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THE PHILOSOPHY OF MULLA SADRA
AND ITS EDUCATIONAL
IMPLICATIONS

By

Said Rajaie Khorasani

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ABSTRACT

Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim Sadr al-Din Shirazi, known as Mulla Sadra, is a Persian philosopher of the sixteenth century. His birthplace was Shiraz. He spent his academic life in Shiraz and Isfahan. Due to his gnostic attitude, Mulla Sadra was exposed to the enmity of some reactionary Mullas, as a result of which he went into exile. After ten years of self-exile and seclusion, he returned to Shiraz, where he spent the rest of his life teaching and writing. Among his many writings, *Asfār* represents the most significant work.

The foundation of Mulla Sadra's system of thought is his philosophy of existence which comprises such issues as the definition, the primordality, the unity, and the gradation of existence. Some of his philosophical doctrines are the theory of substantial motion, the theory of the unity of the intelligent (the knower) and the intelligible (the known), and the theory of the corporal origin of the soul.

The delineation of some of the cardinal

doctrines of Mulla Sadra and the extraction of their educational implications are the objectives of this thesis.

The thesis consists of four parts. The first part presents a biographical sketch of Mulla Sadra. This has already been summarized above.

In the second part, some of Mulla Sadra's philosophical doctrines are explained. The following is a brief outline:

Existence is the undefinable objective reality which is responsible for the individuation of every individuated reality; and essence is but an abstraction. Existence is a reality which has various degrees of completion and perfection. In each degree, it discloses itself in a certain manifestation. The plurality of existing realities is, therefore, due to the variety of degrees of perfection of existence.

Motion does not take place only in the accidental traits of beings, as Aristotle and his followers believed. Accidents which are the

effects of substance cannot move independently of substance. Therefore, motion is essentially a property of substance and is imposed upon accidents incidentally.

Man has a monistic nature. There is no such duality as that of body-and-soul. Soul is not a partner of the body. Rather, it is the manifestation of the completion and perfection of the body. Hence it has a corporal origin.

Mind and knowledge are not two realities. When knowledge is attained, the mind of the knower has identified itself with the form of the known; through this identification, a mental existence emanated from the mind is manifested in the direction of the Known. So, knowledge is mind itself not something contained in it.

The third part of the thesis is devoted to deducing the educational philosophy of Mulla Sadra particularly its metaphysical, epistemological, and ontological aspects. The fourth part summarizes some principles of Mulla Sadra's philosophy which have a specific relevance to educa-

tion. These may be briefly stated as follows:

1. Reality is existence and appearance qua appearance has no objectivity.

2. Man has a monistic nature capable of promoting himself to higher degrees of existentiality.

3. Knowledge is a mental existence emitted by and from the mind.

4. Existence means "good"; and evil, nothingness. The higher the existence of the things, the better they are.

5. Education means provision for substantial growth. The aim^{of} education is the substantial promotion of the student.

6. The teacher, knowing the unity of existence, must appreciate the unity and brotherhood of all students. His approach to the students must be directed by love which is the inevitable manifestation of unity. At the same time he must appreciate the uniqueness of each individual student, which is determined by the substantial motion of each of them.

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INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of Mulla Sadra, with which we will be dealing in this research, is one of the systems of philosophy which has remained obscure. The birthplace of this system is Iran. Although Persian scholars have recently made vigorous attempts to unveil the real features of this philosophy, nevertheless even in Iran there are relatively few people who know about Mulla Sadra or his philosophy. In spite of its obscurity, this system of philosophy is both profound and illuminating. It can become a rich source of inspiration for educational theories and practices. But, perhaps due to its obscurity, the educational significance of this philosophy has not yet been investigated.

The aim of this research is to examine some of the major principles of the philosophy of Mulla Sadra, and to extract their educational implications. There are four separate parts in the whole study: The first presents a biographical sketch of Mulla Sadra; the second covers those

major philosophical doctrines of Mulla Sadra, which have a bearing upon education; the third is a philosophy of education comprising the metaphysical, the epistemological, and the axiological implications of the doctrines mentioned in the second part; and fourth discusses further educational implications of those doctrines. A brief summary of the whole study will follow the fourth part.

The sources we have consulted in preparing this study are drawn from three different languages - Arabic, English, and Persian. The bibliography, therefore, is divided into 3 sections each for one language. We have also tried to prevent the emergence of three languages in the footnotes in order to provide for the uniformity and neatness of the footnotes. For this purpose we have adopted the following device:

The section of the bibliography in which a particular source is included is identified first by the letters A, E, and P meaning respectively Arabic, English, and Persian. Then the number under which the source is recorded is given; and

then, the page number after the letter "p" follows. For example, "Sect. A, No. 1, p. 10" means the following:

Arabic section of the bibliography; source No. 1, page 10.

PART I

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

In the year 979-980 H. (1571-1572 AD) in one of the families of Shiraz a child was born who later on became an outstanding figure in the history of philosophy of Iran as well as that of the Muslim world. His name was Sadr al-Din Muhammad, better known as Mulla Sadra.

Mulla Sadra's father, Ibrahim Ibn Yahya, was from Qawamis, an ancient and aristocratic family of Shiraz. In addition to his wealth, Mulla Sadra's father was an intellectual, a man of great learning and profound scholarship. It is said¹ that he had grown old without being blessed with a child. Being desirous to see his progeny, Ibrahim made a vow that if God would grant his desire and bless him with a virtuous child, he would give a great deal of his property to the poor. Soon afterwards, his prayer was answered,

¹Section F, No. 3, p. 1.

¹Section E, No. 2, p. 14.

and his first and only child, Muhammad, was born.

Muhammad started his early education in Shiraz. As he was an exceptionally gifted child, he mastered all the elementary courses of learning in a short time. It should be noted that the content of these first stages at that time was much broader than those of today. It included the study of Persian and Arabic literature, logic, the Koranic sciences such as jurisprudence and exegesis, mathematics, and some other branches of knowledge.

Muhammad's brilliance and zeal for knowledge caused his wealthy father to send Muhammad to Isfahan in order to pursue his studies.

Isfahan at that time was the capital of Iran, where the ruling Safavi kings had established a highly developed center of learning. A community of the leading authorities like Mir Abul-Qāsim Finderiski (میر ابو القاسم فندر سکی), Mir Muhammad Bāqir known as Mir Dāmād (میر داماد), and Shaykh Bāhā-uddin Āmili called Shaykh Bāhāie (شیخ بهائی) were teaching there. Libraries, magnificently beautiful and attractive schools and mosques - which

today are the subject of admiration of visiting tourists - were built. Many of the intellectuals therefore, flocked to Isfahan where they found a warm welcome.

In Isfahan, Mulla Sadra completed the traditional sciences as a disciple of Shaykh Bahāie, and received the degree of Ijtahād.¹ He also enjoyed apprenticeship under Mir Damad, studying the rational sciences. He covered the whole Greek philosophy and the Islamic philosophy worked out by his predecessors like Al-Kindi, Ibn Sina (Avecenna), Ibn Rushed (Averroes), Al-Fārābi, Al-Ghazali, and others. It is said² that he probably attended the teachings of the eminent philosopher and mathematician, Mir FINDERISKI, who might have introduced Mulla Sadra to Indian philosophy.

To appreciate Mulla Sadra's ability and scholarship, it is enough to recall the testimony of his master, Mir Dāmād, as found in the follow-

¹Section P, No. 3, p. 2.

²Section E, No. 4, p. 115.

ing story.¹

It happened that Mir Dāmād undertook the pilgrimage to Mecca. During his absence, his students were asked to write a treatise on a philosophical issue and submit it to the master on his return. Mulla Sadra wrote his first book (شواهد الربوبية) "Evidences of Divinity". Mir Dāmād, after reading the work, said to Mulla Sadra (صدر جان کتاب مرا از میان بردی) "O my dear Sadra thou hast taken my work out of the midst (arena) - meaning that he (Sadra) had superseded it by the work he had just composed."²

Mulla Sadra's apprenticeship under those three teachers, by whom he was profoundly influenced, led him to a totally new type of life. For these teachers were inclined towards Sufism and very often manifested certain gnostic attitudes which were severely criticized by some of the Mullas of those days. The following verse is a

¹Section E, No. 2, p. 142.

²Ibid., p. 142.

good example of the view of a Mulla on one of the compositions of Mir Dāmād which has the title of (صراط المستقيم):

صراط المستقيم ميرداماد سلمان نشنود کانر مبیناد

"May the Muselman (The Persian word for Muslim) not hear nor the unbeliever see Mir Dāmād's Siratul-Mostaqim."¹

Of course, the Mullas, in turn, were not immune from the counter-attacks of their opponents. The Sufis and those scholars who had gnostic propensities undertook to belittle the Mullas and undermine their influence and reputation. The Sufi scholars went so far in their denunciation as to deny the value of all intellectual effort. Shaykh Bahaie, for example, who himself was a teacher of rational and traditional learning, condemned all the branches of knowledge, and then called for an esoteric knowledge to be acquired through love and illumination.²

¹Section E, No. 1, p. 407.

²Section A, No. 6, pp. 250-58.

Under the influence of such teachings, Mulla Sadra ventured to pursue gnostic studies in spite of the opposition of certain conservative Mullas. He studied the works of the great Sufi scholars such as those of Ibn Arabi, Bāyazid Bastāmi, Sohrawardi and others. Ibn Arabi's works in particular enchanted him.¹

Mulla Sadra's devotion to the work of Sufis like Ibn Arabi (who had been accused of infidelity and apostasy²) and Sohrawardi (who had been put to death³) yielded serious consequences: The Mulla's and the masses, upon whom the Mulla's had considerable influence, condemned Mulla Sadra in the same manner as had been done to Ibn Arabi. Mulla Sadra fell into disrepute. He was rejected and despised. He himself, in his writings, repeatedly referred to those bitter experiences.⁴

¹Section A, No. 2, pp. 117-119.

²Section E, No. 4, p. 115.

³Section A, No. 2, p. 117.

⁴Section A, No. 7, V. 1, pp. 4, 6-8.

⁴Section A, No. 13, p. 348.

So strong was the public opposition to him that Mulla Sadra's life was in danger. He therefore, subjected himself to self-exile in Kahak, a small village near Qom.

To travel to Kahak, one needs to pass through a vast desert, beyond which lies a high mountain range, which also must be crossed. On the other side of the mountains, down in the depth of a valley, there is a small village surrounded by luxuriant gardens. In contrast to the area at the back of the enclosing mountains, the village is green and beautiful. The fresh air, the magnificent and charming scenery, and the protective high mountain range made the village an ideal place for Mulla Sadra to live and to take refuge in.

Mulla Sadra spent more than ten years in this village. During his residence there, he had the necessary time and tranquility to reflect upon his earlier ideas, and to perform gnostic exercises and practice his religious genuflections.

محمد بن
 رسول الله
 صلوات الله
 علیہ
 علیهم
 و آله
 و سلم
 در المجلد الاول
 سلطان

السواد مع صلوات الشرف
 كتاب العبد المتواضع
 محمد بن
 سلطان



این کتاب خط در هر جا به صد این تجربین در اسم القوامی شیرازی آید
 که شرح حال این صاحب ۲۳۱ در کتابت حضرت اجات و در تاریخ
 یکم هزار و سیصد و شصت و در طهران الطبع شده و مندرج وفات در روز ۱۲۰۶
 ۱۲۰۶

Autograph of Mullá Šadrá of Šhíráz, the Philosopher

Deep faith, and contemplation over a long period of time, sustained by profound knowledge, started a new phase in the life of Mulla Sadra. According to him, new sources of knowledge were disclosed through illumination.¹ In his introduction to Asfar he explained in detail how the secrets of the Celestial Kingdom were unlocked to him in the light of the reflections which entered his heart from the Almighty as a result of his sustained course of self-purification.²

It was during this period of seclusion that Sadra established his philosophy by integrating his vast areas of knowledge and reflecting upon them as a whole.

After about ten years of self-exile, Mulla Sadra received an invitation from Allah-wardi Khan, the governor of Fars (Shiraz) to serve as a professor in a large school which the governor had established in Shiraz. Mulla Sadra welcomed the

¹Section A, No. 7, V. 1, p. 8-9.

