËbiyyah, pp. 195-196

6-‘...And I blew therein of my spirit...’ (al-°ajr: 29)

7-Ibn ʿArabç, al-FutËjt al-Makiyyah, v.8, ch. 70, pp. 310-313

8-Mullij ʿadrij, Tafsiṛ al-Qurʿin al-Karīm, v.1, p. 91

9-The rēʿi-e-bukhjiṛ is the name used by the physicians when they refer to the spirit.

10-Mullij ʿadrij, al-Asfiṛ, v.9, pp 74-77

11-Ibn ʿArabī, Fuṣṣal al-ʿikam, Faṣṣal-e-Shāhī, p. 91

12-That which is meant by ‘the tools and equipment’ when applied to the soul, is, evidently, the faculties of knowledge, perception and the like.

13-Mullij ʿadrij, al-Asfiṛ, v.9, pp. 54-55

14-Ibid., v.9, pp. 221-222

15-Mullij ʿadrij, al-Shawāhid al-Rubūbiyyah, pp. 275-277

16-Mullij ʿadrij, al-Wjridī al-Qalbiyyah, fayṣ 22, p.85

17-Mullij ʿadrij, al-Asfiṛ, v.8, pp. 382-384

Essays in Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Mysticism

Parviz Morewedge, *Essays in Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Mysticism*. Oneonta Philosophy Series, Oneonta: Department of Philosophy at State University of New York at Oneonta 1995, pp. xxvii + 296.

These pioneering essays represent the culmination and fruition of a life-long interest in certain themes and ideas in later Islamic thought, especially related to Iran, on the part of Parviz Morewedge. Versions of the essays have appeared in former guises in different collections and journals. But given the significant methodological contribution of the author, it is a welcome publication that finds a collection of pieces that truly represent the ‘Morewedge method’ of studying and presenting Islamic philosophy. It is an approach that pitches the fruits of Islamic thought at those in the humanities in Western academia best suited for a successful dialogue, namely philosophers.

It has been said that much of Morewedge’s work over the years, as he himself would admit, is inspired by three keys ‘teachers’ and influences: Freud, Rāmānujam and Carnap. Thus it is that the essays present a peculiar and engaging mixture of psychological and psychoanalytic insights, mystical taste and logical formulation and systematisation. Morewedge’s method is characterised by a paradigmatic shift in his approach to Islamic philosophy, removing it from the confines of the Greek-into-Arabic tradition and presenting it to analytical philosophers. Specifically, two major insights have changed the way in which we perceive the later tradition. First, he notes that later Islamic philosophy ushers in a shift from Aristotelian substance metaphysics to a more neoplatonising process metaphysics, which is far more conducive to a theological world-view. Second, later Islamic philosophy marks a growing concern with problems of intentionality and the relationship between the mind and the world. He also offers a holistic vision of Islamic thought in which its components of philosophy, theology and mysticism are never totally divorced from each other and mutually enhance each others’ discourse, an insight that grows from his interest in later Islamic thought especially in Iran.

The opening piece is a sweeping, and at times marred by some simple generalisations, meditation upon the variety and history of Islamic theology. Although specialists would quibble with his details, what is significant is his presentation of later philosophical theology and mystical thought as components of what one would now consider to be theology and not what was once narrowly conceived and conveyed by the term *kalīm*.

The three core philosophical chapters deal with his primary concerns: Neoplatonic paradigms of process metaphysics, and epistemological problems associated with intentionality in his piece on the concept of *wahm* or what he calls 'prehension' in Avicenna's psychology. The first of these chapters sets out his concept of Neoplatonism(s) and implies the use of the Neoplatonic paradigm in approaching much of later Islamic philosophy with its stress on the process of being. The second piece focuses on a pre-history or even genealogy of later Islamic philosophy by tracing the debates among Aristotelians and Neoplatonists on questions of ontology and their influence on three key schools of Islamic philosophy. Again specialists might quibble with his characterisation of these three schools: the analytical school of Avicenna, the Sufi essentialist school represented by 'AzÇz-i NasafÇ and the 'existentialist' school of Mulli ĩadrj. He concludes with a useful consideration of how one might compare and understand these issues in light of the discussions of ontology by the likes of Wittgenstein, Lewis and Munitz. The third piece is an innovative examination of 'prehension' as a process and a natural instrumentalist account of epistemology that coheres with process metaphysics and naturalistic meta-ethics. Again one should stress that many an Avicenna scholar would take issue with both the details of the argument and its conclusions but it remains a pioneering piece that takes the study of Islamic philosophy into new and exciting directions.

