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Chapter Four: Trans-Substantial Motion

4.1. Introduction

The issue of trans-substantial motion is a brilliant and innovative idea expressed by Sadra in his philosophy. In it he propounds some important points. As the history of philosophy shows, philosophers before Sadra believed that motion is limited to four categories: quality (*kayfiyya*), quantity (*kammīya*), being in a position (*waḍʿ*) and where (*ʿayn*) and clearly all of these four categories are accidental. They denied motion in substances and in this chapter we will show why they did so. However, as we will also state in this chapter, Sadra proved that all material substances (*Jawāhir-i māddī*) are moving and following the substances he proved that all accidents (*ʿarād*) are moving.

Relying on fundamentality of existence (*aṣāla al-wujūd*) and trans-substantial motion, which we will explain in this chapter, we will be able to see how motion occurs in the human soul since, according to Mulla Sadra, the human soul is one of the substances which has a material state at the beginning of its creation (*jismānīyya al-ḥudūth*) then it can reach the spiritual state via trans-substantial motion (*ruḥānīyya al-baqā*) upon which Sadra insists. Therefore, in regard to trans-substantial motion Sadra's basis for the soul will be completely different from that of other philosophers.¹ In the next chapter we will explain his basis regarding the soul and the challenge with which his philosophical psychology is faced due to the fact that he ignored the separation of the soul and the spirit and that the spirit exists before the creation of body.

In the previous chapter we explained motion and its prerequisites in general, its relation to time and instant and the relation between motion, time and distance. We then stated that Sadra reached the conclusion that motion in an accidental

¹ A. Pahlawānī, *Rābīta-i nafs wa badan az nadhar-i Mulla Sadra* (The relationship between the soul and body in Mulla Sadra's view), Boustān-i kitāb Institute Publications, First edition, (1387 SH, Qom), ISBN 964-548-991-1, p. 161.

category means that the flowing unit of that category exists which means that there is motion in that category. At the same time Sadra claimed that motion in accidents actually follows motion in substances. He also claimed that substance can possess a flowing unit. In this chapter we put forward an explanation of motion in substance and the relation between the changing object (*al-mutaghayyir*) and the permanent (*al-thābit*). This chapter consists of the following:

- 1) A perspective of trans-substantial motion.
- 2) The object of motion (*mawḍūʿ*).
- 3) The problems which caused the denial of motion in substance by Ibn Sina and the solution proposed by Mulla Sadra.
- 4) Arguments for trans-substantial motion.
- 5) Generalization of motion to the natural world (*tabīʿa*).
- 6) The relation between the changing object (*al-mutaghayyir*) and the permanent (*al-thābit*).

4.2. Trans-substantial motion

4.2.1. A perspective of trans-substantial motion

As previously stated Sadra believed that there is motion in substance. It was previously thought that substance has three dimensions, but we know that because of time, it has a flowing dimension too, so it must be assumed that substance has four dimensions: three permanent dimensions and a flowing dimension.² The problem is that it is difficult to imagine a four-dimensional body; we can easily imagine a three dimensional body, but we have no sense of the fourth dimension and it is not easy to comprehend it. Therefore we are not able to understand motion in substance by our normal sense since we are not able to realize the reality of time (fourth dimension) we simply do not have any cognition of it. We will try to provide

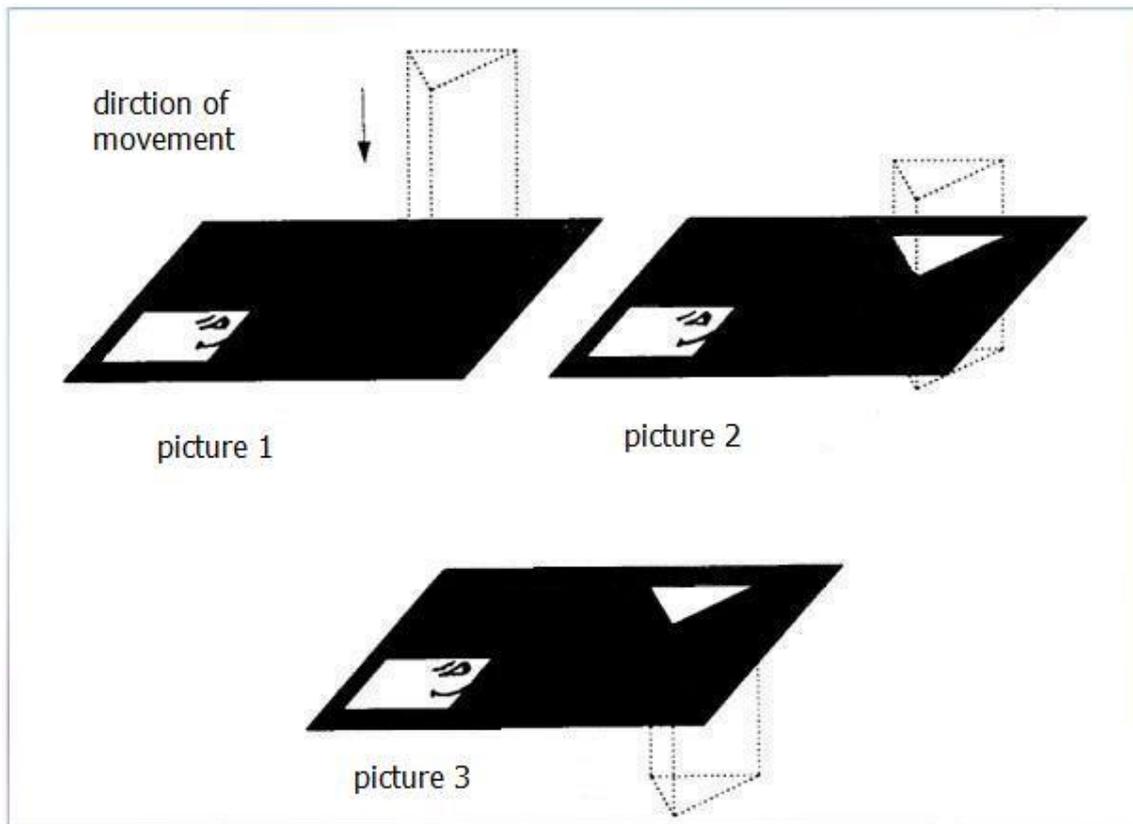
² Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 7, chapter 2, pp. 289-297.

a correct image of the fourth dimension with an example.³ Assume that there is an existent which can only comprehend two dimensions. It is not able to comprehend a three-dimensional object, in the same way that we cannot understand a fourth dimension. However, because we are able to understand the third dimension of bodies, then we will be able to compare ourselves with this existent, which will make it easier for us to understand the fourth dimension which is a flowing dimension.

Imagine that there is an existence, which we call the eye, which is living in an infinite two dimensional world (a page) and it is not able to comprehend more than two dimensions. It can understand what occurs on the page but is not able to feel the perpendicular dimension. It has no comprehension of what is above and below itself; in its vision the whole world is the page and what the page includes. This is like us when we can only understand three dimensional things and have no comprehension of the fourth dimension.

Now suppose there is a prism (*manshūr*) above the page which starts to come down towards the page. Before the prism touches the page (picture 1), what is the eye's perception of the situation? He will say there is nothing there as there is nothing on the page. The prism comes closer and closer and at a precise time, we will say 8 o'clock for example, comes into contact with the page. Clearly, the prism appears on the page as a triangle. Now how does the eye perceive it? He sees that a triangle was created in the world at 8 o'clock (his world). Again suppose after five minutes the prism passes from the page. Now what is the eye's perception? He understands that a triangle was created at 8 o'clock and existed for five minute and then became nothing.

³ This example has been taken from Raker's book see: R. Raker, *Geometrical relativity and fourth dimension*, Translated by Amir Ahmadi, Iran Institute of Physics Publications, (1374 SH, Tehran).



However, as we are able to comprehend three dimensions, we firstly remind the eye that there was no triangle; secondly, we suppose it was right and a triangle was created at 8 o'clock, but the eye thought this was a stable triangle that existed for five minutes and then became nothing. This is wrong because it was seeing a new triangle at each moment which was not there before and after its time; thirdly these triangles were not separate from each other; they were continuous. In fact they were hypothetical parts of a flowing two dimensional thing, that is a thing that has two stable dimensions and a flowing dimension and its flowing dimension appeared as a triangle to the eye that existed at the first moment then became nothing and the next one came and replaced it and then the third triangle came and replaced the second and so on, and after five minutes the last triangle became nothing. We tell the eye that because it was not able to realize the third dimension of this prism, it saw a triangle that became nothing and then another one replaced it.⁴

⁴ 'Ubūdīyyat, *Darāmadī bar falsafa-i islāmī*, pp. 246-252. 'Ubūdīyyat has used this example with the picture above and has explained and compared this example with the Mulla Sadra's.

According to Sadra, because we are only able to realize three dimensions, we are seeing a four-dimensional body (*jism*) - three stable dimensions and a flowing dimension - as a stable, three-dimensional body. Sadra tells us what we told the eye that could see only two dimensions. We said to the eye that there was not a stable triangle, rather, in each time-instant the triangle was changed and replaced with another one. Similarly, Sadra says that a pen that is on table, for example, is not a stable thing. The pen in each time-instant will be renewed with another pen on the table because it has a flowing dimension. All the pens are related to each other and in fact, all of these pens are hypothetical parts of a four dimensional pen which exist throughout all of its time. Sadra states that, there is a four-dimensional pen and we can only comprehend one part of in each moment and the whole of it exists in the whole of its being. There is actually a whole in the external world, but because of our limitation we cannot comprehend its fourth dimension so we can only comprehend a part of it at each instant.⁵

It is worth mentioning here that at the first step on the question of trans-substantial motion Sadra transfers us from a body with three stable dimensions to a flowing body which has a flowing dimension too, but on the question of the relationship between the mobile object (*mutaghayyir*) and the permanent (*thābit*) he sets us forward to the next step.⁶ In other words, in the debate on trans-substantial motion he tries to show us that because of our limitation in time we have no understanding of the fourth dimension and we see objects in the material world as stable objects, whereas all things are changing but on the subject of the relation between changing

⁵ The issue of time being the fourth dimension has been mentioned in both 'Transcendental Wisdom' as we explained above and also in 'relativity physics'. However we have to establish whether the two (fourth dimension in physics and philosophy) have the same meaning. We are not able to talk about the physics, however we believe the answer to be negative. In philosophy, when we say that time is the fourth dimension of objects, this means that every object has another unstable and flowing extension as well as the three other stable dimensions. Therefore the meaning of that dimension here is the same as the internal extension of body. However, in physics, when we say that time is the fourth dimension, it means that in order to find the situation of a phenomenon in a pure spatial coordinates system, containing the X, Y and Z axis, is not enough rather, a time-spatial coordinates system which contains X,Y, Z and T(ct) axis must be used.

⁶ We will explain this issue in the second part of this chapter.

and permanent he states that from another point of view all objects in the material world are permanent. In short, on the question of trans-substantial motion he carries us from the stable body – three stable dimensions - to the flowing body that possesses three stable dimensions and a flowing dimension. However, on the subject of the relationship between stable and changing he carries us from a flowing body which has three stable dimensions and a flowing dimension to a stable, four-dimensional body.⁷

Sadra begins by claiming that in the natural world there is no permanence and that all material bodies have motion in their substance and their accidents follow the substances in their motion. He says it is impossible for the substance of a thing to change and its features to remain stable.

