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Reincarnation or Resurrection of the Soul?

Mullâ Sadrâ's Philosophical Solution to the Dilemma

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Abstract

One of the issues which confronted Mullâ Sadrâ in his philosophical psychology was concerning the post-mortem status of the human soul. The existing competitive conceptions on this issue were four: (a) upon the death of the body the soul also dies together with the body; (b) reincarnation or transmigration of the soul attributed to Pythagoras and Plato and maintained by Ikhwân al-Safâ', some Ismâ'îlî philosophers and Qutb al-Dîn al-Shîrâzî the commentator on Hikmat al-Ishrâq of Suhrawardî; (c) the soul will remain in the physical tomb and will have the fore-taste of bliss or chastisement according to its deeds, and on the Day of Resurrection the elemental physical body will be resurrected together with the soul and recompensed physically. In the Islamic religious language it is phrased as ma'âd jismanî (bodily resurrection). This was the interpretation of the Islamic religious revealed texts

maintained by Mutakallimûn (theologians) foremost among them was al-Ghazzâlî; (d) the resurrection will only be the spiritual resurrection (ma'âd rûhânî) and the recompense will be spiritual maintained by Avicenna and the Muslim Peripatetic philosophers.

Mullâ Sadrâ demonstrated the inadequacy of all the above positions pertaining to the posthumous state of the psychic non-physical being and its bodily resurrection on the basis of his philosophical premises which deal with his concept of matter and form, different levels of body, independence of the imaginative faculty of the soul, the imaginal world ('âlam al-mithâl) or barzakh (the intermediate world), substantial motion of the soul, and oneness and gradation of being. In this philosophy we find that he had reworked the writings of Ibn 'Arabî and Suhrawardî on this issue. Besides the Qur'ân, Hadîth and the sayings of the Shi'ite Imams, he drew on a number of contemporary domains of knowledge such as psychology, medicine, religious experience of death and his personal spiritual experience. So his metaphysics of resurrection goes far beyond the competing theological interpretations and could serve as a key to understand the religious texts dealing with this issue and the death and afterlife.

In this paper, I will briefly discuss various positions indicated above pertaining to the post-mortem state of the soul and body as discussed by Sadrâ and his invalidation of those theories on the philosophical grounds, then I will focus on his theory basing my research mostly on his *Asfâr*, his *Ta'liqah* on *Hikmat al-Ishrâq* of Shihâb al-Dîn al-Suhrawardî and *Mabda' wa al-ma'âd*.

Reincarnation

Belief in the reincarnation of the soul in one or more successive existences which may be human, animal or vegetable is characteristic of Asian religions especially Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. From the account of Muslim philosophers such as the Nâsir-I Khusraw (d. cir. 1094)¹, Shams al-Dîn al-Shahrzûrî (d. after 1288) and Qutb al-Dîn al-Shirâzî (d.1311) we learn that this doctrine was also upheld by Greek sages such as Empedocles, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, some Babylonian and Persian sages. Among the Islamic thinkers prior to Mullâ Sadrâ who were inclined towards the doctrine of reincarnation were: Ikhwân al-Safâ (10th century A.C.), the Ismâ'ilî thinker Abû Ya'qûb al-Sijistânî (d. cir. 1002), Shams al-Dîn Shahrzûrî and Qutb al-Dîn al-Shîrâzî.² Their thesis in favour of reincarnation are as follows:

The first place of descent of the immaterial spiritual substance or the rational soul from the sacred world is the human body. As long as the soul is associated with the body whatever actions a person does gets rooted in his soul and will have their effects in the next life. If the immoral quality dominates on the rational substance, it would necessitate the transference (of the human soul) after the corruption of person's body to the body corresponding to that dark quality either in different classes of human, or animals or even plants. If a person is perfect in good morals he will ascend to the world of Light. Some have upheld the belief in the transmigration (of the soul) in the ascending direction. They claim that the (body) which accepts the fresh effusion from the sacred world is that of the plant. Each soul effused on the plant transfers (after the death of that plant) to its species of different levels from the most imperfect to the most perfect plants until it reaches the level which is adjacent to the lowest level of the animal such as the palm. Then it transfers to the lowest animal level such as worm, and gradually rises up to the higher and higher level until it ascends to the human level. Thus the human soul in the human body has transcended all the levels of plant and animal souls.

Sadrâ invalidates the doctrine of transmigration upheld by its adherents. He argues:

The issue of transference (of human soul to another body after death) is very problematic (to comprehend) and (requires) a subtle way (to perceive). (Due to the lack of that) it has become popular among people that the ancient philosophers, despite their great level in philosophy still maintained (the doctrine of) transmigration. But relating such a doctrine to them is a sheer folly according to us whose basis is not knowing the difference between the 'resurrection' of human souls (after death), and the 'transmigration' of human souls (after death).³ This is an issue which some philosophers have discussed but were not able to solve it. But God gave us inspiration (about its solution) and threw (its light) in my mind which is as follows:

The soul qua soul or Form is temporally created, and its creation from the Principle which is continuously effusive only depends on the preparedness of the receptacle which is the particular body suited for that particular soul. So when the body attains the sound constitution for its reception, then necessarily there effuses from the Donor [of Forms] a governing soul without any delay and hesitation at all. It is like the effusion of light from the sun on the receptacle before it. If we assume that a soul connects to it in the way of transmigration, then this would entail two souls for one body, and that is impossible.

The soul has an essential connection with the body, and the composition between the two is a natural, unified composition; and simultaneously in each one there is a substantial, essential motion. The soul at the beginning of its (temporal) creation is something potential in all that it has from the states, and so is the case with (its) body and both of them emerge simultaneously from potentiality to actuality. The levels of potentiality and actuality in every soul are determined according to the acts and deeds, good or evil it has done which have become actualised in the soul be that fortunate or unfortunate. But once the soul becomes one of the species in actuality, its descending to the level of a pure potentiality is impossible, just as it is impossible for a human body to become sperm and clot after it has reached the completion of [its] physical creation. That is because this is the [ascending] motion [of growth] in its essence and substance, so it is not possible for it to reverse neither by compulsion, nor by nature, nor by will, nor by accident. If a disembodied soul connects to another physical body at its (level of) being foetus or something similar to it, it would entail that the being of one is potential [which is the physical body] and the other is actual [which is the soul], or the thing which is actual has become potential [in order to connect with the potential], and that is impossible. Because the composition between the body and the soul is a natural and unifying composition, so the natural composition between the two things one actual and the other potential is impossible."⁴

Sadrâ's argument for the disapproval of transmigration or reincarnation is based on his concept of intra-substantive movement. According to this doctrine as long the soul is associated with the physical body elemental body it increases in its substance and actuality. So gradually it becomes more powerful in existence and stronger in the acquisition of qualities be they (good or evil). Further, soul and body are both potential to start with and both gradually actualise their potentialities and both move in the vertical ascension. This perfecting movement of being is not prevented, neither by the compulsion of the subject who compels, nor by any force, or any event so long there is the existence of the subject. Since this movement of being is irreversible, it is absurd to suppose that a developed soul after leaving its own body can enter a new undeveloped body and then start developing once again from scratch.⁵

Denial of reincarnation, however, entails certain serious problems, some of which arise from the Qur'ân, and others from the philosophic views concerning the destiny of the undeveloped humans. Among the religious difficulties are the âyât in the Qur'ân such as: "There is no creature walking the earth, and none flying with wings, but they are peoples like you. We have neglected nothing in the Book" [6:38], and "He made some of them apes and pigs and worshipers of idols" [5:65], and "We said to them: Be you apes, miserably slinking" [7:166], and "Their hearing, their eyes and their skins bear witness against them concerning what they have been doing" [41:19]. Sadrâ replies to these difficulties on the basis of his doctrine of intra-substantive movement and the Imaginal World (‘Âlam al-Mithâl). All the undeveloped souls or the souls which have done evil deeds in this life will be resurrected in the subtle body or the body of resurrection in the Imaginal World. This leads us to explain Sadrâ's concept of the Imaginal World.

The Imaginal World

The traditional hierarchy of being in the Islamic philosophical thought which Mullâ Sadrâ has followed consists of triple universe, the sensible physical world (Mulk), the supra-sensible inter-world of the Soul (Malakût or barzakh) also called the Imaginal World (‘âlam al-mithâl), and the world of pure Intelligences or angels (Jabarût). God who is pure Being or Existence is above these levels. To these three universes there corresponds the anthropological triad, body-soul-spirit whose corresponding organs of knowledge are: the senses, the imagination, and the intellect.

Shihâb al-Dîn Suhrawardî (d.1191) is the first Muslim philosopher who determined in philosophical terms the function of the inter-world or the Imaginal World whose true reality, according to him, is perceived by the imaginative faculty at the service of the intellect. He, and subsequently Ibn ‘Arabî (d. 638/1240) gave it a grounding in the objective world and made it an indispensable part of the structure of cosmology and eschatology. It was, however, Mullâ Sadrâ who gave the first systematic and philosophical explanation of this world. It is a world of substantial and autonomous forms and images described as being "in suspense" (mu‘allaqah). By this technical term he meant that they do not have a material substrate (lâ fî mahall) in which they subsist in the manner in which accidents are immanent in a material body, for instance, the colour green in a green body. Rather they subsist in the manner of images in a mirror where the substance of the mirror is not the substrate of the image.

This world is an intermediary between the world of Intellect and the physical world and participates in both in being intelligible and sensible but without physical matter. So it is a barzakh, an inter-world between the two worlds having the characteristics of both. It constitutes cognitive Forms or images, hence called âlam al-mithâl the world of Image (or Imaginal World, mundus imaginalis according to H. Corbin's terminology). This world is a real world according to all visionaries and theosophists including Mullâ Sadrâ. It is a world which has cities, dwelling places, markets, rivers, trees, etc. The bodies in it are all imaginal and subtle. Some are jinn and devils. The inhabitants of this world are embodied spirits having shape, colour, form, extension, movement and conscious beings but without physical matter. This is the world, says Mullâ Sadrâ, whose existence has been vouchsafed by the ancient philosophers and theosophists such as Empedocles, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and others, and all the spiritual travellers in different communities. "I am among those" so says he, "who have conviction in the existence of the Imaginal World as the pillars of Philosophy and intuitive people have established...and as reported by Suhrawardî." But it is not the world of Platonic Ideas (muthul Iflâtunîyah). The latter are

the stable entities of luminous intellects whereas the Forms of the World of Image are "Forms in suspense", some have no light. They are darkness and they constitute Hell, an abode for the evil ones, some have light, and they constitute Heaven, an abode for the felicitous souls who are mediocre in intelligence.⁶

The souls in this Imaginal World have imaginal or subtle bodies. What is this imaginal body constituted of according to Sadrâ? We turn next to this issue.

The Subtle Body of Resurrection

According to Sadrâ, the souls which have become perfect in becoming acquired intellect join the spiritual or noetic world after the death of the physical body. But what is the plight of the mediocre souls? Sadrâ has invalidated the doctrine of reincarnation on the philosophical grounds as mentioned earlier, so what happens to the mediocre imperfect souls? The imperfect and mediocre souls though they separate from the sensory (elemental bodies), they do not separate from the imaginal or subtle body.⁷

The imaginal or subtle body or the body of the resurrection, according to Sadrâ, is intermediate (between the sensible and intellectual; or noetic bodies) and combine the two worlds in being immaterial and corporeal. Many inherent qualities of the bodies of (this) world are negated from them. It is like a shadow inherent in the spirit, like an apparition and a similitude for it. Rather, both are united with each other in existence, contrary to these bodies it is not subject to annihilation and corruption. This body is nothing but the imaginative faculty of man which according to Sadrâ is not an organic faculty linked to the material body, so it is not subject to perishing along with the body. Therefore, once separated from this world, the soul again has the perception of individual and conscious senses which are hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch. It also has a faculty of causing movement. This entire collection, however, is reduced to one faculty which is the Imagination and which is completely alive. Because it has ceased to disperse itself among the different thresholds which are the five senses of the physical body, and because it has ceased to be entreated by the needs of the physical body which is prey to the vicissitudes of the external world, the imaginative perception can finally demonstrate its essential superiority to sense perception. In it are stored the 'semantic effects'. I mean, whatever one has said or done whether internally or externally in this physical life has left its mark in it. This is the subtle envelope of the soul which is independent of the physical body. It is a subtle or imaginal body of the soul, "woven" of man's actions and is identical to the physical body in form. So once the soul separates from the physical body, it is not disembodied but is embodied by this imaginal subtle body and travels to the Intermediate World (barzakh), the Imaginal World and enters a realm which conforms to its inner nature.⁸

According to Sadrâ the misunderstanding in comprehending the words of the philosophers such as Empedocles, Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato to be alluding to transmigration is due to confusing resurrection with reincarnation, and due to the heedlessness and ignorance regarding the reality of the next world intermediary between the world of (physical) nature and the world of Intellect in which the mankind is resurrected according to the Forms corresponding to their moral qualities. This is given in detail by them, is established by them, and is well-known among them. They have established that for every moral quality which is blame-worthy, and the wicked form deeply rooted in the soul there is a body of the kind particular to that moral quality. For instance the character-trait of pride and rashness

correspond to the bodies of lions; viciousness and perfidy correspond to the bodies of foxes and their likes; imitation and mockery to the bodies of monkeys and their likes; vanity to the peacocks; greed to the pigs, etc.

Just as for every wicked moral quality there are particular species of animals corresponding to that moral quality, likewise corresponding to each degree whether strong or weak there is a particular body of those animals which participate in that moral quality, for instance a huge body for the strong passion, a small body if it is weak. At times one person may have multiple kinds of wicked traits (each one) at different level. According to the strength and weakness of every wicked moral quality in his soul, the way the rest of the strong and weak wicked moral qualities are ordered, and the difference in their multiple compositions which only God the Exalted can encompass, is the difference in the connection of his soul whether strong in wickedness, or weak (in wickedness) to some kind of Forms (or subtle bodies) of wicked animals. Also, the connection of some individuals of one kind differs from the other. Further, if that moral quality gets eliminated completely, or the strength of its degree diminishes, his soul transfers to another moral quality following it in wickedness in a species (of animal), or to a degree of another species of animal corresponding to it until all the wicked forms in his soul are eliminated if they are capable of being eliminated. If they can't, then they remain in it and it transfers to bodies corresponding to them one after the other for multiple periods of time until God wills (that to end). All this is sound and straight according to us but in not the emergent state of this world, but in the next world, as the Exalted said: "As often as their skins are well-consumed We shall give them new skins in exchange, so that they may taste the chastisement" [4:56]. It is an indication to the change of their imaginal bodies created by the soul, and not as the transmigratationists claim that it is the transfer of the souls in the world of corporeal extension from the physical corporeal matter to another physical one.⁹

Hence in order to understand what constitutes the essence of a body, Sadrâ argues that it is not necessary to limit the act of existence to the sole level of the physical world of sensible perception. It is necessary to consider it beginning from the simple element, then to traverse the successive metamorphoses which lead it from the mineral state to the vegetal state, then to the animal state, then to the state of a living and speaking body capable of comprehending the spiritual realities. There is the material body, but there is also the psychic or subtle body and a spiritual or noetic body. It is the latter two, that is, the subtle body and the noetic body which has a future palingenesis and resurrection.¹⁰

So the soul becomes separated from the natural powers (of the elemental body at death) but not the imaginal faculty, from the external (physical) senses and not the internal senses. It has perceptions of images of particular things; it has the faculty of imagination arising from its essence. The soul in its essence has hearing, sight, the inner power and the power of movement. But its power of movement and its power of perception refer to one thing. All the external powers are the shadows of those which are in the substance of the soul from the dimensions and modes which are existent in its essence as one collective existence. Its shadows are extended, multiplied and spread in the matter of the body, and take shape by the shapes of the limbs and organs. So it has in its essence a seeing eye, a hearing ear, and taste, smell, touch and active power whose nature is to represent the truths as presential, to witness them as what is conceived now in this world.

Thus, as long as man is present in this world, states Sadrâ, his status is that of a visible thing corresponding to the nature of the material body. It is this body which is visible, and it is through the body that actions and practical effects are accomplished. The soul and the spirit are concealed in the existence of the body, both of them hidden beneath the veil of the physical body. When God wishes to transfer the soul from this world to the interworld (barzakh), He causes the body to die through the

agency of the Angel of Death. It is in that world the soul with its body acquired by it or the body of resurrection become visible. It is this which is manifested in the interworld and this itself which configures its proper form (its subtle body) corresponding to its ethos, to its ways of being. It is this exitus which is the *qiyamah sughra* or minor resurrection. Born into this inter-world, the soul begins its second growth, the growth which is proper to a soul (*nash'at thâniyah nafsâniyah*). It is this then which is the manifest and the visible, and this itself which configures its proper form (its subtle body) corresponding to its ethos, to its ways of being and of comporting itself. This is why the inter-world constitutes a distinct world between this world and the other world. It is an Abode which persists for a time (*dâr al-qarâr*, 40:42) as the dawn occupies a time between the night and the day. It is the abode of the Souls and the Spirits which have been transferred until the consummation of the time when the final Hour shall sound, the Hour of the Great Convulsion (*al-Tâmmât al-kubrâ*, 78:34).¹¹

The growth of the soul in the inter-world is thus a second growth or the second emergent state which is achieved following upon its growth in this world. For this reason the inter-world, the *barzakh*, comprises both a paradise and a hell. From this moment the soul is either one or the other along with the body which it has constituted by its acts whose organ of substantiation is the imaginative power. The consummation of the time of the inter-world, according to Sadrâ, marks the advent of the "major Resurrection" which consists in the transfer of the soul from the abode of the inter-world to the abode of the Reality (*haqîqah*), where the act of being attains the full verity of its essence.

The "minor resurrection" according to Sadrâ is the passage of the soul from this world to the inter-world which he calls the "eighth clime" following Suhrawardî. It is this inter-world which will be the sight of the "major resurrection". This interpretation indicates how the eschatological events announced in the Qur'an and the Hadîth should be read and understood according to Sadrâ. The passage from the inter-world to the world of *Haqîqah*, is analogous to the exitus from this world into the inter-world. The Refulgent Brightness of the first sounding of the Trumpet of Seraphieal confounds the souls in the inter-world while the second resuscitates them to the other world. After this development the soul dies to the inter-world, in order to be reborn in the world of the Spirit or Noetic world. There then begins its new growth in the Spirit (*nash'at rûhâniyah 'aqlîyah*). A Qur'anic verse declares: "Then God causes the second growth to grow" (29: 19).¹²

Thus according to Sadrâ, through the birth and growth in the inter-world followed by the birth and growth in the other world (*âkhirah*), the phases of the *ma'âd jismânî* or bodily resurrection are accomplished. On the first occasion, that of its exitus from this world, the soul is resurrected in the inter-world with its subtle psycho-spiritual body, that body which is constituted for it by its own being and action and which pursues its growth in the inter-world, the world of the Soul. This is the *Qiyâmat Sughrâ*, the minor resurrection. Then, at the time of the *Qiyâmat Kubrâ* the major resurrection, the body of the resurrection attains the stature of the body of spirit. Thus the body phases through the three states that Mullâ Sadrâ describes elsewhere, which correspond to the three degrees of human reality according to the gnostic conception: the physical man, the psychic man, and the spiritual man.¹³ This interpretation of the resurrection of the soul and body differs entirely from the theologians' interpretation, to which we turn next.

Muslim Theologians on the Resurrection of the Dead

As an example we will give the view of Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî (d. 1209) which in general is the view of the Muslim scholastic theologians especially the Ash'arites who believe in a physical afterlife. According to him the recurrence of the destroyed body is not impossible because if not the whole of the body then its certain essential parts survive. A body has no other form except the continuity of this form. Then on the Day of Resurrection God combines the separated parts of the body dispersed in numerous places and in different directions of the world, a form similar to the original form of the body emerges and the soul gets attached to it once again and gets its reward of punishment according to its actions whilst on this earth. Râzî has based his view on his commentary on a number of âyât from the Qur'ân which also indicates the Ash'arite theological point of view about the resurrection and the after life.¹⁴

Sadrâ has several objections to this theory. First, they imply that life is not something substantive but the category of relation and consists merely in relationships of bodily parts. Secondly, if those disintegrated bodily parts still retain the capacity to become that body once again and should come together once again by chance the dead person would become alive while he is still dead! Thirdly, this doctrine leads to the acceptance of transmigration in essence. For if the capacity of the bodily parts to become that original body once again remains unabated, the dead person would become alive while he is dead, as we have just said. But if these bodily parts have lost that capacity which comes back through a new factor, then this new factor would call for a new soul and if we suppose that the old soul has also returned to it, then there will be simultaneously two souls in one body.¹⁵ Fourthly, since at the dissolution of the composition of the body and the corruption of the bodily faculties the faculty of remembrance will have perished according to him, so how will the soul recognize its body? And even when we suppose that memory comes back, the existence of mere memory is not a sure criterion of actual identity, (just as loss of memory does not necessarily mean that actual identity has been lost). This is because for identity, the one to one relationship must exist not only from the side of the soul to this body, but also from the side of this body to this body.¹⁶

Most basically the theologians according to Sadrâ were searching in the Hereafter for an elemental material body.¹⁷ The Ash'arite theologian Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî, according to him, went to the greatest lengths to show on the Day of Judgment the bodies will be re-gathered from these elemental material parts and each soul will enter its own body. He thought that this was required by the teaching of the Qur'ân. According to Sadrâ, nothing was further from the truth than this claim, for the Qur'ân repeatedly tells us that the afterlife is a "new creation, new level of existence (khalq jadîd; nash'a jadîdah). This clearly means that we cannot look for a reappearance of earthly elemental bodies there.¹⁸

Further, according to Sadrâ, the theologians were trying to locate afterlife at a point of physical time and physical location, whereas the Qur'ân, with its doctrine of a "new form of existence", was very clear that it is another kind of existence, radically different from the earthly existence; it is the "inwardness" of this kind of external existence and is beyond physical space and time.¹⁹ The Qur'ân, according to his interpretation, uses two types of argument to establish afterlife, both for the soul and the body, and these proofs possess complete demonstrative force in this field, but these proofs have not the slightest tendency toward a resurrection of the body in its elemental, earthly form. One of these two types of proof concentrates on the developmental and purposive side of human existence: it points out how man started as an embryo and then developed into a foetus, then a body, then a youth, and then a mature man. This shows that the Qur'ân wants to tell us that man even in this life passes constantly through new levels of existence, and that in the Hereafter he will have a new mode of life which would be supra-material in space and time. The Qur'ân also tells in the context of the creation of the heavens and the earth that God can create things, not necessarily out of preceding matter and its potentialities, but by a

simple act of creation just as the heavens and this world as a whole have been created, not out of a pre-existing matter but all at once. So does the soul create its images and imaginal body, not out of elemental matter but by a simple act of creation, because the soul belongs to the Divine World in its substance, that is why the Qur'ân speaks of the creation of the other world all at once "like the twinkling of an eye" (Qur'ân, 16:77; 54:50).²⁰

One of the principles established by Sadrâ in connection with the resurrection in the next life is that it is the soul (the Form) which is the principle of individuation and not the body. Hence, even if the parts of the body change, as happens in the course of life with the advent of old age, and even if the present body is exchanged (permuted with the body of resurrection (jism mahshûrî) at the time of the Qiyâmah, still the soul remains the same soul. This body of the resurrection is identical to the earthly body so much so as Sadra states, "if you were to see him you would say, 'I have seen so-and so-precisely the same as he was in the world'".²¹ It is the same body as the former one in respect to the Form which is precisely the soul, but not the same with respect to material. So both propositions are true; it is the same, and it is not the same. Here, then, is reversal of the principle which makes matter the principle of individuation. Without this reversal the identity of the body of resurrection would be inconceivable, for this body is the achievement of the triple growth of man as body-soul-spirit.