²Ibid., p. 8.

invitation and returned to his home where he spent the rest of his life in teaching and writing. In his 70's when undertaking his seventh pilgrimage to Macca on foot, Mulla Sadra died in Basrah. This was in the year 1050 H. (1642 AD).¹

But the apponents of Mulla Sadra, who could not appreciate the value and the merit of his ideas, did not stop their denunciation of him, even after his death. They continued accusing the philosopher of apostasy and blasphemy; and by doing so, they prevented the spread of his thoughts among the youth of Persia.

It should be noted that Mulla Sadra's propensity towards Sufism did not prevent him from criticizing Sufis. He wrote a complete volume under the title of (كسراصنام الجاهليية) "The Destruction of Idols of Ignorance", which had the Mullas read, they would not have exposed him to so much suffering. In his preface to that work Mulla Sadra attacked those "dishonest spongers" who, under the

¹Section E, No. 4, pp. 115-116.

mask of Sufism, and by abusing the Sufistic doctrines in their exorbitant idle utterances, pretend that they are ascetic virtuous men, while having no knowledge or virtue. In Mulla Sadra's opinion, these people are but "impostors".

Then Mulla Sadra enumerates the essential elements which make up a genuine Sufi.¹

To become a genuine Sufi one must know:

1) His nature, his "self", and understand that his soul is a luminous substance which subsists and that his corpse is but a dark material refuse.

2) That the attainment of perfection lies exclusively in knowledge and acting according to it.

3) That the knowledge which guarantees the promotion of self from the brutality of animality to supreme archetype of humanity is a particular knowledge not knowledge in general. For

¹Section A, No. 10, pp. 28-30.

what most of the people include under the general concept of knowledge is, in fact, technique not knowledge. The knowledge which provides for self-perfection and the life hereafter is what the men of worldly life avoid; it is the gnosis of Almighty, His attributes, His books and Prophepts, the meaning of the Last Day, and the soul with the modality of its promotion.

4) That this knowledge can be acquired only through religious and theosophical endeavour under appropriate circumstances which are not necessarily available to everybody.

Thus Mulla Sadra excludes from Sufism many whose program of self-purification or knowledge is not in accordance with religion, or whose religious exercise is not performed knowingly and consciously.

What the possessor of that particular knowledge gains is a higher self, a better soul, a more realistic view of this transient life, and more faith and certainty - not the ability to display miraculous performances or to tell for-

tune. Such claims as divination, miracles, apotheosis and union with God are nonsense according to Mulla Sadra.¹ Hence he warns the people not to follow those so-called Sufis and pleads for abstaining from their deceptive talks.²

A real Sufi as Mulla Sadra says is he who bases his knowledge of Reality on the solid foundations of valid demonstration, which results in faith and certainty. Thus he becomes safe from the fluctuation of doubt or hesitation no matter how his life conditions alter or become unbearable. His piety and his process of perfection never waver.³

Sufism, therefore, is an intellectual system according to Mulla Sadra, it demands learning and scholarship along with faith and religion. Sufism does not imply seclusion or abdication. A Sufi can eat well, and dress well. What makes a

¹Section A, No. 10, p. 29-30.

²Section A, No. 7, V. 1, p. 10.

³Section A, No. 10, p. 39.

Sufi a Sufi is his faith, his perfect orientation to the ultimate goal of life, his self-integration by his deliberate and conscious attempt; not his suffering through hunger, or his dirty and ragged dress.

His Work: Mulla Sadra left behind many writings, the most significant of which is his opus magnum, Al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah fi al-Asfār al-Aqliyyah (الحكمة المتعالية في الاسفار العقلية) usually abbreviated as Asfar. The reason why it is so-called is given by Mulla Sadra himself in his introduction to Asfar as follows:

ان للسالك من العرفاء والاولياء اسفارا اربعة : احدها السفر
من الخلق الى الحق وثانيها بالحق في الحق والسفر
الثالث يقابل الاول لانه من الحق الى الخلق والرابع يقابل
الثاني من وجه لانه بالحق في الخلق . فرتبته كتابي هذا
طبق حركاتهم في الانوار والآثار على اربعة اسفار وسميته
بالحكمة المتعالية في الاسفار العقلية .^١

¹Section A, No. 7, p. 13.

There are four journeys for the wayfarers of gnosticism and Saints: one of them is the journey from the creatures to Reality; the second is the journey within Reality by Reality; the third is the reverse of the first, for it is from Reality to creatures; the fourth is the reverse of the second in a way, for it is within the creatures by Reality. So I arranged this book of mine according to the stages of their journey to emanations and effects of Reality, hence I called it al-Hikmah al-Muta'aliyah fi al-Asfar al-Aqliyyah.

It is very likely that in choosing this particular title for his book as well as the reason for his choice Mulla Sadra has been influenced by Ibn 'Arabi. This likelihood is supported by the fact that one section of "The Letters of Ibn 'Arabi" (رسائل ابن العربي) has the same title, al-Asfar; moreover, Ibn Arabi also at the beginning of his Asfar says: فان الاسفار ثلاثة لا رابع لها اثبتها الحق عز وجل : سفر من عنده وسفر اليه وسفر فيه¹

Journeys are three and there is no fourth...
A journey from Him; a journey to Him; and a journey within Him.

It is quite possible that Mulla Sadra, being enchanted by Ibn Arabi, decided to develop the work of Ibn Arabi, hence he composed a far super-

ior work which despite the assertion of Ibn Arabi, had a fourth Safar too.

Beside Asfar, Mulla Sadra wrote the following books:

al-Mabda' Wal-Ma'ād	١- المبدأ والمعاد
al-Mashā-ir	٢- المشاعر
Shawahid al-Rabubiyah	٣- شواهد الربوبية
al-Hikmah al-'Arshiyah	٤- الحكمة العرشية
Mafātīḥ al Ghaib	٥- مفاتيح الغيب
Wāridāt Qalbiyyah	٦- واردات قلبية
Asrar al-'Āyāt	٧- اسرار الآيات
al-Imāmah	٨- الامامة
Qawa'id Malakūtiyyah	٩- قواعد ملكوتية
Kasr Asnām al-Jahiliyyah	١٠- كسر اسنام الجاهلية
Tanqiah	١١- تنقية
Rasāleh Seh Asl	١٢- رسالة سه اصل

- A Treatise on al-Itteḥād al-Āqil wal-Māqūl
١٣ - رسالة في اتحاد العاقل والمعقول
- " " " Bad' Wujūd al-Insan
١٤ - رسالة في بدء وجود الانسان
- " " " Itteṣāf al-Māhiyyah Bil-Wujūd
١٥ - رسالة في اتصاف الماهية بالوجود
- " " " al-Tasawwur wal-Tasdiq
١٦ - رسالة في التصور والتصديق
- " " " al-Jabr wal-Tafwiz
١٧ - رسالة في الجبر والتفويض
- " " " Tashakhhos
١٨ - رسالة في التشخيص
- " " " Tarh al-Konain
١٩ - رسالة في طرح الكونين
- " " " al-Hashr
٢٠ - رسالة في الحشر
- " " " al-Qazā wal-Qadar
٢١ - رسالة في القضاء والقدر
- " " " al-Hoduth al-Ālam
٢٢ - رسالة في حدوث العالم
- " " " Sarayān al-Wujūd
٢٣ - رسالة في سريان الوجود
- " " " Masāil al-Qodsiyyah
٢٤ - رسالة في مسائل القدسية
- Commentary on al-Ḥedāyah of Athir
٢٥ - شرح الهداية الاثيرية
- Commentary on Usul al-Kafi
٢٦ - شرح لاصول الكافي
- Glosses on the Commentary on Hikmah al-Ishraq
٢٧ - حاشية على شرح حكمة الاشراق
- Glosses on Ilāhiyyat al-Shafa
٢٨ - حاشية على الهيات الشفا

Glosses on al-Rawashih of Mir Dāmād

- ٢٩ - حاشية على الرواشح لميرداماد
" upon al-Tajrid
٣٠ - حاشية للتجريد
" " the Commentary of al-Bizawi
٣١ - حاشية على تفسير البيضاوي
" " " " " al-Tajrid of Qushchi
٣٢ - حاشية على شرح تجريد القوشجي
" " " " " al-Lumāh
٣٣ - حاشية على شرح اللمعة

Mulla Sadra has also written commentaries

on the following verses and Surahs of the Koran.

The Surah al-Fātihah

- ١ - سورة الفاتحة
" " al-Baqarah
٢ - سورة البقرة
" " ya-seen
٣ - سورة يس
" " al-Tariq
٤ - سورة الطارق
" " al-Juma'h
٥ - سورة الجمعة
" " al-Duhā
٦ - سورة الضحى
" " al-Zilzal
٧ - سورة الزلزال
" " al-Sajdah
٨ - سورة السجدة
" " al-Waqiah
٩ - سورة الواقعة

The Surah al-Hadid

١٠ - سورة الحديد

" " al-A'lā

١١ - سورة الاعلى

The verse al-Nūr

١٢ - آية النور

" " al-Kursi

١٣ - آية الكرسي

There are several other writings attributed to Mulla Sadra, whose content does not confirm the reliability of this attribution according to recent research; therefore, their names are not given in the text.¹

Mulla Sadra's major aim in many of his writings is to harmonize reason with faith, or

¹These writings are: Glosses upon the Shifā, commentary upon the Hikmah al-Ishraq; a treatise called Sirr al-Noqtah (سر النقطة) and a treatise on the commentary of the verse 27 of Surah al-Naml (وترى الجبال تحسبها جامدة وهي تمرر السحاب). It should be mentioned that the exact number of Mulla Sadra's writings is not yet unanimously agreed upon. For instance Dr. Nasr in his introduction to Seh Asl enumerates 46 pieces of work for Mulla Sadra in addition to the commentaries on the Koranic Surahs and verses. But since Dr. Nasr himself refers us to the "most reliable" research done by Mr. Donish Pezhuh (Seh Asl, p. 9), the writer has given what Mr. Donish Pezhuh's findings confirm, plus one more volume - Seh Asl - which is not included in Mr. Donish Pezhuh's list, but it is edited and published by Dr. Nasr himself, hence, the writer included it in the work of Mulla Sadra.

science with religion. This, he seems to have succeeded in doing. Many of his writings are on a highly advanced level, particularly his *Asfar*, which is one of the cardinal texts for the doctoral degree in the School of Oriental Sciences of the University of Tehran. It is said¹ that if one studies Mulla Sadra's books without attending the class of an expert on Mulla Sadra's philosophy, not only one does not benefit from them, but will be misled too.

Mulla Sadra usually inserts Arabic and Persian verses of many poets in his sophisticated philosophical issues. These verses are so fit for the context that, beside uplifting the literary value of the writing, they assist the reader in comprehending the issue well. For instance, when talking of the various degrees and stages of the human soul, he says:

لقد صار قلبي قابلا كل صورة
فمرعى لغزلان وديرا لرهبان¹

And quite often he does not give the references of the poems inserted in his context.

¹Section A, No. 2, V. 47, p. 111.

His Poetry: Mulla Sadra is a poet as well as a philosopher. He usually composes Persian poetry. But his own compositions are not as eloquent as those he has quoted from others. Mulla Sadra's poems are lacking the smoothness and the eloquence of a natural piece of art. This might be due to the fact that he has overloaded his poems with so much philosophy that they have consequently lost the delicacy and art usually associated with beautiful poetry.

Of Mulla Sadra's poetry what is available is a collection of Mathnawis (المثنوي) and some incomplete quatrains published with his Seh Asl (Three Principles) in one volume edited by Dr. Nasr.

¹Section A, No. 7, V. 1 from
p. 343.

PART II

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EXISTENCE

1. Concerning the Definition of Existence: Existence, according to Mulla Sadra, is the most obvious reality. It is the most concrete and the most individuated of all things. Existence engulfs everything, is responsible for the concretion of every concrete, and individuates everything that has an individuality. But the meaning of existence is the most remote, the most obscure and the most inaccessible concept. Due to the obviousness of the reality of existence, everybody easily understands the difference between, let us say "The book exists." and "The book does not exist." But nobody can define existence. There is no clear and definable concept for existence, and according to Mulla Sadra, it is impossible to define it.

Regarding the impossibility of defining existence, Mulla Sadra gives the following demonstration:

واما انه لا يمكن تعريفه . فلان التعريف اما ان يكون بحد او
برسم ولا يمكن تعريفه بالحد حيث لا جنس له ولا فصل له فلا حد
له ولا بالرسم اذ لا يمكن ادراكه بما هو اظهر واشهر ولا بصورة
مساوية له¹.