The third part comprises three pieces on mysticism which are far more personally inspired. The first two tackle issues of the processual self in Sufism and metaphysical icons and symbols in the poetry of RĒmÇ. The third piece is a critique of Zaehner's account of Sufism within his wider theory of theistic mysticism. Implicit in these pieces is not only Carnap's quest for formalisations, but also Dewey's pragmatic holistic approach to the unity of all fields of inquiry such that one can approach the study of Islamic mysticism pretty much in similar terms in which one might approach Islamic philosophy.

The collection is a major contribution to the discourse of Islamic philosophy and should provide much material for students to consider and pointers for avenues of inquiry to pursue. As long as one is aware of the influences upon Morewedge and his shortcomings (at times his Arabic is eccentric), then a reading of these articles can be both inspiring and instructive.

Some typographical errors mar the presentation of the work, which could also benefit from a more attractive font and typeface. The only serious quibble that this reviewer has is that given the relative obscurity of the publisher, it will unfortunately be the case that this book will not reach the wider audience that it merits. Islamic thought is perhaps not the top priority of most publishers but a major interpretation such as this deserves better.

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The Voyage and the Messenger: Iran and philosophy. tr. Joseph Rowe

Henry Corbin, *The Voyage and the Messenger: Iran and philosophy*. tr. Joseph Rowe, North Atlantic Books, Berkeley 1998, pp. lx + 236, £11.99.

As a general rule, studies in Islamic thought by Western scholars over the centuries have been clouded by an extreme, even if more or less subtle, antagonism and hostility. In the past couple of centuries, this attitude has, in combination with the sensibilities of modern secular humanism and the prevalence of an historicist approach to cross-cultural research, given added impetus and vigor to the continued assault on Islam in general and to the marginalization of thoroughly indigenous Muslim contributions to world civilization. For example, most histories of Western and even world philosophy continue to only marginally cover the contributions of Muslim thinkers. Even when they do cover these contributions, it is generally in the context of Hellenistic thought. The general hostility towards Islam in the West culminates in the thesis that the original Muslim sources of revelation and prophecy have little to offer in the way of profound philosophical thought. The historicist attitude then seeks to reduce whatever undeniable contributions made by Muslim thinkers to the mere preservation, with some rewordings or reworkings, of Hellenic thought. It then remained for the scholastics to continue the real development of philosophy.

This eurocentric and historicist approach to the study of Muslim philosophy was gradually challenged by a few orientalists of the past two centuries. However, it was the French philosopher Henry Corbin (1903-78) who, more than any Western scholar before or since, made a fresh contributions. He did two things. He tried to understand Islamic philosophy as largely an expression and manifestation of that Muslim consciousness which finds its ultimate muse in the twin sources of revelation and the prophecy of Muhammad (S), as well as to convey convincingly the essence of that consciousness to Western scholars. Corbin replaced the traditional approach of an antagonistic and historicist reductionism with that of a sympathetic phenomenology and archetypal psychology, effectively utilizing the resources of Continental philosophers such as Husserl and Heidegger (note that Corbin was the first translator of the latter into French).

Although the writings of Corbin span nearly the entire panorama of Muslim intellectual and mystical experience, ultimately it was the shape and form that Islamic thought took on in Iran, which became the primary focus of Corbin's attention. Suhrawardi [d. 1191] was to become one of Corbin's most important muses and the former's philosophy of *ishraq* or oriental illumination was to become fully integrated into, and indeed dominate, Corbin's own philosophical outlook and commitments. This he combined with a powerful admiration for Shi'ism. The book under review here, *The Voyage and the Messenger*, subtitled *Iran and Philosophy*, is a posthumous collection of lectures and essays exploring Corbin's research, not only on philosophy in Muslim Iran, but the entire spectrum of Iranian Muslim religious experience, research that goes under the title *iranologie*, a term that Corbin helped to give widespread circulation. Probably since most of the material here was meant to be presented in front of an audience, I find that this work is, while still pretty dense, easy to read in comparison to some of the author's monographs such as *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*.

This collection is graced with a preface by Corbin's widow Stella Corbin, as well as a foreword by Jacob Needleman, an expert in comparative religious studies. Christopher Bamford contributed an extensive introduction on Corbin and the latter's own relation as well as that of his research on the tradition of Western esoterism. Here, as in many places in Corbin's own writings, philosophy gives way to a more or less 'fluffy theosophy'. Indeed, one finds in the wake of Corbin a phenomenon similar to that that took place with Husserl, Heidegger, and other Continental philosophers. Analysis and structure give way to an amalgamation of dense and difficult terminology that gives the appearance of profundity but very little

in the way of clarity. The postmodern developments in Continental philosophy have frequently bordered upon or crossed into complete cultural relativism. In the case of Corbin the danger is that comparative philosophy, especially a purely phenomenological approach, may degenerate into mystical or esoteric relativism. Corbin's method leaves little room for a truly objective assessment of creeds such as Ismailism and Nusayrism. This is an important point to keep in mind for young Muslim readers of the writings of Corbin. While providing the reader with valuable phenomenological insights into various facets of Eastern and Western esoterism, little is given to the reader in the way of historical, sociological, and religious guidance by means of which the reader may judge the objective truth and 'separate the lean from the fat'. The point here is less to criticize Corbin but to warn the philosophically unprepared Muslim reader of the limits of Corbin's approach to philosophical and religious experience. Phenomenology is primarily descriptive and involves the suspension of value judgements; but on matters of faith value judgements are unavoidable.