Philosophers Avicenna and Suhrawardî on the Resurrection

We finally come to the point of view of some Muslim philosophers especially Avicenna (d. 1037) and Shihâb al-Dîn al-Suhrawardî on resurrection whose views have been critiqued by Sadrâ. In brief, Avicenna maintains that philosophically he cannot prove the resurrection of the physical body on the Day of Resurrection, because once the elemental body dies and is annihilated it cannot be revived. Abu Hâmid al-Ghazzâlî (d.1111) accused him of disbelief in the resurrection which is one of the cardinal principle of Islam and condemned him as infidel²² which was a misunderstanding on the part of Ghazzâlî. For Avicenna never denied the resurrection. He maintained that soul is something spiritual or intellectual (or noetic) in essence. The body becomes non-existent in its form and accidents at the severance of the attachment of the soul from it, so the individual physical body is not resurrected because that which becomes non-existent does not resurrect. The perfect soul returns to the world of Intellect. Therefore all the promised matters in the Qur'ân regarding the delights and torture in the after life are the metonym for the intellectual delights and tortures for the mediocre, imperfect and evil souls. They resemble the dream delights and tortures.

Avicenna narrates from a philosopher, who according to him had substance in his opinion, that when the imperfect and evil souls separate from their bodies, and they are attached to corporeal bodily pleasures so they have no attachment to that which is higher than the physical bodies which could necessarily occupy their attention away from the material bodily affairs. For their souls the adornment is only for their bodies and they do not know other than the material bodies and the bodily things. It is possible that some kind of their yearning may make them attached to some bodies whose characteristic is that the souls get attached to them because they seek that by nature. So they attach to some celestial body and use that body for the possibility of imagination and imagine the forms which are in their estimative faculty; (these are the forms) of their conviction. If their conviction in itself and their acts are good and requisite of felicity, they see something beautiful, and imagine it; they imagine that they are dead and entombed, and (imagine) all that is in their conviction [regarding the reward] for the good (human beings).

Further, he said:

Those who are contrary to the (above) group are the evil ones. They too have estimative torture. They will imagine that they are suffering from the punishment about which the Tradition (sunnah) to which they belong has said regarding the punishment to the evil ones. Every group from the people of felicity and torture increases in its state by connecting to that which is from its genus. So the really felicitous ones derive delight by being proximate (to their kind); and each one intellects its essence and the essence of that to which it is connected. Now the connection with each other is not like the connection of the physical bodies (to each other) where the places become constricted due to (the bodies) being over-crowded, rather it is like the connection of an intelligible with an intelligible which increases in width by over-crowding." 23

Suhrawardî also accepted the above view with a difference that the body of a sphere below the sphere of moon and above the sphere of fire which is the intermediate world between the world of ether and the world of elements is the substratum for their imaginations by which they imagine their evil deeds in the images of fire, stinging scorpions, biting snakes, eating [the bitter fruit of the infernal] Zaqqûm (tree of hell), etc.

Sadrâ' criticism on the above views is even if the body of sphere like a mirror were to be the substratum for their imaginations, the imaginative objects are the very Forms existent in it and imaginalized in its soul and they are none but the imaginations of the spheres and not of the ones imaginations of the human souls.

Further, he stated, that it is impossible that the relation of the higher body to its soul is like the relation of the substance of the brain to us, and that it represents the imprints and the Forms of imagination other than what its noble higher soul creates. According to this assumption it is impossible that in the higher bodies there are evil, painful Forms and dark, chilling, tormenting imaginations by which the wretched ones will be punished after death. What will torment these souls will be nothing but their wicked patterns (of thoughts), false imaginations, invalid convictions, and evil views not in conformity with the truth of the matter (al-wâqi'ah). Because that which is generated in the receptacle which is extremely pure and clean such as the higher celestial bodies by the active agent which is very noble and sanctified could only be true Forms and images which conform to the reality of things in themselves.²⁴

The truth according to him was the delectable Forms for the blessed ones and the painful Forms for the wretched ones in the next emergent state as promised by the master of the Divine Law (Sharî'ah) and warned about them occur in the next emergent state and in the human soul. Those blissful or tormenting Forms do not inhere in one of the (heavenly) bodies, nor do they subsist in the physical bodily faculty. Rather they subsist by the essence of the soul. Their loci of manifestation is the soul and their manifestation is by the way of act and effect, just as the forms and apparitions in the mirror do not subsist in it but their loci of manifestation is that mirror by the way of receptivity [of the mirror].

In sum, according to him, the Forms of resurrection by which there is the bliss of the Paradise for the fortunate ones, and Gehenna of the wretched ones are not imprinted in the body of the sphere or of not-sphere, but they are the Forms in suspense existent for the soul and from the soul in (its) other

dimension and they are a degree of deeds and acts created by it during its abode in this world; those Forms in suspense are the fruits of the moral qualities and ingrained habits in its essence. 25

Conclusion

From the brief discussion above on four positions given by Mullâ Sadrâ on the resurrection one can recapitulate thus: Sadrâ has attempted to understand the eschatological ideas of the Qur'ân, the paradise and hell, in a word bodily resurrection (*ma'âd jismânî*) without falling into the literalism of the non-philosophical theologians, or into the allegories of the rationalist philosophers. By establishing the ontology of the inter-world or *barzakh* along with the sensible and intelligible universe he has attempted to understand the texts of the divine Revelation concerning the eschatology based on this ontology. He has also attempted to distinguish the between *tanâsukh* (reincarnation or transmigration) of the soul attributed to Empedocles, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, some Babylonian, Indian, and Persian sages in the current usage, and *ma'âd* (resurrection) of the soul and shown how one must understand the *ma'âd* in such a way that the idea of *tanâsukh* (transmigration) acquires a new meaning.

Notes

1 Nâsir-I Khusraw. *Khvân al-Ikhvân*, ed. Y. Khashshâb, (Cairo, 1930), pp. 116-117.

2 Ibid; *Ikhvân al-Safâ. Rasâ'il*, (Beirut, 1957), vol. 1:137; vol. 3:64; Shams al-Dîn al-Shaharzûrî. *Sharh Hikmat al-Ishrâq*, ed. H. Ziai, (Tehran, 1372 H.S.) pp. 521-531; Qutb al-Dîn al-Shîrâzî. *Sharh Hikmat al-Ishrâq*, lithograph edition (1313 A.H.), pp. 485-496.

3 Mullâ Sadrâ (*Sadr al-Dîn Muhammad ibn Ibrâhim al-Shîrâzî*). *Asfâr=al*

Hikmah al-Muta'âlîyah fî al-Asfâr al-'Aqliyah al-Arba', (Beirut, 1981), vol. 9:26-27.

4 Ibid, pp.9, 3.

5 Ibid, pp. 16-18

6 *Asfâr*, vol. 1:302.

7 Ibid, vol. 9:28

8 Mullâ Sadrâ's glosses on the margins of *Sharh Hikmat al-Ishrâq* by Qutb al-Dîn al-Shîrâzî lithograph edition (1313 A.H.), pp 493, 509; his *Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-Karîm*, edited by M. Khvâjû'î, (Qum, 1366 H.S.), vol. 1:298; *Asfâr*, vol. 9:372.

9 Mullâ Sadrâ. *Asfâr...* vol. 9:30-31.

10 *Sharh Usûl min al-Kâfî*, *kitâb al-Tawhîd*. Edited by M. Khvâjû'î (Tehran, 1367 H.S.), pp. 206-207.

11 Mullâ Sadrâ's glosses, *op.cit.* p. 518, also its translation in French by H. Corbin in *Sohravardi: Le Livre De La Sagesse Orientale* (Paris, 1986), p. 665. Some note-worthy works in this area are: H. Corbin. "The Theory of Visionary Knowledge in Islamic Philosophy" trans. by L. Sherrard in *Temenos*, vol. 8: 224-237; and his, *Terre Célestial et Corps de Résurrection De l'Iran Mazdéen á l'Iran Shi'ite* (Paris, 1960); English

trans. *Spiritual Body and Celestial earth from Mazdean Iran to Shi'ite Iran*, by N. Pearson, (Bollingen Series XCI:2, Princeton, 1977); W. Chittick, *Imaginal World: Ibn al-'Arabî and the problem of religious Diversity*, (New York, 1994).

12 Mullâ Sadrâ's glosses, op.cit. p. 518, also its translation in French by H. Corbin in *Sohravardi: Le Livre De*, op.cit, p. 665; Latimah-Parvin Peerwani, "Mullâ Sadrâ on Imaginative Perception" in *Transcendent Philosophy*, vol. I: no.2; pp. 81-96.

13 C.f. note 8, *Sharh Usûl...*p. 206-207; H. Corbin. *En Islam iranien*, Tome 1V (Paris: 1972), p. 116.

14 Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî. *Tafsir al-kabîr*. (Beirut, 1990), the following âyât, 22:5; 23:15,82; 37:16; 56:41, 63-64,68,71-72; 75:37; 86:5-8.

15 Mullâ Sadrâ. *Asfâr*, vol. 9:164-165; 168-170.

16 Ibid. 9:171.

17 Ibid. 9:203.

18 Ibid. 9:153,63,180.

19 Ibid. 9:180.

20 F. Rahman. *Philosophy of Mullâ Sadrâ* (Albany, 1975), pp. 247-257; Sadrâ. Ibid. 9:159, 161.

21 Mullâ Sadrâ. Ibid. vol. 9:190.

22 Al-Ghazali. *Tahafut al-Falasifah*[Incoherence of the philosophers], trans. by S.A.Kamali, (Lahore, 1963) pp. 229ff..

23 Mullâ Sadrâ. *Asfâr*, 9:149.

24 Ibid. 9:149.

25 Ibid. 9:44-45.

The Epistemology of the Mystics (Part one)

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Abstract

Issues concerning the epistemology of the mystics have, though not by this name, been discussed in mystical texts. In the present article these problems shall be extracted, classified and presented within the context of Islamic mysticism. To attain this aim the author first quotes certain passages from mystical texts and then continues his discussion by quoting A'yn al-Quzat-e Hamadani, the twelfth

century mystic. At the beginning of the article the manner in which the subject is treated is briefly discussed and the limitations, possibilities and difficulties of the task are briefly set forth.

Introduction

Since epistemology, as an extensive, independent and serious field of intellectual endeavour, is a product of the efforts of modern Western thinkers and these issues have been, irrespective of our wishes, transmitted to us and drawn our attention to their fruits and consequences, we cannot remain indifferent to them. Furthermore, since we must begin our investigation into any field of knowledge by assessing what we have inherited from the past, we must first see what our predecessors have accomplished in the field of epistemology. Although Muslim thinkers of the past did not give a particular title to epistemological problems, they contemplated many issues in this category and set forth their views concerning them. For example, investigations by Ibn Sina and others into such topics as definition and proof contain significant epistemological points and the same may also be said of theological discussions about speculation and the statements made by mystics concerning intuitive perception.

What shall be presented to the reader in this and the following articles under the title of the epistemology of the mystics is an investigation and analysis of direct and intuitive inner perception of reality, a perception and knowledge that Islamic mysticism sets forth as its final goal and destination. In these articles we shall discuss the principles, foundations, origin and characteristics of mystical knowledge, to the degree possible and based on statements made by Muslim mystics. Moreover, in order to remain within the limits necessitated by the article and because of the need to avoid repetition, we shall refrain from discussing peripheral issues.

Method of Discussion

Since it lies outside the realm of human consciousness and self-awareness, direct inner knowledge is difficult to discuss and investigate. When we speak of a method of discussion we do not mean that there is a particular method that makes investigation of this topic possible and that we aim to present it here. What is meant is that we must first indicate, to the degree possible, the manner in which we plan to pursue this investigation, begin our discussions and reach conclusions. To clarify this issue, we must first consider the following points:

The first point is that all arts and sciences have gone through different stages of development before reaching their present state, and it is certain that they shall not stop at this particular stage, but shall continue to develop and enter still farther stages. Even if we do not accept that such evolutionary development exists in the case of fundamental truths and principles, it is undoubtedly true when it comes to the manner in which we understand, appreciate and make use of these principles and realities. Thus, not only arts and sciences, but also philosophical and mystical forms of knowledge are subject to change and transformation.

It is undoubtedly true that irfan and tasawuf, too, since their appearance in the Muslim world, have undergone numerous changes until they have appeared in their present forms. Without question, the mysticism of Ibrahim Adham (d.762), Rabe'eh (d. 736) and others like them is different from that of

Sarraj Tusi (d. 979), Kalabadi (d. 981) and other such individuals, and the mysticism of this group is again different in many aspects from that of such mystics as Ibn Arabi (d. 1240) and Mawlawi (d. 1273). Another point to keep in mind in this regard is that the change and transformation that gives rise to different degrees and levels is in some ways historical and in others not. It is historical in that this evolution has, in any case, taken place in the course of history. In another sense, however, as is the case with other fields of knowledge, different levels of mystical insight and accomplishment can be found in different individuals in any given historical period. For example, in the seventh or tenth centuries there were individuals who were also on the same level as Ibn Adham, just as there were mystics who can be compared to Ibn Arabi and Mawlawi. Furthermore, every seeker experiences different stages of mystical illumination in the course of his life.

Taking into consideration the points made above, our discussion shall take the following form:

In order to delineate the foundations of the epistemological system of the mystics (intuitive inner perception), we shall make use of statements made by all mystics, irrespective of whether this system is fully expressed by a particular mystic or not. This is so because, for a variety of reasons, it is unreasonable to expect such statements to be comprehensive. These reasons are well known to those who are familiar with the manner in which mystics express themselves. Some of these reasons, in brief, are as follows:

The fact that not all mystics attain every spiritual station

The fact that mystical experiences and states cannot be described in words

The fundamentally secretive nature of direct intuitive perception

The commitment of mystics to refrain from divulging secrets revealed to them

The indirect nature of the language used by mystics

The relative dominance of the following factors in statements made by mystics:

The spiritual state and station of the speaker

The spiritual state and station of the listener

The rhetorical and linguistic abilities of the speaker and his ability to choose appropriate terms and expressions

Delineation and classification of these principles and bases is based on the possibility of such delineation and not its precedence. It follows, then, that in many instances we have been obliged to innovate and speculate. Thus, accepting due responsibility for all shortcomings and faults, we expect and shall be most appreciative of the sympathy and kind guidance of scholars in the field.

We shall discuss the following topics:

Direct intuitive perception. Here we shall define direct inner perception, delineate its limits and describe its foundations.

Characteristics of direct intuitive perception, including certitude, clarity, being inexpressible, etc.

The relationship between direct intuitive knowledge and the speculative sciences, including the relationship of intuitive knowledge to experimental science, points of agreement and disagreement, the possibility of mutual criticism, the basis for mutual criticism.

Points of departure for attaining direct intuitive perception, including the ascending and descending curves, the cause of the effects of Being, Comprehensive Being, etc.

Methods of attaining mystical knowledge, including seeking, points of departure, asceticism, stages of the quest and signs of spiritual progress.

Presentation of the written and spoken words of the mystics

In this regard it is first of all necessary to consider a selection of statements made by mystics. This has two benefits: the first is that we enter the subject to be discussed through the description provided by the mystics, and the second is that we may refer to these statements in our later discussions.

A'yn Al-quzat and Epistemological Problems

Abu al-Ma'ali Abdullah bin Abu Bakr, known as A'yn al-Quzat, was born in Hamadan. Because of his prodigious intellect and unceasing effort he succeeded, while still young, in mastering the normal sciences of his age, such as mathematics, the natural sciences, divinities, Islamic law (fiqh) and traditions (hadith). However, he abandoned all these sciences for the sake of tasawuf (Sufism) or Islamic mysticism. His two most important works on this subject are Zubdat al-Haqayeq and Tamhidat. In spite of its brevity, Zubdat al-Haqayeq contains valuable material dealing with mystical epistemology. For this reason we shall first quote a selection from this book.

The reason for our choosing A'yn al-Quzat as the first mystic to consider is that he was the first person to deal with epistemological issues in a clear and detailed manner. The issues he investigates early in the 12th century were delved into about one and half centuries later by such commentators on, and masters of, Islamic mysticism, as Sadr al-Din Qunavi. A'yn al-Quzat lived for thirty-three years. Like all others who tried to go beyond the accepted dogma of the age, he was subjected to baseless charges, one of which was that he claimed to be God. He was tried and convicted, skinned alive, hanged and then burned.

In the Introduction to Zubdat al-Haqayeq A'yn al-Quzat states that before writing this book his writings were devoted to explicating Islamic doctrines by relying on the rules of logic. This, he says, he did on the behest of his friends. He maintains, however, that this volume was written after he had attained direct intuitive insight into spiritual realities. He goes on to say that in this book he intends to explain the doctrines of Islam, especially the issue of prophecy, in the light of mystical knowledge. Confessing that such intuitive spiritual insights cannot be expressed in words, he promises to do his utmost to set them forth in a clear and understandable manner. If he fails to do so, he begs the reader to excuse him for two reasons. His first excuse is that he did not have sufficient time and opportunity to search for the most precise and appropriate words. Of course, no matter how precise and well-chosen such terms may be they still could not express the spiritual truths the author wishes to convey. His second excuse is that this text is intended for those who, having already laboured long and hard to understand philosophical and rational concepts, now possess the ability to comprehend the spiritual realities these terms allude to. Ultimately, two motives lie behind the writing of this book: first, the urging of friends, and second, the desire to show the path to intuitive and direct inner realisation to the seekers of truth, so that they may not content themselves with rational and intellectual knowledge alone, mistaking conceptual understanding for Reality.¹

Now let us take a look at a brief selection from the writings and sayings of Ayn al-Quzat:

Inner Illumination

As long as you are trying to comprehend eternal and divine Knowledge through the exercise of your reason all your efforts will be fruitless, since its true understanding depends on the appearance of an inner illumination... This light arises in the individual when he has entered a realm beyond reason and thought (the domain of metareason). Do not imagine this to be impossible, since beyond the boundaries of the reason there lie innumerable worlds, the true number of which is known only by God. Things perceived in these realms are in lesser need of rational explanation and proof, since he who sees something with his own eyes does not require logical proof of its existence. It is the blind who is in need of such proof. For example, one may know the existence of something by touching it. However, the only thing that reason can ascertain in this regard is the existence of the object that we have touched. It cannot, for instance, tell us what color it is, since the reason can make no headway in such cases.²

The Limits of the Capability of Thought and Inner Illumination

The original purpose of reason (khirad) is to comprehend axioms or first principles that do not require a process of rational or logical analysis to be understood. It is unable, however, to grasp complicated theoretical problems that require complex logical arguments. It is like the case of the sense of touch. The function of this sense is to perceive all those things that can be touched. If a blind person tries to use it to perceive an object of sight, he will fail because the task required would be beyond its capacity... We can understand from this that in order to understand complex theoretical and speculative issues we must rely on a faculty of metareason that has no need of logical reasoning and thought and whose relation to these issues is like that of intelligence to axioms or first principles.³

Insight (basirat) is a Faculty like the Power of Sight or Poetic Taste and Aptitude

The relation between this faculty and what it perceives is like that of the poetic sense when it perceives proportion and rhythm in a poem. Just as the poetic sense perceives harmony without requiring any preliminary logical analysis, metareason also has no need of such devices to evaluate the truth or fallacy of complex theoretical issues, in contrast to the ways of reason and thought and the manner in which the blind try to understand objects of sight...⁴

The Difference between the Mystic and the Scholar in Perceiving Supreme Reality

One of the characteristics of metareason is that its perception of the supreme Truth is accompanied by an intense ecstasy inexpressible in words. Human reason also enjoys its comprehension of God's existence. However, this pleasure is not derived from perception of God's beauty, but rather from intellectual knowledge of the existence of such beauty, just as reason enjoys its grasp of such other fields of knowledge as arithmetic, mathematics and medicine. The function of reason here may be compared to that of the eye in relation to sweet-smelling things. Although the eye may perceive the fine colours of those objects, there is no comparison between its enjoyment and that of the sense of smell. It is only natural that what the eye perceives from sweet-smelling objects does not produce the sort of delight and pleasure that is brought about by the sensations produced by the sense of smell. In the case

of the rational apprehension of God also, it may be said that it lacks the intense pleasure and pain that fills the heart of the mystic, and that reason merely takes delight in its knowledge.⁵

Attachment of the Mystic to Divine Beauty

When the seeker's spiritual eye is opened, divine truths shall be revealed to him in accordance with his level of spiritual aptitude and development. As more such truths are revealed to him, his familiarity with, and love for, the heavenly realm and God's beauty and blessings increase. This process is accompanied by a parallel decrease in the seeker's familiarity with, and love for, the material world. Of course, this familiarity and attachment is incomparable to any other, and we use such commonly used terms as familiarity, love, beauty and so on. Be on your guard so as not to be deluded by the superficial similarity of the words, for if you are not careful, they shall mislead you so that instead of apprehending the truth of the matter you are forced to content yourself with nothing more than illusory concoctions of impotent reason.⁶

Faith in the Realm of Knowledge, Guardianship and Prophecy

He who has not set foot within the realm of metareason will not be persuaded to believe in it by reasoning and rational arguments. It is also impossible for such a person to believe in prophecy, since this is also related to metareason and is even above it. Thus, he who does not admit the existence of the realm of metareason cannot believe in prophecy either. The same is also true of the person who does not believe in the realm of guidance and guardianship (wilayat). This world is above the world of reason but below the realm of prophecy. Even if such a person states or thinks that he believes in prophecy he is mistaken, for in truth he is like a blind man who feels an object of a particular colour and believes that by touching it he has experienced colour and perceived its true nature. The fact of the matter is, of course, that there is no relationship whatsoever between his experience and perception of colour.⁷

Faith in Prophecy is Identical to Faith in the Invisible Realm

In the eyes of reason, faith in prophecy means faith in the existence of the invisible world. Thus, if reason takes this invisible realm to be similar to the material world it is committing a serious error.⁸

The Method of Reinforcing Faith in Prophecy

The way, for those who seek the wisdom of metareason, like those who lack a taste for poetry, is to associate with those who have intuitive spiritual sensibility, so that they may make headway in their search. For it is indeed the case that many people who have no poetic taste and cannot tell the difference between prose and poetry believe that there are others who do. This firm belief in something they have no direct experience of is the result of associating with men of taste who have not been denied this capacity.⁹

Attributes of God From the Perspectives of Reason and Intuitive Insight

Divine attributes are generally of two kinds. The first category includes such attributes that can be found in other creatures as well, such as wisdom and creativeness. Reason and thought can comprehend this class of attributes. The other category includes those divine attributes the likes of which cannot be found in other creatures. These attributes include majesty, greatness, beauty and elegance. The true nature of these attributes cannot be grasped by reason, since no matter how much it learns about them it would still be far away from their reality. Thus, in order to perceive such attributes we must rely on knowledge that can only be provided by metareason.