Sadra divides all creatures into two groups, stable and flowing. By flowing he means the natural world and by stable he means immaterial being.⁸ Then in the next step he says that if the natural world is seen from the immaterial view then it can be understood that there is no fluidity, and everything we think is flowing, is not flowing but stable.⁹

After stating a perspective of trans-substantial motion, we must consider the arguments which support it, but before explaining these arguments we should explain two issues, the first one is the issue of object of motion (*mawḍūʿ-i ḥarika*). This is important because accepting or denying motion in substance depends on the object (a stable component). The second important issue is the distinction between object of motion (*mawḍūʿ*) and distance of motion (*masāfa*).

⁷ For more details on time as the fourth dimension of all natural bodies see: Motahari, *Ḥaraka wa zamān*, vol. 3, pp. 103-105, and time the momentum of trans-substantial motion, pp. 114-116.

⁸ Sadra, *Asfār*, vol. 3, p. 20, 21.

⁹ Sadra, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah*, Sadra publications, pp. 343-344.

4.2.2. More details about the subject

The usual mistake in the debate on motion in substance is that the object of motion is confused with distance. According to Ibn Sina and his followers it is substance that changes in its colour or shape which means that substance is moving in its colour and shape; therefore it can be said that the substance has motion.¹⁰ However, according to Mulla Sadra, the mistake is that in this example, they took the substance as the object of motion (*mawḍūʿ-i ḥarika*) or locus of motion (*muṣūf-i ḥarika*) not distance, whereas the purpose of trans-substantial motion is that substance is distance. Therefore the aim in trans-substantial motion is not to prove that substance can move, but to prove that substance is distance of motion.¹¹

Then there is a thing called the object that is the recipient of motion and motion is like an adjective for it which is also called the moving object (*mutaḥarrik*). There is another thing called distance which is the state of a thing and is continually changing. The object of motion can be stable, indeed philosophers before Sadra like Ibn Sina and his followers believed that it must be stable and fixed during the motion. However, it is impossible for distance of motion to be stable. For example when a body (*jism*) is moving in the where (*ʿayn*), the object (body) is not moving, it is stable. Therefore it has motion in its place, it has no change in itself, and it is permanent. Sadra believes that the meaning of motion in substance is that substance is moving in its essence. A comparison between motion in substance and motion in accident may help us to understand the meaning of motion in substance easier.

Motion in blackness is the state of a body which is called blackness and is continually changing. Now, regarding this point, motion in substance i.e. the state of the body (*jism*), which is called corporeal substance (*jawhar-i jismānī*) and is the same as the body, is continuously changing in itself. For example when a pen which is on the desk falls onto the floor the substance is moving but the movement is in its location.

¹⁰ Ibn Sina, *Shifā, Tabīʿyyāt*, vol. 1, p. 98. See also: ʿUbūdiyyat, *Darāmadī bi niẓām-i ḥikmat-i sadrāʿī*, vol. 1, Chapter. 6, p. 299.

¹¹ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 5, p. 269.

On the other hand, motion in substance means that substance moves in itself (in substance). In the first type of motion substance was the object, not distance, but in the second type of motion (motion in substance) substance was both the object and distance. Perhaps there is confusion about distance and the object among philosophers. Sadra claimed that Suhriwardī made this mistake. In Asfar *Sadra* says that trans-substantial motion does not mean that the substance is the object of motion i.e. the moving (*mutaḥarrik*), rather it means that the substance is the distance of motion i.e. a moving substance moves in substance itself and this means that the substance itself starts to change.¹²

Distance is usually indicated by using the word 'in' which is used before the word 'distance', like 'motion in substance'. The word 'in' is only used for distance. For example it is said that 'motion of substance in colour' but not 'motion of quality' rather it is 'motion in quality'. Therefore 'in' is never used for the object and motion is always added to the object and we refer to 'the motion of substance' but distance is used with both, with addition, and without addition and with the word 'in' and it is called 'qualitative motion' or 'motion in quality'. However, in order to avoid any mistakes, it is always better to use 'in' with distance and say 'motion of substance in colour' or 'motion of substance in shape' or 'motion of substance in size' or 'motion of substance in substance'. We now have to consider the object of motion again.

4.3. Considering the object of motion (*mawḍū'-i ḥarika*) in more detail

The reason we need to explain this part further is that accepting a stable component (the object of motion) leads to denying motion in substance or vice versa. So we will consider, in detail, the problem previous philosophers had with this and also Sadra's solution.

¹² Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 1, pp. 425, 426; vol. 3, pp. 72, 73.

4.3.1. The main problem which caused the denial of motion in substances

As previously noted, according to philosophers before Sadra each motion needs a stable component to be left during the motion.¹³ The problem is how to determine the remaining and stable object in trans-substantial motion. If we are going to look at the problem completely and in philosophical terms we must say that according to some arguments which were put forward regarding the object of motion, every motion requires a stable and fixed object as a location for accidents (*mahall-i mustaghni*) or the recipient matter of motion aptitude or as a preserver of motion unity. As long as we believe that motion only occurs in accidents then the corporeal substance (*jawhar-i jismāni*) which is the carrier of accidents is stable and constant and is the object of motion. However if we think that there is motion in the substance itself and it is not stable and constant but is continually changing, what is stable in the body to be the object of motion? By this supposition, neither the motions in accidents nor a motion which occurs in the corporeal substance have a stable and remaining object. However, a motion which occurs in the whole of corporeal substance would not have an object at all, much less if it is stable and remaining. Therefore trans-substantial motion requires the denial of the stable and remaining object and also requires the denial of object for all types of motion. It was this problem which forced the philosophers before Sadra to totally deny motion in substances.¹⁴

However, if we pay special attention to Mulla Sadra's statements on motion, it could be claimed that his vision of motion in itself does not need a stable and remaining object, either as a location for accidents (*mahall-i mustaghni*) or a matter as carrier

¹³ See Chapter 3 Aristotle and Muslim's idea about constancy and change.

¹⁴ Ibn Sina, *Shifā, ilāhiyyāt*, vol. 1, pp. 98-99. See also: Sadra, *Asfār*, vol. 3, pp. 71-73; 'Ubūdīyyat, *Hastī shināsī*, pp. 389-403.

of the potentiality for motion (*mādda-i ḥāmil-i qowwa*) or as a preserver of the unity of motion.¹⁵

However, according to philosophers before Sadra the object has three roles:

1. The object as a substance that is the gatherer/acquirer of perfect species (*jawhar-i mutahaṣil-i tāmm al-nu'īyya*) which is the location for accidents and does not need the accidents (*mahall-i mustaghni*).
2. The object as a thing that acts as matter (*mādda*) or a thing which is able to accept motion.
3. The object as a thing that is the preserver of the unity of motion.

In any case, according to philosophers before Sadra, motion needs a permanent object, for which one of the meanings above may be intended. In short the three roles above have been stated for the permanent object, the first role is a substance which does not need a location (*mahall-i mustaghni*), the second, a recipient of motion (*qābil*) and the third, the preserver of the unity of motion. We have to consider these three roles to understand the philosophers' ideas.¹⁶

4.3.2. The object in the role of a substance which does not need a location (*mahall-i mustaghni*)

According to philosophers before Mulla Sadra there are two probabilities, the first one is that if we know the object as a substance that is a gatherer/acquirer of perfect species (*jawhar-i mutahaṣil-i tāmm al-nu'īyya*) which is a location for accidents, then, as Suhriwardī believes, motion is an accident which is in a category or it is a separate category. However, as previously stated, Sadra did not accept the idea of motion as an accident, 'motion is not an accident' he said 'motion is a relative and abstractive issue' (*'amr-i nisbī wa intizā'ī*), therefore it does not need an object

¹⁵ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, pp. 85, 86, 105, 106; Sadra, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah*, published by Markaz-i Nashr-i dānishgāhi, p. 96 and Sadra publications, p. 122; Motahari, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, Vol. 11, pp. 405-411.

¹⁶ For more details about the object see: 'Ubūdīyyat, *Hastī shināsī*, the object (*mawḍū'*), pp. 317-320.

so there is no problem in trans-substantial motion¹⁷. The second probability is that if we say motion is a manner of being and it is a manner of accidental being, like quantity (*kamiyya*), quality (*kayfiyya*), where (*'ayn*), position (*waḍ'*) and also accident needs an object, then motion will follow accident in requiring an object too. However, according to Sadra in this case motion itself does not need an object. An accident, that is distance of motion, needs an object and we figuratively attribute this need to motion. In other words motion in itself does not need an object. We must first establish in which category motion occurs and if that category needs an object, then motion, which is in it, will need an object accidentally (*bil-'araḍ*) and if not, then motion will not need an object either. Therefore in this case motion does not need an object.¹⁸

4.3.3. The object in the role of matter (*mādda*) or recipient (*qābil*) to accept motion

As previously mentioned philosophers follow a principle which says: "each created thing (*ḥādith*) needs a potentiality (*qowwa*) and a matter (*mādda*) to carry this potentiality."¹⁹ This means that it is impossible for a thing to exist without previous matter. Everything in the world has a precedent, for example, all trees were a seed at the beginning and a seed was created from another tree and so on. There is no spontaneous creation (*khalq al-sā'a*) but there is a precedent until eternity. Now the question arises as to why spontaneous creation is impossible. In other words why a wheat seed must become a wheat plant and it is impossible for it to become an oats plant. According to philosophers, the wheat seed has a thing which is called a special aptitude (*isti'dād*) for becoming wheat plant and the oat seed does not have this aptitude. So according to this aptitude they justify the relation between past and

¹⁷ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, pp. 26, 61, 67, 109, 129. See also: Motahari, *Ḥarika wa zamān*, vol. 1, p. 23; also ref No. 8, p. 308 and pp. 249-250; vol. 2, pp. 145-149; vol. 3, pp. 27-30 and 55-58.

¹⁸ Motahari, *Ḥarika wa zamān dar falsafa-i islāmī*, vol. 1, pp. 451-452; vol. 2, p. 44, and, pp. 50-54; Motahari, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, Vol. 5, pp. 401, 406.

¹⁹ For more information about this rule and its consequences see: Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, pp. 49-56. See also: Motahari, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, Vol. 11, pp. 191-217.

present and also between present and future. They also believe that aptitude is an accident (*'araḍ*) and a kind of quality which needs a previous object to carry this aptitude in the external world and this object is the same as matter (*mādda*) or element (*'unṣur*). In short, each created thing (*ḥādīth*) possesses a matter (*mādda*) before its creation which contains its aptitude, and needs certain conditions – like water, soil and the like - to be prepared for its actuality then it can reach its actual state in the external world.