The implication of the above is that a connotative definition, definition per genus et defferentia, for existence is impossible because existence has neither a genus nor a differentia. The place of partition for genus and differentia is essence. The duality of existence and essence prevents the substitution of one for another, hence the impossibility of the application of connotative definition to existence. It is also impossible to define existence through description because it is necessary for the definiens to be more obvious and more easily understandable than the definiendum. Existence is the most obvious of all. The definiens, whatever it be, would be either less obvious than existence or as obvious; and in both cases the condition of being more obvious for the definiens is not satisfied.

¹Section A, No. 9, p. 6.

" اللهم إلا ان يريد تنبيهها واخطارا بالبال وبالجملة تعريفا لفظيا " .¹

And if somebody takes the trouble to develop a definition for existence, the outcome would be a synonymous definition which explains only the word existence and which eliminates no ambiguity from the concept of the reality of existence.

In another demonstration , Mulla Sadra explains the impossibility of having a concept of existence by analysing the process of conception.

واني اقول ان تصور الشئ مطلقا عبارة عن حصول معناه في النفس مطابقا لما في العين وهذا يجرى في ما عدا الوجود من المعاني والماهيات الكلية التي توجد تارة بوجود عيني اصيل وتارة بوجود ذهني ظلي مع انحفاظ ذاتها في كلا الوجودين وليس للوجود وجود آخر يتبدل عليه مع انحفاظ معناه خارجا وذهنا فليس لكل حقيقة وجودية الا نحو واحد من الحصول . فليس للوجود وجود ذهني وما ليس له وجود ذهني فليس بكلي ولا جزئي ولا عام ولا خاص فهو في ذاته امر بسيط متشخص بذاته لا جنس له ولا فصل له ولا جنس لشيء² ولا فصل له ولا عرض عام ولا خاصة .

¹Ibid, p. 4.

²Ibid, pp. 4-5.

In this analysis, Mulla Sadra says that conception is the formation of the meaning (concept or picture) of something in the mind, the meaning being similar to the form of that thing. Then he says that conception as such does not apply to existence. The process of conception applies to the general meanings and quiddities, which onetime are associated with external real existence, and another time, with mental shadowy existence in the mind. Since existence is not associated with another existence beyond itself, it is impossible to separate existence from existence and transfer it to mind, and associate it with mental existence. Therefore it is impossible to have a concept of existence; that is existence does not have a mental equivalent to be called the concept of it. And anything for which there is no mental existence is not characterized by such characteristics as generality, particularity, commonness or partiality, which are ascribed to concepts.

Thus existence remains as a reality with extreme simplicity and absoluteness and has its

own individuality. There is no genus or differentia for it; nor is it a genus, a differentia, a species, a common accidental property or a particular accidental one for anything.

Since we cannot develop a concept of existence, it is not strange that we cannot define it. So was the opinion of Mulla Sadra about the definition of existence.

Despite Mulla Sadra's denial of any possibility for having a concept of existence, we do have some conception of existence in our mind - what we abstract from the existing realities and ascribe to quiddities, for example, when testifying that the tree exists.

Mulla Sadra being aware of this fact, provides the following answer to any possible criticism:

واما الذى يقال له عرضى للموجودات من المعنى الانتزاعي الذهنى فليس هو حقيقة الوجود بل هو معنى ذهنى من المعقولات الثانية كالشئبية والممكنية والجوهرية والعرضية والانسانية والسوادية وسائر الانتزاعات

المصدرية التي يقع بها الحكاية عن الاشياء الحقيقية
او غير الحقيقية وكلامنا ليس فيه بل المحكى
عنه وهو حقيقة واحدة بسيطة لا يفتر اصلا في
تحققه وتحصله الى ضمية قيد فصلي او عرضي
صنفي او شخصي .¹

As the quotation implies, Mulla Sadra first differentiates between two typically different denotations of the word existence, one of which refers to the entire objective reality - what the American College Dictionary calls "all that exists", and the other refers to the state or fact of existing. Then Mulla Sadra says that abstraction which is attributed to the existent realities is the latter denotation of the word existence which is one of the secondary intelligibles² (such as "thinghood", "possibility", "substantiality", "accidentality", "manhood" and

¹Ibid., p. 7.

²Particular concepts which are perceived through sense experience are what Mulla Sadra calls "sensibles" (محسوسات); when the sensible concepts on the basis of their common characteristics are generalized, he calls them "intelligibles"

so forth); while our issue concerns the former denotation of the word existence. What is undefinable and inconceivable is that sense of existence which is actually the concrete and individuated reality in all the external realities. That existence which concerns us is a simple single reality which has no dependence on any differential or accidental condition in the advent of its reality and its concretion.

As such if we have some conception of existence, that conception corresponds not to the reality of existence but to the state, condition

(معقولات); the entire action of generalization is called "intellection" (تعقل) by Mulla Sadra; and the agent of intellection is the intellect (العقل) according to him. The primary intelligibles are those general concepts which are developed on the basis of particular and sensible concepts. The secondary intelligibles are those general concepts which are developed not on the basis of particular ones but on the basis of the primary intelligibles. For instance, "man", "black", "general", "essential" and "thing" are general concepts. Our mind can develop new general concepts of "manhood", "blackness", "generality", "essentiality", and "thinghood", on the basis of those former ones. These new general concepts, which, according to Mulla Sadra have some infinitival connotation, are called secondary intelligibles (المعقولات الثانية). One of the major difference between the primary and secondary in-

or act of existing. Thus when we testify that "The tree exists.", we mean that it is existing or it is in the state of existence. "The state of existence" or "to be existing" is different from the objective reality of existence exactly in the same manner that the state of blackness or to be black is different from the objective reality of black.

2. Primordially of Existence:

The bedrock of Mulla Sadra's philosophy is his doctrine of primordially of existence. In the issue of primordially of existence, Mulla Sadra propounds that existence is the dependent, principal element, and essence is but a manifestation or an appearance the advent of whose reality is dependent on existence. In other words,

telligibles is in respect to their meaning. For instance "man" means "rational animal"; while "manhood" means the state of being "man"; or "father" means the male parent, whereas "fatherhood" means the relation of "father" to child as well as the state of being a father.

Since existence has two meanings - all that exists, and the state of existing - , and since the latter meaning, unlike the former, has

existence is prior to essence, and essence is only our abstraction of the existing realities.

To prove the primordiality of existence, Mulla Sadra adduces eight demonstrations four of which will be presented in the following:

The first demonstration:

ان حقيقة كل شئ هو وجوده الذي يترتب به عليه آثاره واحكامه .
فالوجود اذن احق الاشياء بان يكون ذا حقيقة اذ غيره به يصير
ذا حقيقة . فهو حقيقة كل ذي حقيقة ولا يحتاج هو في ان يكون
ذا حقيقة الى حقيقة اخرى فهو بنفسه في الاعدان وغيره
- اي الماهيات - به في الاعدان لا بنفسها .¹

The reality of everything is its external existence, that which provides the thing with ef-

the implication of secondary intelligibles, mixing up the two and mistaking the latter meaning for the former will have sequential effects on the issue of impossibility of defining existence. Please check Asfar, v.1, p. 332-334 and al-Manzumah (المنظومة) Part II, p. 10 for further information concerning the secondary intelligibles.

¹Section A, No. 9, p. 12.

ficacies and values. What does not exist has no effect or value. It is just nothing. Since existence is the agent of reality of every real, existence itself is the most meritorious for being considered as a reality and for being real because other things - essences - become real by existence; it is the very concrete reality which is present in the objective realities by itself, and essence appears on the stage of reality by it.

The second demonstration: This demonstration is developed on the ground of the difference between mental and external existence. Mulla Sadra first clarifies the implications of "mental" and "external" as follows:

ان من البين الواضح ان المراد بالخارج والذهن في قولنا "هذا موجود في الخارج" و "ذاك موجود في الذهن" ليس من قبيل الظروف والامكانة والمحال ، بل المعنى بكون الشيء في الخارج ان له وجودا يترتب عليه آثاره واحكامه ويكونه في الذهن انه بخلاف ذلك .¹

The mind and outside the mind are not two containers or two places in which the existence of things occurs. By external and mental exist-

¹Ibid., p. 12.

ence we do not mean that things exist in the mind and outside the mind. What is meant by external existence is that sort of existence which carries the values and the efficacies of the existing being. Mental existence, on the other hand, is a sort of existence which does not carry the relevant effects, values, and consequences. Let us take "fire" as an example in order to make the point more understandable. Fire has external existence, and this existence is accompanied by particular efficacies, values, effects, or consequences: it burns; it radiates heat; we do not touch it with our hand; and we make use of it. But if fire has mental existence, that is if it exists on the mental level only, it has none of the characteristics we mentioned about external fire. It does not burn; it has no heat, it is not tangible; and we cannot make use of it. Therefore, the difference between the fire which exists mentally and that which exists externally is only that, externally existing fire has all the functions and values expected from fire, while the mentally existing fire does not. But in so far

as "firehood" is concerned, both are the same. In other words, they are the same essence which is associated with two kinds of existence.

After this clarification Mulla Sadra says:

فلولم يكن للوجود حقيقة الا مجرد تحصل الماهية ، لم يكن حينئذ فرق
بين الخارج والذهن وهو محال اذ الماهية قد تكون متحصلة ذهنيا
وليس بموجودة في الخارج¹ .

In this demonstration Mulla Sadra explains that if existence were not primordial, then it should be an abstraction from the realization of essence; that is, essence should be primordial. But if essence were primordial, then there should be no difference between the mental and external realities because essence is the same in both of these levels of existence. While the contrary is true. Essence can be realized mentally, and this realization is not followed by the advent of any external reality. Therefore, essence is not primordial. And since essence is not primordial, existence must necessarily be primordial.

¹Ibid, p. 12.

The third demonstration: The basic argument of this demonstration can be reduced to the following conditional syllogism:

If existence were not primordial, the process of predication would be limited in the "primary and essential". Predication is not limited in the "primary and essential". Therefore, it is not true that existence is not primordial.¹

This argument is valid according to the rule of Modus Tollens:

$$\begin{aligned} - P &\supset q \\ - q &\therefore - - P = P \end{aligned}$$

Although this argument is valid, yet mere validity does not guarantee the truth of the conclusion unless the premises are proved to be true. In order to realize the truth of the premises one should understand what Mulla Sadra means by "primary and essential" predication.

Mulla Sadra divides the predication of predicate to subject into two kinds: the primary and essential predication (الحمل الاولي الذاتي) and common predication (الحمل المتعارف او الشايع الصناعي).

¹Ibid, pp. 12-13.

The primary and essential predication signifies not only the unity of the objective reality of the subject and that of the predicate, but also the conceptual unity of subject and predicate as well.¹ The propositions "Man is a rational animal.", "John is John.", and "Water is water." exemplify the primary and essential predication,²

The common predication, on the other hand, indicates the unity of the subject and the predicate in existence exclusively.³ For instance, when we say "The table is green.", we only mean that the external reality of the table is unified with the external reality of green; we do not mean

¹Section A, No. 5, p. 19.

¹Section A, No. 7, v. 1, pp. 292-293.

²It should be noted that the primary and essential predication is predicated of the law of identity and the synthetic proposition. For Sabzawari (Sect. A, No. 5, p. 19) gives two examples for the primary and essential predication one of which (الانسان انسان - Man is man) exemplifies the law of identity and the other (الانسان حيوان ناطق - Man is a rational animal.) accords with the implication of synthetic proposition.

³Section A, No. 5, p. 19.

³Section A, No. 7, v. 1, p. 293.

that green and table are one in concept. They are two different things; but they are existentially unified. In other words, in the common predication the subject and the predicate are two different concepts, while in the primary and essential predication, only one.

Now going back to the main argument, we know that essences are essentially different from each other. The essence of the table is different from the essence of green. Since everything is itself and nothing else from the view point of its essence, there should be only primary and essential predication. But we do know that predication is not only primary and essential. Therefore essence is not primordial. Hence the other alternative - primordially of existence - must be true.

The fourth demonstration:

لو لم يكن الوجود موجودا لم يوجد شيء من الاشياء وطلان
التالي يوجب بطلان المقدم¹.