Be careful not to be fooled by appearances, for it is the nature of man to pretend to know everything when he, in fact, knows nothing. Not admitting his ignorance, he interferes in everything irrespective of whether he is qualified to do so or not. An example of this is the way in which the faculty of imagination interferes in matters that rightfully fall within the jurisdiction of reason.

To prove the illegitimate interference of reason it would suffice for you to ask the following question from anyone who claims to understand divine beauty: "Men abandon lesser beauty for the sake of greater beauty, so why do you not abandon things of lesser beauty for the sake of that eternal beauty, while the most beautiful of worldly objects is the ugliest of things in comparison with it?"¹⁰

Love Can only be Understood Through Intuitive Insight

One of the characteristics of the realm of metareason is love. Those who have experienced love know that reason is unable to comprehend it, since the lover's experience cannot be transmitted to those who have not themselves experienced love. The same is also true of such other emotions as anger, happiness, fear and shame. Reason is able to grasp information but is unable to understand emotions and experiences. It is indeed true that reason perceives the existence of such feelings and experiences, but can never experience and perceive them in the same manner that those who have actually felt them do.¹¹

Realisation of the Incapacity of the Reason Through Logic and Intuitive Insight

The more one partakes of the wisdom of metareason the more one becomes cognisant of one's inability to comprehend God's essence and attributes. The last stage of intellectual development is the one in which reason becomes aware of this incapacity, and this realisation is the preliminary indication that one is approaching the realm of metareason. However, there is a huge difference between understanding this impotence by going through a process of logical reasoning and comprehending it through direct intuitive perception. The case here is exactly the same as the imagination's awareness of its incapacity to understand intellectual truths and reason's comprehension of this inability on the part of the faculty of imagination....¹²

The Power of Reason

...Be careful not to hurriedly deny what your feeble reason cannot understand, since reason has been created to perceive only some creatures. Just as the eye is able to perceive only certain objects and cannot perceive sounds, smells or tastes, reason too is incapable of grasping many things...¹³

The Intuition's Perception of Truth is Comparable to the Reason's Comprehension of Axioms

Every creature is being re-created at every moment. In other words, God recreates him uninterruptedly and he faces a new existence, like his old existence at every instant. Those who possess mystical insight observe this directly, but those who rely on their power of reason alone are unable to perceive it... The things we have just pointed out are grasped by the intuition and this apprehension is no less clear and precise than reason's comprehension of axioms. The only difference is that intuitive perception cannot be expressed in words. Undoubtedly, then, words are unable to transmit these truths to the minds of others and make others understand them. Thus, whoever discovers the Truth becomes dumb.¹⁴

The Difference between Intellectual Knowledge (ilm) and Mystic Knowledge (ma'rifat)

You may perhaps wish to know the difference between intellectual and mystical knowledge. Whatever can be directly referred to by a particular term so that if the student hears it either once or a number of times his understanding of that concept will be identical with that of the teacher is intellectual knowledge (ilm). An idea, however, that can only be alluded to by symbolic words and expressions falls within the category of mystic knowledge (ma'rifat). This is how I have used these two terms in this book, and this is the way that spiritual masters usually use them. This is not to deny, however, that the terms ilm and ma'rifat are used interchangeably in conventional usage.¹⁵

Intuitive Realisations are Inexpressible

...Knowledge bestowed on the prophets is inspired. Since these truths are expressed in symbolic and allegorical language, no one but those who possess inner intuitive perception and have been initiated into the divine mysteries can understand them through these expressions... Exactly like statements made by lovers concerning union, separation, and so on; utterances that are incomprehensible to those who have not personally experienced love. This is the meaning of Junaid's statement; "our words are allusions." It is impossible for the mystic to speak except in figurative and allusive language. Whoever tries to decipher the meaning of their words by relying on rational reasoning shall go astray.¹⁶

The Two Forms of Intellectual Learning

From one perspective intellectual problems are of two kinds. Those that fall within the first group have two dimensions while those that fall within the second group have three. Some imagine that the issues in the second category belong to mystic and spiritual knowledge and not to the field of intellectual learning. This is a misunderstanding that I shall try to clarify here.

The subjects in the first category have two aspects, one of which is the teaching and guidance of the instructor and the other is the understanding and receptivity of the student. The subjects that fit in the second group have three aspects. The first is the guidance and instruction of the teacher. The second is the understanding of the pupil, while the third is the student's mystic taste and intuitive perception. Most of the issues concerning the soul, divine attributes and the Hereafter fall into this category. Most scholars imagine that they comprehend these subjects, while the truth of the matter is that they understand no more than a shadow of the real thing.¹⁷

The Best Way to Attain Spiritual Knowledge

When the seeker after Truth has, by means of oral instruction, become partly familiar with these matters, he should try, as much as possible, to associate with spiritual masters. He should reveal his inner self to them, and, through self-purification, prepare himself to realise these truths. This is so, since no perfectly enlightened being can lead one to the Goal unless one has properly prepared oneself.¹⁸

Revelation

When the author began to write this chapter a lightening bolt from the eternal glory of the Kingdom of Heaven struck him, wiping out his knowledge and understanding and even his very self. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the divine Self took possession of him and the illusory disappeared in the Real! When that supreme and eternal Glory returned his reason, knowledge and identity, he composed the following poem:

Concerning what has happened to me,

I can say only one thing: nothing!

If you know what is good for you,

You'll inquire no further!

His heart beat wildly and tears flowed from his eyes. Love ran wild and unbearable sorrow and regret filled him. He asked himself: "how long are you going to continue with these futile efforts? How long are you going to remain in the prison of separation and dream of the Beloved?"

As the fires of love reached their highest pitch the author's soul returned to its original home and the pen dropped from his hand.

The supreme and eternal Beloved granted him an audience and the bird of the soul took flight, left the cage of the material body and set out for its true, original and eternal nest. What transpired between him and the eternal Lord of the universe, in whose clutches he was held, is impossible to describe.

When he was granted permission to return he begged to be allowed to tell those imprisoned within the confines of time and space something about what he had experienced. Having been granted permission to do so, he penned these lines after he had returned to the prison of the body. If you may wonder as to the meaning of all this, a voice from behind the veil of the invisible world replies: "know your place! It is futile to describe colours and pictures to the blind!"

I swear to that almighty Lord of the heavens and the Earth, of glory and majesty, that even if a minute particle of what transpired between I and the Beloved is revealed in the world of dust, even the Throne shall be split asunder not to mention the heavens and the Earth.¹⁹

Attainment of Spiritual Truth and Desire for Worldly Things are Incompatible

Never, never imagine that you may understand these spiritual realities by relying on feeble rational and intellectual comprehension of these words. Accept this free advice from me. I see, though, that you will not do so. I excuse you, however, since I have seen astonishing examples of intellectual infatuation. Thus, I can pardon you and others like you for this error.

If you have the will and the desire to realise the Truth by relying on personal experience and intuitive insight, you must abandon this base world and leave its unworthy and transient pleasures and past-times to those who crave such things and are devoid of spiritual ambition. No price is too high for the Hereafter. What could be more shameful and ignominious for the lover than to content himself with any thing less than meeting his beloved...? If you let go of the world God shall give you a soul that shall desire nothing but eternal and divine beauty, the true water of life.²⁰

Words Belonging to this World Cannot Indicate the Truths of the Invisible Realm

Since we have borrowed these terms to refer to spiritual concepts there is a vast gulf between these ideas and the superficial and conventional meanings of these words. This is only natural because the words in question were not originally created to indicate spiritual realities. We should not be surprised, then, that confronted with these words, men should understand their superficial and conventional meanings. Only those who have some experience of spiritual knowledge and realities can expect to detect the spiritual and mystic truths they point to.

My reasons for thinking so are clear. If someone wishes to make a blind man understand the nature of colours, he has no choice but to explain to him that human beings possess another faculty with which they sense external objects, just as they do with their other senses. He must farther explain, however, that the way this sense perceives things is different from his four other senses, and even from the mode of perception of his rational faculty. It is difficult for the blind person to comprehend all of this. Even if he professes to believe what is explained to him about sight and claims to understand it, we know that he speaks of things that lie beyond the scope of his senses, and his conception of these matters is no more than fantasy. Our relationship with realities that lie beyond our material world is exactly the same.²¹

Preconditions for the Opening of the Spiritual Eye

If you are a true seeker you should take care, and, as I have already explained, keep in mind the conditions for faith in the unseen world. You should be so insistent in this belief and concentrate upon it with such vehemence that faith in the invisible realm becomes a part of your nature and not require any supporting logical argument or proof. As a result, your soul will be prepared to receive the spiritual light. When this light appears in your soul you shall have spiritual insight and perception. This insight is one of the traits of the realm of metareason. The important thing is for you to increase your efforts....²²

Perceptions of Metareason

Truths obtained by the faculty of metareason, can, from one perspective, be divided into two types. The first type includes facts that have the same relation to metareason that axioms and first principles have to reason and intellect. The second group includes truths that relate to metareason in the same way that complex theoretical concepts relate to the power of reason. In other words, they can only be understood by reliance on axioms and first principles. This point is fine and difficult to understand. Do not expect to comprehend it easily, but must accept it on faith as you do with the realm of the unseen as a whole, until God grants you direct experience of it and that experience and intuitive perception makes your reliance on outside authority and secondary sources unnecessary.²³

Perceptions of Metareason are Mysteries to Reason and Intellect

Things perceived by metareason remain mysteries to man's faculty of reason, just as perceptions made by the eye are mysteries to the sense of smell, objects perceived by the power of fantasy (wahn) are mysteries to the faculty of imagination (phantasia), the perceptions of the sense of touch are mysteries to the sense of taste, and finally axioms and first principles are mysteries to all human senses. The real reason for this is that "hidden" and "apparent" are relative qualities. A thing may be hidden from one of the senses but apparent to another sense. Axioms are apparent to reason but are hidden from the senses and are mysteries to them. Every inexpressible truth is a mystery to language and words... On the whole, we may say that what is a mystery will always remain a mystery and what is apparent will always be apparent, and these shall not change unless there is a change in the seeker's state of consciousness.²⁴

Will All the Wise Enter the Realm of Metareason?

If you ask whether every rational human being must ultimately enter the realm of metareason, just as every child must finally reach maturity, the answer is that metareason has many stages and every human being will reach at least one of these stages, even if it is after death. However, it is impossible for everyone to reach all the levels that some human beings attain. One human being must attain many levels of metareason even before he abandons the veil of the body. For most men, however, it is impossible to reach most of these levels or stages, either in this world or after death. This is a verity known to sages by inner spiritual insight, just as rational men know that ten is a greater number than one. He who has not experienced metareason usually stubbornly denies its existence until death removes the veil that covers his eyes.²⁵

The Relationship between Reason and Metareason

No doubt by observing the bodies of such creatures as horses, monkeys, camels, donkeys and human beings, man discerns the existence of souls or selves that animate them, and can distinguish between these souls. He can also easily distinguish bodies that have a soul that controls and manages them from bodies that have lost their souls through death. In the same way, the relationship between reason and metareason is like the relationship between the body and the soul. Therefore, by observing the outer forms of men's reasoning faculties, fully enlightened sages discern the degree to which different individuals have attained the realm of metareason and the degree to which the spirit of metareason is present in the body of reason. In this manner, the masters distinguish between rich and full rational

faculties on the one hand and destitute and empty ones that seem like dead bodies and empty and soulless shells on the other.²⁶

Within the Limits of its Ability, Reason is a Reliable Scale

...It should be noted that the expectations from reason harboured by those scholars who are infatuated with it are like the man who witnesses the precision of the scale used by a goldsmith and then desires to weigh a mountain with it. This, of course, is impossible, but it does not mean that the scale in question does not do its job correctly when it is properly used. Remember, then, that reason is a trustworthy scale and its decrees are certain and reliable. It is honest and without error. However, despite all this, if someone tries to judge everything in its light, even such matters as the Hereafter, prophecy and divine Attributes, he is attempting the impossible and shall be sadly disappointed.

With the dawn of the light of metareason this inappropriate expectation gradually disappears, just as the stars begin to fade with the coming of dawn. There is a difference between voluntary abandonment of this expectation and its natural fading away. Be careful not to err! You cannot abandon this improper expectation on your own accord, for this abandonment or dropping away hinges on the dawning of the light I have already mentioned. Then you will let go of your improper expectation whether you want to or not.²⁷

Conclusion and Summation

Considering their historical precedence, Ayn al-Quzat's statements are very profound and fruitful. We can classify what has been set forth above in the following manner:

It is Possible for Man to Reach Metareason- Ayn al-Quzat believes that it is possible for all men to enter the realm of metareason (point 24). He believes that all human beings are involved in an evolutionary process which qualifies them to eventually realise some level of metareason, though not all human beings may attain all the stages and levels of that realm.

Metareason Cannot be Comprehended and Realised Through Reason and Thought- He discusses this subject in sections 3, 6, 7, 15, 16, 20 and 23. He emphasizes the point that truths realised by the intuition remain an undecipherable mystery to reason and intellect and can never be understood through instruction, verbal description and explanation. The only path open to reason in this regard is to take the existence of metareason on faith.

The Limits of the Capabilities of Reason and Thought- Ayn al-Quzat considers reason to be a reliable measure if applied to fields lying within the limits of its capability. Within such limits, he maintains, its decrees concerning right and wrong are fully credible (section 26).

The Boundaries of Spiritual Insight- Inner spiritual insight has its own domain, to which reason and thought have no inroads. This domain includes the following fields:

Perceiving the existence of Truth (section 4)
Perceiving the attributes of God (section 9)
Perceiving the states of love (section 10)
Perceiving the impotence of reason (section 11)
Perceiving other aspects of existence lying beyond the scope of rational and intellectual perception and comprehension

Some Points about Insight- Sometimes Ayn al-Quzat compares spiritual insight to the sense of sight or to poetic taste (section 3), while on other occasions he compares perceptions made by insight to those made by the rational mind concerning axioms and first principles, and wishes, in such a manner, to give us some indication of the nature of this faculty (section 13). On still other occasions, he compares the relation of spiritual insight to reason to the relationship between spirit and body (section 25).

Characteristics of Metareason- In order to give us a conception of metareason, he enumerates certain traits for it, including the following:

Lack of need for reason and logic

Union with intuitive and spiritual realities. This means that, in contrast with the findings of reason, that can be violated or ignored by the individual, the mystic is united with what he perceives and cannot separate himself from it (section 5).

Intuitively perceived truths cannot be transmitted or taught to others (sections 14, 15, 16 and 20).

Preconditions for Attaining Spiritual Insight- In order to acquire spiritual insight one must purify one's soul (section 17), turn away from the world (section 19) and practice self-discipline and self-denial (section 21).

Different Types of Truths Realised by Metareason- Ayn al-Quzat divides truths apprehended by metareason into those realized directly and those that are realized indirectly (section 22).

Other Subjects- Other points are also made in these selections. These include the way to strengthen faith in metareason (section 8), the recounting of a revelation (section 18) and the relation of reason to metareason (section 25).

Notes:

1-Ayn al-Quzat Hamadani, ed. Afif A'sirian, Tehran: Tehran University Press, pp. 4-7.

2-Ibid. Chapter 16.

3-Ibid. Chapter 17.

4-Ibid. Chapter 18.

5-Ibid. Chapter 20.

6-Ibid. Chapter 21.

7-Ibid. Chapter 22.

8-Ibid. Chapter 23.

9-Ibid. Chapter 24.

10-Ibid. Chapter 25.

11-Ibid. Chapter 26.

12-Ibid. Chapter 28.

13-Ibid. Chapter 45.

14-Ibid. Chapter 59.

15-Ibid. Chapter 61.

16-Ibid. Chapter 62.

17-Ibid. Chapter 63.

18-Ibid. Chapter 65.

19-Ibid. Chapters 82-85.

20-Ibid. Chapter 86.

21-Ibid. Chapter 88.

22-Ibid. Chapter 91.

23-Ibid. Chapter 92.

24-Ibid. Chapter 94.

25-Ibid. Chapter 95.

26-Ibid. Chapter 96.

27-Ibid. Chapter 97.

Saut-e-Sarmad: A Study of Inayat Khan's Theory of Music

Arthur Saniotis

Seest thou not that it is

Allah Whose praises all beings

In the heavens and the earth do

Celebrate, and the birds (of the air)

With wings outspread? Each one knows

Its own mode of prayer and praise (Quran 24:41).

Abstract

One of the major contributions of Sufi philosophy has been its theory of music. Through the ages Sufi teachers have encouraged humanity to become acquainted with the mysteries of music as a way of apprehending the Divine order (amr). As in other areas of Sufi philosophical and mystical thought (al-ma'rifah, 'irfan), music became appropriated within an ontological model which explained the correspondence between the macrocosm and microcosm. Inayat Khan (d. 1927) an Indian Sufi teacher and musician who assisted in the transmission of Sufism to the west in the early twentieth century, elaborated on this central theme of music. In this analysis I draw attention to Inayat Khan's theory of music in relation to his notion that music conveys universal unity, symmetry and beauty. My overview of the nature of Inayat Khan's musical theory is both attentive of its cosmological underpinnings as well as highlighting its unique aesthetic and ontology.

Music: Cosmic Symphony of Symmetry and Unity

Sufis have often likened music to the aural gossamer by which God fashions the web of creation. The conception of nature as being a manifestation of Divine sound is mentioned in the Quran in relation to its creative and governing potentialities.

To him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth. When He creates a thing, He has just to say 'Be' and it evolves into 'Being' (Quran 21:30).

The notion of music as a medium for cosmic creation is also noted by the Sufi poet Hafiz when he claims that the spirit of life had entered the human body through the assistance of music. One eastern folk tale

tells how God made a statue of clay and commanded the soul to enter it. However, the soul refused on the grounds that it did not want to relinquish its state of paradisiacal freedom for the encumbrance of corporeal existence. God then ordered the angels to sing. The soul became so enraptured by their singing that it unwittingly entered the statue. Two important ideas are denoted by this story; firstly, the nature of music as maintaining universal harmony; and secondly, humanity's 'state of spiritual exile.'

In relation to the first point, the Indian Sufi teacher Inayat Khan explains that various musical rhythms are fundamental in shaping all cosmic processes. The universe being an expression of Divine manifestation (sifat'ullah) is constituted by infinite multiplicity and divisibility which conveys unity, symmetry and harmony¹. These tri-partite qualities which are intrinsic to all physical forms are characterised by the centrifugal and centripetal motion of the celestial spheres. The ikhwān al-safa (brethren of purity) had initially expounded a treatise on music which demonstrated how the 'universe is composed in conformity with...geometrical and musical' correspondences which manifest harmony². The correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm was also noted in Chinese mysticism which considered music as the vital integument of all universal forms which express 'all the frequencies of heaven and earth, as several zithers tuned to one tonic'³. Bakhtiar also claims that traditional music consists of symmetrically repetitive melodies (gushah-ha) that imitate nature's unbroken life rhythms:

Nature contains continual repetition, inspiring man to imitate her in her mode of operation through an open-minded, continuous movement system.⁴

Similarly, Inayat Khan deemed music to be a microcosm of the universe which found its ultimate distillation in the human form. Thus, the harmonious and disharmonious rhythms and vibrations, or the movement between change (talwin) and stability (tamkin) which keep creation intact, are also constitutive of the existential pulsations of human life.⁵

Corresponding with Ibn Arabi's influential concept of 'Unity of Being' (wahdat al-wujud) which declares the unity of all things within the universe of Divine manifestation, Inayat Khan considers all physical forms and their existential rhythms as expressing principles of Divine unity (tawhid) and symmetry. In this schema, all the universe is music and nothing exists beyond it.

What we call music in our everyday language is only a miniature, which our intelligence has grasped from that music or harmony of the whole universe which is working behind everything, and which is the source and the origin of nature.⁶

Having said this, Inayat Khan goes beyond naturalistic prescriptions of music to one that asserts music as a psychological method for understanding human nature and the various grades of human action in the world.

The more one studies the harmony of music, and then studies human nature, how people agree and how they disagree, how there is attraction and repulsion, the more one will see that is all music.

This assertion is no less an espousal for a phenomenology of music of human action. Because Inayat Khan believed that human action could be explained within the parameters of previous Sufi ideations of music is no less contentious than Ibn Arabi's claim that all things are God. Perhaps, it is plausible here to comment that Inayat Khan's theory in this area characterised his tendency to incorporate aspects of Hindu metaphysics relating to the science of sound. Judging from his systematic writings, it is not tenuous to claim that this syncretism between Sufi and Hindu theories enabled Inayat Khan to diverge

from the naturalism of previous Sufi concepts of music and re-locating them within the sphere of humanism. It is likely to suppose that such a convergence between Sufi and Hindu cosmologies was a significant exercise, and continued the syncretistic tradition of various Indian Sufi and Hindu spiritual teachers who often combined the metaphysical teachings of Islam and Hinduism in expounding their metaphysics. Several commentators, including Inayat Khan, indicated that Vedantic philosophy held a parallel view of creation as having originated from the primordial vibration called nada brahman which is symbolised by the seed syllable 'Om' and is analogous to the Quranic 'Kun'. Moreover, the monistic panentheism of Ibn Arabi is cognate with the Advaita Vedanta, that most profound magnum opus of Hindu 'ontological subjectivism' whose ātmatology identifies the ātman (soul) and brahman as being one and the same⁷. In Sufism, the Godhead in its absolute essence is referred to as *zāt* and is analogous with the Vedantic nirguna brahman, being totally complete in itself, self-existing and eternal (*al-ha'yy, al-qayyum*)⁸. In both metaphysical paradigms there is an identification of quiddity as being intelligibly imponderable and amenable to no kind of qualification other than to claim that it is neither this nor that. The Divine essence remains forever hidden from the realm of created forms and corresponds with the first part of famous hadith qudsi which declares, 'I was a Hidden Treasure and I desired to be known'. Hence, it is 'beyond-beyond' (*wara al-wara*), or equally the unqualified *sunyata*. While it is not my intention to pursue this discussion of correspondences any further here, I wish to outline those philosophical influences which are germane to Inayat Khan's theory of music.