Part One of *The Voyage and the Messenger* contains three of Corbin's articles dealing with the nature and concept of each of the following: comparative philosophy, Iranology, and historical methodology. These three articles give a good overview of Corbin's own approach to scholarship and research in general. We can follow Stella Corbin in summarizing the mission of Corbin as one of '[restoring] the communication between these two worlds [East and West] as it existed for an all too brief period during the twelfth century'. While Henry Corbin's view of that age is probably (like many of his conceptions) a bit too romantic, it does reflect the fact that at that time, Western scholars, religious hatreds notwithstanding, looked at Muslim civilization with, if not sympathy, then with respect, admiration, and a willingness to learn and be taught. And it is this attitude that permeates the work of Corbin.

Part Two contains six articles on different facets of Iranian religious and philosophical experience. 'A Theory of Visionary Knowledge' follows the theme of the visionary perception of the active imagination (whose sphere of operation is the *mundus imaginalis*, that subtle region that spans the chasm between the purely intelligible and the purely material) from the writings of ancient Iranian sages to Suhrawardi, to whom we owe the first true exposition of the concept of the *mundus imaginalis* in Neoplatonic philosophy; and from Suhrawardi down to Ibn 'Arabi [d. 1240], Mulla Sadra [d. 1641] and Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i [d. 1826] and the Kermani Shaykhis. One can read this article as a kind of introduction to more difficult works of Corbin such as *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*.

The second article 'The Theme of the Voyage and the Messenger' considers the theme of spiritual journey of the philosopher as exemplified by Avicenna and Suhrawardi, who 'completes the task of Avicenna to construct a complete philosophical theory of visionary perception and spiritual wayfaring. Avicenna's spiritual recitals are constructively compared to 'Aṣṣijr's famous epic, *The Conference of the Birds* (*Manṣiq al-Ṣayr*). Corbin ties in the thought of all three authors to the Shi'i notion of the Hidden Imam. Like the 16th century Shi'i author and martyr Shustari (author of *Majalis al-Mu'minin*), Corbin looks to find a Shi'i influence behind virtually all of his Iranian authors. This article may be read as an introduction to the author's *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, another very difficult work.

'A Shi'ite Liturgy of the Grail' focuses on some themes of Nusayri thought. Nusayrism was founded by Muhammad ibn Nusayr al-Namiri (d. circa 884). He was one of the extremists (*ghulāt*) and claimed to be the agent of the hidden Imam. He and his followers broke off from the main body of Imami Shi'ism and founded their own religion, one that finds its adherents in the tribe of the present rulers of Syria, where they are known as 'Alawis. One of the heroes of the Nusayris is Abu l-Khattab, once one of the closest companions of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (A) but later cursed by the Imam for promulgating false doctrines about himself and about the Imams. Abu l-Khattab and a band of his followers were killed in Kufa in 762.

This article provides an example of Corbin's tendency to exaggerate matters. The author calls Abu I-Khattab 'one of the greatest Islamic figures of the 8th century'. Corbin appears to concur with the Nusayri view that Imam al-Sadiq's disavowal of Abu I-Khattab was only outward; a view that I have yet to find shared by any traditional Imami scholar. This view of Corbin ties in, I believe, to the author's own predilection for Isma'ili and Batini esoterism. One should note that it appears that Corbin was much influenced by Ismailism before he began his in-depth studies of Twelver Shi'ism. His interpretations of the latter clearly reflect this influence. In this secret society of Shi'i extremists, Corbin finds correlations with some Western esoteric orders and fraternities; whence the notion of the 'liturgy of the grail', the grail holding a key place in Western 'chivalric orders' (consider the myth of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table).