¹Section A, No. 9, p. 13.

If existence were not primordial, there would be nothing. The denial of the consequent necessitates the denial of the antecedent.

Essence qua essence has no share of existence. Existence is not an essential property of essence. For this reason we can recall an essence such as man without thinking of its existence. We can even think of an essence while knowing that such an essence does not exist - for example we can imagine the essence of a two-headed man and we know that such a man does not exist.

Since essence by itself does not have any existence, if existence were non-primordial, nothing could exist because the primordial element - essence - has no existential property and existence is assumed to be non-primordial. But things do exist. Therefore the assumption of non-primordiality of existence is false.

3. Unity of Existence: Unity, according to Mulla Sadra, is of two different kinds: Unreal unity (وحدة غير حقيقية) and real unity (وحدة حقيقية).¹

¹Section A, No. 8, p. 42

²Section P, No. 1, p. 161

Unreal unity is the one which appears among different things when these things have something in common. The common element is called equality if it is quantitative; similarity, if it is qualitative; and identity, if the common element encompasses all the properties of the things. This kind of unity in fact is based on diversity. If there are no different things, equality or similarity makes no sense.

Real unity has no dependence on diversity. In order to conceive this unity one has no need to think of diversity. The subject of this unity is one thing, one reality, not different things that have something in common.

Mulla Sadra ascribes the real unity to existence. To him there is only existence, and it envelopes the whole world of being. Unity and existence go together. Whenever there is an existing being there is unity. Unity is existence and existence is unity.

الوحدة يساوق الوجود في صدقها على الاشياء بل هي عينه¹

¹Section A, No. 8, p. 43.

Absolute unity goes with mere existence, with absolute being which is a being by itself, in itself, and for itself. Things are the emanations of that Absolute Reality. Hence the unity of existence and the Divine unity are the same according to Mulla Sadra.

The real understanding of this unity is more than a knowledge to be acquired through intellectual effort only, and is different from a concept to be formed in a learning situation as such. Scholarship alone is not enough for grasping this unity. It demands religious exercises and ritualistic practices which promote the totality of the individual and enriches him with a psychology in which he can experience Reality and the manner in which that Reality engulfs other existential realities.¹

Mulla Sadra does not eliminate diversity from the realm of existence. He recognizes the diversity within unity and unity within diversi-

¹Section A, No. 7, p. 8.

ty, and believes that this recognition is not incompatible with the unity of existence. With regard to the entirety of existence, there is entire unity; but with regard to the variegated emanations and manifestations of existence, there is diversity. These emanations according to Mulla Sadra are called "The Breath of the Compassionate" (النفس الرحمانى) in the language of Sufism.¹

4. Gradation of Existence: Existing beings enjoy a particular degree of existentiality which determines their degree of completeness. The highest level of existence is the state of necessity of Being where the Being is absolute and mere existence. Below this level is the state of contingency where the emissions and manifestations of Existence are incarnated in various forms in accordance with the amount of existential illumination they receive from the Absolute.²

¹Section A, No. 9, p. 8.

²Section A, No. 7, 41, pp. 68-70

²Section P, No. 1, pp. 122-123.

To illustrate his point Mulla Sadra gives the allegory of light.¹ Light is one reality, but has various degrees or levels. The light of the sun and the light of a candle are of one nature; the difference between them is due to the degree of intensity. So is the light of existence. The differences in the existing realities are due to the differences in the degree of illumination embodied in them.

Thus we can conclude that Mulla Sadra regards the existing beings in a vertical order in which the places of things are determined by their degree of existence; that is, things in this world are not horizontally arranged.

For the entire existence, Mulla Sadra considers three different levels of existentiality.² The first level is the state of mere existence which is absolute "unconditioned", and

¹Section A, No. 7, v. 1, p. 69.

¹Section A, No. 5, part 2, p. 17.

²Section A, No. 9, p. 40.

has no dependency on anything except itself. This existence, as Mulla Sadra says, is given the names of "Obscure Identity", "Absolute Obscurity", and "Divine Unity" by Muslim Gnostics and Sufis.

The second is the existence which is manifested in the direction of its qualifications and traits, and has resulted in the external entities such as man, tree, heavenly bodies and other things.

The third is the "unconditioned" and absolute existence which engulfs all the things and is common to all of them. It is flowing throughout the whole world of contingency, is not limited by any demarcation such as eternality and temporality, priority and posteriority, deficiency and perfection, substantiality and accidentality, or materiality and immateriality. It is absolute, hence has none of the above conditions or any condition at all; and by its absolute nature is capable of becoming everything. Even the external realities irrespective of their conditions and limitations are included in this existence. This

existence is to the external realities what is prime matter to the individual members of all species.

To summarize the statement of Mulla Sadra, in the whole range of existence from the necessary to the contingent, one would state that there are three levels of existentiality. The first level is the state of necessity of existence wherein there is mere existence at the ultimate degree of perfection and culmination of beauty. The second level is where existence is identified with or determined in a shape and has become one of the individual external realities. The third level is an absolute existence emitted from the first level and is capable of accepting any shape or is already within a shape and has joined the second level.

In other words, if we use the allegory of light for existence, the sun, which is the very source of light and the entire embodiment of light, will be on the first level. The light which has come to a room through a window and has

accepted the shape and color of the glass of the window will be on the second level; and the light which is reflected all around but has no particular shape or color except its own will be on the third level.

5. Qualification of Essence to Existence: Positive attribution of any predicate to a subject depends upon the existence of the subject because what does not exist cannot carry any existential property. This universal assumption is signified by the following principle:

ثبوت شيء لشيء فرع على ثبوته في نفسه¹

Does this principle apply to the attribution of existence to essence? If it does, then essence must be a reality before it gains the qualification of existence. If it does not, then how is it that essence which does not have any reality at all can be qualified to existence? That is, how can we attribute existence to a non-existing subject?

¹Section A, No. 9, p. 45.

Mulla Sadra's solution to this problem is that in the actual world there is no such a duality as essence and existence. The external world is the world of existence. It is only on the mental level that we separate the delimitations of the existential realities from their existence and call them essences. But in the external world when we say "John is." it simply means that being is manifested in a form which is John, or the delimitation of that particular existential reality is John. The "Johnhood" of John in the actual world is not different from the existence of John. The following argument is Mulla Sadra's word concerning the unity of existence and essence in the actual world.

فلولم يكن وجود كل ماهية عينها و متحداً بها فلا يخلوا اما
ان يكون جزءاً منها او زائداً عليها عارضاً لها وكلاهما باطلان
لان وجود الجزء قبل وجود الكل ووجود الصفة بعد الموصوف
فتكون الماهية الحاصلة الوجود قبل نفسها ويكون الوجود
متقدماً على نفسه وكلاهما ممتنعان ويلزم ايضاً تكرير نحو وجود
شيء واحد من جهة واحدة او التسلسل في المترتبات
المجتمععة من افراد الوجود . وهذا التسلسل

مع استحالته بالبراهين واستلزامه لانحصار ما لا يتناهى بين
حاصرين - اى الوجود والماهية - يستلزم المدعى بالخلف
وهو كون الوجود عين الماهية في الخارج¹ .

He says if the existence and the essence of everything were not one reality, then the existence should be either a component of the essence or something additional to it. Both of these assumptions are false because it is necessary for the components to exist before the whole, and for the qualified thing to exist before the qualities. That is, the essence should exist before being qualified to existence. The same argument would be true about this existing essence. Here again the essence should exist before existence being added to it. The same argument can be applied to the latter existing essence, and this would continue as an infinite regression. Therefore the hypothetical assumption of existence being a component part of essence and its being an additional quality added to essence accidentally are

¹Section A, No. 9, p. 29.

false. Hence the other alternative, which is the unity of existence and essence in the external world is true.

As for the mental level, Mulla Sadra accepts that there does exist the duality of essence and existence. He supports his position by referring to the difference between our/idea of existence and that of essence. He says, if these two were the same, we would be allowed to replace one for the other. For instance we should be able to say existence whenever we ~~want to~~ say man, while we cannot. Therefore, they are two different things in our mind.¹

Since the duality of essence and existence is only in the mind and has no external correspondence, the process of qualification of essence to existence is only a mental reality. In the external world there is a complete union and the dual nature of things is only an abstraction.

¹Section A, No. 9, p. 29.

The Theory of Substantial Motion

1. The Ten Categories: The ten categories represent an intellectual achievement of Aristotle, which came to the Islamic schools of philosophy when Muslims introduced the Greek philosophy into their program of scholarship. These categories are as follows:

- 1) substance (الجواهر); 2) quantity (الكم);
- 3) quality (الكيف); 4) relation (اضافة); 5) place (الايمن);
- 6) time (مستى); 7) position (الوضع);
- 8) state (ملك، ار، جد،); 9) activity (فعل);
- 10) passivity (انفعال).¹

2. The Impossibility of Motion in the Category of Substance According to Mulla Sadra's Predecessors: Aristotle himself believed that motion in substance was impossible. He said "There are three kinds of movement - of quality, quantity, and place; not of substance."² His argument is

¹Section A, No. 12, pp. 163-165.

²Section E, No. 6, pp. 334-335.

based on the premise that motion takes place from one contrary to another, and since substance has no contrary, there is no change in the category of substance.¹

Muslim philosophers, adopting the Aristotelian categories, accepted that there would be no change in the category of substance. Ibn Sina, for example, denies substantial motion vehemently. His rejection is based on the ground that the subject of motion or the moving body should be retained in order for motion to take place. And since substance is the moving body in all motions, motion occurs in the accidents which lie on the substance, not in the substance itself.²

3. Mulla Sadra's Opinion: Mulla Sadra does not accept the common view of the impossibility of substantial motion held by Aristotle and the Peripatetic Muslim philosophers. Any change in the accidental properties of any species, according

¹Ibid., p. 338.

²Section P, No. 11, pp. 124-130.

to Mulla Sadra, follows a variation in the substantial form of the species. Since accidents are nothing but the aspects and the effects of substance of each species, it is impossible for those aspects and effects to change unless the substance itself changes. If we see that the color or the smell of an apple changes, since these aspects of the apple have no independent existence of their own, they cannot change unless the apple itself undergoes change. So are the changes which occur in an individual through various stages of his life. The substantial form of the species of the child changes and moves towards completion and perfection, and as the result of that growth the accidents of the child change.¹

In support of his doctrine of substantial motion Mulla Sadra presents two demonstrations to one of which we have already referred - accidents, being aspects of substance, cannot change independently of their origin.

¹Section P, No. 9, pp. 7-9.

¹Section P, No. 11, p. 131.

In the second demonstration, Mulla Sadra refers to motion in the category of accident and says that accident, the advent of whose very reality is due to substance, depends on substance in any unit of motion. That is, every unit of a moving accident is still an accident and must be on a substance. Therefore there must be various degrees of substance each corresponding to a degree of accident. Or else, we have to accept that some units of accident are independent of substance; that is, some units of accident are not accident. The consequent is false. The antecedent - the denial of substantial motion - is therefore false.¹

Take the color of a watermelon as an example. Inside a watermelon at the early stages of growth is white. The color changes to red gradually. Each degree of redness, though different from the previous degree, is still an accident, and must have been originated by a substance. Therefore along with each degree of red-

¹Ibid., p. 132.

¹Section P, No. 9, p. 8-9.

ness there should be a special unit of substance of the watermelon. Or else some degrees of redness should be considered independent of any substance. That is, we have to accept that some of the degrees of accident are not accident, which is a contradiction and false. Therefore along the changes in accident, the substance itself changes.

As such, the theory of substantial motion of Mulla Sadra implies that according to him change is inherent in the nature of realities, and is not a superficial phenomenon. This change is a basic vertical motion which provides for the essential completion and perfection of realities. This evolutionary motion takes its origin in the substantial forms of the species themselves. This, in turn, implies that the varieties of the species are the consequences of that vertical motion that substances of beings have undergone, not the results of the interactions of beings with their environmental conditions, occurring in a serial and horizontal order.

Another implication of the theory of substantial motion concerns our concept of time. For if beside the apparent motion of the planets on whose base our concept of time is developed there is another inherent motion in the nature of beings, then we will have another concept of time abstracted from this substantial motion, which I would like to call "substantial time". "Substantial time" as such is the substantial correspondent of the accidental time - that which envelops our concepts of moment, second, hour, day, year and so forth. And since that substantial time is related to the essential nature of the things, and since the essential natures of the things are not identical, then the meaning of time in respect to each individual species and even in respect to each individual man varies according to the variations of the speed of motion taking place in each of them. Thus two persons whose self-promotions are not at the same speed, are not living at the same time even if they are considered as contemporaries with regard to our calendar.