Inayat Khan's writings are replete with analogies and aphorisms which seek to convey in a practical sense his notions of harmony. For Inayat Khan harmony can be defined as that which expresses those aspects of symmetry, unity and existential consonance. As is often the case, he uses musical idioms as a pedagogical tool for espousing his ideas on human behaviour. In the same vein as the Ikhwan al-safa's and Jalaluddin Rumi's neo-platonic ideations view an evolutionary ascendancy of life forms as they progress through the mineral, vegetable and animal realms of existence, Inayat Khan uses this neo-classical ideal of chain of being into his phenomenology⁹. Inayat Khan writes:

The gradual progress of all creation from a lower to a higher evolution, its change from one aspect to another, is shown as in music where a melody is transposed from one key into another. The friendship and enmity among men, and their likes and dislikes, are as chords and discords. The harmony of human nature, and the human tendency to attraction and repulsion, are like the effect of the consonance and the dissonance intervals in music.¹⁰

This picture of human action as being predicated on the harmonic rhythms of attraction and repulsion underscore Inayat Khan's mysticism of sound and music. At its core it represents an aesthetics of rhythm and tone that continues on from the Ikhwan's theory of correspondences which demonstrate the 'cosmic qualities' contained in human beings.¹¹

Concomitant with the idea of harmony is Inayat Khan's exegesis on vibration which is an innovative development of Hindu science of sound. The universe is grounded and maintained by vibration; each of the three terrestrial kingdoms are different modulations of vibration. The various human sensory perceptions are also posited on varying degrees of vibratory activity which have a marked effect on human cognitive and affective states¹². Each universal genre of vibration has been determined with specific lifespan and is endowed with autogenetic activity, able to produce myriads of vibrations. Similar to the Vedic story of the cosmic net of Indra in which all things are interconnected by an endless matrix of jewels ¼ an allusion of the 'totality of existing things'¹³, the universe in Inayat Khan's thought is constituted by a network of many myriad multitudinous vibrations which having manifested become merged in their original source, or what could be called as the play of cosmic activity (*fa'iliyya*)¹⁴. One is

reminded here of the discoveries in Quantum theory that contends that all matter consists of oscillating atoms. For example, on a sub-atomic level the various bands of light and electro-magnetic waves differ only in the 'frequency of their oscillation'¹⁵. Like the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, Capra avers that universal matter is in a perpetual state of flux. Capra declares: 'Quantum theory has demolished the classical concepts of solid objects and of strictly deterministic laws of nature'¹⁶. Unsurprisingly, this notion of an oscillating universe is recorded in Hindu sacred scripture where 'each element in creation embodies the divine vibration of Shiva'.¹⁷

Inayat Khan instructs that the archetypal movement of all vibration, and hence, music, is circular. As he states; 'there are circles beneath and circles above circles, all of which form the universe'¹⁸. In accordance with Aristotelian theory which asserts nature's abhorrence of vacuum, Inayat Khan considers the universe as not being void but replete with the Divine resonance of the music of the celestial spheres — *saut-e-sarmad*¹⁹. Certainly, his prescriptions relating to the circular and repetitive patterns of cosmic vibration are evident in the ritual organisation of core Sufi practices such as *dhikr*. On this note, *dhikr*'s emphasis on the gnostic (*ārif*) reciting repetitive cycles of Divine Attributes may be likened to an aural mandala which symbolises infinity and unity; its visual correspondence being the circle where the vertical and horizontal lines converge at its centre to express the quadrature — the point of intersection of the four cardinal points where space and time are unified²⁰. Ardalan and Bakhtiar also envisage movement as coalescing 'space and time into a unity' that is embodied by space yet integral at any particular point in time.²¹

Even here, Inayat Khan's concept of vibration is transposed to a human milieu. That which is communicated by the one is reproduced by the many. As he tells us, one person coughing in an audience is likely to trigger a similar response by others around him/her. This also applies to other emotions, i.e. sadness, anger, excitements and happiness²². In this way, consciousness is carried through space by what Inayat Khan calls a 'chord of sympathy' which activates the area surrounding it with a particular vibration, where it becomes a unifying principle, or a *barzakh*, coining Ibn Arabi's a threshold where the essences of oppositional qualities or agents are unified. Ibn Arabi's conception of *barzakh* is elucidated in the following:

The true *barzakh* is that which meets one of the things between which it separates with the very face with which it meets the other. It is in its essence identical to everything that it meets.

Hence the separating between the things and the separating factor become manifest as one in entity.²³

Music is the accretion of this unifying principle of existence, an aural *barzakh*, where it links the 'gulf between the form and the formless.'²⁴

Prolegomenon of Beauty

'Allah is beautiful and He loves beauty', instructs the Prophet Muhammad in an oft-cited hadith. The Prophet's pronouncement is not without implication, for it is the human soul that reflects Allah's beauty. Inayat Khan suggests that the human soul is essentially beautiful and 'naturally' inclined to beauty²⁵. For this reason, he claims, human beings are unconsciously drawn to the beauty of nature which is harmony. Hence, beauty is harmony; each finds its origin and effect in the other. Indeed, it is

the soul's predilection towards beauty which traces its ascent to the Divine, and it is music that delineates the soul's path.

According to this conception, music is invested with the power of ontological transformation. Reminiscent of Ibn Sina's doctrine of the universe as a 'vast cosmos of symbols'²⁶, which permits the gnostic to integrate the 'influx of spiritual forces'²⁷ within his being, Inayat Khan emphasises the transformative capacities of music for promoting a spiritual catharsis of the self. The essence of music, which is beauty, facilitates in the soul's vertical movement, a movement from matter to spirit. Sharia'ti proposes that in Sufi dictum human beings are bi-dimensional, a compound of earth and spirit. One dimension of human corporeality is inclined towards matter and 'lowliness' while the other dimension 'aspires to ascend to God and the spirit of God.'²⁸ Inayat Khan further outlines this metaphysical consideration where he states:

The nature of creation is the doubling of one. And it is this doubling aspect which is the cause of all duality in life...Therefore spirit and nature in this creation of duality stand face to face.²⁹

The expression of this duality is sound, in its first aspect, and light in its second aspect. Of these it is sound which has pre-eminence to light by its ability to penetrate the realm of the soul. It is for this reason, Inayat Khan tells us, that the doyens recognised the science of sound to be the most significant science in every sphere of life³⁰. Sound, as denoted here, is linked with the supra-sensorial domain (ma'nawi), and light with the sensorial domain (hissi). In this schema, sound finds its correspondence with the hidden (bātin) and light with the visible (zāhir). Whereas light makes things appear in relation to the body's state of sensate corporeality, it is sound that engages the self in disclosure of itself (tajalli). Ibn Arabi defines self-disclosure as being connected with 'receptivity (qubul) and preparedness (isti'dād)³¹. Related to this idea of disclosure is music's ability in encouraging the soul's journey of ascent, by virtue of making the soul become lighter from the heaviness of its corporeal embodiment. Inayat Khan claims that all beautiful qualities such as love, compassion, forgiveness and balance are an outcome of the soul being light³². Here, lightness is analogous to the state of realisation of the heart as an 'instrument of gnosis' (ma'rifa)³³, and the actualisation of the Divine in human action.

This brings to mind Ibn Arabi's belief that the qualities of beauty are crucial for the soul's spiritual development³⁴. So saying, for both Inayat Khan and Ibn Arabi the qualities of beauty are the integument and the effusion of the cosmic process of Divine compassion (rahma). As Inayat Khan says, 'The nature of creation is that it is progressing always towards beauty'³⁵. If the universe could be defined as having a specific moral trait, this trait would be compassion assuaged in beauty.

The conception of nature as a reflection of Divine manifestation — a theophany which reconciles all living creatures with their Creator is conveyed in the symbolic and performative aspects of Sufi collective ritual practices such as sama and dhikr. The ritual organisation of these practices provides the gnostic a conceptual and symbolic framework for enacting the allegorical journey of the soul from the periphery of existence to the centre; from separation to union with the Divine. As Lawrence poignantly notes:

Music was said to help the lover in attaining the ecstasy derived from the imminent union with the beloved...for the genuine seeker, music was intended to optimise the dyadic relationship between a human lover and a divine Beloved.³⁶

Among the qualities of beauty which is central to music is contemplation (shuhud). Bakhtiar describes contemplation as the ability to concentrate on any one of the cosmic virtues³⁷. These virtues are

internalised where they aspire the gnostic towards spiritual union with the Divine source³⁸, where the soul is restored to its 'primordial state' (fitrat) of illud tempus. In Sufism, the act of listening to religious scripture and music is a spiritual exercise and requires a contemplative attitude as a way of becoming disclosed to their hidden meanings³⁹. In this sense, contemplation may be referred to as the wine bearer (saki) of beauty and music is the wine. Through contemplation the gnostic is led to pure knowledge or knowledge of the self, the apogee of the mystical quest. Music is the cosmic language of beauty $\frac{3}{4}$ the aural syncretism of Divine immanence, and encompasses the triune creative principles of the Divine; Al-Khāliq (The Creator), Al-Bari' (The Evolver) and Al-Musawwir (The Fashioner).

Conclusion

As I discussed earlier, Inayat Khan's theory of music proposes that existence originates from the primordial command 'Be' (kun) whereby physical forms evolve and are shaped according to their vibratory activity. All existence is poised in unity, symmetry and harmony, where its rhythmical resonances constitute the music of the celestial spheres $\frac{3}{4}$ saut-e-sarmad. My exploration has given attention to the cosmological and aesthetic implications of Inayat Khan's theory of music. By all accounts his musical theory uncovers an aesthetics of sound which is consistent with Heidegger's vision of reality or aletheia in which existence is essentially the 'unconcealing' of Being (dasein). This 'uncovering' function of music follows on from both Sufi and Hindu philosophical schools and their concern with recovering an 'Adamic language', a concern that had also led Inayat Khan to construct the cosmic universe as a concatenation of vibrations and their consequential effect on human existence.

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Notes:

1-Bakhtiar (1991:59).

2-Nasr (1978:261). Ikhwān al-Safā (brethren of purity), a group of early Muslim ascetics which gave rise to Sufism.

3-Tomkins & Bird (1972:143).

4-Bakhtiar (1991:110).

5-Khan (1994:85).

6-Khan (1994:78).

7-Sinari (1990).

8-The significant Quranic 'Verse of the Throne' (ayat ul-kursi) points to God's ipseity: 'Allah! There is no god but He, the Ever Living, Self-subsisting, Eternal' (Quran 2:255).

9-According to the Ikhwan al-safa, human beings exist at the point of intersection between the three terrestrial kingdoms and the three heavenly kingdoms. In this way, humankind acts as a channel of heavenly grace 'for the 'terrestrial world' (Nasr 1978:73).

10-Khan (1994: 58).

11-Nasr (1978:68).

12-Khan (1994: 13-14).

13-Weidenbaum (2001:2).

14-Khan (1994:18). Thus, the archetypal patterns found in nature constitute an imago mundi, a system of inter-connecting centres which contain the cosmic whole.

15-(Capra 1975:61).

16-(Capra 1975:68).

17-Vail (1992:33).

18-Khan (1994:18).

19-The Arts of Islam, (p. 56).

20-Akkach (1995).

21-Ardalalan & Bakhtiar (1979:119).

22-Khan (1994:19,22).

23-(Ibn Arabi, cited in Chittick 1998:518).

24-Khan (1994:151).

25-Khan (1994:148).

26-Nasr (1978:263).

27-Nasr (1978:263).

28-Sharia'ti (1976:74). Human beings are in a state of polemos (conflict, tension) as is all existence, avers Heraclitus. Polemos is the quintessential determinant of physical forms in their actualisation. Heraclitus, as did Islamic theorists, conceived this state of polemos according to cyclic laws of growth, degeneration

and decay. According to Heraclitus' saying 'all change is corruption or decay or degeneration' (Popper 1966:19).

29-Khan (1994:85).

30-Khan (1994:108).

31-Chittick (1989:91).

32-Khan (1994:144).

33-Clarke (2001:31).

34-Chittick (1989:24).

35-Khan (1994:42).

36-Lawrence (1983:71).

37-Bakhtiar (1991:24).

38-Bakhtiar (1991:25).

39-This ontological element of music is cognate with Muslim expositions of art in general, which require a contemplative attitude in disclosing their hidden meanings (The Arts of Islam:55). The pre-eminence of reciting sacred scripture in Islam informed this contemplative faculty and reaffirmed the superiority of listening to sight in Muslim religious life (Trimingham 1971:195). The centrality of sound in invoking the Divine presence resulted in the emergence of several ritual genres, i.e. praises to God (hamd), praises to the Prophet Muhammad (na't), praises to the saints (munqabat), and Indo-Pakistani Sufi music (qawwali). Consequently, the art of listening to religiously based music and poetry became an important mystical practice among various Sufi orders. The Chistiyyah of India was renowned for its spiritual musical assemblies (sama) which influenced Indian sacred music and poetic styles. Moreover, the famous Mehlevi Sufi order of Konya incorporated music within the context of its whirling ritual as a means of inducing a transcendental state of awareness. (See also Sakata 1994).

Transubstantial Motion and its Philosophical Consequences

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Abstract

Transubstantial motion (al-harakat al-jawhariyyah) is one of the most important philosophical issues in the history of Islamic Philosophy and has become closely associated with the name of Mulla Sadra. One must admit that the greatness of this theory and its deep and widespread influence on the philosophical thought of Muslims is no less than that of Einstein's theory of General Relativity in physics and Whitehead's Process Philosophy in philosophy.

This theory provides the basis for Mulla Sadra's world view. In the light of this theory, he presents a new philosophical explanation for the physical and metaphysical problems which include the temporal contingency of the world, the relationship between the permanent and the changing, the creation of the world, the perpetual creation, the relationship between the soul and the body, the resurrection of the body, and many different issues about resurrection. He also analyses and explains the process of motion and transformation, its spread and generality, together with its philosophical results and consequences, in a deep and meaningful way and from a very powerful and effective viewpoint.

As a comprehensive and unifying theory which deals with the origin (mabda), and the return (ma'ad) at the same time, it must be considered to be one of the fundamental and distinguished characteristics of Mulla Sadra's theorising. This article is intended to explain and introduce the consequences of this theory and to determine the role of each in creating a new outlook in the domain of Philosophy. It also tries to shed some light on the history of the evolution of Transubstantial motion and discusses the new ideas proposed by Mulla Sadra which have brought about a change in this theory.

The Place of the Theory of Transubstantial Motion in Mulla Sadra's Ontological System

Before the rise of the theory of Transubstantial motion, scholars generally agreed upon the point that motion or change in the substance of an object is impossible. The ideas of the Islamic Gnostics and theologians who believed in perpetual creation can be viewed as compatible with this theory.¹ But the one who has proposed this problem explicitly, and bravely insisted on proving, it is the most prominent philosopher of the Islamic world, Mulla Sadra. He considers motion nothing but perpetual renovation and renewal of the world in each moment. He concludes that not only accidents but also the very substance of the world is constantly in a state of motion and renovation.

Mulla Sadra's words in defence of motion within the category of substance, and in proof of essential instability and instability in the essence of the whole material entities, are so deep and considerable that they still leave the field open for further research and weighty deliberation of their various angles. In his book, *al-Shifa*,² Ibn Sina refers to the problem of non-subsistence of the subject and he attempts to explicitly refute the Transubstantial motion and considers it impossible. In his opinion, the phenomenon which vaguely represents the extended Transubstantial motion in fact lacks extension and is an interrupted process full of intervals which is under the control of a force beyond the domain of nature. With respect to the unity of the four causes, and using precisely the Aristotelian example about the creation of the individual human being and the evolution of his dispositions, Ibn Sina states:

And it thus undergoes metamorphosis and transformation until it is intensified and then disconnected. But on the surface, it gives rise to the mistake that it is a single journey from one form to another. As a result, it is assumed that there is motion within substance, while it is not so; rather, there are multiple motions and moments.³

The important and fundamental point in Ibn Sina's words lies exactly within these moments of immobility. Ibn Sina considers moments of immobility as non-extended temporal moments like distances within which the Giver of forms grants a substance when the preliminaries are provided. In his opinion, the creation of human beings is not that different forms of sperm, coagulum, lumps of flesh, etc., are realised in the outside in the form of extended and continual motion. Rather, he believes that

special quantitative and qualitative motions make the matter vulnerable to accepting form, and at a moment when this vulnerability reaches perfection, the Giver of form grants it. Hence, motion is not within the substance because substantial forms are not the products of motion; rather, they are created by the will of a creator beyond the internal activities of nature.

It is exactly at this point that Ibn Sina's philosophy in particular, and Muslims' philosophical thought in general, depart from Aristotle's philosophy. Ibn Sina considers the agency of God to be a creative one. Aristotle has referred to this issue where he has explored the relationship between the sensible and changing world with pure actuality and considers pure actuality as the ultimate cause of being.⁴ Pure act is not the agent that causes the world. Contrary to the Islamic thought, the Greek philosophy is based on the idea that nothing comes into existence from non-existence; but existence only originates from existence. That is why in Greek philosophy the manner of the origination of beings from non-existence was not considered a philosophical problem; rather, the manner of the origination of existence from existence provided the basis for their scientific and philosophical explorations. In order to solve this problem, Aristotle has proposed the principle of motion as a fundamental issue in his philosophy.

It is within this philosophical framework that Aristotle directs the range of motions and movements towards the unmoved mover and calls him Theos or God, a being that lacks any kind of motion and change and is the essence of Perfection and sheer perfection itself; a God that necessarily lacks any kind of motion and change within its essence because of being pure perfection. This is because the motion and change necessary for obtaining a higher state of perfection and removing any imperfection from existence is limited.⁵

The logical requirement of such a statement, according to Aristotle, is not that God is the essence of existence and sheer existence. He does not discuss the relationship between the first cause and existence in his philosophy. Had Aristotle understood that God is the very existence itself, it would not have been possible to excuse him his negligence to accept creation. In his opinion, God, world and motion are all eternal and the Almighty God has not created the world. Such a God differs greatly from that of the Islamic God. Hence, the conversion of the Aristotelian God to the Islamic God is one of the greatest events in the history of philosophy; accordingly, the movement of Aristotelian philosophy towards the Islamic tradition and, afterwards, towards the Christian and western traditions has been changed.

In line with this fundamental and Transubstantial change, there exist other transformations including the change in the Aristotelian idea of motion by Ibn Sina and also its new transformation in Mulla Sadra's thinking. The world of Islam could never accept the Aristotelian idea of regarding an agent of cause within the nature of things and without any influence exercised by a metaphysical force. Rather, for Islam and its philosophers, creation has always been an important problem, which they attribute to the creator. Therefore, in order for the Aristotelian philosophy to be accepted by the Islamic world, parts of Aristotelian physics should have necessarily changed. Such a transformation, which can be regarded as a direct revision in Aristotelian motion, can be explicitly and emphatically found in Ibn Sina's philosophy.

Ibn Sina speaks of two kinds of agent in Shifa: one is the agent as conceived by natural philosophers, and the other is the agent as conceived by theologians. For the natural philosopher (as noted in the world view of Aristotle), the agent is the source of motion and for theologians (as it is in the Islamic philosophy), it is the source of existence.

And this is because of the fact that by agent, divine philosophers do not simply mean the origin of motion, as is meant by natural philosophers. Rather, they mean the origin of existence and its conveyor like the relationship of the sublime creator to the world. However, the natural agent of cause does not convey any existence except excitement in one of the forms of excitement. So the conveyor of existence is the source of motion in physics.⁶

It is evident that such an agent, which is considered to be the source of existence and as the creator and giver of existence, fits neither into Greek nor Aristotelian philosophy.

Hence, as a result of the interplay of Greek and Islamic ideas, which are basically different, and by maintaining the dominance of Islamic thought over Greek thought, one of the major pivots of Aristotelian physics and metaphysics was invalidated and replaced by a mixture of Greek and Islamic thought. This idea, though a precise and praiseworthy one, confronted the philosophers with a problem that they were forced to solve by resorting to the theory of Transubstantial and existential motion. This theory has been accepted and regarded as a new principle for philosophical explorations by Mulla Sadra.

In Mulla Sadra's philosophy, the Aristotelian natural motion and Ibn Sina's gradational motion were substituted by the Transubstantial and existential motion which originates from the source of everlasting Divine grace which is ever-graceful and ever-bountiful. Yet it should be taken into consideration that the source of grace does not cause motion but is the cause of perpetual and interconnected forms whose fruit is motion itself. Such a statement and thought is not compatible with Aristotle's philosophy either with regard to its content or the relationship between the four causes. All motion, which Aristotle sees in the essence of nature and from nature, Mulla Sadra sees within the essence of existence and attributes to the Divine creative power.

It is with respect to this point that Mulla Sadra's philosophy drastically differs from that of Aristotle, since Aristotle has presented his discussions about motion in physics and through which he has reached the metaphysical distinction between sensible and non-sensible entities. In fact, Aristotle's real goal in his philosophy is to explain nature, that is, the "where about" and "why about" of the sensible, observable and tangible world in which man lives and is constantly involved with. It is this major goal which in turn characterises the nature of his metaphysics. That is, if it were not for the necessity of completing his natural philosophy in line with his world view, neither would the knowledge of metaphysics be necessary for him, nor would it be meaningful in his philosophical system. Therefore, Aristotle's metaphysics is not an unrelated issue to physics and to the natural world; in other words, it is not beyond tangible and sensible facts.

Contrary to Aristotle, Mulla Sadra considers the issue of motion as being related to metaphysics, and explores it in his philosophy under the title of 'division of existence into constant and becoming'. He uses a precise expression in his *al-Asfar* which indicates that the issue of motion is related to metaphysics. He states that: 'motion is the renewal of event, not a renewed event,' and says that 'the permanence of motion for a renewed and mobile individual is not like the occurrence of an accident for a subject; rather, it is an "analytic accident" whose relationship with the subject is like the relationship of differentia to genus'.⁷ Sabzawari, in his commentary on *al-Asfar*, presents the following statement:

However, Transubstantial motion, like the flux of nature, is not one of the accidents of the body; rather it is one of the principles of it, because the existence of nature is mobile and nature is the differentia of the body and prior to it. So this is particularisation by the natural itself, and not after it.⁸

From the above discussions one may conclude that in Mulla Sadra's view and that of his followers, motion and becoming are not in contrast with being in the sense of existence; rather, being is of two kinds. The first one is a kind of being which is constant and lacks a temporal dimension which is not measurable with temporal criteria and, hence, is not subject to change and transformation. The second one is the mobile being that possesses a temporal dimension which extends in the stretch of time and its being is the same as its becoming. According to rational proofs, such an entity is either essentially material or belongs to matter and is in unity with it in the same way that man's soul is capable of motion and change as long as it has some kind of belonging and attachment to the body.

Mulla Sadra proves the existence of motion in the external world basically by means of rational proof and the rejection of Parmenidos and Zenon's arguments and not by sense perception. In his opinion, motion is a philosophical secondary intelligible concept and not an essential one; and its discussion is a philosophical and metaphysical one, not a discussion within the field of empirical science. This is because he believes that the concept of motion is not attained through abstraction and generalisation by sense perception; rather, similar to other metaphysical categories; it is attained through the analysis and interpretation of percepts by presence. Thus, we perceive the existential motion and its extension over time first by knowledge by presence and recognise the properties of motion by rational analyses in the form of a philosophical secondary intelligible concept. Then, through corresponding these properties to external objects, we recognise the existence of motion in the external world.