The meaning of recipient (*qābil*) in this case is the bearer of aptitude (*hāmil-i isti'dād*). Now, according to philosophers one of the recipient conditions is that as it existed in the past then it must exist at the present time to accept the accepted issue (*maqbul*). Otherwise if this recipient, that is matter, is originated (*ḥādīth*) then the problem will return and so on and this is regression (*tasalsul*) which is impossible.²⁰ Therefore they believe that the recipient cannot be created and must be constant and fixed during the motion. So we need an object which must be the same as the recipient and cannot be created; it must exist and accompany the created issue. In short, motion is a created issue, since the thing had no motion but now finds motion and also needs a pre-aptitude (*isti'dād-i qablī*) which exists in the recipient of motion. And because of this aptitude the recipient can accept motion. The recipient remains stable during the motion and, as has been proved, this recipient is the same as the body (*jism*).²¹

However, according to Sadra, the problem is that previous philosophers talked about accidental motions, and we also agree with their idea that every accidental motion needs a stable component. This is because every accidental motion is created. At first accidents did not exist in the body (*jism*) and then they came to exist. Therefore they are created and need a recipient (*qābil*). For example this pen had no motion at

²⁰ Regression (*tasalsul*) i.e. there is a series of effects that have no a cause, but this is impossible because a series of effects at least needs one cause otherwise effects are not able to exist and the assumption is that there is a series of effects. For more details see: Sadra, *Asfar, T'līqa-i Sabziwārī*, vol. 8, p. 388; G. H. Ibrāhīmī, *Qawā'id-i kolī-i falsafī dar falsafa-i Islāmi*, published by, Anjoman-i Islamī-i ḥikma wa falsafa-i Iran, (Tehran, 1360 SH), three volumes, vol. 3, p. 33.

²¹ See: Chapter 3, Prerequisites No 4, second argument.

first but it found motion later. One can talk about the category of 'where' (*'ayn*) with regard to its movement and 'where' as accidental motion. All accidental motions, like motion in quality, quantity, when (*matā*), where (*'ayn*) and being in a position (*wad'*) are thus. This means that all these motions, as compared with a body, are accidental and it is possible to distinguish them from the body, that is, the body can be static and immobile and does not have any motion in its quality, quantity or where. So these kinds of motion are created in bodies and they need matter to carry the motion aptitude and to be left during the motion. However, Sadra believes motion in substance means that this corporeal substance (*jawhar-i jismāni*) in-itself is the same as motion, so its motion is not accidental; it is an essential motion which is not created (*ḥādith*) and does not need a cause, since it is essential (*al-dhātī lā yu'allal*). While body exists, motion exists too, and if we see that there is no motion, it means the body has become nothing. Mulla Sadra says that although in the accidental motion we need a recipient, in trans-substantial motion we do not need a recipient because motion is essential for the body so motion does not need a cause for its creation.

It might be thought that there is no need for an object in trans-substantial motions, but because trans-substantial motion is the same as substance, therefore the substance itself is continually originating (*ḥudūth-i dā'im*), so the previous problem will return and so the principle is raised again that "each created (*ḥādith*) needs a potentiality (*qowwa*) and a matter (*mādda*) to carry this potentiality". In short the fact is that this principle is not true about trans-substantial motion because motion is inherent (*dhātī*) in it, but it can be adapted to a mobile body because it is created and the principle includes the body. So the problem still remains, which means that the problem has moved a step forward but has not been completely removed. Sadra has a solution in accordance with his basis. He does not agree that the hyle and the specific form are two separate substances which combine to make a third thing. Previous philosophers like Farabi and Ibn Sina believed that there is one substance in the external world called hyle and another substance which is called form.²²

²² The ancients like Farabi and Ibn Sina believed that externally there are two substances (*jawhar*), called matter (*hayūlā*) and form (*sūra*) which are always mixing together a real mixture that results

According to Sadra this idea is wrong as the dependence of two potential and actual substances on each other cannot create a unity that is requisite for a real fabrication. He says the real fabrication which is the source of abstraction of a new specific quiddity is conditioned by the real unity of parts so that as long as there are two separate things such a real fabrication will not occur.²³ He proves that there is no real unity of hyle and form externally, rather there is just one reality in the external world which from one point of view is potential, defective and hyle and from another is actual, perfect and form. So in the outside world hyle and form are united, that is, they are one reality, but we can take two concepts from them in two subjective considerations (*i'tibār*). According to this idea it is wrong to say that there is only one hyle remaining which exists with a different form in each moment. Sadra says there is one flowing reality in trans-substantial motion that has connective unity (*wahdat-i ittiṣālī*). At every moment both hyle/potentiality and a form which is different to the previous forms can be abstracted from that flowing reality.²⁴

In other words, a form and a hyle can be abstracted from every stage of this flowing body. The form of this stage is constituent (*muqawwim*) of the hyle, and the hyle, as compared with the next form, is the bearer of the aptitude (*ḥāmil-i isti'dād*) and the like. So each stage of form that is accidental has a dispositional possibility (*imkān-i isti'dādī*) in the previous hyle and the hyle is the bearer of this possibility and potentiality. In fact in Mulla Sadra's opinion all of these hyles are connected and all of the abstractive forms are also connected. However, there are no two things that are connected to each other, rather there is just one flowing contiguous thing that has all these features and everything can be abstracted from that. Therefore this connective unity of distance (*wahdat-i ittiṣālī-i masāfa*) eliminates the need for a

is a new specific quiddity (*māhīyyat-i no'īya jadīd*). Both of these substances need each other and this requirement, in addition to this point that one of them is potential and the other is actual, is enough to make a real mixture which is a third substance.

²³ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, p. 66.

²⁴ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 7, p. 285.

remaining recipient object. Finally Sadra denies that motion needs an object in this part too.²⁵

4.3.4. The object in the role of preserver of unity

We have discussed the meaning of preserver of unity, and what the philosophers before Sadra believed regarding the object. In short it has been explained that each change requires two things, the first one is differentiation (*in ghayr-i ānī*). This is necessary and is the consistency (*qawām*) of every change, because in each alteration a thing must be changed and for there to be a change but nothing changes is meaningless.

The second one is identity (*in hamānī*), which is also logically necessary because if there is no identity then the thing that now exists cannot be the same as the previous thing which changed into this new one. Therefore every change needs a thing that is the correlation between its past and future. Thus each alteration must have a thing that is stable and remains during the change. This is the criterion (*milāk*) of the identity, which is called the preserver of unity. According to philosophers, motion is also a kind of alteration, a gradual alteration, which needs a preserver of unity. If there is no preserver of unity then instead of one gradual motion there are infinite originations (*hudūth*) and annihilations (*zawāl*) and it is actually not motion, but a succession of moments and instants (*tatāliy-i ānāt wa ānīāt*) which is impossible.

The question of preserver of unity in philosophy comes under the title of: "intensity of motion in blackness is not a single black which is being intensive" (*al-tasawudu laysa bi-an sawād 'an' wāhid 'an' yashtadid*) i.e. we have a black colour which gradually changes to become more black. It is argued that if we consider initial black that starts to become more black, this may happen in one of five ways: the initial black may be left during the motion and remain fixed or not.

²⁵ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, p. 52; vol. 7, p. 63. See also: 'Ubūdiyyat, *Dar Āmadī bi nizām-i hikmat-i sadrā'i*, vol. 1, chapter. 7, pp. 318-319.

A) If it remains fixed then either something happens or not during the motion:

1. If nothing moves then it is contrary to the theory that assumes a thing has changed so this option is impossible.

B) During the motion something happens and a thing is created, in this case there are two possibilities which is the new thing that gets created is either black or not:

2. If it is not black then the main black has not become intensive which is contrary to the supposition and is impossible.

If it is black, this means that another black is added to the main black and then the question is whether the other black which was added to the main black has been united with it or not?

3. If they are not united with each other it could be said there are two separate blacks, therefore it cannot be an intensive motion (*ḥarakat-i ishtidādī*) in blackness. In addition this requires two similar accidents which are similar in type, time and place to have penetrated one place. This is called gathering of two similar things (*ijtimā'-i mithlayn*) that is impossible.

4. So it must be said that the main black remains and another black is added to it and they become united. However according to philosophers the problem with this is the problem of the "unity of the two similar things" (*ittihād-i mithlayn*) which is impossible i.e. it is impossible for two actual things to become united.

5. So the case remains that the initial black became nothing and after that a stronger black appeared instead of it and during the motion, at each moment, a black became nothing and a stronger black appeared in its place and so on until the end of the motion. However, this is actually infinite instantaneous originations and deterioration (*ḥudūth wa zawāl-i mutatālī wa lā-mutanāhī*) and so motion becomes a collection of infinite continual instantaneous originatedness and deterioration which

is impossible and therefore it is not motion, because motion is a gradual originatedness (*hudūth-i tadrijī*). This is the conclusion of their argument.²⁶

From this argument it may be understood that it is impossible to omit the object of motion. The blackness intensity of motion can only be justified by blackness itself which is the distance of motion. So it must be said that there is another thing called the body or the object which is stable during the motion and blackness is its state which is changing at every moment. Therefore motion needs an object to be the preserver of the unity of motion.²⁷

However Mulla Sadra did not accept their argument. He says that in addition to all of these five probabilities there is another possibility which is similar to the fifth probability but differs from it, in the respect that all the black colours are connected together i.e. it is impossible for the main black to become nothing and then the next black to appear after it with no separation. He says all black colours are continual and in the whole there is a continual flowing black for which we can see a cutting (*maqta'*) at each moment, so there is no problem. According to this supposition it can be said the blackness itself is enough to be the preserver of motion unity and so there is no requirement of another thing called the object. In short, because the blackness is temporal and continual i.e. it is flowing and protracted (*mumtad*) it is enough to protect the unity of motion. So the fact that blackness is continuous and temporal, i.e. continuous flowing, is enough to be the preserver of distance and motion unity and this is why Sadra rejected the need for a preserver of the unity of motion. He says that it not necessary for there to be an object to play the role of preserver of the unity of motion.²⁸

The main reason why Sadra has propounded the sixth probability and other philosophers have not is one of Sadra's principles, "fundamentality of existence".

²⁶ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 1, pp. 423-424; vol. 3, pp. 69, 70, 81, 82. See also: 'Ubūdīyyat, *Dar 'Āmadī bi niẓām-i hikmat-i sadrā'ēī*, vol. 1, chapter. 7, pp. 288-291; Motaharī, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, Vol. 11, PP. 372-374.

²⁷ Sadra, *Sharh al-hidāya al-athīriyya*, pp. 92, 93, 277. See also: Sadra, *Risāla fil-hudūth*, p. 68; Sadra, *Majmū'a-i rasā'l-i falsafī*, pp. 110, 111; Sadra, *Ta'līqī bar shifā*, vol. 1, p. 564.

²⁸ Sadra, *Asfar*, *Ta'līqā-i Tabātabā'ī*, vol. 3, p. 87.

According to Sadra, if we assume that quiddities (*māhīyyā*) fill the exterior world, since connection between quiddities has no meaning then it must be accepted that there is momentary succession of quiddities which has no meaning except with the succession of instants (*tatālī-i ānāt*) and as previously explained at the beginning of Chapter Three, this is impossible. However, according to the fundamentality of existence, he says, it is possible to say that there is a flowing protracted issue in the external world for which our mind can abstract a quiddity that is different from the quiddity in the previous moment and from that in every moment. Therefore this multiplicity and differentiation is created by our mind but there is just an adjoining unity in the exterior world.²⁹

4.3.5. Conclusion

The result of this explanation is that from Mulla Sadra's point of view motion does not need an object as a substance which accepts accidents and also does not need an object as a recipient and matter of motion (*qābil wa mādda*) and finally it does not need an object as a preserver of motion unity. Therefore, basically motion does not need an object to be a stable component. If motion does not occur without an object in some cases, like motion in accidents, it is because of some causes other than the motion. Therefore it is possible that in some other cases like trans-substantial motion such causes may be absent and yet there is motion (trans-substantial motion).