Another significance of the theory of substantial motion concerns the old philosophical and theosophical issue of the relation between temporal and "Eternal", of which only a brief account will be given to avoid the prolongation of the discussion.

Substantial motion itself is not temporal because it originates **both**, accidental and substantial time, hence it precedes them essentially. The phases of this motion, on the other hand, or let us say, the manifestations of this motion are temporal because they occur in time. Therefore the puzzle of relating the temporal world to an Eternal Creator is solved through the theory of substantial motion: From its eternal aspect substantial motion relates the moving and temporal realities to the Eternal; and from its temporal aspect, substantial motion connects the Eternal to the temporal creatures. Hence the gap between the Eternal and temporal is filled.*

* From the theory of substantial motion, one more conclusion might be deduced: since Mulla Sadra proved that motion - hence time, - is an inherent trait of the beings, one might be able to conclude that Mulla Sadra appreciated the concept

The Constancy of Matter and Its Unity
With Form Throughout All The Phases
And Stages of Existence

This doctrine is based on the following principle:

ان تقوم كل شي بصورته لا ب مادته وهي عين
ماهيته وتعام حقيقته .¹

This principle indicates that the essential subsistence of everything is due to its form; or, the "whatness" of the thing stands on the basis of its form. Form is the entire essence and the whole reality of the things. That is, if there could be a pure form independent of any matter, that pure form would still be the whole reality of that thing.

The question arises: what is the function of matter, therefore; why does form need any mat-

of fourth dimension. But since the concept of the fourth dimension is developed on the basis of advanced mathematical arguments with which the writer is not acquainted, he preferred to present this conclusion in the footnote just as a hypothetical statement only; and it is left to the reader to accept or reject it on the basis of his competence.

¹Section P, No. 6, p. 242.

ter at all?

Form is in need of matter, Mulla Sadra says, because it is imperfect. Matter is to form what deficiency is to perfection. Matter is potentiality; and form, actuality because if form is to climb the ladder of perfection and completion, it must have a potentiality and an innate capacity. This potentiality is within the form itself; it is in union with the form. "This is the reason why some thinkers have been inclined to accept the unity of matter with form and they are correct according to us."¹

The Consistency and Accordance of Matter
With Form in All Phases of
Existence of Form

As we have said, the substantial form of the things passes through various stages of perfection according to the principle of substantial motion. In the previous section we also said

¹Ibid., p. 70.

that matter subsists and remains constantly with the form and united with it. The next question to answer is whether matter undergoes change in order to be consistent and in accordance with form or not. Does matter adjust itself to the changes of the form or not?

Take a person as an example. In the early stages, the formation of an individual starts with a fertilized cell in the womb of the mother. From that stage up to the last moment of life that individual's form undergoes many changes. One single cell gradually changes to a zygote. The zygote becomes a child capable of continuing its life in this world. For some time, that child is, like an animal, governed by his instincts. Then gradually his rational soul actualizes and he becomes a person who thinks, acts, and communicates by man-made symbols. He is at this stage a rational being. The question is whether those formal changes are due to the actualization of a totality of potentiality which was associated with the earliest stage of the life of this individual, or each

stage of the form has its own potentiality which did not exist in the previous stage. In other words, does man's matter - potentialities - change with the changes of his form?

Mulla Sadra's answer to this question is that matter also undergoes change simultaneously with the changes of form. Potentialities also develop and vary in order to provide for further promotion of the form. Therefore, form in each stage of existence has a particular kind of matter appropriate to that stage of existence. This continuous renovation and restoration of matter keeps the matter consistent to the form. Hence as the substantial form of man becomes complete and perfect, his material existence also achieves completion.¹

Bodily Resurrection

That people in the life hereafter will face the Day of Justice and reap the recompense

¹Section P, No. 12, p. 24.

of what they have done in this world is one of the basic doctrines of many religions including Islam. Whether the bodily existence of man will participate in the Court of Justice in the next world, or only his soul will be present there to be rewarded or punished presents a serious issue. Indeed Muslims accepted the idea of bodily resurrection on the basis of pure faith and confidence in the Holy Koran. Nevertheless, some Muslim philosophers have done vigorous attempts to approach the issue on rational grounds. Among the very few who might have come out with impressive conclusions, Mulla Sadra is the outstanding figure. He has been able to establish rational demonstrations for the problem in question, a brief account of which is presented below.

The three previous doctrines of Mulla Sadra, namely substantial motion, unity of matter with form, and consistency of matter with form in all phases of existence of the form, play a very basic role in proving the doctrine of bodily resurrection. There is still one more principle

which partakes in proving the doctrine of bodily resurrection. This principle is as follows:

The individuality of every existing being whatever - material or immaterial - is due to its appropriate existence. The characteristics of things, like quality, quantity, time and others, are not the components of the things. They are phenomena, and are associated with the realities of the things, but have no contribution in the formation of the realities of those things. Thus, the redish cheeks, curly hair, weight and age are not what a person is made of. For this reason, these aspects of the individual change, while the person is still who he has been.¹

Now, going back to the problem of bodily resurrection, the substantial form of man, according to the theory of substantial motion, moves from deficiency toward perfection. The material existence of this substance remains with the form of man according to the doctrine of constancy

¹Section P, No. 6, p. 10.

of matter and its unity with form. The bodily existence of man undergoes constant renovation and remains consistent and in accordance with the form of man according to the doctrine of the consistency and accordance of matter with form. Therefore a body is always with the rational soul of man which is the substantial form of his species. But this body does not necessarily have the material characteristics of the worldly corpse; yet it is a body in which and through which the rational soul of man acts and achieves self-promotion and self-enhancement. The fourth principle employed in proving the bodily resurrection signifies that man's body exists not by its accidental characteristics such as color and weight, but by its very existence. According to this principle the physical traits are not the components of any existing reality; the individuality or the external reality of the things are not made up of weight, color and other traits. Since these are not the generic traits of the realities, the existence of realities is independent of them and can subsist without them. Therefore the body can

exist without these traits. And such is the body which accompanies man's soul when the rational soul of man has achieved complete catharsis. That body is actually the continuation of this corpse. When that body is developed and formed, man's psyche having been reached the state of spirituality continues its journey through that body in ^{the} country of eternity.¹

Mulla Sadra tackles the problem of reward and punishment in the life hereafter too². He believes that the recompense man gains in the life hereafter is not actually something added to him or given to him from outside his self. All the rewards and punishments are within him. The actions of man in this world affect his total reality, and have sequential effects on the quality of his further actions. The pattern of ^{his} attitudes, his imagination in particular, his inte-

¹Section P, No. 6, pp. 76-80.

²Ibid, p. 80.

rests and his whole personality will be affected and rather gradually shaped by his actions; and all of these have sequential effects on the development of his soul and his body which accompanies it in the life hereafter. Man's daily actions having established different attitudes determine the range of creativity and scope of activity of his imagination.¹ Then through the faculty of imagination those attitudes become embodied within him. Thus if man acts properly, he will be prepared for the life hereafter; his imagination will be trained and enabled to create what works there, and he will enjoy complete happiness, complete freedom, and complete tranquility. This state of happiness in the scope of eternity is called paradise in the language of religion. But if man acts improperly, then the undesirable attitudes and the vicious personality will be embodied in him and his imagination will never be able to create anything except viciousness, pain,

¹Mulla Sadra believes in the immortality and immateriality of the faculty of imagination. (Section A, No. 7, p. 294 from الجزء الاول من السفر الرابع)

and suffering - all of which are called hell in the context of religion.¹

The Material Origin of the Soul

The acquisition of knowledge about the soul, according to Mulla Sadra, is the most significant as well as the most difficult of all tasks. It is the only channel through which man can realize his place in the context of the whole creation, find out the line of his destiny, and then understand his proper way of life. Scholarship alone cannot reveal anything about the secrets of the human soul. The knowledge about the soul is attainable if and only if scholarship is backed up and directed by the religious instructions of the prophets particularly those received through the last prophet.²

The soul of man has a supernatural and metaphysical reality, a natural and physical reality and spiritual and post-natural reality.

¹Section P, No. 6, p. 80.

²Ibid., p. 40.

These three are, in fact, one and there is no contradiction. The reality of the soul has an existence which precedes nature, an existence associated with nature and an existence which succeeds nature. So says Mulla Sadra in the following:

ان للنفس شؤنا واطوارا كثيرة ولها مع بساطتها اكون وجودية بعضها قبل الطبيعة وبعضها مع الطبيعة وبعضها بعد الطبيعة . ورأوا ان النفوس الانسانية موجودة قبل الايدان بحسب كمال علتها وسببها والسبب الكامل يلزم المسبب معها فالنفس موجودة مع سببها لان سببها كامل الذات تام الافادة وما هو كذلك لا ينفك عنه مسببه لكن تصرفها في البدن موقوف على استعداد مخصوص وشروط معينة ومعلوم ان النفس حادثة عند تمام استعداد البدن وباقية بعد البدن اذا استكملت وليس ذلك الا ان سببها يبقى ابد الدهر . فاذا حصل لك علم يقيني بوجود سببها قبل البدن وعلمت معنى السببية والمسببية . . . حصل لك علم بكونها موجودة قبل البدن بحسب كمال وجودها وفنائها¹ .

He says, the human soul, being absolute, has different existential phases, some precede nature, some are associated with nature, and some

¹Section A, No. 7, pp. 346-347 from
الجزء الاول من السفسر الرابع

continue after nature. The pre-natural existential state of the human soul is due to the absolute perfection of its cause. The complete and perfect cause is always with the effect. Therefore the human soul, whose cause is the most perfect, existed even before nature. But the activity of the soul in the body depends upon certain capacities and fulfillment of particular conditions on the part of the body. It is clear that the temporal advent of the soul occurs when these capacities and conditions are complete and satisfied. The soul is therefore, eternal with regard to the eternality of its cause, and temporal, with regard to its material activity in the form of the body. Since its cause is eternal, the soul can enjoy a post-natural subsistence, and does not perish with the diminution and destruction of the body if it becomes perfect.

The natural state of existence of the soul begins with a physical nature. It is not the case that soul comes to the body from outside. Rather, the very reality of the soul emerges in a physi-

cal and material reality at the beginning of its temporal course. And then, the actualization of the physical reality under the principle of substantial motion ends in the spiritual stage of the soul.

١ . فان النفس جسمانية الحدوث وروحانية البقاء

Thus soul is not different from the body. It is the body itself if the whole range of the body with all its dimensions is taken into consideration.

• وايضا النفس تمام البدن

The transmutation of the physical reality of the body to a spiritual one occurs through substantial motion. This motion promotes the material being of the body into different stages of manhood where the rational soul of man will be realized, and still furthers the process of promotion until man reaches a non-physical state.

¹Section A, No. 8, p. 67.

²Section A, No. 7, V. 1, from "السفر الرابع"
p. 12.

Manhood is therefore the final stage of material perfection of man and the first stage of the spiritual journey of man. It is the transitional point for spiritual realization and actualization. As Mulla Sadra says:

فقد تحقق ان صورة الانسان آخر المعاني الجسمية واول
المعاني الروحانية¹.

The Unity of Intelligent ('āqil) and
Intelligible (mā'qūl)

In the process of cognition, the presence of two factors is inevitable. Those two are the knower and the known, the active agent and the passive agent, or as Sadra says, the intelligent and the intelligible. Those two, being two from the view point of definition, are one thing and exist in one existence, according to Mulla Sadra. In other words, there is only one existent which is the intelligent with regard to its being the subject of intellection and the intelligible with regard to its being the object of intellection. That is to say, in the action of intellection the subject and the object are not different things.

¹Section A, No. 8, p. 67.

This is what Mulla Sadra proves in the doctrine of unity of intelligent and intelligible.

Before presenting Mulla Sadra's argument in support of the doctrine in question, it is necessary to give a brief account of the issue of mental existence because the doctrine of the unity of intelligible and intelligent is directly related to it.