'Prophetic Philosophy and the Metaphysics of Being' is the most philosophically interesting article in this collection. By 'prophetic philosophy', Corbin means that philosophical speculation in Shi'i Islam that is primarily rooted in meditation on the Qur'an and the hermeneutic of the Imams, the inheritors of the wisdom of prophecy. The title of this article is somewhat of a misnomer however, since the main focus of the article is the metaphysics of existence expounded by Mulla Sadra, though Corbin briefly ties this in to Shi'i imamology. At the end of this article Corbin includes some of the corrections made to Mulla Sadra's doctrine by that prophetic philosopher par excellence, Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i. This article is a good introduction to Corbin's annotated translation, including the comments of Shaykh Ahmad, of Mulla Sadra's Kitab al-Masha'ir (which Corbin translates as Metaphysical Penetrations).

The final article consists of some very brief notes on music and Persian mysticism. In the previous article, 'Sufism and Sophia', Corbin considers the concept of a divine feminine principle (sophia) as it occurs in ancient Iranian religion, in ishq philosophy, in Sufism, and in Imamism. This theme is further expounded upon in Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth. This article is quite speculative, for example, it envisions Shi'ism 'integrating' within itself, through the myth that the mother of Imam al-Sajjad (A) was a Persian princess, 'the spirituality of ancient Iran'. This, of course, feeds another myth; one that Corbin does not or perhaps does not want to completely dispel, namely, the notion that Shi'ism is really a Persianized Islam. Corbin firmly believed in the notion of an 'Iranian Islam'; indeed, 'On Iranian Islam' was the title of a four-volume study that is perhaps his magnum opus. I find the notion of 'Iranian Islam' to be both repugnant and dangerous. Islam is a universal religion whose essence transcends ethnicity. This is an example of Corbin sacrificing that essence to his own personal philosophical project, something that we frequently find in Corbin's work. The same arguments that Corbin uses to weigh against the notion of 'Arabic philosophy' (as opposed to 'Islamic philosophy') can be brought to bear against any notion of 'Iranian Islam'.

The transliteration of this collection contains a few oddities like 'Mullah' and 'ishraqi'. Overall, however, this is a good and representative collection of the oeuvre of the greatest scholars of Islamic thought, one which may be highly recommended as a prolegomena to some of the author's more difficult works. Our primary caveat is that young readers and non-experts especially must be on guard not to let Corbin's erudition, profundity, and sympathy for Islam cause them to buy into all of the author's predilections and doctrinal idiosyncrasies.

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The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naguib Al-Attas, An Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization

Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naguib Al-Attas, An Exposition of the Original Concept of Islamization*. Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC, Malaysia), 1998, Pp 507, US\$ 45 pbk, US\$ 58 hbk

The present book is a pioneering effort to come to terms with one of the leading contemporary Muslim intellectuals namely, Syed Muhammad Naguib Al-Attas, founder and director of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The present volume not only gives an exhaustive account of Professor Al-Attas philosophy of education, but shows how this specific Islamic philosophic education has been practiced at ISTAC. In fact, ISTAC itself is the realization of Al-Attas' ideal of an Islamic centre of higher education whose purpose is to promote Islamic education, in its classical sense, in a modern world. The aims are high, as well as the expectations of students, professors, and supporters of ISTAC. In addition, this unique work does not only trace Professor Al-Attas' educational vision, but also focuses upon the paradigmatic idea of Islamization of education and its basic epistemological foundation.

The author of this volume is excellently suited, being a pioneering member of ISTAC since 1988, a confidant of Professor Al-Attas, and Deputy director of ISTAC. As an academician, Professor Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, oversees the implementation of Al-Attas' philosophic vision at ISTAC. In addition, earning his Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Civilization at the University of Chicago under the supervision of another great Muslim thinker, the late Fazular Rahman, Dr. Wan Daud is surely excellently qualified not only formally, but also due to his own Islamic Malay background to handle the subject – matter at hand. Let us describe the specific chapters of this voluminous work.

Chapter one (pp. 33 – 67) deals with Al-Attas' metaphysical worldview. Dr. Wan Daud tells us that Al-Attas formulated his Islamic metaphysics, especially in the latter's internationally acknowledged work on Malay's great scholar Hamzah Fansuri as well as Nur Al-Din Al-Raniri. Aside his numerous other works Al-Attas emphasizes the contribution by the Sufis to Islamic metaphysics. The key concept is intuition. Within the education process, in its Islamic form, the intuitive element looms large. For in Islamic education, contrary to the formal educational curriculum we find in western educational institutions, the intuitive aspects of humankind add a sensitivity to the very educational process that may have been lost in western education. A basic recall in Dr. Wan Daud's work is, how Al-Attas rejuvenates the original Islamic notion, emphasized by Sufis, that humankind's journey is a journey returning to its original source: God. Thus, education in itself is not a mere accumulation of detailed knowledge about the empirical world, but a life-long educational process leading to the unitary foundation of humankind existence: God.