4.3.6. Pointing out a difficulty regarding motion in substance by Ibn Sina and the response given by Mulla Sadra

Although what has been previously noted about the object (*mawḍū'-i ḥarika*) provides enough explanation to solve this issue, it is better to express the problem

²⁹ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, pp. 329.

and at the same time state why Ibn Sina happens to face it and deny motion in substance.³⁰

According to Ibn Sina if there is motion in substance and substance is distance of motion then during this kind of motion specific quiddity (*māhīyyat-i nawīyya*) may or may not remain. For example if man has motion in his substance i.e. he has motion in humanity, during the motion his humanity may remain or may be changed; so during his motion is he still a human or not? If he is still a human, then his substance has not changed, only some of his accidents have changed, like an increase in knowledge or power and so on, but all of these are changes in accidents so it must be said that he has changed in his accidents and he has not moved in his substance; he changes in his quality or in his quiddity and the like.

However, if it is said that his humanity is changing, then by an intensification (*ishtidād*) another substance is created that is something other than his humanity and in this way a substance will be created in each time-instant of the motion time that is different from the previous one and has a quiddity that is different from the previous substance so a new quiddity and a new substance will be created at every moment. According to Ibn Sina the result of this statement is that between two different moments of the motion, for example between now and a minute from now, infinite substances must be created, but this is impossible.

The reason why Ibn Sina says it is impossible in substances while he accepts it in accidents is that, in accidents there is an object that is the preserver of the unity of motion; the object is the body (*jism*) that remains during the motion, but in substances there is not such an object. In substances, the object is the same as the substance. In fact in the previous case substance was stable and remained unchanged during the motion but its accidents were changing, so there was no problem. However in this case the substance itself is changing and there is no actual thing left to preserve the unity, which means that an infinite succession of

³⁰ *Ibid*, vol. 3, pp. 85-86.

momentary things has occurred, which is impossible. Therefore Ibn Sina comes to the conclusion that motion in substances is impossible.³¹

However, according to Ibn Sina if it is said that there is also hyle (*hayūlā*) which can be the preserver of the unity the answer would be that hyle is not an actual thing, but just pure potential. Whereas as previously mentioned, object of motion must have two aspects, in one it must be actual and in the other potential. So the pure potential is not able to be object of motion on its own. This is the conclusion of Ibn Sina's argument.³²

However, in Sadra's opinion there is no successive momentary thing, either in motion or in its distance, rather there is just one flowing continual thing. He says it is wrong to think that type (*naw'*) is changing at every moment and yet there is one motion, since the motion has an object that is the preserver of the unity of all these infinite types.

Sadra says Ibn Sina confused existence (*wujūd*) with quiddity (*māhīyya*). This is where Ibn Sina has, inadvertently, been thinking about the manner of fundamentality of quiddity. According to fundamentality of existence, specific quiddity (*māhīyyat-i nu'īyya*) must remain during trans-substantial motion i.e. existence of substance remains because during the motion a flowing unit remains and it is protracted and continual. It has a continual unity which is coextensive (*musāviq*) with particular unity (*wahdat-i shakhṣī*) which means that every continual issue is a united individual. Therefore as Sadra says if someone asks during the motion whether substance remains or not, if the question is about its existence, it must be said that it remains because existence is a gradual continual thing. However, if the question is about its quiddity (*māhīyya*), then the answer will be no. Given the fact that existence is flowing then in each time-instant a quiddity

³¹ Ibn Sina, *Shifā Tabīyyāt*, pp. 98, 99. See also: Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, pp. 105, 106; Motahari, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, vol. 11, pp. 405-411.

³² Sadra says if you accept that a material issue (*mādda*) accompanied with a form can be the object (*ṣūra*) in generation and annihilation, then why don't you accept it here. This is an initial answer to Ibn Sina.

(*māhīyya*) can be abstracted, which is different from the previous quiddity, in the intensive motions in substance (*ishtidād-i jawhar*).³³

As we saw previously Ibn Sina did not actually separate quiddity from existence. It is as if he thought quiddities are connected together which is impossible; they are essentially distinct. In other words, if there is intensity in motion of substance this means that there are different continual instantaneous quiddities (*tatālī-i ānāt*), which is impossible.³⁴

According to Sadra this mistake has been made because Ibn Sina saw quiddity as an external issue, whereas there are no quiddities in the external world; quiddities are only images of the external world in our mind. They are actually a reflection of the outside in our mind that is abstracted from every hypothetical cut of the flowing continual existence. We can assume a cutting (*maqta'*) of a flowing connected existence in each moment, so our mind can abstract an image (a quiddity) from that cutting. As clearly these quiddities are only able to be in our mind when motion cuts, a quiddity can be taken from each hypothetical cut of this motion. So the existences of these quiddities are not actual, rather they are suppositional and potential. Therefore Ibn Sina was confusing two aspects. First, he confused existence and quiddity, and second, he confused potential with actual. He wanted to solve the problem of trans-substantial motion with quiddity, as if it is quiddities that fill the external world; but he failed in this problem.³⁵

We have put forward a number of discussions on this matter but for the sake of brevity we will not take it any further, so anyone who is interested in this subject can refer to the main sources in this regard.³⁶

³³ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 5, 283-292.

³⁴ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, p. 37.

³⁵ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, p. 329.

³⁶ Sadra, *Asfar*, *Ta'liqat-i Sabziwārī*, vol. 9, p. 186. See also: Sadra, *Risāla fil-hudūth*, p. 82; Motahari, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, vol. 11, pp. 305-307, 323-327.

4.4. Arguments on Trans-substantial Motion

There are some arguments to prove trans-substantial motion but for the sake of brevity we will just give an outline of these arguments. However there are many references for anyone who is interested in more details about these arguments.

4.4.1. The argument that substance is adapted to time

In this argument Sadra proves that all bodies are actually temporal (*zamānī*) and in common language they have duration and the attribution of time and duration to all bodies is not figurative. According to this everything that is actually temporal and possesses life (*'umr dār*) is necessarily gradual, flowing and adapted to time. The result is that all physical substances are flowing and gradual, which is the same as trans-substantial motion.³⁷

4.4.2. The argument that substance is the cause of accidents

Sadra has stated this argument according to the accepted idea among previous philosophers about substances and accidents and also about motion in accidents. According to this, accidents and motions are additional attributes of the essence (*sifat-i zā'id-i bar dhāt*) that occur in corporeal substance (*jawhar-i jismānī*) and each corporeal substance is made from body and specific form (*sūrat-i nu'īyya*) that is called nature (*tabī'a*) so that the body is the recipient and the object for the accidents and their motions. Also its specific form is the direct agent (*fā'il-i mubāshir*) and it can create motions in accident with composite fabrication (*ja'li ta'līfī*). Now to prove trans-substantial motion we can say, specific form and the nature present in the corporeal substance are the direct cause for motions that occur in corporeal substance accidents (*'a'rād-i jawāhir-i jismānī*) and given the rule that "cause of changing is changing" then the cause of each motion must be gradual.

³⁷ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 7, section 2, pp. 289-297. See also: Motahari, *Harika wa zamān*, vol. 2, pp. 111-113; M. T. Mišbāh-i Yazdī, *Āmūzish-i Falsafī*, Sāzimān-i Tablīghāt-i Islāmī Publications, (1366 SH, Tehran) two volume, second edition, vol. 2, p. 335. For more details about temporal concept see: 'Ubūdīyyat, *Hastī shināsī*, pp. 350-355.

Therefore the result is that specific form or nature that is in corporeal substance is gradual and this means motion in substance.³⁸

4.4.3. The argument that there are not two fabrications (*ja'ī*) regarding substance and its natural movements; but only one fabrication to create both of them.

Contrary to the previous argument in this argument and the next one Sadra, on the basis of the unity of existence between substance and its accidents, proves trans-substantial motion.

In this argument he proves that specific form (*sūrat-i nawīyya*) or nature (*tabī'a*) is not the cause and agent of accidents and the natural motions that are in the substance, rather these accidents and motions are prerequisites (*lawāzim*) of specific form that are created by one fabrication and they all exist with one existence. So all natural motions that occur in accidents exist with their substance being that is their locus, that is, there is just one existence and one external reality which is an instance (*miṣdāq*) of both the substance and those motions. This means that the same reality which is an instance of substance is flowing and gradual and this is the meaning of trans-substantial motion. Therefore according to this idea there is a flowing and gradual reality in the external world from which, in various subjective concepts of specific form, different types of accident and motions including substantial and accidental motions can be abstracted.³⁹

³⁸ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, section 19, pp. 61-62. See also: Motahari, *Ḥarika wa zamān*, vol. 1, pp. 269-271; vol. 3, pp. 88-89.

³⁹ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, pp. 101-103. See also: Motahari, *Ḥarika wa zamān*, vol. 2, pp. 27-82 and pp. 89-90; Motahari, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, vol. 5, pp. 423-426; vol. 7, pp. 406-407; 'Ubūdīyyat, *Hastī shināsī*, p. 322.

4.4.4. The argument that accidents personify the substance

In this argument Sadra, on the basis that accidents give personification to substance, proves that substance and accidents are united.

The philosophers who came before Sadra believed that accidents which exist in a substance personify the existence of the substance, but Sadra believes that it is only the existence of substance which gives it personification not its accidents. Then in harmony with this point he concludes that accidents are just signs of the personification of substance not the cause of its personification, because a sign of personification is the manner of its being which has no separate existence from that object.

Therefore according to this unity, motion in accidents has no meaning without motion in substance. So it is impossible for motion to occur in an accident while there is no motion in the substance which is the locus of this accident, because this would necessitate an external reality being both stable and non-stable at the same time since this reality is an instance for substance that is, according to the assumption, stable and also an instance for accident that is, according to the assumption, non-stable and flowing.⁴⁰

4.4.5. The argument that generation and annihilation is false

Occurrence of change in substances is not deniable, the changing from a foetus to a baby, hydrogen to helium, matter to energy and all changes in nature, especially all chemical reactions are kinds of change in substance. In these kinds of change one substance changes into another one. According to philosophers before Sadra, change in substance is a kind of momentary change (*taghyīr-i ānī*) which they said was a kind of generation and annihilation. As previously mentioned in generation and annihilation at every time-instant a form (*sūra*) becomes nothing and immediately another one replaces it in the matter (*mādda*). According to Mulla

⁴⁰ Sadra, *Asfār*, vol. 3, pp. 103-104. Also see: Motahari, *Ḥarika wa zamān*, vol. 2, pp. 90-92 and denial the duality of substance and accident, pp. 99-101 and also, pp. 261-265.

Sadra's point of view, the changing of one substance into another in this case must be in one of two ways:

1) In two successive time-instants, but this requires a succession of time-instants (*tasālī-i ānāt*) and as previously mentioned that is impossible.