As we have pointed out in the philosophy of existence, all what we call concepts and ideas are existing entities on the mental levels according to Sadra.¹ That is, when a concept is formed on the mental level, a kind of existence whose master we are, is given to an essence; and as such, that essence finds an individuality and becomes a mental existent. The world of mind is the person's kingdom, absolutely under his authority. He can create whatever he wants to in this world, even the impossible and nothingness.

A concept, as far as it is a concept, is

¹Section A, No. 5, V.1, from (السفر الاول), pp. 263-314.

an existing being whose existence does not cross the borderline of the world of mind; and as soon as it does, it is no more a concept but an external reality. The difference between mental and external existence is that things that have their individualities in the mind, are distinguished from one another, and possess all their essential properties; but they lack their existential effects, while their external existences are associated with the existential effects as well. For instance, the fire existing by the mental existence is fire, but it does not burn, whereas, when it has external existence it burns. This difference, as we have said before, is due to the primordially of external existence.

One should keep in mind that in the discussion of unity of intelligent and intelligible, when Mulla Sadra uses the word existence he means mental existence not external existence because it is quite obvious that two external realities are never one if they are two, and they are not two realities if they are one. Of course, they might be of one kind because of their common

characteristics but not one. What Mulla Sadra means by the unity, as we shall see is that the duality of mind and knowledge is not like the duality of a container and what it contains, or like the duality of a plane surface and what might be printed on it. On the contrary, the duality is the duality of two approaches to one reality, or the duality of two definitions of one definendum.

ان كل صورة ادراكية - سواء كانت معقولة او محسوسة - فهي متحدة
الوجود مع وجود مدركها ببرهان فائض علينا من عند الله .¹

The existence of any perceptible feature - whether it be intelligible or sensible - is unified with the existence of the perceiver according to a proof bestowed to us by His Almighty God.

This statement reveals three major points:

- 1) that the doctrine propounds the unity of all mental existents including the particular and sensible ones, not only the general and intelligible ones. 2) The proof of this doctrine has been revealed to Mulla Sadra through illumination

¹Section A., No. 8, pp. 50-51.

and gnostic exercise. 3) That, although this proof is not lacking the logical validity one might not be able to understand it on purely rational grounds; hence the full appreciation of the doctrine might require some self-purification. The proof, however is as follows:

وهو ان كل صورة ادراكية ولو تكن عقلية ، فوجودها في نفسها ومعقوليتها
ووجودها لعقلها شيء واحد بلا تغاير بمعنى انه لا يمكن ان يفرض
لصورة عقلية نحو آخر من الوجود لم يكن هي بحسبه معقولة لذلك
العقل والا لم يكن هي هي¹ .

And this proof is that the existence of any perceptible feature, its intelligibility if it is intelligible, and its existence for the intelligent are but one in the sense that it is impossible to assume an existence for an intelligible feature without its being exposed to the intellect of an intelligent; or else it is not intelligible, that is it is not what it is.

In other words, any intelligible, in order to be what it is, must have been perceived by an intellect, must have mental existence. Otherwise it cannot be an intelligible. Therefore, the existence of an intelligible and its intelligibi-

¹Section A, No. 8, p. 51.

lity find their reality in the mere act of intel-
lection of an intelligent. Thus, they cannot have
any other kind of existence except mental. Mental
existence is not apart from the mind or different
from it in nature. Therefore, it is the mind
itself which identifies itself with the feature.
As such the mind itself with regard to its iden-
tification with a feature through the act of in-
tellection is called the intelligent, and with
regard to the identified feature unified with the
existence of the mind is called the intelligent.

PART III

THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF MULLA SADRA

In Part II we presented a condensation of some of the principal doctrines of Mulla Sadra's philosophy. In this part, we are going to establish an educational philosophy in the light of those doctrines. This educational philosophy under-girds the three philosophical foundations of education, namely the metaphysical, the epistemological, and the axiological foundations which identify respectively a theory of reality, a theory of knowledge, and a theory of value, based on Mulla Sadra's philosophy.

The Metaphysical Foundation

Appearance and Reality: What we meet in our ontological inquiries first is the appearance of reality, what Mulla Sadra calls essence. Appearance according to Mulla Sadra's doctrine of primordially of existence, does not have a reality beyond the reality which discloses itself to

us through it. Appearance qua appearance is not a reality, and it is false to ask "what is appearance?" Because appearance is always the appearance of something. The reality which discloses itself and whose mere disclosure constitutes the appearance is existence. What the principle of primordially of existence signifies is that that disclosure - the appearance - is not a reality in addition to the existence which is the disclosing reality; it is just the limitation of the reality, or the demarcating line of that reality. To clarify the issue let us consider the following allegory.

Suppose we have a piece of land which is one hundred square meters. The limitation of this land is one hundred square meters. This limitation is not an objective reality in addition to the piece of land, and if we are selling this land, we are not selling two things - one to be the land, and the other, the area of the land; and we will not receive two prices, one for the land and the other for its area.

The essence of the external realities is not in itself a reality independent of the existence of those realities. But since what we meet first is essence or appearance, we hesitate to testify the primordially of existence, hence we identify existence with essence or the reality with the appearance. In fact we mix up two things, the appearance of reality with the reality of appearance, and mistake the former for the latter.

According to the principle of unity of existence, reality is but one. It is questionable that if reality is really one, then why are appearances many? And since appearances are many, then there must be as many realities as there are appearances.

To answer this question we should refer to the principle of gradation of existence. This principle signifies that existence, being essentially one reality, has various degrees of completeness and perfection, and in each degree it discloses itself through a certain manifestation. That man is more complete and more perfect than

some other beings is due to the fact that the degree of existence which has disclosed itself as man is higher, Hence this disclosure has constituted a more perfect appearance or a more perfect essence which has more effects and efficacies. For instance man can think, act, communicate and create, and control his environment by his creative nature. Thus plurality in appearance is due to the varieties in the degrees of existence and does not necessitate the plurality of existence.

Going deep to the real substance of the philosophy of Mulla Sadra one realizes that Mulla Sadra has somehow discarded the issue of appearance and reality; he has left no room for the consideration of appearance, qua appearance as an element in the actual objective world. In the doctrine of qualification of essence to existence, he explained that essence as an entity apart from existence has no reality except on the mental level. It is the mind that attributes existence to essence as an accidental quality, and then affirms the qualification of essence to existence.

In actuality there is no duality; there is only existence whose emanations appear to us as essences. Hence, it is unnecessary and even misleading to abstract these appearances, oppose these abstractions to the concrete, and then ask "which is real?". For this reason Mulla Sadra does not open the issue of whether essence is real or existence; he questions which of them is primordial, that means which is principal, which has the prior objectivity and which depends upon the other.

At the same time, the value of appearance is given due regard and consideration by Mulla Sadra. Though appearance qua appearance is not considered as having any external objectivity by Mulla Sadra, yet, in so far as it is associated with existence it is real, but not reality. That is, since appearance is the appearance of reality, it is worthy of consideration on condition that we do not ascribe primordiality to it, and that we can appreciate the unity of reality permeating throughout the diversity of appearances. This stand, however, has a very significant impact on

the evaluation of the knowledge of appearance. Our knowledge of appearance is not condemned because of its being about appearance, and not about reality; it is about the appearance of reality, hence related to it.

Is reality changing?

Mulla Sadra's theory of substantial motion provides for the answer to this question. According to this theory, as we have said in Part II, change does not occur only in the accidental properties of beings. Rather, any variation in the appearances is the consequence of a basic and substantial change in the nature of the things. But this change is not haphazard or aimless. It is a constant motion in the substantial form of every species towards completion and perfection. Since the degree of perfection of the realities depends upon their level of existence, any change in the appearance must be preceded by a variation in the nature of the realities. As the existence of something moves from one level to another, the substantial form of that thing undergoes change;

and consequently the promotion of substantial perfection becomes realized.

Indeed, one should be scrupulously careful not to mistake Mulla Sadra's view of change with that of the progressivists. The least attention to the following quotation is enough to unveil the difference between them:

Change is not only a main trait of our world psychologically and biologically, but it is a chief characteristic of our social world as well.¹

Psychological, biological, and social changes are exactly what Mulla Sadra calls accidental changes because they are related to the accidents - quality, quantity, time relation and others. These changes are the consequences of a more basic change according to Mulla Sadra. That change takes place in the substantial form of realities, and they ascend to a higher degree of their substantial form as the result of it. The progressive change is aimless, hence unpredictable; Mulla Sadra's change is towards completion. It is an essential demand of the nature of the things

¹Section E, No. 3, p. 28.

to grow and perfect, and this substantial growth results in those accidental novelties.

What about the Ultimate Reality?

After our discussion on reality in general, it is time to approach the cardinal metaphysical problem, namely the problem of Ultimate Reality or God.

Being's the essence of Lord of all;
All things exist in Him and He in all;
This is the meaning of the Gnostic phrase;
All things are comprehended in the all. (Jami)¹

Recalling the philosophy of existence presented in Part II, we will confirm that Mulla Sadra has reduced all the realities into a single united reality, existence. The meaning of Ultimate Reality, therefore, should be looked up in the philosophy of existence of Mulla Sadra.

Explaining the doctrine of gradation of existence we mentioned the three levels of existentiality propounded by Mulla Sadra. They were:

¹Section E, No. 4, p. 143.

- 1) The state of mere existence, absolutely unconditioned; being by itself, in itself, and for itself. This existence is what Muslim Gnostics call "Obscure Identity", "Absolute Obscurity", and "Divine Unity".
- 2) The existence which is already manifested in directions of various qualities and has become the existing essences.
- 3) The existence which is flowing throughout the whole scope of the contingent world, is-or is not - determined in any direction, and due to its absoluteness is capable of being everything.

What Mulla Sadra considered as the first level or the highest level of existentiality is Ultimate Reality. This existence is the Prime Mover, the Cause of all causes, and the Center which emanates the light of existence as an absolute reality which in turn descends to the state of limited individual beings. As Mahmud Shabistari has put it:

"Under the veil of each particle is concealed the soul refreshing beauty of the Face of Beloved. To that one whose spirit lives in contemplation of the Vision of God, the whole world is the book of

God Most High".¹

The Nature of Man: Change and renovation are inherent in the nature of beings as the doctrine of substantial motion signifies. Growth is inevitably taking place and novelties appear as the consequences of growth.

This evolutionary process to which Mulla Sadra refers as substantial motion has uplifted the physical reality to the state of manhood, a transitional stage between the natural and the supernatural or between physical and spiritual. Thus, man is the product of motion or the outcome of the process of perfection, the best of all material beings.

The body-and-soul doctrine which had the support of many philosophical and religious systems is rejected by Mulla Sadra. He considers the soul not as a partner of the body in the formation of man but as the actualization of the body, in the sense that the totality of the body includ-

¹Section E, No. 4, p. 143.

ing all its dimensions means soul. The body undergoes change and perfects until it is transmuted to a non-physical reality. This developmental process is nothing but the substantial motion of man's nature.

The uplifting of the physical reality to the culmination of perfection of matter is manifested in manhood. Man is perfect enough to be given a free hand in the prolongation of the process of perfection. As a rational being, man can promote his self deliberately. In the stage of manhood, perfection and completion are the function of the rational substance, are intentional and deliberate, and no longer automatic. Due to the actualization of his rational soul, man has become responsible for the participation in his own becoming. This responsibility from the pessimistic view point is but a load, quite a heavy one. But optimistically viewing it, it is a challenge, even an honor, a highly significant one. Man has two choices: to accept the responsibility and achieve self-promotion; or to reject

his dynamic nature, stand still, eventually appeal to regression and go back to the animal life, take refuge under animal joy and remain as happy as an animal.

But to choose one of these two alternatives is not so easy a job, particularly when one is very familiar with and may be accustomed to the second choice. Who is going to take a courageous leap and venture to become what one does not know specifically, and leave what one is and has been familiar with. A cautious and conservative man may probably stand still and not choose any of the alternatives in order not to lose any of them.

In order to save man from the corruption of regression or the wilderness of permanent hesitation, both of which paralyze the dynamic nature of man, hence destroy his glory, The Provider has sent prophets and has offered guidance to man. The prophets have revealed the consequences of each alternative specifically, have explained the joy and happiness of the perfection in terms of this worldly joy and happiness, and as such have

persuaded man to the best choice. They have also offered a pattern of life through their own lives and thus have helped man in decision making.