With respect to the point just quoted from Mulla Sadra, this fact can be explained in a different way as follows: since motion is one of the "analytical accidents" of existence, the mode of motion is not objectively separable from the object's mode of existence; rather, what exists in the external world is merely a restless existence and an unstable essence, which is separate from other beings only through rational analysis.⁹ What was said holds true with respect to all metaphysical concepts which indicate the various aspects of existence. As constancy or stability is not a property which may occur to a constant existence in the external world, motion is also not a property which may occur in the external world to a mobile existence either; rather, both count as concepts which indicate two modes of existence. As a result, in the Transubstantial motion, according to Mulla Sadra, there is no need for an external subject since the very object itself, in every moment, is different from the same object in one moment before or one moment after. In other words, in the Transubstantial motion, unlike in accidental motions, the motion and the mobile are identical. Of course, an ordinary mind which is not philosophically oriented takes it for granted that no motion in the external world is possible without a mobile being, and this is so because it is used to accidental and, specifically, spatial motions. However, after getting used to precise philosophical analyses, it would be clear that the need of accidental motions to a subject too is not because of their being "motion"; rather, it is because of their being "accidental". That is why even immobility requires a subject. Hence, after proving motion in the essence and substance of an object, and recognising the fact that the material existent itself does not remain the same in two successive moments, we understand that such a motion does not require the presupposition of an external subject and its external existence is the same as motion itself.

The Relationship between the Transubstantial Motion and the Principle of the Primacy of Existence over Quiddity (Priorities of Existence)

Mulla Sadra's argument for proving the Transubstantial motion is based on the idea that the existence of an object comprises its whole and that quiddity is an imaginary or hypothesised entity. By accepting

the priorities of existence, flux becomes a mode of existence, and the way of mobile beings' coming into existence, which is nothing but their being, is conceived in a gradual and mobile manner. The question 'In the Transubstantial motion what becomes of the object itself?' is a question arising from the priority of the quiddity approach. According to the priorities of existence, the existence of an object is the object itself and motion is the mode of existence. Nevertheless, in the theory of Transubstantial motion, the object itself is the very mobile existence and not something which is in motion.

The formal substance, too, in its gradual increase in perfection, is a temporal unique being which is continual in one sense, and is connected gradually in another sense. A connected unit has a single existence. Existence for us and for all others with deep roots in theosophy is the same personal entity. If motion were not the single connected unit, the judgment that blackness does not remain constant in its gradual increase in intensity towards more black would be correct, and the same judgment would go through with the Transubstantial form at the time of its perfection, while it is not so. The mystery lies in what was already mentioned, that is, specific existence is fundamental for every object, and is determined by its own essence, and in spite of having entity and unity has its degrees and stages.¹⁰

It has been mentioned that Mulla Sadra considers the individual unity of blackness in becoming more black which is acceptable for the opposite side and, despite its conjunctive transformation, he bases the survival of the individuation of substance on the same grounds. The basis in both cases is that the conjoined unit has a unique existence. In fact, the mobile being is a scattered and spread existence that is fulfilled in every moment simultaneously with the motion of its component parts. However, these component parts have a conjunctive unity and, as a result, an individual unity. That is why one can speak of the subsistence of a subject along with its Transubstantial motion.

The Reasons for Proving Transubstantial Motion

Mulla Sadra's first proof for demonstrating motion in substance is based on the premise that the mobility and changeability of an object are not false attributes to be transferable from one thing to another. Such an event which is interpreted as the transference of accident necessitates that a phenomenon which is dependent upon other (outside) factors becomes dependent upon itself for a moment; and its ipseity, which is the very dependence upon other, abandons its dependence and becomes independent. This is a contradiction in premises. So, the relationship between the motion and the mobile is like the relationship between an object and its appearance. As a result, when a change takes place in an object because of the new conditions, the object itself becomes the source of change. That is to say, motion originates from the object itself, not from external factors. External factors only prepare the substance of the object to move, and thereafter, it is the substance of the object which is the source of motion.¹¹

The second premise is that the substance of an object, which is the cause of motion and change, must itself be mobile and unstable and identical to change and motion. This is because, according to a philosophical principle, any constant effect has a constant cause and any changing effect has a changing cause. Given that substance is the cause of the motion of the accident, and the cause of motion itself must be mobile; why does one not believe that substance is essentially mobile?

Mulla Sadra has a more exact statement in this regard which originates from his view on substance and accident.¹² Mulla Sadra's view concerning the relationship between substance and accident differs from

that of Aristotle and even Ibn Sina. With respect to existence, he regards accidents and attributes of every object as the stages and ranks of the existence of substance. The general assumption is that objects require their attributes in order to maintain their individuation and exclusive characteristics. However, according to the genuine principle of the principles of existence, in Transcendent Theosophy, these various attributes are not the causes of individuation, but the signs of individuation.

Another illuminationist argument holds that: 'any corporeal substance has a mode of existence that necessitates accidents which are inseparable from substance... These are the same inseparable accidents which are called the individualising factors by the majority of philosophers, while the reality is that these are the signs of individuation'.¹³

The point is that different beings differ from each other in essence and by depending on their own specific existence, and it is because of the individuation of entity that their attributes turn out to be different and not the other way round. Therefore, every existence is but one ipseity and that single ipseity has various appearances and faces. According to this idea, individuation is not imposed upon beings from outside; rather it originates from the very essence of the beings. Therefore, any attribute or accident in an object is exactly the attribute and accident of its specific existence and, as a result, the motion of the object is in fact the very ipseity of that object. In other words, the accidents and attributes of any object are the stages of the existence of substance with respect to existence. In this way the renewal of accidents is impossible unless through the renewal of substance; a renewal which is perpetual, conjunctive, and compatible with the maintenance of the individuation of the object and this is the very same as motion within substance.

With this point clarified, we now say: any corporeal individual in whom all or some of these individualising factors, like 'time', 'quantity', 'position', 'where', etc., are transformed. This transformation is the function of the transformation of the existence that necessitates it, and in a sense is the very same transformation of this existence. This is because the existence of any corporeal nature is inherently a continuous, quantitative substance having position, place and time. Thus the transformation of quantities, colours and positions cause the transformation of the individual existence of the corporeal substance. This is the very motion within substance, because the existence of substance is substance, as the same way that the existence of accident is accident.¹⁴

To prove the Transubstantial motion, Mulla Sadra presents another argument which is based on his view of "the reality of time". Mulla Sadra considers time as an invisible extension or a fourth dimension of material existence. From his point of view, the temporality of objects is the sign of a kind of extension in their existence. This indicates a deep and essential motion which never leaves the world in its previous disposition and which creates a new world in every moment.

Mulla Sadra's words¹⁵ concerning the material entities being four-dimensional is quite explicit. In his precise analysis, bodies have two extensions: one on the scale of place and the other on the scale of time. The spatial extension is the cause of three geometrical dimensions and the temporal extension originates from the internal mobility of material beings. It is impossible to place something which is essentially unplaceable in a place, and it is also impossible to place something which is essentially unstable and restless in time. The effects of the passage of time upon something, at least, indicates that the thing is essentially ready to accept time. There are beings which are neither in time nor with time; rather, they are beyond time like God and pure non-material entities whose existence with respect to different times is identical. But a being whose existence is affected at different times and appears differently at each moment demonstrates the existence of a deep connection between its ipseity and

time, not an accidental or superficial connection which is imposed from outside. Therefore, material beings cannot be conceived of as being essentially stable and unstable with respect to time.

So a sound Judgement states: that is impossible that one of the temporal and spatial things, with regard to its external existence and personal entity, keeps from the accomplishment of time and space and turns to become the constant of existence; that times are not different to it and different spaces are indifferent to it. Anybody who considers this viable has opposed the requirement of his own Judgement, and his appearance has challenged his conscience and his tongue his heart. Thus, bodies that bear different relations to time, i.e. past, present, and future, are renovated with regard to them: this must be because of a formal affair that is inherently involved in the integrity of their existence.¹⁶

Now it can be better understood why one cannot say that the world exists and time passes over it; rather, one must say that the world of the later moment does not exist and must come into existence. A correct conception of time indicates that time is neither something that passes over the world independently nor the claim that the world's existence is meaningful. The world is nothing but a motion and since motion is a mobile process which gradually comes into existence, its parts do not all come into existence together. Therefore, the world of tomorrow will occur tomorrow; it is not the case that the world exists but its being placed in tomorrow is incumbent upon the passage of time. The passage of time is the passage of the world, not the immobility of the world and the passage of time over it. The passage of the world means the motion of the world and the motion of the world means its gradual origination, and its gradual origination means its coming into existence in every moment.

Nevertheless, Mulla Sadra considers the world, in the deepest sense, to be an existence dependent on and needful of other, and this dependence and need have penetrated deeply into its spirit and have entirely captured its existence. That is why Mulla Sadra considers the beings of this world as dependent beings whose existence is just their dependence and if they are deprived of this dependence for one moment, they will lose their existence. One cannot possibly present a deeper argument than this concerning the dependence of the created on the creator and the continual requirement of the world for a creator.

The Philosophical Consequences of the Transubstantial Motion

1- With regard to the discussion of Transubstantial motion in Mulla Sadra's philosophy, the Aristotelian argument of motion has a more complete form and a richer content. For on the basis of this principle, Mulla Sadra presents both a new philosophical explanation for purposefulness of the world of nature and proves the need of the world for a creator, not in its appearance and states, but in its real existence and ipseity. Mulla Sadra states that the nature of all beings and their existence is the same as their desire for the first principle.¹⁷ As a result, these beings must have an intrinsic goal, otherwise it follows that the origination of this desire in their nature is purposeless and absurd, while 'there is no vanity in existence and there is no suspension (ta'til) in nature'.¹⁸

According to the Aristotelian argument of motion, God (the first mover) has neither created nor maintained the world; rather, he simply brings about motion in the world. 'Motion' or 'the first perfection' in this argument is something that the mover gives to the moved. The work of the first mover is giving motion and mobility. Now, if somebody proposes the eternity of matter and states that matter is eternal, even though its attributes and accidents change, Aristotle's argument of motion is not

able to solve this problem. However according to Mulla Sadra's Transubstantial motion, motion flows and circulates through the substance of objects and the changes in accidents and appearance have their roots in the essence and substance of objects. Hence, the need of the first mover has penetrated into the depth of mobile existence, and indeed their existence is the same as poverty and need. Therefore according to this philosophical principle, the story of the eternity of matter and the assumption of the need of the world of nature for a first mover only within the limits of superficial changes are absurd.

According to the theory of Transubstantial motion, Mulla Sadra explicitly states that the first mover is the creative cause and not the instigator of motion.

But there is an exact point here of which you will soon become aware. That is, there must inevitably exist an event apart from motion and the immovable which is inherently mobile and renewed. It is necessarily the source of motion and has a mover agent (by which it is meant the creative cause of the essence of the renewed itself and not the maker of its motion). This is because making does not penetrate between object and its essence (that is, the object is created together with its essence).¹⁹

Therefore, in the Transubstantial motion, instigation does not mean the creation of motion in an object by a mover (to put the existence of an object into motion); rather, here, instigation is the same as creation and origination. So, Mulla Sadra states that: the mover in the Transubstantial motion is the very creative cause (making the existence of an object) for whom mobility and instability are intrinsic. In fact, according to the theory of the Transubstantial motion, motion and the mobile being are the same in the external world, that is, the very transitory and mobile existence and the mobility and transition of motion are the prerequisites for the existence of a mobile being. 'What is necessary for the existence of an external object does not penetrate between that object and its prerequisites with regard to the aspects of external existence'.²⁰

Therefore, the making of a mobile being is the making of motion and mobility as well. It is not the case that motion requires a separate cause and maker, because motion is intrinsic in the mobile being and the mobile being does not have an ipseity without motion. It is not the case that motions will join the mobile at a stage after its realisation; rather, it is abstracted from the inside of its essence (i.e., from the inside of its existence), so that the mode of existence is the mode of mobility. Thus, it does not require a separate cause; rather, the making of the existence of a mobile being is the making of motion as well.

In this way one notes that Mulla Sadra does not confine the mover to the maker of motion in a composite making.

In general, the discussion of the cause of motion can be carried out at two different levels: one at the scientific level and the other at a philosophical one. At a scientific level, the quality of the emergence of motions and their dependence on each other will be explored, and at the philosophical level, motion is considered as a phenomenon requiring a cause. The method of philosophical explorations concerning the agent of motion is a different one. No matter how much science develops and provides justifications for the interpretation of motion, from the philosophical point of view many questions may still arise and one may ask what the creative cause and interpretation of the mobile existence is, and why and how such an existence partakes of mobility. Science seeks to gain more insight into the structure of an object, for example, whether it is simple or complex, and what the conditions of its transformation and change into another object are. But science does not tell us what motion is and what the existence of something should be in order to be moveable. It is the right of philosophy to speak positively or negatively in this regard.

2- Mulla Sadra uses different methods to prove the existence of separate forms in his works, one of which is the very method of the Transubstantial motion. He holds that due to being essentially renewable and unstable, every nature requires a mover that grants its existence through simple making (ja'l-e basit). The mover that grants existence must be a constant entity, separate from matter and even material properties, because it is impossible for the range of causes and effects to be infinite.²¹

There is no contradiction between this account of motion, which leads to the demonstration of separate forms, and the previous account, which proves the existence of a mover that grants existence. The previous account is based on the unity of the world of nature so that the world as an individual unit,²² whose parts are interconnected,²³ constitutes a real unit as a whole.²⁴ Nevertheless, it requires a creative cause to be granted existence so that instability and mobility be necessary and essential to it.

But the present account does not look at the world from this point of view; rather, it looks at every kind of nature with an independent view, and sees the world full of species whose existence is the very same as instability and restlessness. Accordingly, one can state that every mobile nature requires a non-material existence which is separate from matter and material properties, and since the species of the world of nature are of different types, so are the archetypes.

Mulla Sadra compares separate forms to the rays and beams of the light of the 'First Necessity' which are the 'forms of the Knowledge of God; and there is no independent existence in itself for itself for them, and they are only a kind of existence whose essence belongs to Truth'.²⁵ He also argues that: 'Those intellectual beings, luminous ideas, and Divine Knowledge are always connected to their agent and goal, behold the beauty of their creator, and are obsessed by the Divine Ocean and the axis of the light of Oneness'.²⁶

3- The Transubstantial motion is one of the most genuine philosophical interpretations of the fundamental concept of 'creation continua' (or perpetual creation) in the world of Islam. Throughout the history of Islamic thought, this concept has been interpreted in different ways by many thinkers. In addition to the atomistic philosophy of the Ash'arites which can be considered as an obvious and purely rationalistic approach to the problem, we are also dealing with Gnostics' renewal of ideas which has been thoroughly explained by Ibn Arabi.

Taking what Mulla Sadra has proposed in this regard into consideration, every being in this world has essentially some existential need (imkan-e faqri). This statement means that every being in this world, by itself, is but nothingness or 'Non-existence'. So if any being in the world is left to itself, it immediately moves towards its own denial. Thus, every object can only have a momentary existence, since in the same moment that it has been brought to the domain of existence, its own nature returns it to the domain of non-existence. The point that every being, due to its existential need, is inclined towards its own denial, is exactly the very same meaning of mobility and renewal. It is where, according to the theory of Transubstantial motion, we state that every material entity is changeable in its essence and substance; its existence at every moment is different from its existence at another moment; and the act of perpetual creation is ceaselessly granted by the absolute Divine essence. At the intersection of these two factors, i.e., the existential need of all objects and the perpetual effusion by the absolute metaphysical source, the concept of 'new creation' or 'perpetual creation' is realised.

One could not possibly talk more forcefully than this about the dependence of the created on the creator and the continual need of the world for a creator. The momentary character of the world

obviously reveals its needful character. This indicates that the world is in transition and mobility not only in its appearance and states but even in its very existence and ipseity. Dependence and need have penetrated into the depths of its spirit and have captured its whole existence. Mulla Sadra takes the holy verse 'koll-o youm-en Hova fi Sha'an' 27 as a proof for demonstrating the truth of his statement.

Philosophers believed that the beneficence of the sublime truth is permanent and his effusion is uninterrupted... The statement of the sublime truth ("Every moment He is in a state of glory") is related to this issue. The concerns of the sublime truth are but his acts and the self-manifestations (theophanies) of his Names as mentioned before. The origination of an act from the perfect source is impossible and the relationship of the variable to the eternal constant is impossible but by the aspect of the perpetuation of renovation, termination, and graduation in creation and subsistence and by the conjunction of transformation and interruption in existence and annihilation - as is well-known by most philosophers - within motion itself. As it is stated, motion is a gradual ipseity that is created in an object after another object in the external world and is destroyed with an object after another object.²⁸

God's daily involvement in work is expressed in the best way in the theory of the Transubstantial motion. This is also the very specific philosophical meaning of 'new creation' which is stated in the holy Qur'an 'Bal hom fi labsen men khalgh-en Jadid' (Yet are they in doubt with regard to a new creation?).²⁹

The problem of God, on the basis of such a conception of creation, will appear not as a problem but as an objective, evident, and obvious affair which one will face wherever he goes and whatever he sees. The closeness of the Truth to the beings, His dominance over the world, His knowledge over all events, His deep intervention in all affairs, and many problems concerning monotheism and God will receive an explicit meaning in this theory.

4- The quality of the relationship of changing beings which exist in the material world to God, who is essentially constant, is one of the most difficult problems of philosophy. After proposing motion within substance, Mulla Sadra considers this problem as being solved and states that: 'That we say a contingent and changing effect requires a contingent and variable cause holds true only in the case of beings for which contingency and change are additional (non-essential) and occur to them from outside.' A cause must deal with such beings in two ways: The first is to create the object itself, and the second is the production of motion in them. But the need of those beings that are essentially mobile and whose ipseity is the same as mobility to a cause is a simple and not a composite one. That is, their creation is identical with their mobility and creating them is like giving motion to them, because their being is just mobility and motion.

But we say that if the renovation of an object is not an inherent property of the object, it requires a renovator for its renovation. Also, if renovation is an inherent property of the object, the object, in its renovation, does not require a maker to renovate it; rather, a maker is required to create the object itself in a simple making, not a composite one, that penetrates between the made and the made-for. There is no doubt in the existence of an entity whose reality requires renovation and mobility; that, in our opinion, is nature, but motion and time for people. And every object has constancy and actuality and what the maker grants is the aspect of the constancy and actuality of the object.³⁰

As such, whatever being which has a transitory ipseity and depends upon its own cause with regard to its existence receives from its cause only its very existence. That is, the creator does not grant motion to it; rather, he (the creator) gives itself to it. As a result, this created being is related to the creator with regard to the stability of its ipseity. However, this same existence whose relationship to God is one of

stability, is just transformation and mobility itself. So it is possible for a being which is stable from one aspect and transformed from the other to become the source of transformation in the world. From Mulla Sadra's point of view, it is the very mobile substance that becomes the connector of the change to the constant existence and that which is contingent upon the eternal.

5- One of the most important consequences of the Transubstantial motion is the demonstration of the temporal contingency of the world. According to the Transubstantial motion, all existence in the world of nature is essentially transformable and changeable, and all parts are continually in the process of creation and extinction. So the whole world, which is the sum total of its parts in a sense, with all that exists in it, is created in time.

The world, including whatever it holds, is a temporal contingent entity since whatever is within the world is preceded by non-existence in time. That is to say there is no ipseity amongst the personal ipseities except that its non-existence temporally precedes its existence, which temporally precedes its non-existence. On the whole, there is no body or material body, be it celestial or elemental, spiritual or physical, but that its renewal entity renovates and its existence and individuation remains constant.³¹

In addition, since there is 'no whole but through the existence of its parts',³² 'so the world with all its parts, be it the heavenly spheres and stars, or be it simple or complex, is contingent and perishable. Whatever exists in it, at every moment of time, counts as another being and a new creation'.³³ It is clear that according to this viewpoint, one cannot assume a starting point for the world, and there is indeed no necessity to assume a starting point because time originates from the world itself. It follows that there was no time before the creation of the world. So the question of when the world was created is an irrelevant and meaningless one. This question would be meaningful only if there were a flowing time independent of the world, and the world was brought into existence in one of its hours and moments. But since it is not so, and since time is an offspring of matter, is not independent of it, and comes after and not before it, one cannot ask about the time of the creation of the world. In fact, the whole world is located in 'timelessness', the same way that it is located in 'placelessness'. One cannot ask where the whole galaxies are located, since when we consider the entire matter, there is no place outside it to determine the location of the world here and not there. The story of time is the same. When there is no time beyond the world, one can not say that the world is at this time and not at another time. Having a time is only applicable to the parts of the world and not to the whole world. Accordingly, it will essentially be purposeless to speak about the temporal contingency and pre-eternity of the world as theologians have been trying to do, to reject or confirm it.

6- According to the theory of Transubstantial motion, Mulla Sadra regards the soul as a product³⁴ of the Transubstantial motion of the body. In the same way that fruit and branch are naturally located beside each other, the soul and the body enjoy such a natural and essential relationship, and in no way is their relationship a superficial and accidental one. On this basis, the body has the status of a background and 'potentia' with regard to the soul. It is not the case that the body generates the soul, and the soul is the effect of the body. The body only provides the conditions for the appearance of the soul. The soul is a special being that requires a material background both in genesis and in appearance, but in its survival and continuity it is independent of matter and material conditions. Mulla Sadra's famous rule, which is recorded in his name in philosophical texts and indicates the above fact, is as follows: The soul is corporeal in contingency and spiritual in subsistence.

It means that the origination of the soul is corporeal and material but its survival and continuity are spiritual and non-material.

The truth is that man's soul is corporeal in contingency (temporal origination) and domination, but it is spiritual in subsistence and intellection. Its domination upon bodies is corporeal, but its intellection of itself and of the essence of its maker is spiritual. Non-material intellects are inherently and actually spiritual, but natures in the world are inherently and actually corporeal.³⁵

The distinction between the soul and other attributes of matter manifests itself at the point that the attributes of matter are always dependent upon the matter; they are found within matter; they remain dependent upon material objects, and they perish together with the extinction of the matter. In contrast, only the background of the appearance of the soul is material and it does not require a material carrier for survival. Accordingly, the material and non-material world directly follow each other and are the natural continuation of each other so that 'human form is the ultimate stage of corporeal perfection and the first step of spiritual perfection' ³⁶. A similar statement can be found in Asfar: 'At the time of origination, the soul is at the final stage of the evolution of material forms and at the first stage of the development of cognitive forms, and its existence at this stage counts as the final corporeal shell and the first spiritual core'.³⁷

Based on this principle, each body possesses a soul that belongs absolutely to it, has come into existence within its background, and is the continuation of the material motion of that body. Accordingly, one should never think that each person has a soul which accompanies him from birth to death. The reality is not so; rather the soul gradually and hand in hand with the body comes into perfection and actuality and is developed with the help of his achievements and acts.

How absurd and shallow it would be to assume that the soul, with regard to its substance and essence, from the start of its dependence to body till the end of its subsistence, is a unitary entity (i.e. remains identical and constant). While you learned that the soul is sheer non-thing in the first stages of being, as it is said in the holy Qur'an 'There surely came over man a period of time when he was a thing not worth mentioning'.³⁸ The soul in its ascent reaches the active intellect.³⁹

Another consequence Mulla Sadra draws from his theory is the rejection of the idea of reincarnation. Since the soul is the continuation of the body's natural motion, it is not essentially reasonable to assume that one person's soul turns to become another person's soul. Each body in its Transubstantial motion seeks for and finds its own suitable soul. At the beginning, this soul is nothing, but gradually, and at the same time, harmoniously grows with the body and develops actuality and form. In this case, how would it be possible for a body to accept and conform to a soul which has been made, polished, cast, and grown to suit another body?