2) In two non-consecutive instants separated by a very short space of time, but that requires that for that short amount of time the matter will remain without a form which is also impossible. Therefore generation and annihilation is impossible. So we must accept that all changes that occur in the substances are gradual, that is, alterations in substance only occur through trans-substantial motion.⁴¹

4.4.6. The argument that proves specific forms have finality (a final goal).

Muslim philosophers believe that every specific form and every nature is moving towards a final goal. Material things have been created to reach this finality, in other words, nature has finality. According to this idea Sadra shows that if any changes in substances are momentary and a kind of generation and annihilation, that is incompatible with a nature having a final goal. Contrary to this we know the change in substance to be gradual and a kind of motion. In other words, basically, having finality can be justified with motion that is a gradual change not a momentary one. Therefore the claim of having finality is opposite to the denial of nature's trans-substantial motion.⁴²

4.4.7. The argument that the essential features of some substances can change over time

In this argument, firstly it is proved that the essential features of some substances are changed over time, for example the soul is firstly a corporeal form which cannot exist without matter and later it becomes immaterial and without the need for

⁴¹ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 4, pp. 273-274. Also see: Motahari, *Ḥarika wa zamān*, vol. 2, p. 109.

⁴² Motahari, *Ḥarika wa zamān*, vol. 2, pp. 113-116. For more details about the issue of finality see: Motahari, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, vol. 5, pp. 419-423 and pp. 430-380; vol. 6, NO 1, pp. 701-714; vol. 7, pp. 354-457; 'Ubūdīyyat, *Hastī shināsī*, chapter 11-12, pp. 141-165.

matter. First, essential transformation is proved in some substances in an abridged form, and then by relying on the fact that essential transformation is not justifiable unless on the basis of intensive trans-substantial motion. Therefore the presence of trans-substantial motion is concluded. Mulla Sadra says:

Here there is an eminent secret by which it is learned possibility of the gradual intensification of the substance in its ipseity and essence. It is learned [by it] that this definition for the soul is not according to the name only as is the case with the definition of builder, father, son and their like. For the soulhood of the soul is not like the fatherhood of father, the sonhood of son, being-writer of the writer, and the similar [relative concepts] in which the assumption of the privation of that relational aspect is not possible. Now [in the case of builder] there is an existence for the quiddity of builder, and there is another existence for his being-builder. Whereas his being-human is not identical as his being-builder, for the former is [non-relational] substance, whereas the later is a relational accident. This is contrary to the soul, for the soulhood of soul is some kind of its particular existence, and for the quiddity of soul there is no another existence, so accordingly it is not a soul except after the gradual perfection and essential metamorphosis occurring to it in its essence and substance, then [it becomes] an active intellect.⁴³

4.5. Conclusion: Generalization of motion to all nature (*tabi'a*)

Of all the arguments the first one generalizes trans-substantial motion to the whole of the natural world. In this argument Sadra shows that every substance is temporal and adapted to time. He then says that everything that is adapted to time, since time has a flowing extension, then like time this thing also has a flowing extension. So all substances in the natural world possess a flowing extension, therefore it can be said, that every corporeal substance (*jawhar-i jismānī*) in this natural world must have a flowing extension because it has time. Now if all bodies (*ajsām*) are flowing and variant then all of their accidents must be similar to their bodies; that is they must be flowing and variant. It is impossible for a body to change while its accidents and features are fixed and stable. This is because it is necessary that accidents

⁴³ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 8, pp. 11-12; vol. 9, p. 85.

either be independent from their body or be moved into another body, both of which are impossible. Therefore the entire natural world with all of its states and accidents is changing at every moment. This means we face a new world at each time-instant, but as the new world is mainly similar to the old one that has passed, we do not perceive the transition and renewing of the world as it happens.⁴⁴

The theory of trans-substantial motion has had a number of useful and interesting consequences for philosophy, such as:

1. The dynamic essence of the world is identical with nature: Sadrian nature, unlike Aristotelian nature, is a dynamic one.⁴⁵
2. Motion in nature is purposeful and leads the world and all its existents towards perfection (*kamāl*).⁴⁶
3. As previously explained the nature of time and, to some extent, its relativity is revealed by this theory and, in this way, one can provide an exact definition for time.
4. The relation between the ever-changing (*mutaghayyir*) and the permanent (*thabit*) and between the originated (*ḥādith*) and eternal (*qadīm*),⁴⁷ which have always been seen as complicated problems in philosophy, found a clear solution by trans-substantial motion. We are now only going to discuss the relation between changing and permanent.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Mulla Sadra's argument about trans-substantial motion via time will automatically come to this conclusion, because in this argument he first proves that all bodies are temporal in every condition, and then he proves that being temporal requires it to be flowing. It is clear that the result of this reason is perpetual trans-substantial motion of all bodies and as a result it requires perpetual motion in all accidents. For more details see: Motahari, *Ḥarika wa zamān*, vol. 1, pp. 284-285, and pp. 380-382; 'Ubūdīyyat, *Hastī shināsī*, pp. 392-398.

⁴⁵ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, P. 39.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 273-274.

⁴⁷ For more information about originated and eternal see: 'Ubūdīyyat, *Dar 'Āmadī bi niẓām-i ḥikmat-i sadrā'ei*, vol. 1, chapter. 7, pp. 368-382.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

4.6. The relation between the ever-changing (*mutaghayyir*) and the permanent (*thabit*)

4.6.1. Introduction

As previously stated in Chapter Two, the problem which was demonstrated on the basis of the theory of "trans-substantial motion" was Mulla Sadra's other theory on man's soul. He believes that the soul is corporeal in origin, but develops in the light of the movement towards perfection and finally becomes without need of matter.

The important fact, however, is to know how the human, that is a material and changing being at the beginning of his creation, can be created with a cause that is non-material and stable. So it is important to understand the relationship between permanent (*thabit*) and ever-changing (*mutaghayyir*) to solve the problem of the nature of the relation between the human soul, which is ever-changing, and its creator, i.e. God, who does not change. This subject is rather difficult and needs more attention. As Sadra says this is a difficult question that was not resolved correctly until his time and can only be resolved with trans-substantial motion.⁴⁹ However, we must firstly point out the problem and see the philosophers' answers and then consider Sadra's reply to the previous philosophers and after that we will consider Sadra's answer regarding trans-substantial motion.

4.6.2. Stating the problem

In order to understand the problem and its answers better, three things must first be pointed out. The first one is the rule stated by philosophers that: "the cause of that which is changing must also be changing"⁵⁰ and the second one is the subject of "composite fabrication (*ja'l-i ta'lifi*) and simple fabrication (*ja'l-i basit*)" and finally the third one, that is, the rule that "Everything which is accidental needs a cause

⁴⁹ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, pp. 69, 128. See also: Sadra, *Risāla fil-ḥudūth*, p. 117; Sadra, *Sharh al-hidāya al-athirīyya*, p. 371; Sadra, *Ta'līqa bar shifā*, vol. 2, pp. 1017, 2210.

⁵⁰ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, pp. 61, 68.

(*kullu 'araḍīyin yo'alal*) and that which is essential does not need a cause (*al-dhātī lā yo'alal*)."⁵¹

4.6.2.1. The rule which says "the cause of that which is changing must also be changing"

We will try to explain this rule with an example. Assume that there is a stable thing that has no motion and then starts to move. Also, compared to this thing, motion is accidental since it has no motion at first but finds it later. Therefore the law of "every accidental issue needs a cause" applies to this case. Now the question is, what manner of being has this cause got? Is it changing or stable? Every aspect that we consider will lead to a paradox. As stated previously in the issue of motion, motion is a thing that the two hypothetical parts of it can never be found together, that is, while a first part exists the second part does not exist, so that if we divide each part of it into other hypothetical parts they will all have the same state as each other. Therefore we can never find two hypothetical parts of motion together. This is the essential characteristic of motion.

Now according to this point we have to consider what is the characteristic of the cause that created motion in this thing that is called "the cause of that which is changing"? If this cause is stable then the rule of "the cause of that which is changing must also be changing" has been disrupted, but this needs more explanation.⁵² Assume that we are considering motion as a direct line that is made up of ten parts, now consider the first part and assume that the adequate cause (*'ilat-i tāmma*) of the motion is stable. The cause creates the first part of the motion but by the time the cause begins to create the second part, the first one must have become nothing, because according to the assumption the hypothetical parts of motion cannot exist together. So the first part must be nothing before the second

⁵¹ Muslim philosophers have used the word 'fabrication' (*ja'l*) in accordance with the holy Qur'an. This term has been used in many Qur'an verses, which by paying attention to them we can see that it is highly possible that the two meanings mentioned above have been used in the Qur'an. For more details about all kinds of 'fabrication' (*ja'l*) see: Motahari, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, vol. 5, Introduction 3-4, pp. 333-335, and also introduction 6-9, pp. 337-344.

⁵² Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, p. 61.

part can be created. However there is a problem that according to the assumption the cause of the first part still exists because it is stable but its effect i.e. the first part must be nothing at that moment and in fact it requires separation of the perfect cause and its effect which is impossible. So to resolve this problem every part must remain after its creation, the first and second and the like, exactly like when we draw a line, all parts of which will remain. Therefore there is a stable extension, not a flowing extension that will be nothing at the end of the motion. Therefore the perfect cause of motion must be changing just like motion itself; otherwise if it is stable then motion must be like a line that is drawn step by step and at the end, all parts of the line exist and are left together, whereas this is impossible in motion.⁵³

4.6.2.2. Simple fabrication (*ja'l-i basīt*) and composite fabrication (*ja'l-i ta'lifi*)

Before discussing simple fabrication and composite fabrication it is necessary to explain two kinds of existence, independent existence (*wujūd-i mustaqil*) and relative existence (*wujūd-i rābiti*)⁵⁴ which was introduced by Sadra. Muslim philosophers say independent existence, that is existence in-itself for itself (*wujūd-i fī-nafsa li-nafsa*)

⁵³ - It is proved by Muslim philosophers that the perfect cause and its effect cannot be separated from each other in the world, that is, one cannot be existent and the other non-existent. Sadra stated this problem in many places, sometimes in detail and sometimes in brief, see: Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, p. 65; Sadra, *Sharh al-hidāya al-athīriyyih*, pp. 101, 273, Sadra, *Risāla fil-ḥudūth*, p. 45, 47, Sadra, *Sharh-i 'uṣūl-i kāfī*, p. 33.