To summarize the whole story, we should say that, according to the philosophy of Mulla Sadra, man is a unique system with a monistic nature, essentially capable of achieving self-enhancement and self-promotion by his deliberate attempt. This capacity is entrusted to him as the result of a completion that his substantial form has undergone according to an evolutionary motion which takes place essentially in the substance of all beings and generates the promotion of their existential properties. In order to open man's ear to the call of his nature and to answer this call for self-promotion and self-enhancement which are the natural demands of man, His Almighty God has blessed him with practical instructions in the light of which man can and should utilize his freedom and attain a successful life and follow his line of completion and perfection.

The Epistemological Foundation

Mulla Sadra's theory of knowledge can be derived from his two doctrines of mental existence and unity of intelligent and intelligible. The doctrine of mental existence, as we have referred to it in Part II, signifies that "apart from their external existence things might exist mentally."¹ This mental existence constitutes our knowledge of the things. That is, when we know something, we determine a sort of existence emitted from or through our mind in the direction of the Known, and consequently those things become existents but as mental realities. In other words, we create those realities in our mind.

The doctrine of unity of intelligent and intelligible denotes that the mental existence of something is not different from the existence of the mind itself; that is, the knowledge and the mind are not two different things existing in two different existences. It is the mind itself which

¹This is the kernel of the doctrine of the theory of mental existence summarized in the following verse by Sabzawari (Sect. A, No. 5, p. 22).

لشئ غير الكون في الاعيان كون بنفسه لدى الازهان

is identified with the known and resulted in knowledge. That is, the mind and the known are in complete union.

To make the implication of this unity and its impact on our theory of knowledge more understandable, it is necessary to restate the view of Mulla Sadra concerning mental existence, with further analyses.

Mental existence can be presented in different manifestations each of which constitutes what we call a concept. Concepts, being limited mental existents, are mental entities different from one another, and still each of them, different from mental existence. As such, the same diversity that we perceive in the external existence imposes itself upon mental existence too. But, since the existence of these mental entities comes entirely from the totality of mental existence, they are but the manifestations of one absolute mental existence. As such the unity of the totality of mental existence is preserved among the diversity of its manifestations. That

is, mental existence is a totality which covers all the mental existents, and with which all the mental existents are in union. Since the agent of mental existence is the mind, and since the existence of the mind is not different from the mind itself, all mental existents are in union with mind. Thus it is the mind that identifies itself with the essences and ~~them~~ those essences enjoy mental existence, and become our knowledge.

The definition of knowledge on the basis of Mulla Sadra's philosophy would be something like the following:

Knowledge is but the mind when it is identified with the known.

This theory of knowledge, in turn, gives way to another significant conclusion. During the cognitive process man is an active agent; he is not passive, he does not accept knowledge as a blackboard accepts the picture; nor is he unfolding his Platonic innate knowledge. The mind is not a place or a container wherein knowledge can be accumulated; nor is knowledge something

to be stored in a container. To know means to create, to emanate rays of existence through the mind and embody them in what is called knowledge or mental existent. Let us re-state the very word of Mulla Sadra, concerning the fact that the relation of the mind to knowledge is not like that of a container to what it contains:

ان من البين الواضح ان المراد بالخارج والذهن في قولنا
"هذا موجود في الخارج" و"ذاك موجود في الذهن" ليس
من قبيل الظروف والامكنة والمحال . . .

Now, let us examine how man can establish the identification of his mind with the known, or how knowledge can be attained.

The methodological implications of the philosophy of Mulla Sadra can be identified by giving due consideration to the following:

1. As we have mentioned in Part I, Mulla Sadra has testified that his knowledge came to him through self-purification and illumination. Moreover, in his introduction to Asfar he advises the students to begin with purifying themselves before starting to read Asfar.

ابدأ يا حبيبي قبل قراءة هذا الكتاب بتركية نفسك عن هواها .¹

2. After enumerating the essential elements of Sufism, he says "a real Sufi is he who bases his knowledge of Reality on the solid foundations of valid demonstrations."

Such evidences imply that Mulla Sadra suggests a method which is in fact a combination of the vigorous Peripatetic demonstration with illumination, one supplementing the other. On the other hand Mulla Sadra's hostile attitude to those Sufis who have not strictly followed the line of religion in their program of self-purification (Part I) indicates that any self-purificatory activity must be confined within the framework of religion. Thus, the method suggested by Mulla Sadra is a fusion of the illumination through religious exercise, and the formal learning on rational and logical grounds. In other words, Mulla Sadra's method of acquiring knowledge is an integration of subjectivity and objectivity backed up by faith and sustained by practice.

¹Section A, No. 7, v. 1, p. 12.

The nature of this method as such implies that any intellectual endeavor based exclusively upon the dry and soulless logic is as useless as the illumination whose outcome is not explicable in terms of vigorous and valid demonstration.

Axiology

The reason why we called this section "Axiology" and not "Axiological Implications" is that Mulla Sadra does have an explicit statement on axiology.¹ In that statement, Mulla Sadra develops a theory of value in the light of his philosophy of existence. Good, to him, means existence; and bad, nothingness. He clearly points out that if someone does not accept the principle of primordality of existence, he can hardly appreciate that existence is mere good. For "good", according to the wise intellectual, is what has external effect and influence, what things are attracted to and move towards naturally and deli-

¹Section A, No. 7, v. 1, pp. 340-342.

berately as well. So says Mulla Sadra in the following:

لان معنى الخير ما يؤثر عند العقلاء ويشتاق اليه الاشياء ويطلبه
الموجودات ويدور عليه طبعاً واردة¹ .

That is, "good" is an objective reality essentially needed by every existent, a center toward which and around which every reality moves. This axis, this common objective of all beings, is only existence.

Worth-noticing is the crucial point that Mulla Sadra is not defining the objective reality of good. All he is saying is that good attracts every being. Indeed, if good, as Mulla said, is existence, then it is undefinable and inconceivable.

However, since all perfections, according to Mulla Sadra, are existential properties, and all deficiencies are nihilistic qualities, Mulla Sadra concludes that (فالوجود خير محض والعدم شر)
(محض . فكل ما يوجد له اتم واكمل فخيرته اشد واعلى مما دونه .²

¹Ibid., pp. 340-41.

²Section A., No. 7, p. 12.

existence is mere good, and nothingness is mere evil. Hence, whatever whose existence is more complete and more perfect, its goodness is higher and stronger than what is below it.

It is quite evident that good, being the same as existence, has three different levels. The highest level is the state of absolute goodness, absolute beauty, and absolute perfection, what we can call Good.

The second level is the state of diversity or plurality of good. Goodness - existence - is manifested and disclosed in the direction of many properties, and is embodied in the external objective realities. The objective realities are, therefore, good; but the scope of this goodness is demarcated by the existential limitation of each objective reality. The third level is an absolute good, unlike the second level, unconditioned and unlimited. It is an all-inclusive wholeness which is capable of becoming any limited and conditioned good, and at the same time is already incarnated in them because it encompasses

all the individual manifestations of good.

With regard to what has been said about good, there are two major questions to answer: Are all the existing beings good? In other words, is there anything bad in this world? The next question which is in a way related to the first is "Is there anything which is good in itself but bad for us?". In other words, does Mulla Sadra appreciate any relativity for goodness or badness?

The first question is easier to answer. Evil, Mulla Sadra said, means nothingness, and since nothingness does not exist (because if it does, it is not nothingness.) evil does not exist. There is no mere badness. As for the existing beings, we should say with regard to their existence and existential properties they are good; but with regard to non-existential properties they are bad.

The second question is answered by Mulla Sadra himself.¹ This natural and material world

¹Ibid, p. 342.

is associated with the limitations of time and place; and these limitations impose clashes, oppositions, and contrarieties upon the beings. But of course, since temporal and spacial limitations are imposed upon things accidentally, those oppositions emerge as accidents. These accidental clashes and oppositions make something bad for something else. Things might harm the existence of each other, or reduce the degree of perfection of each other. Hence they become bad.

Therefore "to be good" and "to be good for something" are not the same to Mulla Sadra. Something might be good for something else and bad for another. Something can be good for something else and bad for the same thing under another circumstance. But the general criterion of evaluation is existence. One should be carefully aware of the fact that even this relative good concerns the nature of the objective realities, and is different from that good which is the principle of ethics. The ethical good which concerns the rules of conduct is not included in this dis-

cussion of Mulla Sadra. Moreover, nobody should jump to the conclusion that since Mulla Sadra believed in the relativity of good to some extent, then the meaning of good differs from one person to the other, or from one time to another. Beware of thinking that good is subjective and personal according to Mulla Sadra.

PART IV

EDUCATION

The extraction of the educational implications of the philosophy of Mulla Sadra is our only objective in this part. Mulla Sadra's philosophical doctrines as presented in Part II begin with the philosophy of existence and end with the unity of intelligent and intelligible. Of those doctrines some concern the very broad and general educational issues such as the nature or the aim of education; others concern more specific issues such as student, teacher, curriculum and so forth. Our approach is to present first those implications which concern the nature and the aim of education irrespective of whether they are derived from the first doctrine or the last in order to give an over-all view of an educational system based on Mulla Sadra's philosophy. Then we will examine the rest of the doctrines according to their sequential order in Part II.

Education and Its Aims

As we have said in Part II, Mulla Sadra does not limit the history of an individual's life to the period between birth and death. Man's life, he said, has a pre-natural, a natural, and a post-natural stage. The temporal life of man is confined within the range of the natural stage. The theory of education we are going to define concerns primarily this temporal life. Nevertheless, since the temporal stage of life is preceded and succeeded by two other stages, the philosopher of education cannot be indifferent towards the preceding and succeeding stages. And since the educational system adopted to the natural stage imposes sequential effects on the succeeding stage, the philosopher of education cannot define the nature of the education based on Mulla Sadra's philosophy unless he takes into account the succeeding stage; or else, his definition will not accord with the philosophy of Mulla Sadra.

In the light of these two view points and because Mulla Sadra strongly emphasized religion,

we can deduce one of the criteria of the education based on Mulla Sadra's philosophy, namely, that Mulla Sadra's system of education cannot be a secular one.

On the other hand, Mulla Sadra's education is not preparation for death. He never recommended the abandonment of social life. Furthermore, the doctrine of substantial motion implies that the fulfillment of mundane life is quite necessary. For the motion of the substantial form of man from the physical reality to a spiritual one implies that growth is the underlying principle of life. Each unit of growth depends upon the completion of the preceding one. Therefore each stage of the temporal life must be realized. The realization of each stage of life necessitates the satisfaction of certain conditions upon which life is based. Thus eating, dressing, marriage, and other necessities which occupy various aspects of life - social and individual - become truly important. Therefore, the worldly aspects of life cannot be, and are not, neglected by Mulla Sadra. This view is supported by the fact that Mulla Sadra

has recommended worldly activities such as agriculture and trading.¹ Of course, Mulla Sadra did stress self-purification and self-perfection. But this call for self-purification requires the individual not to submerge himself in his animal lusts and passions, and not to take this temporal life for an aimless endless phenomenon occurring just haphazardly. Indeed, to give meaning and direction to life, to appreciate an ultimate end beyond the vicious circle of "eating for living and living for eating", is totally different from neglecting life. Thus the other criterion of Mulla Sadra's education is that it is not extravagantly religious. Therefore the system of education of Mulla Sadra stands between the two extremes of secularity and clericality.

The ultimate aim of this education is self-enhancement and self-promotion, or self-actualization in terms of self itself. The student in this system is helped to recognize his place in particular and the place of man in general in the

¹Section P, No. 7, p. 32.

context of the whole system of being, to appreciate his becoming, and to promote his "self" to higher levels of perfection and completion.

Now, with regard the aim of education as such, let us adopt a functional definition to the education of Mulla Sadra:

Education is the process of self-realization in terms of self itself.

Philosophy of Existence and Education

The refutation of the primordially of essence, and the demonstration of the unity of existence both corroborated by such a vigorous logic as that of Mulla Sadra provide us with a new outlook on the surrounding world. As Jami has put it:

Being, with all its latent qualities,
Doth permeate all mundane entities,
Which, when can receive them, show them
forth
In the degrees of their capacities.¹

¹Section E, No. 4, p. 144.

Thus we rational beings, as well as all other creatures are the manifestations of one reality, existence. Being originally one substance, still we enjoy our own unique individualities.