Chapter two (pp. 69 – 119) emphasizes Al-Attas' notions of knowledge and the process of knowing. Sketching out an outline of historical stations en route to modernization, especially in Egypt and Turkey Dr. Wan makes it clear to the reader, that the real problem of knowledge of some predecessors of Al-Attas, such as Muhammad 'Abduh, or Sayyid Ahmad Khan, was resuscitated by Al-Attas in form of a call towards "the right conception of knowledge". Already in 1973 in his *Risalah*, Al-Attas drew attention to the basic contradiction between Western understanding of knowledge and Islam. Utilitarian conceptions of knowledge such as "knowledge is power", promoted since Francis Bacon, is precisely the kind of epistemology Al-Attas challenged in his 1976 London speech, delivered at the Royal Commonwealth Society. Dr. Wan summarizes the essence of this message in a nutshell: "Knowledge then needs to be defined in relation to the spiritual reality of man." (p. 71) In this spirit, the respective sections entitled "Knowledge and the Islamic Creed" (pp. 76 – 96), "Definitions of Knowledge" (pp. 97-110), and "General

Types of Knowledge" (pp. 110-119) are handled. From a contextual perspective, these sections intend to position Al-Attas' sacred conception of knowledge in reference to many contemporary Muslim as well as western thinkers, e.g. B. Lewis, M. S. Hodgson, F. Rahman, W. M. Watt, R. Rorty, M. Harrington, H. Smith, A. S. Ahmad, F. Schuon, S. H. Nasr, or G. Makdisi, while moving along the track of Franz Rosenthal's classic, *Knowledge Triumphant*. Dr. Wan feels the need to point out that it was Al-Attas who first emphasized the importance of a reformation of Islamic education within a context of a systematic and overall *Weltanschauung* that complies with Islam as a creed and not simply a cultural tradition. In this, as the author stresses several times, Al-Attas influenced his contemporaries such as the influential Fazlur Rahman, who certainly had the ear of many intellectual Muslims studying at Chicago University and Western Universities at large. This reviewer suggests that detailed researches are necessary to reconstruct the implicit debates between Al-Attas, Fazlur Rahman, or Seyyed Hossein Nasr in such a way, as to use these fruitful and creative dialogues as springboards for future discourse focusing on the nature of sacred knowledge. These are in need of specific researches that can use Dr. Wan's *Ansatz* to critically deepen the similarities and difference between these outstanding Muslim thinkers of the late 20th century.

Chapter three (pp. 121-168) deals with the meaning and purpose of Education. Again, this chapter sketches a survey of some educational teleology such as Plato and Aristotle as well as the educational system that is nation-state centred. Pakistan, Indonesia, and Malaysia's educational policies are discussed with the background of philosophic and Islamic views of Mohammed Iqbal, or the *Tazimat* policy of Ottoman Turkey. Modernity, again, in terms of education emphasizes the utilitarian value of the educational end. Due to the development of the nation-state this utilitarian idea of education has been systematized and bureaucratically managed. This is exactly what Al-Attas' educational goals attack: the true Muslim education is not to produce functioning citizens for the state, or well honed office-workers for profit-oriented companies, but excellent and outstanding morally good Muslim men and women. True education is education towards fine character: in that sense Al-Attas' educational philosophy is tradition oriented. The author points out that it was Al-Attas who defined, for the first time in the contemporary Muslim world, a systematic attempt at redefining Islamic education in terms of a novel concept, namely, "*ta'dib*" (p.133). Al-Attas wrote in his *Concept of Education in Islam*, as follows: "*Ta'dib* already includes within its conceptual structure the elements of knowledge (*'ilm*), instruction (*ta 'lim*), and good breeding (*tarbiyah*), so there is no need to refer to the concept of education in Islam as *tarbiyah-ta 'lim-ta'dib* all together." (CE II p. 34, quoted on p. 134). The authentic educated Muslim is the one who exhibits *adab* with a sense of spirituality. Dr. Wan discusses this ideal-type educated Muslim in terms of Al-Attas' work in comparison to some western educators from Werner Jaeger's famous work on *Paideia* to Chicago University President Robert Maynard Hutchins. Again, the critique is essential: the western educational model lacks spirituality. Be that as it may, it must be noted that a comparison with John Dewey's pragmatic progress education would have accentuated the matter more clearly. Yet, a dialogue with German idealist philosophers of the Romantic school such as Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, Novalis, the poet, would have made the situation not appear so clear cut. A meaningful dialogue between the educational ideals of German idealism, especially its Romantic branch, with Islam is still wanting. Al-Attas version of *adab* with spirituality can be had in the German notion of *Bilung*, i.e. character developing in contrast to *Erziehung*, which is much closer to the American idea of education. To a western reader, with some background in German Idealism, Al-Attas' conception of the educated Muslim person sounds like a lost relative in an Age of Educational utilitarianism.