⁵⁴ The issue of relative existence (*wujūd-i rābiti*) is an issue in which by negating multiplicity of existence and referring it to the states of existence (*shu'ūn-i wujūd*), particular unity of existence (*waḥdat-i shakhsīy-i wujūd*) and multiplicity of states of existence (*kathrat-i shu'ūn-i wujūd*) can be concluded. In this idea the claim of mystical intuition, based on particular unity of existence, with the clear claim of philosophy, based on accepting the multiplicity (*kathra*) (Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 2, pp. 318-327). Relying on some philosophical arguments, have been made and synthesized. Sadra has stated that he is the only person who could prove relative existence and he said this is one of his innovations (Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 2, p. 292). He paid great attention to this theory so that he frequently mentioned it before proving it (Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 1, pp. 46, 47, 49, 65, 71, 86, 80, 88, 117, 218, 219, 261, 278, 329, 330, 380, 412, 413/ also see: Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 2, p. 12). After proving it he claims that the philosophy has been completed and wisdom has found a compliment (Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 2, p. 292) and then he uses it so much (for example see: Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, pp. 19, 249, 250, 258, 271).

and relative existence, that is existence in-itself for something else (*wujūd-i fī-nafsa-i li-ghiyra*) so that, being in itself is the same as being for something else and there are not two separate modes (*hiythīyya*). These two existences are in-itself (*fī-nafsihi*)⁵⁵ which means there are two separate external things, being in-itself is a sign for multiplicity but there is a differentness between these two mentioned existences one of which is for something else and the other is for itself. Existence in-itself for itself is not an adjective for anything else, like this body (*jism*), but existence in-itself for something else is just to be attributed to something else like shape (*shikl*).⁵⁶ Philosophers prove that shape has being in-itself i.e. the thing that has shape, like body, is one thing and its shape is another thing so there are two things because both of them have existence in-itself, but the difference is that body is not an adjective for anything else, but its shape is an adjective.⁵⁷

They say for a shape not to be attributed to a thing because shape has being in-itself for something else i.e. for a body. In other words existence of shape is the same as being for a body and there are not two external things, one of which is being in-itself and the other is being for something else and then both of them are mixed together. There is only one simple existence that is called in-itself in one vision and in the other vision for something else. These two visions have not been taken from two external modes so they are not two external things.⁵⁸

Now we can talk about kinds of fabrication. Muslim Philosophers like Ibn Sina, Suhriwardi, Farabi and Mulla Sadra believed that there are two kinds of fabrication,⁵⁹ one sort is simple fabrication (*ja'ī-i basīt*) that is to give existence to something (*ja'ī al-shaiy'*) and the other is composite fabrication that is making something exist (*ja'ī al-shiy'-i shay'an*).⁶⁰ The important point is that non composite fabrication belongs to an independent existence i.e. existence in-itself for itself and composite fabrication

⁵⁵ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, p. 314.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 82.

⁵⁷ Sadra, *Ta'liqā bar hikmat-i ishrāq*, p. 23.

⁵⁸ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 2, p. 305; vol. 4, p. 232.

⁵⁹ The purpose of fabrication (*'ijād*) is the same as creation and authorship (*fā'ilīyya*), the maker is the same as agent cause and the created is the same as the effect which is caused by the maker.

⁶⁰ 'Ubūdiyyat, *Dar 'Āmadī bi nizām-i hikmat-i sadrā'ei*, vol. 1, chapter. 7, p. 347.

belongs to a relative existence i.e. existence in-itself for something else. Understanding non composite fabrication is not difficult, it is the same as the creation of things i.e. it brings a thing into existence from being nothing (*'adam*). But understanding composite fabrication needs some precision. They ask whether, when we say relational existents like shape belong to composite fabrication, it means that the Maker (*jā'il*) actually carries out two creations, the first of which creates the shape and the second penetrates the body, i.e. gives shape to the body. This is impossible. Composite fabrication i.e. in-itself existence is the same as the existence for something else. These two modes have real external unity. In other words, making a shape is equal to making a moulded body. In more subtle and simpler words, we have no fabrication from the side of relational existence i.e. there is no fabrication from the aspect of attributes (*'awsāf*); all fabrications are from the aspect of in-itself for itself existence i.e. from the aspect of locus of attributes (*mawṣūf*).⁶¹

There are two fabrications that belong to the locus of motion which in one its existence is created and in the other it changes and creates attributes within it. So composite fabrication, that is this in-itself for itself existence of the locus is first created by a non composite fabrication, and then another fabrication is added to it and it is via this fabrication that it changes and becomes a thing that has a state which it did not previously have. Of course another maker performs these actions i.e. gives shape, movement and so on, that is, the body, which was created by a non composite fabrication and had no motion or any other attributes, was given motion, shape and the like by another maker.

All Muslim philosophers believe that dimension is not like other attributes. It is only attributes which have an in-itself being which are thus. This means that they have a separate existence from their objects like motion, shape, colour and as a whole all separable accidents (*'arād-i mufāriq*) need a new fabrication, but essential things (*dhātīyyāt*) and inseparable accidents (*'arāz-i lāzim*) like dimensions do not need a new fabrication.⁶² Therefore philosophers argued that essential things do not need a new fabrication other than the first fabrication. This means that God invents a thing

⁶¹ *Ibid*, pp. 355-356.

⁶² These two groups are called essential (*dhātī*).

that can create all of these purports and images in the mind. They say accidents are like this because a thing can exist with no movement but it can find movement later. So we can understand that motion is an adjective which is not the same as essentials and inseparable accidents, so it cannot have a united existence with its locus. Motion is an accident that has a separate existence from its locus. Therefore it needs a cause other than the cause of the locus of motion. It needs a new maker to create motion in it (body); otherwise the motion will be without a cause (maker) which is impossible. So the condition that makes an adjective requisite to a fabrication is to have in-itself existence, the existence in-itself for something else, and also an existence which is separate from the locus of motion, to allow it to become independent of the locus of motion. Philosophers believe that when we want to make a thing like this, for example to make motion; it is actually like causing the body (*jism*) to have movement, otherwise that is not fabrication of a motion. They say that there is one fabrication that makes the body and another fabrication which makes the body possess movement, colour and the like.⁶³

As a result it can be said that: The discussion is about accidental motions not substantial motions. We have motion in place, disposition quality and quantity; all of these motions are accidental and a kind of separable accidents (*a'rād-i mufāriq*). These motions are accidental because this body had no motion in place before, for example, but now it finds motion in place, or the body has no motion in colour but maybe after it experiences warmth it gradually changes its colour. So, all of these motions are separable from their bodies.⁶⁴ They are separable accidents so they need to be made with a composite fabrication, that is, they need a thing to make the body have movement in its place, colour and the like. So in short the purpose of the cause in this sentence "the cause of that which is changing must also be changing" is the cause for a composite fabrication that is a perfect cause for accidental motions. We can take two important points from the above explanation:

1. There are two types of creation in the world; one is simple fabrication which brings a thing into existence after it was nothing and the other is composite

⁶³ 'Ubūdiyyat, *Dar 'Āmadī bi niẓām-i ḥikmat-i sadrā'ei*, vol. 1, chapter. 7, p. 356.

⁶⁴ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, p. 67.

fabrication that can create some changes in the first creation and is actually another kind of creation. With the first creation matter will be created and with the second creation the matter will find its perfection step by step.

2. In this case our assumption is that a thing gets created with a simple fabrication but now our discussion is about composite fabrication and accidental movements, not simple fabrication. This is because the movements which we are talking about here are accidental motions which may or may not exist in a body.

4.6.2.3. The rule “essential issue does not need to be made and accidental issue needs to be made”

Essential things do not need a cause i.e. the initial simple fabrication is enough to have all of its essentials. However separable accidents (*'a'rāḍ-i mufāriq*), which are the same as relative existence (*wujūd-i rābitī*), need a cause to make them with a composite fabrication.⁶⁵

4.6.2.4. Explanation of the problem

As already noted according to the regulation of causality, every motion needs a cause i.e. motion needs a maker which brings about composite fabrication and with respect to the regulation of “the cause of changing must be changing” this cause must be changing too, a changing which is the same as motion. Then we shift to this changing cause and because of its characteristic, i.e. being changing, in respect to the regulation of the cause of changing must be changing it needs a changing cause too. Then we shift to this cause of cause and it also needs a changing cause etc. Finally it leads to an infinite regression (*tasalsul*) or a vicious circle (*dawr*) and both of them are impossible.⁶⁶ So this chain of causes reaches a stable cause and finally reaches God. Then the problem of separation of cause and its effect returns. In short there are two ways and both of them are impossible. The first one is that the series of causes does not reach a stable cause, i.e. continually a changing gets created from another changing and they never reach a stable cause but as we saw

⁶⁵ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, p. 68, see also: Sadra, *Risāla fil-ḥudūth*, p. 51.

⁶⁶ Ubūdīyyat, *Dar 'Āmadī bi niẓām-i ḥikmat-i sadrā'ei*, vol. 1, chapter. 7, pp. 346-349.

above this is impossible. The second way is that we can reach a point where a stable cause creates this changing, but there is a question as to how this stable cause creates this changing effect and finally it breaks the regulation and leads to the problem of separation of cause and its effect which is impossible.⁶⁷

4.6.2.5. The solutions of the problem by philosophers before Mulla Sadra

With respect to this problem, Muslim philosophers before Sadra said that the cause that creates motion must have a kind of change otherwise it cannot be the cause for motion. However, it is important to know how they perceive this manner of change. Also, the direct cause (*'ilat-i mubāshir*) i.e. specific form of every motion is the nature (*tabī'a*) which exists in all material issues. In other words that which can actually create the motion in objects is the form (*sūra*) that exists in objects. Sometimes it does this by the influence of the soul, which is called volitional motion (*ḥarika al-irādīyya*), and sometimes it is influenced by an external factor, which is called propulsive motion (*ḥarika al-ghasrīyya*) and sometimes it moves by its own nature and that is called natural motion (*ḥarika al-tabī'īyya*). Therefore the direct cause of all these motions is nature (*tabī'a*) itself.

Some Islamic philosophers put forth many solutions for this problem but Sadra rejected all of their solutions and because of brevity we cannot speak about all of them.⁶⁸ We will only mention the solution of Suhriwardī and then what Sadra has stated.

4.6.2.6. The solutions of Suhriwardī and his followers

According to Suhriwardī motion does not need a changing cause. He explains that if change in something is accidental then it needs a composite fabrication (*ja'ī-i ta'lifī*)

⁶⁷ Sadra, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah*, published by Markaz-i Nashr, p. 84, and sadra publications, P. 108. See also: Sadra, *Sharh-i 'uṣūl-i kāfī*, p. 33.

⁶⁸ To understand Muslim philosophers' solutions to this matter and Mulla Sadra's replies, see: Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, pp. 65-66; Sadra, *Ta'līqā bar ḥikmat-i ishrāq*, p. 396; Sadra, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah*, published by Markaz-i Nashr publications, p. 85, and Sadra Publications, P. 109; Sadra, *Risāla fil-ḥudūth*, pp. 47-48.

and a changing agent to carry out this kind of fabrication for this thing i.e. it causes the thing to have motion and of course the regulation of “the cause of that which is changing must also be changing” involves this kind. However, if change is essential for a thing and since “essential issues do not need a cause” then it does not need an agent to carry out a composite fabrication to cause it to have motion, it only needs the first fabrication i.e. simple fabrication (*ja’li basīt*).⁶⁹ Changing and alteration as compared with motion itself is essential and a part of its own nature, so motion in itself does not need a fabrication (*ja’l*) in order to be in motion,⁷⁰ therefore motion does not need an agent to carry out a composite fabrication, it just needs simple fabrication to create it. Therefore Suhriwardī believes that motion has been made with simple fabrication and after being made it is automatically moving and renewing and it does not need a new fabrication for its adjective (its motion).⁷¹ Suhriwardī solves the problem by removing the simple fabrication for motion. Since, as noted at the beginning, the problem was raised with composite fabrication Suhriwardī says one stable maker can create motion via a simple fabrication and since change is essential for motion this simple fabrication is enough for motion and no other fabrication, i.e. composite fabrication, is necessary. In this way the problem can be resolved.⁷²

In summary, he says that nature which is stable creates motion by means of a simple fabrication so motion does not need any other fabrication; motion does not need a thing to cause it to have movement and essentially motion in-itself is moving. So on the one hand motion is an effect of a stable thing and on the other it can be a cause for other moving things, that is, motion is the communicator between stable and flowing issues.