This genuine approach presents a new social concept, a new educational outlook, hence a new life long horizon to us.

From the social point of view, the doctrine of unity of existence implies the unity and brotherhood of all men regardless of their cultural, social, racial, and educational backgrounds.

One who believes in the doctrine of unity of existence can easily appreciate the fact that the underlying reality of all men is but one. Hence the accidental differences of color, time, place, and others never seem so significant to him as to ignore the essential "substantial unity" of all men.

With regard to this social implication,

the doctrine of substantial unity serves as a solid foundation for teaching for international understanding or internationality which seems to have won the support of a good number of liberal and broad-minded people of the present time. A teacher who has such a philosophical base for the issue of internationality can hold a more vigorous position and offer more substantiated arguments in favour of the issue in question.

The implication of the doctrine of unity of existence concerns the teacher's attitude towards the students too. This doctrine implies that the teacher and the students are of the same nature, and from one single substance; they are the embodiments of one reality. Hence, despite all the differences of age, weight, knowledge, social status, understanding, maturity and others which exist between the teacher and each student, the teacher who can appreciate the unity of existence is always conscious of his own existential unity and that of each student. Consequently the principle of unity acts within the totality of

the teacher and dominates all his personality. Thus he will respect the students not as the result of the principles of education he has memorized but as the result of a philosophy which governs his whole being.

The doctrine of unity of existence provides for sentimental sharing and communication between the teacher and the students too. Unity is the only principle of sharing and communication. The more unity, the more sharing and the more communication. To testify this universal principle, it is enough to compare the intensity of sharing and communication between the members of a family and between the inhabitants of a city. Parents share their properties and their joy and happiness with their children more than with others because the parent-child ties are stronger. And if exceptionally some parents have less sharing with their children than with somebody else, these exceptions, instead of harming the universality of our principle, sustain it because those so-called exceptions indicate the absence of unity between those parents and their children. That is, if

there is no unity, there will be no sharing even between a parent and a child.

Now, since sharing and communication are the consequences of unity, and since the stronger the unity, the more sharing and communication, a teacher who believes in the unity of his entire existence and the entire existence of the students, exhibits the highest degree of sharing and communication to his students. Thus the behaviour of the students become more meaningful to the teacher. So become those of the teacher to the students. This teacher can communicate through a glance much more than what another ordinary teacher communicates in a one-hour lecture. The looks of the students, their sighs, their smiles, the movement of their hands, and the tone of their voices - all and all - become eloquent languages which reveal the whole psychology of the students exactly and accurately. The sharing between the teacher and the students manifests itself in terms of feeling and sentiment, sympathy, sincerity, and mutual understanding.

Communication, mutual understanding, sympathy, sincerity and all other position attitudes which substantiate the student-teacher relationship and facilitate the process of education are included under an over-all and all-inclusive totality which is called love. Unity means love, and love means unity. A teacher who can appreciate the unity of his being and the being of each individual student loves his students; and his success in performing the miracle of teaching is guaranteed by love.

The Doctrine of Substantial Motion
and Education

To recall the account of substantial motion presented in Part II, the main points of this doctrine will be given below:

1. Motion does not take place only in the accidents of the things; the substantial reality of the things undergoes change too. And it is this substantial change which results in va-

riation in the accidents.

2. Substantial change is motion towards completion and perfection.

3. There are two kinds of time each abstracted from one of these two motions: the one which corresponds to the substantial motion we called substantial time; and that which refers to the motion of accidents we called accidental time.

4. Two persons who are contemporaries in respect to the accidental time are not necessarily so with regard to the substantial time.

The most serious educational implication of the doctrine of substantial motion concerns the school curriculum. The curriculum of the school should provide for two kinds of change taking place in each individual student simultaneously: for the substantial change of the student, which is responsible for his vertical motion towards completion and perfection; and for the accidental changes which in the long run

are responsible for the physical, material, social, and cultural variations of the individual, and provide for his horizontal motion along the line of history. It is the former function of the curriculum which brings religious practices, religious sciences, theosophical and gnostic studies, and may be metaphysical philosophy - certain basic parts of which to be compulsory for all - to the school curriculum.

The second educational implication of the doctrine of substantial motion concerns the role of the teacher. The teacher is dealing with a group of students who are in a state of becoming and growth, and he is supposed to assist them in their vertical and horizontal development. His first step is to know where each student is. In other words the teacher must know his student. But, each student has his own substantial motion; and it is this substantial motion which determines the unique individuality of the student. The first duty of the teacher therefore, is to appreciate the uniqueness of the individuality of each student simultaneously with appreciating the existential

unity of all of them. To appreciate the individuality of each student means to understand the substantial motion of each, and to identify the substantial time of each. Since this understanding is heavily dependent upon the substantial growth of the teacher, upon the level of the self-enhancement of the teacher himself, he can understand his students and appreciate their uniqueness if and only if the teacher has gone through the experience of self-promotion by participating in his own becoming. This means, the teacher training institutions must be the centers of advanced intellectual, moral, theosophical, gnostic and religious studies and practices, and the teachers should be the archetypes of completion and perfection. Thus the mastery of a particular subject, skilful methods of presentation, proper manners of conduct, interest in the profession of teaching, and other qualifications of the teacher should be crowned with substantial maturity and perfection to make the teacher qualified for teaching in the school of Mulla Sadra. The heaviest stress, therefore, must be on the teacher training insti-

tutions because it is not primarily aiming at scientific, technological, or industrial means for man's life, but at life itself. It is false to consider the modern means of life as the components of life. Life precedes these industrial and scientific inventions and succeeds them too. So far as these means are in the hand of a virtuous, pious, understanding, and self-promoted man, they are helpful, useful, and valuable. But if the scientific progress excels the moral and virtuous growth of man, then it becomes dangerous and horrible. Therefore the self-promotive aspect of education must always lead the scientific and technological aspect. And it is the educator who is going to preserve this proportion. Hence it is the school of education and other teacher training centers which must be the center of gravity of all learning institutions, and the teacher who must be equipped with the highest degree of virtue, morality, substantial maturity and self-enhancement. The real value of a nation can be estimated not on the basis of its industrial productions, but on the basis of the quali-

ty and quantity of its teacher training institutions which are in fact the representatives of the philosophy of that nation and the determinents of the nature of the life of that nation. So implies the doctrine of substantial motion.

The teacher, as the doctrine of substantial motion implies, must be interested primarily and essentially in the substantial growth of the student, and secondarily and incidentally in his behavioral changes because the former does provide for the latter, but the latter does not necessarily guarantee the former. For in any conditional proposition the truth of the antecedent establishes the truth of the consequent, but the truth of the consequent does not necessitate that of the antecedent.

To summarize the whole issue, from the educational point of view the doctrine of substantial motion implies that the substantial growth of the child is the axis around which all the educational activities should turn because the substantial growth itself can provide for the acci-

dental changes and can even determine the nature and the direction of the accidental changes.

There are several questions which seem very important to us: How can we measure the substantial growth of each student? What would be our standard of evaluation? How can we develop that standard?

It is still questionable whether these questions are as significant to Mulla Sadra as they are to us. Probably Mulla Sadra would never face such questions because his self-promoted and self-enhanced teacher could know accurately each student and would adjust his curriculum to the needs of each.

Our problem is that we, his readers, are not really self-promoted and self-enhanced. We think in terms of our own system and try to digest Mulla Sadra's system in the context of our own thinking, educational theories, and practices. Hence we ask questions which, had Mulla Sadra been asked, he would probably have considered as very

trivial. All what we can say is that a great deal of subjectivity is involved in Mulla Sadra's criteria for evaluation, and we can appreciate those criteria only when we experience and practice what Mulla Sadra has recommended.

Education and the Theory of
Consistency and Accordance

This doctrine concerns the restoration of matter along with the renovations of form. In other words, it indicates that the potentialities of a child change and grow with the changes of his substantial form. It propounds that as the rational soul or the substantial form of man grows, his potentialities develop, in the sense that, in each stage of life, man has certain potentialities which did not exist in the previous stages. Education therefore, does not only actualize the potentialities which already exist in the child, it offers him new potentialities as well. And since these potentialities as the doctrine implies are always consistent with the form, then the kind of potentialities the child develops

depends upon the form which has just been realized. These accounts indicate the following:

1. Since potentialities are always in union with the present form, there are always certain potentialities in the individual ready for actualization because there is no individual who has no form.

2. Since there are always certain potentialities in the child, and in every individual of any age, education is a lifelong process.

3. The failure of the dropout is not because he is lacking certain potentialities. It is the failure of education because it has failed to actualize that form which is associated with those certain potentialities.

4. Since every potentiality can be developed and established in every individual through establishing certain actualities, children are capable of learning any subject and becoming anything. Thus the difference between what we call a capable child and the so-called incapable child

is not in terms of potentiality but in terms of substantial time. Therefore that John fails and Jane does not is not due to the additional potentialities of Jane, but due to the fact that John and Jane are not substantially contemporaries, and each of them needs a certain kind of education which might not be good for the other.

SUMMARY

Muhammad Ibn Ibrahim Sadr al-Din of Shiraz was born in Shiraz (979-1050). He spent his academic life in Shiraz and Isfahan. In Isfahan Mulla Sadra manifested gnostic propensities. Hence some of his contemporary Mullas whose knowledge was but exoteric exposed Mulla Sadra to apposition and animosity. Finally Mulla Sadra perpetrated self-exile. After more than ten years of concealment, Mulla Sadra returned to Shiraz where he was received with profound respect and veneration and where he spent the rest of his life teaching and writing.

According to Mulla Sadra, existence is the undefinable and inconceivable objective reality which is responsible for the individuation of every individuated objective reality; and essence is but an abstraction of the existing realities. Essences are only the delimitations of existents; and these delimitations are not something additional to those existents.

Existence is one reality which has various degrees of perfection. The plurality of the existing realities is due to the variety in the degrees of existence. The most complete level of existentiality is the state of mere existence which is at the culmination of beauty, perfection, and abstractness. The emanations of this existence are responsible for the being of all beings at any moment.

Mulla Sadra does not accept the common idea that motion takes place in accidents only. On the contrary, he proves that motion primarily and essentially takes place in substance of the things, and secondarily and accidentally, in their accidents because the accidents which are entirely dependent upon the substance cannot move independently of the substance.

Mulla Sadra rejects the idea of duality of man's nature. To him, man's temporal stage of life begins with the physical reality of the body and gradually the physical reality according to the principle of substantial motion grows and

becomes transmuted into a non-physical reality. Thus soul is the continuation and the completion of the body.

At the end of the temporal life when man passes through the gateway of death, he is dissociated from his corpse and associated with another body which is united and consistent with the degree of his perfection. This body, Mulla Sadra believes, is what participates in the Court of Justice in the life hereafter.

Mulla Sadra believes in the unity of the intelligent (the knower) and the intelligible (the known). According to him, when the knowledge of something is attained, this means that the mind of the knower has identified itself with the form of the known, hence a mental existence emanated from the mind is manifested in the direction of the known.

Some important conclusions which may be derived from a review of Mulla Sadra's doctrines are the following:

1. Reality is existence; and appearance qua appearance has no objectivity.

2. Man has a monistic nature. The soul is not a partner of the body in forming the individual; it is the state of completion and perfection of the body.

3. The life hereafter is the continuation of this life. Its nature is determined by the quality of the life in this world. Hence the life hereafter becomes the concern of education.

4. Knowledge is mental existence, which is emitted from the mind itself.

5. Good means existence, and "bad" nothingness. Things are bad with regard to their imperfections; and good, to the extension of their existentiality.

6. Education means provision for growth. And since growth is basically substantial and incidentally accidental, education must provide for substantial growth in such a way that the accidental growth be provided for too. Hence the curricu-

lum must be twofold. It must provide for the self-realization in terms of self itself, and for meeting the needs of the child in every stage of accidental growth.

7. The teacher, being conscious of the unity of his own existence and that of each student, must appreciate the unity and brotherhood of all the members of his class including himself; must base his approach on love, which is the inevitable consequence of unity; and at the same time must appreciate the uniqueness of each student, which is determined by the student's substantial motion.

8. The apprehension of the uniqueness of each student is dependent upon the appreciation of the unique substantial growth of each student. This appreciation, in turn, is subordinated to the substantial growth of the teacher himself. Hence, one more qualification for teachers: self-enhancement.

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