Chapter four (pp. 169-224) is an interesting discussion as to what constitutes an ideal Islamic University. Needless to say, the educational philosophy of Al-Attas promotes a university that reflects the idea of

the universal man, the educated Muslim person who exhibits spirituality. The idea of the institution of higher learning is not only a matter of instruction, but a spiritual way of life in which teacher and student live in harmony in the pursuit of knowledge and truth. The basic idea of Al-Attas of a spiritual institute of higher learning is exemplified in his own founded International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization. Anyone who had the privilege and the pleasure of experiencing ISTAC, as did this reviewer, in the summer term of 1995, will be able to witness and experience Al-Attas educational cosmology, understood in its literal meaning, in which harmony of form and matter, psyche and body, is reflected in the aesthetic architecture based on its proto-type in Andalusia. The golden age of Islamic civilization is reflected in Al-Attas' ISTAC. Dr. Wan is well suited to treat the matter, considering that he has been Deputy Director of ISTAC for many years and confidant of the master himself, in addition, of having pursued special research in the philosophy of education, and acquired experience in educational policy with the Malaysian Ministry of Education. One interesting question raised by Dr. Wan is, to what extent did the Madrasah influence the formation of the West European Cathedral School, or college. Aside the classic account by Makdisi and Rashdall, other sources are cited among others Haskins. To a European reader, however, matters are more complex than to suggest that university life has turned completely secular in the West and that western university are state oriented. This is, since the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, to some extent correct, however, it overlooks the fact that most prominent American institutions of higher learning had denominational origins; that there are still plenty of private religious institutions in the United States; that in Europe, the Theological Faculties, for instance, still lead a life of spirituality, despite being contextualized by state education, such as in Germany. Universities such as the University of Louvain in Belgium, at which this reviewer has the privilege of functioning as a visiting professor in the Institute of Philosophy with its famous Husserl Archive, can be said to reflect a spirituality of which Al-Attas speaks. The dichotomy between the religious and the secular seems somewhat overemphasized, which is also a fact in Al-Attas' work, and does not, at least to sensitive European reader of Dr. Wan's work, do justice to the real complexity not only in Europe, but also in the United States and Canada. The reviewer would forward scholars like the Belgian Henri Pirenne, or the British cosmopolitan thinker Christopher Dawson, and the impressive four volume series, published by Cambridge University Press, A History of the University in Europe, with the appearance of the first volume on the universities in the Middle Ages in 1992.

Chapter five (pp. 225-290) deals with the content of curriculum and its educational methods. It is clear from the outset that Al-Attas' ideal Muslim reflects the ideal of the curriculum and its methods that accompanied this man of adab. The authentic goal of this ideal curriculum is proper knowledge, wisdom, and justice, but in a hierarchical scheme that reminds one of Neo-Platonic emanation configuration. Thus, authoritative sources, books, teachers, and hierarchy of knowledge constitute the framework of an Islamic curriculum, which guides the student into the structure of knowledge, exhibiting the dual nature of humankind.

Chapter six (pp. 291-370) turns out to be the center piece of the book. The central idea, the Islamization of contemporary knowledge and education, Dr. Wan argues, was basically the original idea of Al-Attas, prior to the fashionable trends in the last two decades in the name of Islamization. A highly valuable section is Dr. Wan's historical perspective of the Islamization of knowledge. The author wishes, "... the systematic formulation of the concept of Islamization of contemporary knowledge achieved by Al-Attas is a clear product of the latter half of the 20th century, yet the practice of Islamization of knowledge occurred since the beginning of Islam till our times ." (p. 316) Discussions of the reception and interpretation of Greek philosophy from Al-Kindi to Ibn Sina are valuable, as well as the contributions by contemporary scholars, such as the eminent Japanese thinker Dr. Izutsu. It is correctly observed, in tune with recent scholarship of the history of Islamic philosophy that philosophy and intellectual activity did