⁶⁹ Sadra, *Ta’līqā bar ḥikmat-i ishrāq*, p. 394.

⁷⁰ Sadra, *Risāla fil-ḥudūth*, p. 51.

⁷¹ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 7, p. 284.

⁷² According to Suhrawardi’s point of view the issue that change is one of its essentials so that alteration is used in its definition is motion which is also known as gradual change and continual occurrence and disappearance. According to this definition the nature present in any body creates the specific motion in that body adapted to the external conditions. This does not require the nature, *hayl* or any other components of the perfect cause to be changeable. (Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, p. 68).

Sadra makes a very subtle point on this subject; he says none of the abstractive and comparative issues (*'umūr-i intizāṭ wa nisbī*) can be the communicator and creator of something else, i.e. they are not able to act as an agent (*fā'ilīyya*). If it is said that something is a cause or is an effect, for example, it means this thing must have a real external existence to be a cause for another thing or to be an effect by another one, but if there is only a pure concept that is abstracted from an external reality then it is not able to be a cause or effect for a real thing. This is called abstractive issue (*'amr-i intizāṭ*) which is out of the circle of cause and effect. Real causality relates to external and real issues. According to Sadra motion is not actually an external thing.⁷³ Motion is a manner of being for other things. It is a manner of the existence of distance (*masāfa*). What is actually filling the outside is the existence of distances like colour, shape, disposition and, of course existence of distance needs a maker but motion that is a manner of being for other things and is actually a relative issue (*'amr-i nisbī*) does not need a maker because being the manner of existence for other things is not a thing in external world.⁷⁴

With regard to Suhriwardī's explanation motion must be counted as a communicator (*wāsita*) between stable and flowing issues, That is, a stable thing creates motion then motion makes another moving thing. Therefore there are three factors, a stable thing, a moving thing and also motion (which Suhriwardī understood as a communicator between stable and flowing things). So motion is an effect of a stable thing and the cause of moving things. In this assumption motion only needs a cause to create it not to make it move, i.e. motion only needs a maker to create it via a 'simple fabrication' and it does not need another maker that makes it move via a 'composite fabrication'. Therefore a stable issue is the maker of motion in being not the maker of movement in motion, and since motion is essentially moving and changeable it can be a cause for other moving things then motion has cut the relation between stable and flowing things as a communicator and in Suhriwardī's opinion there is no problem.⁷⁵

⁷³ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, p. 67, 129.

⁷⁴ Sadra, *Risāla fil-ḥudūth*, pp. 52, 53, 119. See also: Sadra, *Al-Mashā'ir*, p. 65.

⁷⁵ 'Ubūdiyyat, *Dar 'Āmadī bi niẓām-i ḥikmat-i sadrā'ei*, vol. 1, Chapter 7, p. 353.

However Sadra explains that motion is not the third existence after the two other real existences, i.e. stable and flowing issues, so that it can be a cause for one and the effect for another. Motion, as mentioned, is the same as the manner of existence of moving issues. So Suhriwardī's solution is not acceptable to Sadra.⁷⁶

4.6.2.7. Mulla Sadra's main solution

Sadra states that there is just one way to solve the problem and that is to take nature (*tabī'a*) as an essential moving factor and to suppose it as the communicator, that is, what Suhriwardī said about motion, Sadra says about nature. Suhriwardī found something in which changing was inherent and therefore it did not need a maker to give it motion or to make it move, which means that it did not need a composite fabrication.

Sadra says the same thing about nature. He says that by proving the trans-substantial motion an inherently moving thing can be found which is called nature and does not need a maker to make it move, but it only needs a maker for its initial creation. This means that it needs simple fabrication not composite fabrication.⁷⁷

Therefore according to Mulla Sadra's point of view nature has a flowing state like motion and being flowing is its essentiality since it has trans-substantial motion i.e. fluidity is inherent in its existence and fluidity is not inherent in its quiddity (*māhīyya*)⁷⁸. In this way the problem can be resolved since nature is not an abstractive and relative issue, nature is a substance and it has in-itself for itself existence (*wujūd-i fī-nafsa-i li-nafsa*), and naturally there is no problem from this aspect. On the other hand; since it has an essential fluidity (*sayyālān-i dhātī*) in order to flow and have movement it does not need a cause. The first fabrication i.e. simple fabrication via a stable cause is enough to make it moving and flowing. In addition to that, because it is a moving issue it can be a cause for the other moving issues. In short Sadra carries the fluidity into the nature and then resolves the problem.

⁷⁶ Sadra, *Risāla fil-ḥudūth*, pp. 52, 53, 119. See also: Sadra, *Ta'liqa bar shifā*, vol. 2, p. 1021.

⁷⁷ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, p. 66.

⁷⁸ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, p. 68.

At this point a question has to be asked of Sadra and the question is: How is it possible for a substance (the nature) that is the same as fluidity, i.e. it has hypothetical parts which cannot exist together, to be an effect of a stable cause? Does this not require the separation of the effect from its perfect cause since while the second hypothetical part of nature is being created the first part has become nothing although the perfect cause of the first part which is the cause of the second part too, still exists? In other words, why is it that when we arrive at the essential moving and do not need the composite fabrication but need only simple fabrication there is no problem? Basically, how is it possible for a thing to be stable from one aspect and flowing from another? According to what is it stable and according to what is flowing?⁷⁹

However in Sadra's opinion fluidity and motion in substance is inherent in its nature and it does not need a second maker which causes it to move since an essential thing does not need a cause. The nature only needs a maker to bring about its initial creation i.e. coming into existence without needing a cause for its motion afterwards.

It has been stated that the problem of relationship between stable and flowing is in the accidental motions. This means motion, as compared with the moving issue (*mutaḥarrik*) or the motion locus, is accidental not essential. The moving issue which motion is attributed to is the body (*jism*). It is the body which has movement in its disposition (*wad'*), for example, and disposition is one of the separable accidents (*'a'rāḍ-i mufāriq*) for the body. As a result both the disposition and dispositional motion, as compared with body, are accidental and every accidental issue needs a cause. It needs a cause to create motion in the locus of motion i.e. the body. Therefore dispositional motion needs the second maker to perform a composite fabrication. All accidental motions like motion in quality, quantity and place are like this.

⁷⁹ This problem has not been stated in Mulla Sadra's writing; rather he repeatedly states its answer. He explains that a temporal issue as compared to a non-temporal issue is not temporal. And as a result the flowing body as compared to the non-temporal issue is stable not flowing. For more details about this problem and its answer see: Motahari, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, vol. 11, p. 281, ref No. 1.

According to Sadra there is no problem in trans-substantial motion since nature is flowing, that is motion is the same as the body's being which means motion is inherent for all material and natural bodies, so motion is not accidental for the body.

Other kinds of motion stated above are accidental, however trans-substantial motion is not accidental it is an essential motion; that is, being flowing is a manner of substance being and because motion in substance is not accidental it does not need a cause to make it moving. It needs a cause only for its initial being not to be flowing or moving. As a result it can be said that a stable cause creates the existence of the nature and the nature is automatically flowing and it can create other moving issues. So we have found something which in respect to the relation with the stable (its maker) is not flowing but in respect to the relation with other flowing issues is flowing and can be a communicator between stable and flowing. In short, as Sadra says, the creator makes a substance and substance in itself is moving and so the problem can be resolved.

However, although the problem has apparently been resolved it still seems that something is unresolved. Finally, it is this substance, which was created by a stable cause, has hypothetical parts, the first of which was created at the first moment and then became nothing and the second part replaced it at the second moment and then the third one came to existence and the second became nothing and so on. Now the problem is that since this cause is the cause of all parts so it must be accompanied with its effect i.e. it must be accompanied with all parts of the substance during the motion. So this cause is the cause of all parts and we know after the first time the first part became nothing then the effect became nothing and its cause still remained, then the initial problem that was stated in accidental motions arises again here; i.e. how did a stable cause create a flowing effect? Therefore having essential fluidity and having simple fabrication did not solve the problem and the question still exists as to why Sadra says when the fluidity became an essential for a substance then this flowing being can be an effect for a stable

being. A solution might be found to the problem, based on the division of the divine and natural agents (*fā'il-i 'ilāhī wa fā'il-i tabīī*).⁸⁰

4.6.2.8. The divine agent and natural agent

The knowledge of this is based on knowing the location of simple fabrication. Simple fabrication means granting existence to objects. Philosophers have proved that at the stage of nature i.e. world of physical bodies there is only composite fabrication not simple fabrication. In the subtle word, from the philosophical view, an agent that could make simple fabrication and is called a divine agent must be necessarily immaterial and free of time and place. Conversely, material agents which consist of time and place i.e. corporeal agents (*fā'il-i jismānī*) or natural agents are not able to make simple fabrication at all, that is, they are not able to grant existence. They can only carry out composite fabrication.

With regard to the above explanation it can be said that, because of our limitation in time, we have past, present and future, however the thing which is past for us is not past for this divine agent, it only exists for such an agent. Also present and future exist at the same time for this divine agent, they are not past, present or future for the divine agent since it does not have the limitation of time.⁸¹ According to this it could be said that when such an agent creates a flowing issue, although it has hypothetical parts of which at each moment there is only one hypothetical part and when the first part becomes nothing the second part replaces it and so on, from the point of view of the divine agent becoming nothing has no meaning since in relation to this agent everything exists therefore there is no separation between perfect cause and its effect. In other words past and future which do not exist now for us, exist for this agent. It could be said that existence and non-existences which we can see in the stage of nature are all relative issues (*'umūr-i nisbī*).⁸²

⁸⁰ 'Ubūdiyyat, *Dar 'Āmadī bi niẓām-i ḥikmat-i sadrā'ei*, vol. 1, chapter. 7, p. 358.

⁸¹ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, p. 269.

⁸² *Ibid*, vol. 3, p. 269.

4.6.2.9. Division into stable and flowing

Mulla Sadra has claimed that the division of existence into stable and flowing is a kind of relative division. He says if we consider existents as in-itself beings without comparison to other things, then everything is stable and nothing is flowing, but if we compare something to something else then one may be stable and the other flowing, but without any comparison all things are stable.⁸³

Before proving Mulla Sadra's claim let us assume that it is true and division of stable and flowing is a relative division like division of existence into unit and multiple, subjective and objective, potential and actual. Then the meaning is all existents are stable in-themselves but as compared with something else, some of them are stable and others are flowing and are able to be divided.⁸⁴

It may be thought that the terms 'analogy', 'comparison', 'relative' and the like deceive us and cause us to think that the characters such as flowing, multitudinous, potential and subjective are made by the mind and have no relation to the external reality of things. However this is not the case; rather the external reality of these issues is such that our intellect, by some comparisons, can abstract these concepts from them. Therefore these characters are rooted in external reality. In Sadra's opinion with or without comparison the exterior world exists, it is an in-itself existence and according to this view all things are stable.⁸⁵ Therefore the relation between flowing nature and immaterial stable is the relation between stable and stable and so there is no problem. But why is the division into stable and flowing relative? The answer may help us to understand the subject and can be understood better with an example.⁸⁶

Assume that God exists and, for example, creates only one body with flowing length (t) in the material world. The assumption is not that God creates a thing that is from

⁸³ Sadra, *Sharḥ al-hidāya al-athirīyya*, p. 111.