7- One of the problems of the theory of Transubstantial motion is the problem of resurrection. In no way does Mulla Sadra claim that by the Transubstantial motion can one explain and interpret all the details of the problem of resurrection which have been proposed in Divine religions and especially in Islam. What is intended is that the world, which is a motion, inevitably has a destination and goal and heads towards a direction in its depth and interior. This motion is the very coming into existence of the world. In other words, the world is created in such a way that heads towards an ultimate goal. This goal is not a place and location beyond the world itself. The source, destination and movement are the same here.

The movement starts out from itself and moves within itself and reaches itself again. But this ultimate self is a stage higher than the starting self.

A great change occurs not only on the Earth but also in the whole world with the emergence of resurrection and a totally new world and scene appear. One can recognise here that the problem of resurrection is not confined to the Earth and human beings; rather, it is a cosmic event at the level of entire material entities.⁴⁰

Mulla Sadra's arguments concerning the issue of resurrection are not confined to the essential and Transubstantial transformation of the world; rather, they are related to human beings as well. He considers the world as a growing sapling which undergoes essential and Transubstantial transformation, continual decay, and origination until it ultimately leads to resurrection. Likewise, by presenting the deep inner motion in man, he demonstrates the Last Day and its certain and inevitable occurrence.

The soul in Mulla Sadra's view is an independent substance that by Transubstantial motion passes through the different stages one by one until it becomes free from dependence on matter and potentialia and achieves eternity in the realm of the intellect. Following some Gnostics, besides accepting the eternity of the rational faculty of the human soul, he maintains a kind of eternity for the faculty of imagination as well. Amongst the faculties of the soul, intellection and imagination are essential to the soul while vegetative and animal faculties are transferred through the body. According to him, on the Last Day, the power to create external forms will be granted to all souls and the parts of the body which seem to be external will be created from within the soul, so that the revivification of soul will really be accompanied by the revivification of the body. According to Mulla Sadra, this statement is another interpretation of the problem of the resurrection of the body which he prides himself on having solved.

Notes

1 Throughout the history of Islamic thought, the concept of 'perpetual creation' has been explained in different ways by Islamic thinkers. Gnostics believed in the 'renewal of similars', and agreed with the existence of renewal and transformation all over the world of possibility including substances and accidents. The Ash'arites, based on the rule of 'the accident does not remain the same in two successive moments', consider the forms of beings to be in continual change and transformation, in spite of the survival and constancy of their substances. Mulla Sadra and his followers propose the Transubstantial motion and accordingly conceive of the world with its substance and accidents as being in constant change and transformation. Mulla Sadra's Transubstantial motion is more compatible with the Gnostics' renewal of 'similars' than with the difference that the Gnostics believe in covering after uncovering forms (al-labs ba'd al-khla'), while Mulla Sadra believes in covering after covering (al-labs ba'd al-labs). This differentia implies that in the Sufi doctrine, at every moment, the universe is annihilated and recreated. However, in Mulla Sadra's view, the form and matter of an existence become themselves the material for a new form and this process goes on continuously as if one were to put on one coat on top of another. See: Mulla Sadra, *al-Asfar al-arba'ah*, vol.3, 4th, Beirut, daro ehya al-toras al-Arabi, 1410 A.H., pp. 112-113; Taftazani, *sa'ad al-din, shar maga'sid*, vol.1, Mesr, 1305 A.H., pp. 181,319; Ashari, *Abol-hasan, Mazahib al-Islamiyyin*, vol.1, Mesr, 1389 A.H., p.710.

2 Ibn Sina, *al-Shifa, Sama'e Tabi'iy*, Qum, Maktabat al-Mar'ashi, 1405 A.H., pp. 123-124.

- 3 Ibid. 101.
- 4 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 12,8,1704a.
- 5 Ibid.12, 1-10, 1069a - 1076a.
- 6 Ibn Sina, *al-Shifa, al-Ilahiyyat*, p.257.
- 7 Mulla Sadra, *al-Asfar*, Vol.3, p.74.
- 8 Ibid.Ta'liqa, Mulla Ha'di Sabzevari, p.21.
- 9 Ibid.180; Ibid. Ta'liqa, Allamah-Tabatabai, p.69.
- 10 Ibid. chap.25, p.97.
- 11 Ibid. chap.26, p.101.
- 12 Ibid. Borhan mashragi A'khar, p.103.
- 13 Ibid. p.103.
- 14 Ibid. p.104.
- 15 Ibid. chap.33, Bahs va Tahsil, p.133.
- 16 Ibid. Vol.7, Maugef.10, chap.2, pp.290-291.
- 17 Ibid. chap. 24, pp. 273.
- 18 Ibid. chap.2, p.201; See: Vol.5, chap.2, p.204; Mulla Sadra, *Mafa'tih al-Gaib*, 12, pp.426-427.
- 19 Ibid. Vol.3, chap.12, p.39.
- 20 Ibid. chap.12, p.61.
- 21 Mulla Sadra, *al-Shawahid al-Rububiyah*, ed. Jalal Ashtiyani, Markaz Nashri Danishkahy, Tehran, 1360 H.S. pp.244-245.
- 22 Mulla Sadra, *al-Asfar*, Vol.6, chap.8, pp.98-99.
- 23 Ibid. Vol.5, chap.17, p.342.
- 24 Ibid. Vol.6, Ta'liqa, Mulla Hadi Sabzavari, p.98.
- 25 Ibid. Vol.5, chap.2, p.202.
- 26 Ibid. Vol.3, pp.95-96.

27 The Qur'an, (Rahman, 29).

28 Mulla Sadra, al-Asfar, Vol. 7, chap.1, pp.281-283.

29 The Qur'an, (Qaf, 15).

30 Mulla Sadra al-Asfar, Vol. 2, chap. 21, p.68; See: Mulla Sadra, Mafatih al-Gaib, al-Meftah 12, pp.395-396; al-Asfar, Vol. 7, pp.285, 292.

31 Mulla Sadra, al-Mashair, ed. Hanri Corbin, Ketabkhaneh Tahori, 2nd, al-Manhaje.3, al-Mashair 3, p.64.

32 Mulla Sadra, al-Asfar, Vol.7, chap. 2, p.297; See: Ibid, chap. 1, p.287.

33 Ibid, chap.2, p.297; See: al-Mazahir al-Ila'hiyah, al-Maza'hir. 7, p.44.

34 The phrase 'a product of Transubstantial motion' must be perceived in its precise and special sense; and from the analogy of fruit and branch one must not wrongly assume that the soul, like a fruit, is dependent upon a branch and always feeds on it. The soul is like a ripe fruit that after ripening falls off the branch and starts out on an independent life for itself. See: Mulla Sadra, al-Asfar, Vol.8, al-Safar. 4, Bab.7, chap.6, p.390.

35 Ibid. Chap.3, p.347.

36 Mulla Sadra, al-Shawahid al-rububiyah, p.223.

37 Mulla Sadra, al-Asfar, Vol.8, chap.1, p.328.

38 The Qur'an, (al-Insan or-Dahr, 1).

39 Mulla Sadra, al-Asfar, Vol.8, chap.1, p.328.

40 The holy Qur'an's interpretations of considering resurrection simultaneous with great worldly events are far too explicit. (When the heaven becomes cleft asunder, and when the stars become dispersed, and when the seas are made to flow forth, and when the graves are laid open, every soul shall know what it has sent before and held back) (Infitar, 1-5).

Preexistence of Souls to Bodies in Sadra's Philosophy

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Abstract

In this paper, I will try to show how Sadra reconciles his well-known principle "the soul is corporeal by its temporal origination (hudûth) and spiritual by its subsistence (baqâ')" with the Shiite belief in the pre-

existence of spirits to bodies – the belief, which is an indispensable element of the Imamite doctrine. First of all, it should be noted that, unlike some early Shiite traditionalists (e.g., Ibn Babuyeh), Sadra clearly differentiates between the terms "nafs" and "rûh". So, in the "Asfâr" he often repeats that "nafs" (the soul) in the stricter sense of term, i.e., as long as it truly remains "nafs", can only be spoken of as a temporally originated being, created together with (or rather as) the body, while "rûh" (the spirit), if understood as the principle of "nafs", definitely enjoys a kind of pre-existence to the body.

According to Sadra, the soul does not possess a certain station (maqâm) in its being and a definite degree in its it-ness (huwiyya); what it does possess instead, is a number of modalities (nasha'ât), some of which exist before the body, some – together with it, and some - after it. Hence, what is actually corporeal by its temporal origination and depends on the body, is only one of the soul's modalities; the preparedness of the body is the precondition of the existence of this lowest modality and engendered nature; this does not deny the soul's existence before the body if we understand it as the existence of its perfect cause and the perfection of its being: to Sadra, a thing which are weaker than it, as far as their being / existence of its cause.

What we find in the "Tafsîr of the Sûrah "The Heifer" ", is a similar treatment of the problem, although the employed terminology is a bit different. While explaining the nature of the Covenant of Alast (the Qur'ân, 7:172), Sadra says that the testimony ("Yes, we bear witness") is given by the reality of the human soul, which dwells in the world of the Lordly Presence (al-hadra al-rubûbiyya). Individual human souls relate to this universal reality (haqîqa) as its particular tenuities (raqâ'iq). Every tenuity is also the reality in its lower appearance, while the reality is the tenuity in its higher aspect.

The difference among the individual human souls is caused by the difference of the active directions (al-jihât al-fâ'iliyya) and noetic aspects (al-haysiyyât al-'aqliyya) in this reality, which, in turn, is caused by the influence of different Divine Names and Attributes and their interaction.

Sadra's famous principle "the soul is corporeal by its origination (hudûth) and spiritual by its subsistence (baqâ')" seems to imply the impossibility of any kind of preexistence of souls to bodies. If so, Sadra's view on the topic must be in disagreement with the verses of the Qur'ân and the Imamite doctrine, which unequivocally ascribe to the human soul a kind of existence preceding the creation of the material body. Moreover, the aforementioned principle seems to be inconsistent from a purely philosophical point of view as well, because, according to the general principle of wisdom, "every thing returns to its root (or: source) (asl)". How can then – one should ask – the thing, which is entirely corporeal by its creation, return to the realm of the spirit? After all, one can only return to the place which it comes from.

Interestingly, Sadra himself seems (or pretends?) to be unaware of any of these contradictions. In his works, he explicitly declares his adherence to the Quranic, Prophetic and Imamite teachings on the preexistence of souls and repeatedly quotes the relevant passages from the Book and the sayings of the Prophet and Imams.

In the Qur'ân, this is the so-called "Covenant of Alast" verse (7:172), which speaks of the preexistence of human souls in the most unequivocal way:

When thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam – from their loins – their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): "Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?" –

they said: "Yea, we do testify!"(This), lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: "Of this we were never mindful".¹

Among the sayings of the Prophet which concern the topic, Sadra often quotes the following one:

The spirits (of men) are armies drawn up in ranks: [Those who recognize one another are in harmony, and those who dislike one another are in disagreement].²

As for the sayings of the Shiite Imams, the following one, attributed to Ja'far al-Sadiq, is apparently Sadra's favourite one:

God created us [i.e., the Imams – J.E.] from the light of His Greatness and Majesty, then gave our creation a form from the clay [which was] hidden under the Throne, and made the light inhabit this form, and we were people of light; and He created the spirits of our followers from our clay.³

The authority of the Qur'ān and the Tradition is unquestionable to Sadra. But he also claims that the essential principles of his philosophy (including that of the corporeal character of the origination of the soul) have been unveiled to him directly by God. Does God contradict Himself in the teachings of Sadra? Before we can get to the root of this – real or apparent – contradiction, we need to make a bit more inquiry on the exact kind of the existence which the souls allegedly enjoy before the origination of their material bodies. It is well known that the earlier Islamic philosophers – Ibn Sina in particular – held that any kind of the soul's preexistence to the body is impossible, because the admittance of such preexistence would inevitably lead to a number of absurdities, such as transmigration of souls, preeternity (qidam) of the soul, multiplicity of individuals of a single species and their differentiation without the matter and material preparedness, the soul's divisibility after its unity (like the one which is inherent in contiguous quantities), or its ineffectuality (ta'tīl) before the origination of the body.

Sadra's solution of the difficulty is based on three principles: 1) the principle of the principality of being / existence (asālat at-wujūd); 2) the principle of the analogicity of being (tashkīk al-wujūd); 3) the principle "the thing which is simple by its reality is all things" (basīt al-haqīqa kull al-ashyā'). I will try to explain how it works.

First of all, according to the principle of the principality of existence, the quiddity (or "whatness") (māhiya) of the thing, being a mere mental abstraction, does not possess any reality whatsoever ("has never felt the fragrance of [the outward] existence"). Now the being possesses various levels (marātib), which differ as regards their intensity and weakness. The properties (ahkām) and traces (āthār) of the weaker level, as far as they concern the being, not nonbeing and privation, are fully possessed by the stronger one. As one which is closer to the Necessary Being, the latter is also more simple. Its more perfect simplicity allow it to be more things as far as their being is considered (of course, we are now discussing only the longitudinal order of the universe, leaving aside the latitudinal one, which is based on the difference among God's names and attributes and their interaction).

To clarify the point, H.M.H.Sabzawārī, one of the most eminent representatives of Mulla Sadra's school, often compares the world of the entified being with a cone. Let us quote from his commentary to "Asfār":

The world of the entified being is like a cone: the light of its summit is at the Necessary One (may He be exalted!) and its base is at the matters (mawwād), because in every thing which is nearer to the

Necessary One, prevail the properties of necessity, such as oneness and simplicity, while in every thing which is nearer to the matters, prevail the properties of contingency (imkān), such as manyness and compoundedness (tarkīb).⁴

Graphically, it should look something like this:

The Necessary Being

predomination of properties
of necessity (oneness and simplicity)

predomination of properties of contingency (manyness and compoundedness)

The Contingent Being

(the matters)

So we come to the conclusion that, in the longitudinal descendent order, the being / existence of the lower and weaker level is fully included in that of the higher and more intense one. Sadra himself confirms this view in the following words:

...as the intense light contains the levels of lights which are lower than it – though not in a way, in which the compounded thing contains the simple one – so the strong being includes in it what is in the weak beings, which are lower than it, and it causes the effects, which are caused by them.⁵

Hence, if we regard the human soul as a certain level of being, as such it is fully included in the relevant higher level (whatever we call it: the intellect, the nous, the subjugating light (al-nūr al-qāhir)) of being, which is stronger and more intense (what it lacks in comparison with the lower level (the soul), is the particular limit of privation and non-existence, which is possessed by the soul due to its greater nearness to the world of the matters).

Now, philosophers believe that every existent has its particular lord – "lord of the species" (rabb al-naw'). This lord of the species, which is a member of the latitudinal chain (al-silsila al-'ardiyya) of intellects (and, as such, enjoys a kind of noetic existence), is the soul's perfect cause (while it is itself an effect of the universal intellect and a direction (or: aspect) (jihāt) of it).

We have already learnt ⁶ that, in keeping with the gnostic way-faring (al-sulūk al-'irfānī), only "the cause is a real thing but the effect is [merely] an aspect of its aspects"⁷ and that the effect is not a separate thing, differing from its cause. This gives Sadra a full right to assert that

The human souls exist before the bodies through the perfection of their cause [i.e., its being perfect – J.E.] and occasion (sabab), and a perfect occasion entails the occasioned thing [and brings it] together

with it; and so, the soul exists together with its occasion, because its occasion is perfect by its essence and complete by its benefaction (tāmm al-ifāda) and if a thing is such, [the thing] [which is] occasioned by it does not become detached from it.⁸

This, in turn, gives Sadra the possibility to conclude:

...and when you have obtained the knowledge of certainty of its [the soul's – J.E.] existence before the body and have known the meaning of "occasion" and "being occasioned", and that the essential occasion is the completeness of the occasioned (thing), and its furthest limit (ghāya), you have obtained the knowledge about its engendered existence before the body through the perfection of its being and its independence (ghanā).⁹

Apart from the "Asfār", the problem of the preexistence of souls is also discussed in the "Tafsīr". Sadra's commentary on the 22nd verse of the surah "The Heifer" contains a discussion on the "Covenant of Alast". While the employed terminology is a bit different (instead of terms "occasion" (sabab) / "the occasioned thing" (musabbab) or "cause" ('illa) / "effect" (ma'lūl), Sadra employs the set "reality" (haqīqa) / "tenuity" (raqīqa)), the overall treatment of the problem, as well as the general conclusion, is very similar. We shall quote here the most essential part of the discussion:

The realisers (al-muhaqqiqīn) among the folk of tawhīd say that the one who is addressed by the words of God: (may He be exalted!): "Am I not your Lord?", in respect of making the covenant, is the reality (haqīqa) of the human being, which exists in the Divine World and the Lordly Region; and indeed, every natural species has its noetic reality and separated [i.e., from the matter – J.E.] form, and its likeness of light in the world of the noetic realities and divine likenesses, [which were] known to the lordly sages and ancient gnostics as "the forms of what is in the knowledge of God" – and they called them "the lords of the species", and some of them held that each of these lords of the species is an angel, entrusted, by the permission of God, to preserve the other individuals of the species – the species, whose form he is at God, in the world of separate forms and noetic likenesses of light and his [the lord's of the species – J.E.] relation to them [the other individuals of the relevant species – J.E.] is that of the root to the branches and that of the light to the shadows.

And the difference between the reality of the human being and other realities lies in [the fact] that each of the latter is a vassal (marbūb) of a single name among the names of God but the reality of the human being is the locus of manifestation of the name "God" (Allāh), which contains in itself [all] other names, and its vassal, and in [the fact] that other solitaries (afrād) cannot descend from the level on which they stand and ascend from one station to another, in order to reach the divine presence, while this is not the case with the reality of the human being, which alone is prepared to act through its engendered form (al-sūra al-kawnī) as the lordly viceregent and through its noetic form it is prepared to remain faithful to the covenant in the end, as [it is prepared] to the reception, in order to receive and conclude the covenant, in the beginning.¹⁰

Sadra gives tremendous importance to the opposition "reality" / "tenuity" (haqīqa / raqīqa) (which, as we have seen, he identifies with the opposition between the lord of the species and an individual belonging to the relevant species). As this opposition seems to constitute the very core¹¹ of the problem of preexistence of souls, we shall quote here a part from the chapter in the "Asfār", which is devoted to the analysis of the nature of this opposition:

Know that the particular corporeal forms are universal realities which exist in the world of God's command and decree (qadā'), as He (may He be exalted!) said: "There is no thing, whose storehouses are not at Us and We send them down but in a known measure" (15:21);¹² the "storehouses" (khazā'in) are the universal noetic realities, and each of them has [its] particular tenuities, which exist through particular measured occasions (asbāb qadarī), such as specific matter and position, as well as [specific] time and place; the universal realities exist at God in a principal way (bi-l-asāla) and these sensory tenuities exist through the ruling (or: property) (hukm) of dependence and inclusion. The realities [if taken] as universalia in their lofty divine being are not transmitted, but their tenuities, through the ruling [=property] of contingency (ittisāl) and transmutation, and encompassing of other levels, descend and display themselves in the moulds of apparitions and [material] bodies, as it was said earlier in regard to the meaning of the descent of the angels to the creation by God's command; and the tenuity is the reality through the ruling [=property] of contingency, and indeed the difference between them is but in respect of intensity and weakness, and perfection and deficiency.¹³

These quotations allow us to assert that, in a general way, the preexistence of souls to bodies is understood by Sadra as the preexistence of the reality to the tenuity, the occasion (the cause) to the occasioned thing (the effect) and the lord of the species to the individual of that species. It is important to underline that this preexistence bears rather an essential¹⁴ than a temporal character, i.e., the existence of the reality and the occasion is prior to that of the tenuity and the occasioned thing in essence, not necessarily in time. Hence, the existence of the soul is prior to that of the body by essence, not by time – and this is, indeed, this essential preexistence (or the absence of it), which really concerns Sadra.

The difference among individual human souls, says Sadra, is caused by the difference among the active directions (al-jihāt al-fā'iliyya) and noetic aspects (al-haysiyyāt al-'aqliyya) in the reality of the human being (its lord of the species), which, in turn, is caused by the influence of different divine names and attributes and their interaction. In his "Tafsīr" Sadra explains the idea in the following way, employing the illuminationist terminology:

...this reality of the human being, which exists before these earthy (turābī) engendered qualities (or: states) (akwān) in the world of the Lordly Presence, possesses noetic directions and aspects, which multiply in it due to the multiplication of the necessary illuminations of light and the multiplication of the contingent deficiencies, and manyness of joinings, which occur between light and darkness, necessity and contingency, perfection and deficiency; and these noetic directions are the occasions (asbāb) of multiplicity of the engendered qualities (=states) in the individuals of the human kind.¹⁵

When we have ascertained these important points, it is time to say that this essential preexistence has several stations or levels. Though, to our knowledge, ¹⁶Sadra does not speak at length about these stations in any of his works, he briefly enumerates them in some of his treatises, in particular, in "Asrār al-āyāt", where he writes:

...[God] took their [i.e., the children's of Adam – J.E.] spirits from the loins of their noetic father – and this is the noetic station of "cutting into pattern" (maqām 'aqlī tafīlī) the individuals of human kind, [which follows] after the existence of their entities in God's knowledge in a simple noetic manner; and He said, pointing to another station, [which comes] after the aforementioned stations: "[We said:] "O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden; and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and

when) ye will; but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression"¹⁷ – and this is also a modality (nash'a), previous to this [this-wordly] existence.¹⁸

In this passage, Sadra mentions at least three stations (maqāmāt) or modalities (nasha'āt) of the soul, prior to its this-wordly station and modality, in which it exists together with the material body:

the station, in which the soul exists as the entity in God's knowledge; station of non-differentiation, succinctness and simple noetic existence, which, in fact, is not in any way different from the existence of God (maqām basīt 'aqlī; maqām ijmālī 'aqlī);

the station, in which the souls are "cut into patterns", i.e., the station of noetic differentiation (which is also the station of bearing witness at the Day of the Covenant of Alast);

the station of the imaginal forms (al-suwar al-mithāliyya) which is the world of apparitions (ashbāh) (the station of the imaginal Garden, in which Adam and Eve dwelt before their coming to the world of engendered nature).

Perhaps it is possible to add other stations to the list; it is absolutely clear however that the given list of 3 stages is in complete accordance with Sadra's teachings of 3 worlds (sensory, imaginal and noetic) and two risings (qiyāma) – the greater and the lesser, where the latter is understood as the soul's return to the world of imaginal forms and apparitions, whereas the former means its return to the world of fully separated spirits (pure noetic forms). What should be underlined, is the fact that the fixed entities (al-'yān al-thābita) of souls, which exist in God's knowledge, do not possess any existence of their own – "the entities, which pertain to the non-existence, are fixed in It [the Real – J.E.], they have [never] smelt the fragrance of existence";¹⁹ instead they exist through the existence of God, being not differentiated from Him in any way, as far as their existence (which is their subsistence through God) is considered. Hence we can conclude that the souls, if taken as the fixed entities in God's knowledge, preexist to their material bodies by the preexistence of God to "what is other than God" (in this case, the lord of the species of the human being is itself nothing else but an active direction of the Universal Reality). As Sadra relates the world of noetic forms to the "divine region" (al-suq' al-ilāhī), which is not "other than God" (mā siwā Allāh) but exists with / through the existence of God, it is correct in regard to the second station as well. Hence, the first and the second stations preexist to the third and the following stations in the arc of descent as "what is with God" preexists to "what is other than God".