not die after Ghazali's critique of the peripatetics (p. 325 f.). Due to De Boer's well-known work, from 1901, where a comprehensive view of the development was offered, ending with the judgement that Islamic philosophy declined drastically after Ghazali. Already, Max Horten, the Bonn University Orientalist, saw matters more clearly in his works in 1910 and 1920s, that further east, in Persia and the Indian Subcontinent, philosophy was well and alive. Unfortunately, Horten's work, written in German, was never translated into English, or French, or for that matter in any other language. However, the late Fazlur Rahman and Dr. S. H. Nasr did honor rightfully so, Horten's pioneering work. Yet, an excellent summary by the master himself can be had in the following quote on the nature of Islamization: "The Islamization of ontology and metaphysics which marked the real break from the Aristotelian tradition, that is, the real transition from the metaphysics of existent (mawjūd) to the metaphysics of being and existence (wujūd), was accomplished by the Sūfis, particularly as reflected in the rational and theoretical formulation of the 'system' by Ibn Al-'Arabi, their greatest representative, as based on intuitive knowledge gained from spiritual experience" (p. 327). Other sections, in the respective chapter, on the unique status of the Arabic language in Islam, as compared to Hebrew, Koine Greek and Latin within Christianity, is also of great interest. Dr. Wan emphasizes how Al-Attas understands Tafsir as not being identical with hermeneutics, which we find in Greek philosophy, or Christian Bible interpretation and commentary. A special point is made how the master differs on this matter from contemporary Muslim thinkers such as the late Rahman, Arkoun, Hanafi, or Soroush (p. 344). Dr. Wan's work concludes with chapter seven (pp. 371-422) in enumerating various responses to the Islamization of contemporary knowledge. It is pointed out that the project of Islamization of knowledge is called by Al-Attas the "epistemological revolution" (p. 371) in the Islamic world. Modern reformers are surveyed, from the Turkish Namik Kemal and the Egyptian Al-Rifa'i to the Pakistani Muhammad Iqbal and the late Al-Faruqi and his institute of Islamic thought. Although it is important to the author to note "...that Al-Attas was a major source of Al-Faruqi's Islamization of contemporary knowledge." (p. 386) The late Fazlur Rahman, as well as S. H. Nasr and Sheikh Idris, are discussed in reference to the Islamization project. Others, more critical of the Islamization project as the Syrian political science professor in Germany, Bassam Tibi, are scrutinized, rightfully so. Tibi is also the target of many of his German colleagues in the field of Oriental studies, since it is obvious that, due to his studies with the Frankfurt school people, Tibi tries to synthesize a Neo-Frankfurt approach to the resurgence of Islam. Dr. Wan in his concluding remarks points out a final summary of Al-Attas' project of Islamization: "It should become clear to even a casual reader that Al-Attas' philosophy and methodology of education are about one fundamental objective: Islamization of the mind, body and soul and its effects on the personal and collective life of not only Muslims but also others, including the spiritual and physical non-human elements in the environment ." (p. 421)

Concluding remarks by this reviewer are allowed in the spirit that true friends must be critical, because they care: Dr. Wan's work is, no doubt, a pioneering effort to present, even to the uninitiated, the scope and debt of Professor Al-Attas' original concept of Islamization in the context of his philosophy of education, in theory and practice. We shall remind ourselves that the book is an exposition, rightfully so, and not a critical assessment of Al-Attas' achievements and shortcomings. The general index attached to the cited bibliography and personal name index is excellent. The voluminous size of the book made this index necessary. It is advised by this, not so casual reader, to start reading chapters six and seven, on Islamization and its response, then to turn to the introductory chapters in order to be introduced to Al-Attas' general perspective. What is needed now are researches focusing on specific themes and concepts that confront themselves, critically, with items of Al-Attas' life work, so as to come to an appreciating, but critical assessment of a master-thinker of the contemporary Islamic world. Unfortunately, most contemporary Islamic thinkers, aside political ideologists, are hardly known in western intellectual circles. This is unfortunate; yet, it is hoped that due to the efforts of books like Dr. Wan's, valuable lessons taken from the world of Islam are introduced to the non-Islamic world. A carefully edited reader,

with some biographical and historical background of Al-Attas' writings, in an established western press, would promote such introduction.

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The Metaphysics of Mulla Sadra

Parviz Morewedge, *The Metaphysics of Mulla Sadra* [being a translation of *Kitab al-Mashair*]. New York: Society for the Study of Islamic Philosophy and Science in association with the Institute of Cultural Studies, Tehran 1992, pp. 11 (English and Persian introductions) and 92 (Arabic text and facing English translation).

Morewedge's presentation and translation of this seminal work on ontology of the famous Safavid philosopher Mullī ʿadri Shīrīzī (d. 1641) is one of a new wave of translations of Islamic philosophical texts being produced in North America. It is hoped that these works will encourage the study of serious and analytically rigorous Islamic philosophy in philosophy departments and programs throughout Western academia.

In the preface introducing the series of translations, Morewedge writes that the editors have two main aims in mind. First, they wish to present interesting contributions to philosophy to historians of philosophy, who can be 'hardly expected to master both Persian and Arabic'. Second, they wish to contribute to 'pure philosophical inquiry, by selecting manuscripts of clear philosophical merit'. The series and this specific work under review is designed with the analytic philosopher as reader in mind. No doubt the choice of text is significant and appropriate. But the success of the endeavour lies in the translation and the introduction (and annotation).