⁸⁴ Motahari, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, vol. 11, p. 282-285.

⁸⁵ Sadra, *Ta'liqā bar Shifā*, vol. 1, p. 689.

⁸⁶ This example has been taken from the book *Dar 'Āmadī bi niẓām-i ḥikmat-i sadrā'eī*, see: 'Ubūdiyyat, *Dar 'Āmadī bi niẓām-i ḥikmat-i sadrā'eī*, vol. 1, chapter. 7, pp. 361-363.

t_1 time to t_2 time, since if that were so, there would have to be a time that was free of that body and then that body took place in a part of this absolute time i.e. from point A of this time to point B. but if we say that God created a body in flowing length (t) there is no problem because we point out the flowing extension of this body alone not to a time that is outside this body, so it does not need another body that consists of this time. God created just one body in the entire material world. Now two questions can be asked.

- 1) Does this body have a beginning or not? It is clear that this body must have a beginning and an extremity. Doubtless it has a beginning but we cannot say its beginning is a temporal beginning (*al-ibtidā al-zamānī*) i.e. it cannot be said it has time-instant occurrence because having the precedence of being nothing (*'adam-i qabli*) has no meaning for this body. In this supposition time is the flowing length of this body and according to the supposition there is no body other than this body and although this body has beginning, its beginning is not pertaining to time. This is one important point.
- 2) Can we say this body is created (*hādith*) in regard to the explanation above? No, we cannot say that, since although it has a beginning and an extremity and it is a limited existence, not unlimited, it is still not created. In the same way it can be said, this body does not lapse (*zāyil*) – i.e. become nothing after existing - and this means it has no temporal disappearance.

Now assuming that God had also created another body but this body is longer than the first in both aspects, i.e both its beginning and its extremity. Now compare the first body with this new created longer one and in respect to this longer body, it can be said that this body has a time longer than the first body and it can draw a longer time. Now in regard to this we could ask whether it is possible to point to a time-instant occurrence for the first body. The answer is that of course it is, because this longer body can draw a time which is longer than the previous body, so we can imagine a temporal preceding non-existence therefore it can truly be said that before now this body did not exist, but it exists now. Thus it becomes temporal created and from the extremity becomes temporal disappearing (*al-zāyil bil-zamān*) too.

This example shows us that temporal occurrence is a relative issue, because in the first statement there was only one thing and there was no other body to be compared with the first creation; there was no comparison or judgment. In this case the first creation is considered an in-itself body and then it was shown that this body was not a temporal created. However, in the second statement we assumed the other body, which we knew could draw a longer time than the first one, by the next of the first one and the first body was compared with the second body which had a longer time. As a result of this comparison, the precedence of non-existence and temporal occurrence finds a real meaning and the first body gets attributed to the temporal occurrence. Similar examples can be found in Sadra's works.⁸⁷

In short, when we regard the body as in-itself we see that it is not a temporal occurrence and not temporal extinction. Now we can understand that temporal occurrence is not an in-itself attribution. It is a relative and analogical attribution. So this means that temporal occurrence is a relative issue. The subtle point is that the second body was not influenced by the first one or vice versa, so we cannot say the second one was the cause of the first one becoming a temporal occurrence. The only action of the second being was that it logically prepared a field of comparison.⁸⁸

According to the above explanation the meaning of motion is continuous occurrence and decay, of course temporal continuous occurrence and decay. When temporal occurrence and decay become relative, continuous occurrence and decay become relative too. This means that when we eliminate comparison and have flowing body as an in-itself being in mind then there is no continuous occurrence and decay and there is no meaning for validity of motion. Therefore when we say the first part of motion became nothing and the second part came into existence, then the second part became nothing and the third part came into existence and so on, this is from our view, since we are limited by time and in time and can only see bodies as sectional. In fact, we are automatically comparing other bodies to ourselves, however from the point of view of a non-temporal existence all of the hypothetical

⁸⁷ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, p. 63; vol. 7, pp. 266, 300. See also: Motaharī, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, Vol. 11, PP. 282-285; Sadra, *Risāla fil-ḥudūth*, pp. 51, 215; Sadra, *al-Mashā'ir*, p. 32, 65.

⁸⁸ 'Ubūdiyyat, *Dar 'Āmadī bi niẓām-i ḥikmat-i sadrā'ei*, vol. 1, chapter. 7, pp. 364-365.

parts of a body – even from the direction of flowing dimension of the body - exist together and this existent can see all parts from the beginning to the end together. Therefore in his view there is no becoming existent and non-existent, there is no fluidity and no motion and in fact there is no problem. In philosophy this state is called supra-temporality (*dahr*).⁸⁹ Muslim philosophers, such as Mir Damad and Sabziwari, say that the components of time and temporal flowing issues which cannot be collected together and also the scattered temporal issues as compared to supra-temporal (*dahr*) are not so, rather they and all of their components exist together at the same time. This is why Mulla Sadra's statement about components of time is based on this.⁹⁰

The example which was stated previously about a prism (*manshūr*) when we wanted to give a perspective of trans-substantial motion can help us to understand the subject better.

It was assumed that the existent had only two dimensions and could not realize more than two dimensions as it could not perceive perpendicular dimensions. This existent was not able to see whole of the prism. It was able to see only a triangle that came into existence and then became non-existent. We explained to him that there is not a stable triangle that now exists and after five minute becomes nothing, that he was seeing a new triangle at each moment that was not there before and after. Then we tried to explain him that these triangles were not separate from each other, but were all continuously together i.e. there was a flowing triangle. This is what Sadra did with us on the issue of trans-substantial motion. He explained that this body is not a stable thing, it is flowing; it is a flowing three dimensional body.

The next step in the prism example was to explain to him that actually there is no flowing triangle; however, since he was not able to imagine the third dimension we said that there was a flowing triangle, but if he was able to come up from this two dimensional disc and to understand the third dimension, then he would have realized that actually there is no triangle and no fluidity but one stable three-dimensional

⁸⁹ Sadra, *Ta'liqā bar shifā*, vol. 1, p. 689.

⁹⁰ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 5, p. 49.

prism.⁹¹ Sadra does the same thing on the question of the relationship between flowing and stable things.⁹²

In short, the assumed existent could see a triangle at first i.e. two stable dimensions. Then we told him that it was not stable it was two-dimensional and flowing and finally at the last step we said to him that basically it is stable and three-dimensional. We brought him from the two-dimensional stable to the two dimensional flowing then at the next step to three-dimensional stable.

In a normal material view, in which the body is three dimensional, Sadra, with trans-substantial motion, makes it a three-dimensional flowing thing. Then, on the question of "the relationship between flowing and stable," he makes it a four-dimensional stable thing. In fact Sadra says that since we are restricted by time then we are not able to comprehend time as the fourth dimension of material things. Naturally we are restricted to three stable and sensible dimensions and therefore we see things in three stable dimensions. So after stating trans-substantial motion we are convinced that we are seeing things as a continual cutting (*maqta' maqta'*), but if we can overcome time we can see the past and future both together. Then we can understand that there is not a thing which becomes nothing or a thing which comes into existence. All things are existing in their locations and yet their evolution (*takāmul*) is a truth and also changing is true and none of them have been lost and it is justly an innovative idea. Now, by accepting this notion in fact the relationship between stable and flowing changes to the relationship between stable and stable.

So fluidity in this statement becomes a kind of relative issue. It means all creatures can be divided into two parts: A stable part which, if compared with something else, presence and absence will find real meaning. This kind of being is called flowing.

⁹¹ Motahari, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, vol. 11, pp. 277-278.

⁹² Sadra in this regard says: "if God releases someone's reality from the limitation of time and place, he will be able to know that all the times [from the beginning, present and future] and whatever adapted to it are all present in his view now ..." (Sadra, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah*, published by Markaz-i Nashr, p. 289, and Sadra publications, pp. 343-344.). Sadra in multiple situations has stated this point, see: Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 1, pp. 128-129; vol. 3, pp. 146, 164; vol. 5, p. 49; Sadra, *Al-Mabda' wal-ma'ād*, vol. 1, pp. 124, 125, 172, 203, Sadra, *Īqāz al-nā'imīn*, pp. 29, 33, 34.

The other part is stable which even if we compare it to something else, presence and absence have no meaning in regard to it.⁹³ This kind of being is called stable. So, the fundamental point in the issue of relationship between stable and flowing is to show that, actually, this division is an analogical division.⁹⁴

4.7. Conclusion

The previous two chapters attempted to deal with the issues of motion and trans-substantial motion. The aim has been to show the changes that the subject of motion has undergone during its evolution journey, especially in Islamic philosophy. Accepting motion in substance and solving the problems that resulted in the denial of motion in substance by philosophers who came before Mulla Sadra, caused a fundamental evolution in the realm of philosophy. As mentioned Sadra was the one who succeeded in finding the solution for these problems. A true understanding of trans-substantial motion can change the human view of the natural world. As a result our view of being human will change. The human being is constantly changing in his soul's substance as he is changing in his natural body.

In addition, the relation between this material world and the immaterial world has been considered and it was pointed out that this relation is not like the relation between two temporal existences and so understanding this subject should not be considered according to the temporal rules which with humans often deal. It has been explained that in this section, contrary to the previous one, Mulla Sadra, with a new vision, says that the entire material world is stable. It can be seen that according to this type of vision of the world, if we see it from the view of a

⁹³ For more details about the relation between flowing and stable see: Motahari, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, vol. 11, pp. 282-285.

⁹⁴ Mir Damad, before his student (Sadra) has insisted on the fact, in multiple situations, that time and temporal issues as compared to the non-temporal issues are stable and fixed, he says: "the Miscellaneous issues (*al-mutafariqāt*) in the container of time are all aggregated (*al-mujtama'āt*) in the container of sempiternity (*dahr*)." (Mir Damad, *Muṣannafāt*, pp. 185, 283, 284, 313, 314, 446, 447, 451.)

supernatural and non-temporal existent, there will be no issues such as motion and trans-substantial motion.

The entire material world is stable as all of its existents, which are moving in our view, are stable in the view of immaterial existents. So all things are present for them and there is no past or future. According to this view many of the problems in theology, psychology and philosophy can be solved with intellectual arguments. For example, regarding the subject of God's knowledge of the creatures it can be said that God, as a non-temporal existent, knows the past and future of all creatures.

However this topic requires independent research. This research concerns the soul and Mulla Sadra's ideas on it. With the preliminaries discussed in the previous two chapters and this chapter, we can now look specifically at the soul. In the next chapter we will discuss the levels which the human soul can reach through its trans-substantial motion. This will include a discussion on a subject which this researcher believes has been ignored by psychologists, theologians and especially philosophers and that is the distinction between the soul and the spirit. This is a question which Mulla Sadra's arguments regarding the soul, despite all their strength to solve the problem of the soul, have not been able to solve and has tried to justify some of its related issues. In the next chapter as well as explaining the ideas of some main philosophers and some psychologists regarding the soul we will explain Mulla Sadra's thoughts and the problem that he was faced with i.e. accepting the existence of the spirit before the creation of the body as the religious texts believe. After this we will try to prove that the soul and the spirit are two separate things. This will be done in the last section of Chapter Five. In addition to this we will attempt to consider this separation according to Quranic and traditional evidence in Chapter Six.