How does the preexistence of the soul agree with its origination (hudūth) together with the body?

To answer this question, we must pay attention to the specific status of the human soul in the universe – the status, which distinguishes it from all other existents, namely, its being the locus of manifestation of the name "God" (Allāh), which contains in itself all other God's names. This unique status, which the human soul has obtained through the knowledge of all God's names, allows it to travel freely from one station & modality to another (i.e., to witness itself in its noetic, psychic and natural aspects; to see itself both as the reality and the tenuity). Sadra repeats this point more than once. E.g., in the "Asfār" he writes:

The human soul does not possess a certain (literally: known) (ma'lūm) station in the it-ness (huwiyya) and a definite degree in the being, as it is the case with other natural, psychic and noetic existents: each of them has a certain station; on the contrary, the human soul possesses different stations and degrees,

and it has preceding and subsequent modalities, and in each station and world it takes a different form.²⁰

After a few pages, he says:

...they [i.e., "those who are firmly rooted in knowledge" (rāsihīn fī l-‘ilm) – J.E.] held that the soul has many modes (shu‘ūn) and stages (atwār) and, notwithstanding its simplicity, possesses [a number of] existential states (al-akwān al-wujūdiyya), some of them – before the nature, some – with the nature, and some – after the nature.²¹

Hence, one can already guess that what is originated after the acquisition of a specific preparedness and the fulfilment of certain preconditions, is neither the reality of the human soul, nor the fixed entities of individual souls – rather it is one of the existential states, possessed by a particular soul. A few lines later Sadra explains the point even more definitely:

What depends on the body [in its origination] is one of the soul’s modalities, the preparedness of the body being the precondition of the existence of this this-worldly modality and the engendered nature; and this is the direction (=aspect) of the soul’s poverty, need, contingency and deficiency, not the direction (=aspect) of its necessity, independence and perfection.²²

It should be noted, however, that what Sadra (as well as the representatives of the hikmat tradition in general) call "the soul" (al-nafs) in the strict sense of the term, is actually this-worldly modality of the soul, in which it exists together with the engendered nature and material body. If we take the word "soul" in this stricter sense, there is no doubt whatsoever about the corporeal origination of the soul inasmuch as it is the soul (al-nafs bi mā hiya al-nafs) (i.e., as far as it is confined to its this-worldly modality and "witness" (companionship) of the engendered nature).

...it has been established earlier that the existence of the soul and its being the soul is one and the same thing, and, in regard to this existence, it is a form, which is related (lit.: ascribed) (mudāf) to the body and administers it... and what needs the body, is the soul’s dependent (ta‘alluqī) existence, and its direction (aspect) of being the soul, and its administration (tasarruf) of the body, and its becoming perfect in it, and this kind of existence pertains to the soul’s essence and is originated through the origination of the body, it becomes invalid through the invalidation of it, in the sense that the soul, inasmuch as it is the soul, the possessor of the bodily nature, is invalidated and its substance transforms itself into another kind of existence according to its substantial perfection, which is directed towards the furthest limits; and annihilation of the thing into its furthest end and its principle is more noble and more preferable [than its subsistence through itself].²³

It is evident that Sadra does not question the invalidation (butlān) of the soul’s this-worldly modality, i.e., the corruption of the soul inasmuch as it is taken as the bodily nature and has no doubt about the corruption of the corporeal and originated modality of its existence. Hence, his famous principle "the soul is corporeal by its origination and spiritual by its subsistence" should not be understood in terms of "al-mabda’ wa al-ma’ād". Instead of pointing to the place of the soul’s beginning (allegedly the "body") and its place of return ("spirit"), the principle provides us with brief formulae of two subsequent modalities of the soul: its this-worldly and temporally originated modality is corporeal (and hence corruptive), while its other-worldly and subsistent modality is spiritual. (One can also say: the soul’s corporeal modality is temporally originated while its spiritual modality is subsistent.)

One will notice that Sadra is careful not to use the word "soul" when he speaks about the noetic modality, which exists before the material body, while he readily applies it to the modality which comes after the corporeal modality. Indeed, if the soul during its residence in the material body reaches a degree of perfection, which allows it to unite with the Active Intellect and return directly to its lord of the species, in such a case it becomes a noetic form and a pure intellect, and therefore cannot be called "the soul" in the strict sense of the term. Like other philosophers, Sadra, however, has little doubt that this lofty degree is reached only by a handful of the individuals of the human species (the prophets, Imāms and "friends of God"); as for the remaining majority, their souls reach that degree of separation from the matter which only allow them to travel as far as the world of imagination ('ālam al-mithāl). In this case, the soul's existence after the material body is based on the subsistence of its faculty of imagination. Though it has not reached the threshold of the divine region (al-suq' al-ilāhī), thus becoming a pure intellect, it enjoys a kind of imaginal existence (similar to what we experience in dreams) and resides either in the imaginal Garden or in the imaginal Fire (i.e., witnesses either beautiful and agreeable or ugly and disagreeable forms, which are the likenesses of its acquired traits (malakāt)). In the latter case, it is absolutely correct to characterize this post natural modality of the soul as its spiritual subsistence.

It is quite clear that the soul's existence after the body cannot be fully understood without the true knowledge of its existence before the body, and vice versa, since our knowledge of the beginnings and the ends rests on the principle of the parallelism and reciprocal correspondence of the stations of the descending and ascending arcs of the circle of Being.

The furthest limits (=ends) and the places of beginning are parallel to each other and [they are] situated [exactly] opposite each other.²⁴

Every degree of the ascending arc [of the circle of Being] is situated [exactly] opposite its counterpart, which is one of the degrees of the descending arc.²⁵

In keeping with this principle, every station and modality of the soul's existence before the natural body has a counterpart in its existence after this body. Those counterparts are of one and the same genus, through their entities are different. A brief account of these parallel and mutually corresponding stations / modalities of the circle of Being is given in most of Sadra's works. Thus, in "Al-hikma al-'arshīyya", Sadra writes:

So know, my beloved, that we came to this world from the Garden of God, which is the Enclosure of Sacredness, through which are consecrated (=sanctified) the sacred ones, and from this garden to the abode of Life and the Garden of bodies, and from there to this world, [which is] the abode of deed ('amal) without reward; and from this world we go to the abode of reward without deed; and those of us, whose innate disposition (fitra) has remained sound and whose deeds are beautiful, go to the Garden of God, if they are among those drawn near [to God], the ones who have become perfect in this world, or to the Garden of life, if they are among the people of the right hand; and those, whose deeds were ugly and whose hearts have become black, remain under (=in) the Fire of God's wrath, in Gehenna.²⁶

On the basis of the above-quoted passages from "Asrār al-āyāt" and "Al-hikma al-'arshīyya", we can draw the following chart:

Station of succinctness & non-differentiation (maqām ijmālī):

The reality of the human being // forms in God's knowledge

THE CIRCLE OF BEING

The Garden of God (Station of noetic subsistence)

Station of imaginal forms & the universal likeness (al-mithal al-kulli)//the Garden of the falling of spirits

Station of imaginal forms & the particular likeness (al-mithal al-juzi)//the Garden of life &the Garden of the rising of apparitionstation of noetic differentiation & cutting into patterns (the Garden of God)

Station of the material body & engendered nature:

Tenuity in its corporeal form

When the human spirit reaches the stage of its sacred father, the end of the circle of being joins up with its beginning, and the separation of the engendered existence is removed from it by the existential connective substance of meaning.²⁷

Hence, it is evident that, for Sadra, the denial of the soul's existence before the body actually implies the denial of its existence after the body, since the latter existence is understood by him as the soul's return to its beginning and source, after the obtaining of bodily, psychic and noetic perfections. The denial of the soul's existence before the body – through the existence of its principle and source-would lead to the denial of any kind of its existence after the body; hence we shall have no other choice than to follow the path of the Aeonists (dahriyyūn) and the Naturalists (tabī'iyūn), which, in turn, will invalidate not only the "transcendent wisdom" but the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Prophet as well.

As for the exact way of the soul's pre-existence to the body, in a nutshell, it can be characterized as the existence of the effect and the occasioned thing through its cause and occasion. This pre-existence bears essential, rather than temporal, character and consists of several stations and at least two existential modalities – the noetic (intellectual) and the psychic (imaginal). The soul, though it is the shadow of its noetic cause and principle, preexists the natural body as a more intense light preexists a weaker one. This body, then, is the effect of the soul and the soul, being its cause, brings it to perfection, which eventually allows entering the world of separated intellects and subjugating lights. The intellect, which subjugates the soul, in turn, uses the body as a tool to bring the soul itself to the highest possible perfection, which results in its becoming the actual intellect, i.e., in the actualisation of its hidden noetic potentiality. Since this actualisation cannot take place otherwise except by means of the natural body, the latter is originated, in order to ensure the possibility of the soul's progress towards perfection. Hence, the natural modality is an indispensable stage of the soul's journey towards perfection, while the natural body is nothing else than a specific level (martaba) of the soul.

Notes:

1-"The Holy Qur'an", translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, London: Wordsworth Editions 2000, p.132.

2-J.W.Morris (trans.), "The Wisdom of the Throne: an Introduction to the Philosophy of Mulla Sadra", Princeton: Princeton University Press 1981, p. 141.

3-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, " 'Arshiyya", Isfahan: Isfahan University Press 1341 H.S. / 1962, p. 239. Cf. J.W.Morris's English translation in: J.W.Morris, "The Wisdom of the Throne", p. 141.

4-One will notice the difference between the spirits of the Imams, which are created from the pure Divine Light, and those of their followers, which are created from the clay the Imams' bodies of light. (Hence, only a second rate spirituality (that with the alloy of the clay of the Throne) can be ascribed to the latter, while that of the first rate (the pure essential spirituality, which is void of the alloy of the clay) is confined to the Prophet and Imams.)

5-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, "Al-hikma al-muta' āliyya fī-l-asfār al-'aqliyya al-arba'a", ed. R.Lutfi et als., 3rd edition, Beirut: Dār Ihyā' al-turāth al-'arabī 1981, part 8, p. 321, note 2.

6-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, "Asfār", part 8, p. 148.

7-See my paper: J.Eshots, "The Gnostic Element of Sadra's doctrine on causation" in the "Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Mulla Sadra: Causation according to Mulla Sadra and other Schools of Philosophy. 5-6 May 2001 – SOAS (London)" (forthcoming).

8-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, "Asfār", part 2, p. 300.

9-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, "Asfār", part 8, p. 346-347.

10-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, "Asfār", part 8, p. 347.

11-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, "Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm", ed. M.Khajavi, Qum: Entesharat-e Bidār 1364 H.S., part 2, p. 243.

12-Cf. the comments of H.M.H.Sabzawārī: "the reality's being in its lofty station is [i.e., presupposes – J.E.] the tenuity's inclusion in it; and the tenuity's [coming] to the earth is [=means] the reality's becoming (sayrūra) the tenuity without its lofty station; and around this rotate all the symbols of the sages and allusions of the prophets, such as "preeternity" (qidam), "origination" (huduth), "effusion" (ifāda), "descent" (tanazzul), "ascent" (su'ūd), "falling" (hubūt), "particles" (dharrāt) and "seeds" (barazāt)" – Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, "Asfār", part 8, p. 332, note 2.

13-We have used here W.Chittick's English translation of the verse, which was taken from: W.C.Chittick, "The Self-Disclosure of God", Albany: SUNY Press 1998, p. 36.

14-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, "Asfār", part 8, p. 126-127.

15-Both H.M.H.Sabzawārī and M.A.Nūrī speak of the aeonic (dahrī) preexistence as well. The idea seems not to contradict the Tradition, but, as Sadra's negative attitude to his master's theory of "the aeonic origination" (al-hudūth al-dahrī) is well known, I doubt whether Sadra himself would accept it.

16-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, "Tafsīr", part 2, p. 244.

17-Unfortunately, Sadra's glosses to Qutb al-Dīn Shīrāzī's commentary on "Hikmat al-Ishrāq", which are said to contain important discussion on the preexistence of souls, were not available to us. Prof. H.Ziai told us that he has prepared the text for the edition but, until now, we have not got any notice regarding the appearance of the book.

18-"The Holy Qur'an", p.7.

19-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, "Asrār al-āyāt", edited, with prolegomena and notes by M.Khājavi, Tehran: Iranian Academy of Philosophy 1981, p. 186.

20-Ibn al-'Arabī, "Fusūs al-hikam", with the commentaries of A. 'Afifi, Tehran: Entesharat-e Zahrā 1370 H.S., part 1, p. 76.

21-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, "Asfār", part 8, p. 343.

22-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, "Asfār", part 8, p. 346.

23-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, "Asfār", part 8, p. 347.

24-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, "Asfār", part 8, p. 375.

25-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, " 'Arshiyya", p. 273.

26-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, " 'Arshiyya", p. 273.

27-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, " 'Arshiyya", p. 274-275.

28-Sadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, "Tafsīr", part 2, p. 247.

Book Reviews

L.E. Hahn, R. E. Auxier, and L. W. Stone, Jr., (eds) *The Philosophy of Seyyed Hossein Nasr*, Chicago/LaSalle, Open Court, 2001.

'By their fruits ye shall know them.' One can scarcely imagine a richer illustration of that scriptural lesson, in our own day, than the 30 essays included in the 1001 pages of this latest volume of the 'Library of Living Philosophers'. Certainly the breadth and depth of the enterprise of 'philosophy', if that term is to be applied to the work of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, must be understood in the classical, truly

universal sense of hikma (or 'irfān). And only Martin Buber, among the many figures who have earlier appeared in this prestigious series, was also a spiritual teacher, creative author, activist and truly global figure whose prolific works, teachings, students and vast range of influences so undeniably merit the term hakīm. Given the immense scope (and volume!) of Dr. Nasr's writings and deeper personal influences, each of the essays included here is not so much a 'criticism' (only a handful even remotely fit that description) as a personal homage and testimony to the manifold facets of that work, a kind of symphonic composition in which even those who may think they have known either the man or his writings will be constantly surprised by the discovery of new 'voices' and instruments—and where those who are encountering him more or less for the first time will no doubt experience something of that hayra, or illuminating wonder, with which he concludes his own 'intellectual autobiography' (p. 85).

Almost all readers even marginally familiar with Dr. Nasr's writings are likely to find his opening autobiographical essay (pp. 1-85; covering his childhood through to 1998) the most enlightening, informative and potentially challenging part of this book. What is so striking about this section is the way it highlights the series of personal relations and encounters—extending from famous thinkers, scholars and religious figures from all over the world to dozens of his own students and colleagues in every corner of the globe—which from childhood on have providentially formed the living framework (the 'roots', branches and prolific fruits) and ever-expanding expressions of Dr. Nasr's influence and of all the multiple 'traditions' which have shaped and given impetus to his work. Readers who have only encountered him through this or that published volume might understandably take this profusion of names to be a kind of celebrity 'name-dropping', but anyone who has known the man even briefly will recognise how absolutely essential, foundational and integral this element of personal interaction has always been to his own personality, work and the notion of 'tradition' which has informed it from his earliest years.

More particularly, for that vast majority of Dr. Nasr's international 'public' (readers and listeners) who have never known directly of his roots and connections in the many different fields of traditional Iranian philosophy, spirituality and religious learning—and who might otherwise see him simply as another spokesperson for the 'perennialist' school of thought—the most personally revealing, detailed and evocative portions of his rich autobiography (which is far more than merely 'intellectual'!) will be the many pages where he speaks of his own youth and then of his later years spent studying with so many of the today almost mythical Iranian masters of the varied fields of traditional wisdom in his homeland, not to mention a sort of 'who's who' of the formative figures of twentieth-century Islamic scholarship in virtually every area of the Islamic world and the West.

The immense bibliography of Dr. Nasr's publications (pp. 833-964, covering the period from 1961 through 1999) must also be understood in the context of that same almost unimaginably rich network of personal contacts and expressions. In particular, all those who have seen him as a passionate and persuasive public speaker (in—at least—equally fluent and gripping Arabic, French, German, Spanish or English, as well as his native Persian) will realise that simply a listing of his typically crowded, long-awaited and memorable public presentations and lectures (and in recent years, more and more prominent appearances in the international mass media) would far surpass in length this bibliography of written works. And more commonly, it has been through those unforgettable personal speaking appearances all over the globe, rather than his written works, that he has awakened the hundreds of life-long vocations which are so concretely and significantly reflected here in this catalogue of translations of his works into the 22 languages (by no means simply Islamic ones) which are included in this bibliography. In most cases, each of those translations, in itself, represents another philosophical and spiritual 'autobiography'—almost all of them hidden from the public spotlight—which would speak

volumes about the hidden transformations and more lasting influences which have been brought about all over the world through all the expressions of this extraordinarily 'catalytical' work.

Certainly one of the most distinctive defining features of S. H. Nasr's written works, as with his speaking and other public activities (and from his earliest writings onward), has been its truly phenomenal and genuinely 'cosmo-politan' scope, both in terms of intellectual or academic fields, and in its equally remarkable range of cultural and religious reference-points and audiences. That unparalleled range of subjects, audiences and civilisational perspectives is beautifully reflected in the broad spectrum of contributors to this volume. Although all of them appear here in English, they include figures from at least twenty other national, linguistic or religious backgrounds. As a result, readers who have primarily encountered Dr. Nasr's works (and students and disciples) in such areas as several traditions of Islamic philosophy, the 'perennial philosophy' and comparative religious thought, Sufism, the history and philosophy of science, or the contemporary ideologies of Islamic 'reform', will all find penetrating summaries of, or novel particular insights into, his distinctive contributions in each of those often academically separated areas, usually by prominent international scholarly authorities in each of the fields in question.

But even assiduous students of his writings will also discover fascinating windows onto possibly lesser-known facets of his work, such as Luce Lopez-Baralt's essay (pp. 393-428) on his own poetry and other writings in Spanish, or L. Lewisohn's condensed summary (pp. 669-684) of his influential and still seminal insights (usually expressed in short essays and public lectures) into the essential spiritual dimensions of the traditional Islamic arts, especially where he has taken up the quintessentially Islamic (and Persian!) arts of music and spiritual poetry. On the other hand, readers who might be encountering Dr. Nasr's thought and writing for the first time will probably find that Pierre Lory's remarkably insightful and sensitive essay entitled 'Know the World to Know Yourself' (pp. 717-734) probably gives the best overall, synthetic explanation of the intrinsic inner connections of all the facets of his work.

One of the most satisfying features of this particular volume is that the editors have essentially abandoned the medieval 'disputatio' format of the Living Philosophers series, and instead have allowed Dr. Nasr to amplify and elaborate on (rather than to rebut) the positive insights and contributions of each essay. Perhaps the one relative omission we noted is the lack of an essay focused on what has surely been one of the most 'prophetic' and lastingly influential areas of Dr. Nasr's writings, from his earliest days: i.e., his focus on the 'ecological crisis' and the fundamental spiritual—as well as environmental and economic—dimensions of both that crisis itself and the necessary elements of any lastingly constructive and humanly satisfying response. Although aspects of that topic are brought up in passing at various points, his pioneering writings in this area offer a beautifully inclusive and practically unavoidable illustration of the cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural, and trans-historical (while historically informed) breadth of vision which has characterised Seyyed Hossein Nasr's individual contributions and creative insights in all the many fields that are highlighted in this volume.

Finally, we would like to point to what is certainly the most central and unavoidable practical lesson of this monumental volume, and of the immense work and far wider range of influences it represents. One could not find more concrete proof that true philosophy today, in all its equally indispensable dimensions, has become an explicitly—not just ideally—universal and unavoidably global endeavour. When Dr. Nasr began his long and prolific career fifty years ago, one could still speak confidently, accurately and empirically of a multiplicity of 'civilisations' and authentic religious 'traditions', and hopefully live out what was reflected in that speech. As a result, some of his more recent readers have surely tended, perhaps understandably, to view much of his writing—and of the wider 'perennialist'

school with which he has been associated—as a kind of nostalgic longing (to take a stock expression from classical Persian poetry) for a long-lost, once real, but now irretrievably utopian Beloved. This volume, insofar as it constantly re-situates the recurrent abstractions of Dr. Nasr’s religious and philosophic writings much more concretely in their actual living and changing contexts, should be most helpful in dispelling any such misconceptions.

From that perspective, the most memorable new contribution here—in addition to the multiple insights flowing from his autobiography—is his revealingly personal and open-ended reply (pp. 381-392) to Eliot Deutsch’s essay on the actual existential dilemmas (simultaneously philosophic and eminently practical) of the practising artist and architect today, since this safely ‘aesthetic’ subject of *ihsān* momentarily avoids all the familiar minefields of most religious and philosophical discussion. Like the accomplished Sufi teacher that he also is, Dr. Nasr’s single paragraph describing his long youthful philosophic discussions with Walter Gropius (in Cambridge in the 1950’s) beautifully encapsulates and communicates, better than whole volumes of analytical prose, the lifelong practical tensions, philosophic dilemmas and truly philo-sophic aspirations which have informed and driven his phenomenally prolific life’s work—and its increasing global appeal to ever more diverse audiences—from that day down to this new century.

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Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 2001. Pp.v+252

Dover Publications is to be congratulated for making available this classic treatment of consciousness, free will and time, first translated into English in 1913, to contemporary readers in the excellent and original translation of F.L. Pogson. This is a very accessible and readable text, although that does not make it always easy to follow at times, which helps us to understand the quality and range of Bergson’s thinking, in this case, on the nature of the self and on the implications of self-consciousness for freedom and choice. As a twentieth century philosopher, Henri Bergson is neglected, if not ignored, nowadays, where some of his contemporaries such as Husserl and Sartre are still currently regarded as being of continuing relevance in relation to their discussions on self-consciousness and freedom. This is a great pity as this book demonstrates since Bergson’s treatment is wide ranging, very readable and sensitive to earlier historical accounts which he discusses and adapts for his own purposes. The dominant philosophical background figure here is clearly that of Descartes and it is fair to say that Bergson’s treatment of the self can be described as Neo-Cartesian with some Kantian adaptations., especially concerning the respective roles of time and space. There is a strong tone of dualism throughout the book, in the context of which, the mysterious and elusive character of the self is identified as the core of a freedom that is personally experienced while being indefinable. The Kantian intuitions of time and space in terms of what is inner and outer are viewed in Bergson’s text as dimensions that are improperly

equated with one another in relation to our psychophysical existence, thereby confusing our appreciation of the nature of duration and the conditions that influence human freedom.

Bergson's emphasis on consciousness as a flow that is inwardly experienced rather than understood analytically is central to his view of events in terms of being successive or interpenetrative. One is reminded here of the Joycean stream of consciousness theme evident in many of his writings, such as 'Portrait of the Artist', 'Ulysses' and 'Finnegan's Wake'. Bergson also evokes the spirit of an earlier Irishman, George Berkeley, by insisting that it is only because we are conscious of a succession of events that they are constituted as such. This raises the interesting ontological question as to whether those things that are unconscious of successive states, are in effect, not participating in a sequence of events.