Morewedge's major contributions are methodological. First, he has been one of the first to notice that later Islamic philosophy, especially the neoplatonising Illuminationist (*ishrīqī*) school signals a shift away from Aristotelian category theory and substance metaphysics. The prime unit of metaphysical inquiry is no longer Aristotelian secondary substances but in fact the flow or process of being that expresses itself in instances of beings that, far from being substances, are actually 'structures of events'. Second, he insists that scholars of Islamic philosophy should engage in a philosophical dialogue with the mainstream analytic and post-analytic Anglo-Saxon school of philosophy prevalent in the United States and Great Britain. His own training with Carnap makes him an ideal interlocutor between the traditions. No longer should Islamic philosophy be explained purely in medieval or Hellenic terms, but rather in terms of philosophical issues that are live and current. As such his method is in some ways a continuation of the work of scholars such as the late Norman Kretzmann on medieval philosophy, an analytical reconstruction of the medievals.

This work was translated into French in 1964 by the late eminent 'Iranologist' and French philosopher Henry Corbin as *Le livre des Pénétrations Métaphysiques*. This truly masterful endeavour was prefaced by a pioneering work of comparative philosophy in which Corbin compared Mulla Sadra's concept of being with the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre and the existential phenomenology of Martin Heidegger. Corbin's interest in the text was that of a phenomenologist seeking and finding cognate arguments and modes of presentation in other traditions. The translation itself is accurate, readable and philosophically sophisticated. But it is essentially aimed at the Islamicist and at the phenomenologist or even the 'Corbinian'.

Morewedge's presentation, however, is quite different and it is not aimed at the philosopher with continental interests. The actual translation is at times rather stilted and literal. It almost seems as if the work is a preliminary draft that was never quite completed or finalised. The numerous typographical errors and mistaken transliteration of Arabic terms compounds this initial unease. Morewedge uses the Corbin edition, correcting some of the mistaken Qur'anic references, and the Persian translation of Ghulam ḥani. But he does not seem to draw on the success of these two translations in his own. An Arabist or Arab speaker might find the translation useful insofar as he would become familiar with some useful terms in English expressing Mulla Sadra's philosophical lexicon. But I suspect the philosopher faced with this English translation would be quite at a loss. Some translations are slightly misleading and too literal. For example, on page 6 he translates *mafḥmuḥu aghni l-ashyī* 'an al-ta'rif "uhḥran wa wuḥḥan as 'its [being's] notion is the richest of all entities in description in its manifestation and clarity'. The phrase *aghna* 'an al-ta'rif does not mean 'rich in description' but described something that needs no definition usually because it is intuited a priori by the mind. Furthermore, it is an axiom of Islamic philosophy that being has neither a definition nor a description (technically defined in terms of their components analysed in terms of the Isagoge of Porphyry). What the Arabic phrase means is that being is so manifest and clear a concept that one does not even have to begin to describe or define it. It is a priori. On page 64, *ḥura idrakiyya* does not mean 'conceivable form' but 'perceptible form'. Perception and conception are not the same. In the passage, Mulla Sadra comments that these perceptible forms are those perceived either through sense perception or intellectual perception. Nowhere does the issue of conception arise. On page 85, he translates *al-ufuq al-mubḥn* as 'the horizon of the logos'. Where does he get 'logos' from? Even if he feels that is what is meant, the translation requires some commentary. 'Clear horizon' might be more accurate and refers to a stage on the mystical path at which the mystic begins to realise and understand realities of existence. Even if one does not regard such translations (and one could take many more examples) as mistakes, at least in most of these instances the option taken by Morewedge requires some explanation and argument to justify the choice. Again this confirms for this reviewer that the translation is not quite complete. One would recommend a second edition that might iron out these infelicities especially since the text itself is of paramount importance to later Islamic philosophy. Such an edition might then accommodate some more suggestions that one has.

The non-specialist and non-Islamicist would benefit from a more extensive introduction that introduced the author, his life and times and the development of Islamic philosophical traditions within which he worked. The rather cursory discussion of Mulla Sadra at the beginning of the introduction is insufficient.

The presentation would be enhanced by a more detailed and helpful annotation that indicates common lines of inquiry, suggestions for further research and pointers to paradigmatic approaches in the text, all of which are lacking. It would also be improved by an extensive and instructive glossary of philosophical terms in Arabic, both for the philosopher trying to grasp the termini technici of the work and genre, and for the Islamicist who is looking for guidance in expressing certain terms felicitously into English.

Thus one can only recommend Morewedge's translation with such qualifications. A beginner in Islamic philosophy or philosophy more generally would not find this work accessible and indeed the present translation would be misleading for such an individual. If the translation were completed in a new edition, then it would be a significant event in the study of Islamic philosophy.

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