Experiences of intensity and endurance are also examined by Bergson in this fascinating study of consciousness, as occurrences that are relevant to the appreciation of the nature of the personal process that defines our human way of being. In sum, Bergson's account makes very relevant reading for current discussions in the philosophy of mind. This exciting philosophical text challenges contemporary mechanistic and deterministic accounts of philosophical psychology and repays close reading, especially for Bergson's (still relevant) illustrations derived from close observation about human perception and action. It is to be recommended for its clarity of style, originality of treatment and richness of insight as a provocative Neocartesian alternative to the physicalist accounts of the mind-body relationship that predominate today.

Patrick Quinn

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Luce Irigaray, *Between East and West: From Singularity to Community*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002 (Stephen Pluhacek, translator), pp. vii-xiv+151.

Luce Irigaray proposes a unique way to attempt to rid the world of various forms of domination (men over women, whites over non-whites, humans over nature), which, she believes, have not served it well. She searches for a solution that aims to overcome Western dichotomies perpetuated if not developed by philosophy, including those between mind and body, the spiritual and the material, male and female, dominator and subjugated, and individual and community. Her experiences with the Eastern practice of traditional yoga (i.e., yoga without Western, male influence in which the emphasis is on separating body from spirit), more specifically, the practice of breathing, provide the foundation for accomplishing this task. Breathing is the first autonomous gesture of a human being. In yoga one learns to be conscious of one's breathing and to see it as voluntary and as a way of taking charge of one's life, rather than as a passive activity. Yoga, when practiced in light of traditional Eastern Indian non-patriarchal culture and history, teaches us that the body and spirit are in each person and need to be celebrated as such. Irigaray urges us to take a cue from Eastern yoga and revise our view of sexual relations between men

and women. Such relations in Western culture are too often oriented to reproduction and bodily desire, resulting in harm to women that feminists have analyzed and lamented for decades. Instead, these relations should respect and celebrate both the body and spirit of each person. Irigaray argues that the loving couple that respects each other as both bodily and spiritual becomes the basic unit of a democratic community, rather than one grounded in domination. Irigaray also argues for diversity in community, beginning with "mixed families." On her view, we need to celebrate all of our differences, including those grounded in race and gender, and use these as the foundation for a civil community where domination and harmful dichotomies no longer exist.

Much of Irigaray's book is metaphorical, and the claims are grounded in historical generalizations, which I understand to be rather typical in continental philosophy. The book focuses on issues such as how Western society has encouraged domination, rather than an analysis of the details of particular problems women face in a patriarchal society that is commonly found in analytical feminist works. I must confess that I have not done much venturing into continental feminism, let alone continental philosophy, even into the works of such a prominent continental feminist as Irigaray. Thus, the richness of Irigaray's work may not be as fully appreciated by someone such as myself who has been trained, and works exclusively, in the analytical tradition, as it would be by a continental feminist. Some of this may be due to translation "stiffness," as well. Nevertheless, I believe that Irigaray has much feminist insight to offer in this short book. Her views about breath and yoga and their relations to feminism are, indeed, unique. And she shares the goal all feminists share, namely, to eradicate women's oppression.

Irigaray begins with a discussion of yoga, which has as its goal to make humans one with the universe, and where every element of the universe is treated with respect, where couples unite out of love rather than a bodily, instinctual desire to procreate, and children are born out of consideration for the order of the universe. Yoga becomes the grounding of a civil society free from domination and dichotomies that are used to oppress people. Yoga's focus on breathing amounts to cultivating respect for living things in the universe. While it is not clear how breathing is related to respect, it might be that yoga makes us aware that living things are both bodily and spiritual, and thus to cultivate respect for the body: the body is where the spiritual resides, and is not a fallen vehicle as some philosophers have portrayed it. Finally, yoga is supposed to develop the differences between men and women, what Irigaray calls "the simple and true realities." At points like these she seems to be an essentialist -- see also her claim that there are two human natures, masculine and feminine (98). However, I believe that she rejects essentialism because she rejects the predominant view that men are spiritual and women merely bodily in favor of the view that they are each bodily and spiritual. And toward the end of the book, she explicitly notes that affirming that man and woman are really two different subjects "does not amount to sending them back to a biological destiny, to a simple natural belonging. Man and woman are culturally different." (128-29) I take her many rejections of equality between the sexes (54, 69, 86, 102, 113, and 145) to amount to a rejection of the view that patriarchy can be eliminated if we simply make women be just like men, and create laws that treat women and men as equal without sensitivity to their differences, while at the same time not associating women with the body, men with the spirit. This same point has been made by Catharine MacKinnon, Martha Minow, and other feminists writing in the analytic tradition, who argue that laws on pornography, rape, pregnancy leaves, and so on, should be sensitive to cultural context and gender and sex differences. This is not to say, of course, that equality is not a political ideal; rather, it is to say that we should aim for equality with respect to difference.

Yoga attempts to overcome the dichotomy between body and spirit, and, in our culture, since the body has been associated with female and the spirit with male, the dichotomy between woman and man. It does not make the spiritual (male) more important, as philosophy has often done; rather, it incorporates

the spirit into the body as one. Irigaray believes that men and women have to come to see themselves as whole beings in different ways, given their different upbringing. She calls this the "irreducible givens." A woman is born of a woman, a person like herself. The first relation she has, then, is very different from the ones a boy has. In order to develop herself ("construct subjectivity"), a woman must come out of her relation with her mother and see herself as different while remaining herself – that is, she must put aside what she has in common with her mother and retain her own identity. What she has in common with her mother is that she learns to respect and share life just as her mother has done for her in bringing her to life and caring for her after birth. Irigaray claims, more controversially, that she is even born with the capacity to engender and love like her mother. A woman can "keep her breath in order to build, create, and share it," sharing it with the child during pregnancy and after birth, giving her offspring autonomy. But a man puts his breath into the things he produces, and employs it in order to build his world. To keep the little of his breath in him, he needs concepts, dogmas, rites, and so on, but his breath is no longer shareable (85). What I understand Irigaray to be getting at with this metaphorical description (leaving aside the controversial psychological account) is that women recognize that they are both bodily and spiritual, whereas men, through Western culture, tend to see themselves as merely spiritual since this is what is identified as male and is valorized under patriarchy. If we are to have a society grounded in love instead of domination, men need to come to see that they, too, are both bodily and spiritual. Indeed, each person's singularity, but not false dichotomies, should be respected and valorized.

The respect that a couple has for each other forms the basis of a family, and of a community that is democratic and not oppressive. The family should be based on love of the couple for each other, not on intervention by the state and religion that impose restrictions on the woman's body, and not on seduction and violence against the woman. In such a respectful relationship, the man and woman "discover how to combine nature and spirituality across their differences of body and subjectivity"(118). Then they can form the basis of a democratic community. Irigaray argues also that not only do we need to respect differences across gender, but across race, as well. This is necessary for us to develop individually and to live together in peace. She encourages mixed race families as a way of educating people to change and acceptance, but cautions that we need to protect them from domination and prejudice.

I find interesting the suggestion that yoga is a way of eradicating dichotomies that have been used to ground oppression. It has recently surged in popularity, especially among young, urban, professionals. While I am skeptical that those who practice it will make the philosophical connections that Irigaray makes, if it at least makes people question the dualisms and their sexist associations, then it is a step in the right direction towards the eradication of women's oppression.

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T. Davis & K. Womack (eds) *Mapping the Ethical Turn: A Reader in Ethics, Culture, and Literary Theory*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001

W. Davis (ed) *Taking Responsibility: Comparative Perspectives*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001

These two volumes represent collections of essays which include some of the best writing on these topics today. The collection on the ethics of literature and criticism deals with the issue of the links between the ethical and the literary in general, on the ethics of race and power, the nature of the narrative as witness and the diversity of applied ethical criticism. One would normally say of a collection like that the standard of the essays is rather variable, but that would be unfair. I found the standard to be remarkably high throughout, although the one essay which I felt was rather disappointing was Martha Nussbaum's, who uses her chapter to reply to criticism which had been made of her and this did not always reflect the same general issues as the other essays. Some of the authors are well known figures, Nussbaum herself of course, and J. Hillis Miller, Cora Diamond, Susan Gubar, and Wayne C. Booth, and there is remarkable thematic unity throughout.

The essay which really impressed me was Booth's discussion of the complexity of ethical criticism. He brings out the significance of narrative in human life, and how the corresponding ethical commentaries on that narrative are also part and parcel of those lives. One cannot separate the literary and the ethical, and he brings this out nicely by pointing out how descriptive much of the Bible is. The Bible does not operate directly by pushing moral theses, it wraps these into stories and allows those stories to educate morally. Booth points out that we should not think of the story as necessarily directly incorporating a moral position, as though that were all that the story is about, or why it was written, because this also would be a crude oversimplification of what literature is about. Yet the moral has to enter into our approach to the story, both in its grasp of the actions of the characters and in what those actions mean. It is relevant if a character behaves badly, or well, or more plausibly in a manner which we find difficult to classify one way or another. As Charles Altieri points out in his essay, Wittgenstein identified ethics and aesthetics since there is a deep connection between our attitude to our actions and our attitude to works of art. Who we are as people is linked with the feelings we have when contemplating particular events and also the work of art. In a sense we respond to a story as an account of a unity which makes up someone's life in much the same way to an aesthetic object as a whole.

The collection of essays on responsibility is equally rich. A lot of the chapters have a legal orientation, and there has been an attempt to bring in points of view which reflect the multicultural nature of responsibility, so we have discussions of Confucianism, Islam, African views and so on as well as the traditional issues which arise within the United States on the links between the state and religion, and what it means for a corporation to be responsible for harm consequently on its actions or negligence. This collection is rather historically based and philosophically is not as interesting as it might have been. For example, the essays on what is obviously supposed to stand for "non-Western" cultures are largely descriptive and do not enter much into the debates which raged in those cultures on the nature of responsibility. One exception which I thought was very interesting is the critique by Sallie King of the failure by many zen thinkers to understand the responsibility of Japanese agents for their actions. She argues plausibly that many zen theorists employed zen Buddhism, entirely incorrectly, to justify both support for a war and for the lack of moral relevance of those engaged on support of the war. She contrasts this determined failure to admit responsibility for our actions with the original Indian

Buddhists, who had a very strong sense of responsibility and how we should organize our lives in such a way as to minimize the harm we cause to sentient creatures.

On the other hand, I wonder whether the zen dissolution of responsibility is not in fact more part of orthodox Buddhism than she thinks. As she points out, Buddhism criticizes the notion of the self, and advocates forgetting the self in one's actions. It is a short path from that position to the zen theory that we should lose ourselves in our actions, and not consider our responsibility for those actions since that would interfere with such forgetfulness. Any theory which criticizes the notion of the self is going to have difficulties in acknowledging a strong sense of responsibility, since with the latter the issue inevitably arises as to who is responsible. So perhaps the zen carelessness with the ascription of responsibility is more inherent in Buddhism itself than King appreciates.

As with the collection on literature, there are too many essays in this volume to be discussed individually, but the standard is pretty uniformly high. Collections like this are often rather uneven, but the editors of these volumes are to be congratulated on the consistent quality which they have managed to establish. Very few readers will be unable to find anything of interest in both books.

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A. V. Smirnov, *Logika smisla: teoriya i yeyo prilozheniye k analizu klassicheskoi arabskoi filosofii i kulturi* (Logic of Sense: Theory and Its Application in the Analysis of Classical Arabic Philosophy and Culture), Moscow: Yaziki slavyanskoi kulturi, 2001, 504 p, hardback

A. Smirnov is a leading scholar of Islamic Philosophy currently working in Russia. He is the Russian translator of such essential texts as Ibn al-'Arabi's "Fusus al-hikam", Hamid al-Din Kermani's "Rahat al-'aql" and Suhrawardi's "Hikmat al-ishraq". He begins his book by questioning the basic possibility of establishing the meaning of linguistic signs arbitrarily, through mutual agreement. The recent theories of modern philosophy and linguistics, he claims, have only questioned our ability to set the meaning of such signs precisely and have doubted the clarity of their meaning, whereas, according to the author, it is our basic freedom to give the signs their meanings (thus turning them into language signs) which itself ought to be questioned first. Hence, Smirnov's attention is focused on the relationship between the sign and the signified. The relationship of the sign to the signified, he argues, should be described as a complex and logically consistent process, allowing variable realizations and, at least partially, should be accountable for the formation of meaning.

What makes logic of sense different from different systems of formal logic is the former's approach to the notion of sense as a logically consistent entity while the latter investigates the laws of form

irrespective of context (and, therefore, is compelled to treat as abstract the thing - first and foremost the copula, negation and affirmation - which in fact are not devoid of concrete meaning).

The book consists of an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion. The Introduction examines the approaches to similar problems in modern philosophy (Russell, Wittgenstein, Quine, Derrida etc.) and gives a general outline of the category of sense. The first chapter investigates samples of ordinary language usage in classical Arabic culture. The second concentrates on the logic of sense generation on the basis of evidence provided by classical Arabic philosophical thought. The third chapter describes the ultimate intuitions that constitute the foundation for any logic which can generate sense. The conclusion summarizes the theory of sense generation.

To characterize the content of the book in one sentence, it sets down the foundations of a theory which explains laws of sense formation in language. The author makes an attempt to analyze these laws down to their intuitive ("intuition" meaning to him "a capability to arrange (organize) the atoms of thought" (p.399)) foundation which makes it possible for the meaning to emerge as a transformation of certain evidences recognized as valid by our consciousness. Smirnov claims that the basic sense-setting intuitions are different in different (European and classical Arabic) cultures (the author understands "culture" as "culture of thought" (p.451)). These basic intuitions, which he calls "the intuitions of ordering" or "the intuitions of space-time relations", differ in the two logics of sense investigated in the book as the intuitions of "concurrence" (European culture) and "replacement" (Arabic culture).

According to the author, "the logic of sense presents the content of philosophical theories as a result of the development of a limited number of concepts (which he calls "procedural"): unity in its relation to multiplicity, opposition, negation, affirmation and copula" (p.501). These concepts immediately reflect the structure of sense by describing theoretically its constitutive procedure. The way in which they (the procedural concepts) are filled with concrete content is directly determined by the particular set up of the structure of sense. At the higher levels of sense generation they become less obvious - but never disappear completely. Hence, "the irreducible and non-analyzable reminder of any analysis of semantic content is represented by these procedural factors which by that virtue constitute the basis for semantic content generation at any level" (p.502).

In a nutshell, the author believes the main categories of formal logic (copula, negation and affirmation) not to be content-free themselves (as we are inclined to think), since the possibility of an alternative content always exists. Hence, the logical axioms which can be formulated on the basis of these categories also are of an alternative character. This presupposes the existence of at least two systems of formal logic (European and classical Arabic).

To explain his ideas in detail and demonstrate their applicability, the author provides us with a vast number of quotations from classical Arabic philosophical texts, representing virtually every significant branch of classical (up to the fourteenth century) Arabic philosophical thought (Kalam, Peripateticism, the school of illumination, Sufism, Ismailism). An excellent biobibliographical dictionary and an English summary are provided as well.

Let us hope that the author will prepare and publish an English (perhaps slightly abridged) version of this pioneering work in the not too distant future.

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Patricia Crone & Fritz Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Salim ibn Dhakwan*, New York: Oxford University Press 2001, pp. xi + 407, cloth.

Although the importance of early sects in Islam may be lost on us today, the questions they raise about personal status remain. In the Introduction to *Salim ibn Dhakwan*, Crone and Zimmermann remind us that as early as the first/seventh century the Kharijites raised such questions as, Can one be a believer and a sinner? As a Muslim, what is the status of a sinner? And depending on this question, Is it legal to marry such a person and inherit from them? Since Muslims cannot intermarry with non-Muslims or inherit from them, such status may isolate them from the community.

This epistle treated here describes the views of the Kharijites, the first extremist sect in early Islam, which survives now as only a small sub-group, the Ibadis. The Ibadis moved to Islam's fringe lands in the eighth century A.D.; their original ideas are preserved now chiefly in literary works. Thus the authors contend that early Islamic thought can be reconstructed from these works, especially true now as the Omani Ministry of National Heritage and Culture has published these sources. The present work is the culmination of over twenty-four years' work by various authors, including Michael Cook, Wilferd Madelung, J. van Ess, Norman Calder, and Martin Hinds, regrettably not all of whom have survived to see the fruits of their labour.

The epistle offered here is by Salim ibn Dhakwan, whom the authors describe as a "shadowy figure of the second/eighth century" (p. 11). Although particulars of Salim's identity may be in question, he was well informed on the beliefs of Kharijites and their subgroups: Ibadis, Azraqites, Najdiyya, Murji'ites and others. As we read, we see graphically illustrated what makes a sect extremist—a refusal to compromise and a drawing out conclusions to their painful end. Among these the Murji'ites are particularly interesting for their refusal to condemn sinners as polytheists, or to believe them necessarily doomed to Hell, contrary to prevailing interpretations; rather, they suspended judgement. The authors see in this an anti-sectarian move in its attempt to keep all Muslims together in one community.

The Kharijite issue arose because the un-Islamic behaviour of the third caliph 'Uthman drove other Muslims to assassinate him, according to the surviving sources. 'Ali, considered a moral and Shari'a-abiding man, succeeded him as caliph. However with the revolt of the Syrians, 'Ali accepted the idea of human negotiators to judge between the two claimants. The Kharijites found this to be a fatal flaw: at this point, 'Ali lost Kharijite support. In their opinion, God had already approved the choice of 'Ali as caliph. To re-examine the matter was the equivalent of placing human judgment above the divine. In describing these events Salim presents his opinions clearly, taking his readers through the story of 'Uthman's sinfulness, his death and 'Ali's appointment and acceptance of the caliphate, only to allow Mu'awiya to challenge him. Salim presents the core of the story in a way that makes the reader understand the Kharijite position, particularly when he represents that " 'Ali abandoned the path the Muslims had followed in the past by making somebody other than God the judge in a case already settled by God" (p. 93).

Salim explains that the Kharijites accept only God as their judge, and how this colours their relationship to other Muslims, whom they refer to as non-Kharijite Muslims (p. 97-99). This book should be able to answer comprehensively any detail readers might have about the Kharijites. The Muslims may not have invented the heresiography, but they raised it to an art form. Where else can one discover that in their treatment of disbelievers (i.e., non-Kharijite Muslims) Kharijites can not kill their opponents indiscriminately in combat, marry their women and eat their slaughters, because of their religious beliefs.

Stylistically Salim proves himself to be a typical classical Islamic author, his text is heavily clotted with Qur'anic quotations which the authors call "dense Quranicity." Qur'anic verses are used to create an argument by the selection of verses, even short phrases, in some sections (paras. 19-22, for instance) with little connecting tissue.

Part 1, consisting of an Introduction, Text and Commentary, reproduces the Arabic text and the English translation, printed on facing pages. The text itself is relatively short, comprising a mere quarter of the book in length in both Arabic and English; however the subsidiary material more than compensates for the brevity of the text, serving to provide context to is an otherwise terribly specific text. Part 2 locates Salim in his historical perspective, in relation to both the mainstream and Ibadi thought. Part 3 discusses the putative dating of the epistle. The authors include copious ancillary matter: Appendices of historical figures related to the time, discussions of technical terms, related translations, a Bibliography and Indices. This is an exhaustive study of Salim's epistle.

This volume is a comprehensive study of a little-known area. While the general reader may find it a complicated read, The Epistle of Salim ibn Dhakwan is a valuable contribution to the scholarship on early Muslim sects.

Kiki Kennedy-Day

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T. Beal, Religion and its Monsters, New York: Routledge, 2002

The role of monsters in religion is one which interests almost everyone, and Beal has tapped a rich vein of material here. Although he does examine briefly some Eastern cultures, the emphasis of his work is firmly on Jewish and Christian scriptures and traditions, and their impact on modern film and science fiction. The treatment is usually interesting and plausible on particular instances of texts and other cultural products, but unsatisfying theoretically. Beal has no clear idea of the role of the monster in literature, he tries to present a general theory in which the monster is seen as representing chaos, in opposition to religion and order, but comes to realise that some monsters are actually recruited by their

religions as on the side of God and opposed to disorder. So any neat dichotomy with monsters on one side and God on the other is not going to work. He even suggests that all religions have monsters, which like Dracula are undead and keep coming back. It really has to be said, though, that the theoretical basis to his discussion is very thin, and knotted together out of the ad hoc judgments which he produces along the way. The strength of this book does not lie in the depth of the theory but in the scope for discussing the religious roots of the monster in popular culture, and here Beal is excellent.

The first part of the book deals with the references to the Leviathan and the Behemoth in the book of Job, and Beal argues that these are important figures in the text. There is an interesting account of the aggadic tradition according to which Jonah also encounters the Leviathan, but despite what Beal argues there is no reason to think that the monsters play any part in the theodicy. He may well be right that the monster represents chaos, and the possibility that chaos will overcome order, but what is central to the work is the discussion of why a good man can suffer in a world controlled by an omnipotent and benevolent deity. This discussion is not really enlarged by the references to monsters, graphic and dramatic though such references are. Where Beal really makes an interesting point is showing how Hobbes' book *Leviathan* uses the concept of the powerful monster as his symbol of authority in the state, only a power which is overwhelmingly powerful can hope to control the forces of chaos represented by the masses. Here the monster has become the symbol of order rather than its reverse, and Beal is quite right to point to the simplistic nature of linking the monster with disorder. In many cases the monster comes to represent a challenge to the existing order, and as such requires destruction, but as in the Dracula legends that destruction can only be temporary, since such challenges will always recur.

Beal argues that the monsters in the Dracula legends and subsequent literature owe much of their power to the earlier biblical accounts of such creatures, and to much older notions of purity. This seems to me implausible, and no evidence is presented for such a conclusion. In fact, it might well be argued that the religious themes in modern monster stories are there as part of the dramatic colouring, not essential aspects of the narrative. How many in the audience for a Dracula film know that there are ancient Jewish taboos about blood, for example, which form part of the Dracula story? The answer is probably very few, and we must be careful about applying to the audience the same sort of textual sophistication to be expected of biblical scholars such as the author. Despite these criticisms, it has to be said that Beal's analyses of individual cultural products are fascinating, the reader will often feel less than compelled by his approach but will always find it enlightening. It is in the wider theoretical conclusions which can be drawn from such work that Beal is weak, and he seems to think that once he has shown that the sorts of generalizations which one might wish to make are too crude, the scope for any such theory is vacuous. If the book is to be more than a Cook's Tour of monsters and their putative theological roots in our culture, then this sort of theoretical work needs to be done.

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The titles mentioned here are either reviewed in the current issue or will be reviewed in future issues of the journal.

A. V. Smirnov, *Logika smisla: teoriya i yeyo prilozheniye k analizy klassicheskoi arabskoi filosofii I kulturi* (Logic of Sense: Theory and Its Application in the Analysis of Classical Arabic Philosophy and Culture), Moscow: Yaziki slavyanskoi kulturi, 2001, 504 p, hardback

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