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MULLA SADRA'S PHILOSOPHY AND  
ITS EPISTEMOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

BY

Said Rajaie Khorassani

Thesis submitted for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy to the Faculty  
of Arts at Durham University.

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January 1976

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

ABSTRACT

This is a study of the epistemological implications of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy. It has four major parts, as follows:

Part I. Mullā Ṣadrā's life and works.

Part II. A brief account of his Sufism, with reference to his mystical teachings and his attitude toward Sufism and the Sufis. An attempt has been made to delineate his Sufi perspective and to spotlight some of his mystical ideas and assumptions which have epistemological significance.

Part III. A study of Mullā Ṣadrā's major philosophical doctrines. His ontological doctrines, such as the doctrines of the Primordiality, the Unity, and the gradation of existence as well as his account of the unequivocality of existence and mental existence have been examined critically. His doctrine of substantial motion has been studied and some of its major implications have been considered. His psychological ideas which explain Mullā Ṣadrā's view of man's nature, his doctrine of the unity of the intelligent and the intelligible, which is Ṣadrā's analysis of the human mind, and also his eschatological doctrine of bodily resurrection have been studied.

Part IV presents an epistemological account of Mullā Ṣadrā, with reference to his philosophical and mystical ideas. His definition of knowledge has been critically examined, and the criteria of truth and falsehood which

are either implicitly or explicitly advocated by Mullā Ṣadrā, are specified and examined.

At the end a conclusion has been provided which puts the general structure of Mullā Ṣadrā's system in perspective and presents an overall epistemological evaluation of it.

This work is dedicated to the memory  
of the late Professor M. Ilāhī Qumshī'ī  
and the late Professor M. I. 'Ayati,  
both of Tehran University.

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PREFACE

The present research aims at the study of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy in order to arrive at its epistemological implications. The study may contribute to a better understanding of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy in two ways:

Firstly, Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy contains certain doctrines which have significant epistemological implications. In the traditional studies of Mullā Ṣadrā these doctrines have been considered generally and not from the view point of the theory of knowledge; hence the epistemological aspects of Ṣadrā's philosophy, which deserve special consideration, have remained obscure. It is hoped that the present study will shed some light upon the epistemological aspects of his philosophy.

Secondly, there are special issues concerning Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy, which cannot be thoroughly examined unless they are tackled from the epistemological angle. The most important of these issues is the conviction that Ṣadrā has finally achieved the reconciliation and unification of rational philosophy with spiritual and religious attainment. Mullā Ṣadrā, being a very sincere and conscientious Muslim, has, like many other Muslim philosophers, incorporated many religious ideas into his philosophy. His ontological discussions, for instance, are so skillfully mixed with religious ideas, drawn from the revealed sources of Islam, as to convince many of his readers that

whoever does not subscribe to the doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence may be anything but not a Muslim. It is even maintained that without the doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence the Unity of God cannot be established; that is to say that every individual Muslim is either knowingly or unknowingly an advocate of the philosophical doctrine in question. A Muslim student of Mullā Ṣadrā may, therefore, feel that to reject Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy is tantamount to contradicting his articles of faith, probably without having considered any possible incongeniality between the methodology and the cognitive content of religious and spiritual experience on the one hand and philosophy on the other.

In the face of the religious aspect of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy, what should have been seriously considered is the fact that when a philosophical system is converted to or tied up with a religious discipline, the student of that philosophy, instead of stressing its religious significance, should be always on the alert so as not to run the risk of subordinating his critical thinking to a dogmatic attitude; otherwise he may fail to consider the significance of the philosophy as such. A correct understanding of Mullā Ṣadrā requires, first of all, a critical study of his philosophical doctrines, a study which aims at examining the validity of the arguments and the

soundness of the principles and assumptions involved in his philosophy, indeed without the student's being fascinated by their religious or gnostic implications. And to go one step further, such a study requires an examination of the epistemological network upon which the entire philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā is structured. Such a study becomes indispensable particularly in the face of the fact that the putative unification of philosophy and religious attainment is ultimately an epistemological matter.

In order to study the epistemological ideas and implications of Ṣadrā's philosophy, I have made a critical examination of his fundamental philosophical doctrines. The entire work consists of four major sections. The first section - Part I - covers the life of the philosopher and his works followed by a few remarks about his system and the sources of his ideas. I do not claim to have presented a detailed account of his life. The available information concerning Mullā Ṣadrā's life is very brief. Many historical facts about his life are not known. Of course, the possibility of finding more information about the details of his life is not ruled out. But fortunately enough, the available biographical information and the occasional passages found in his writings have prepared reasonable grounds for a general understanding of the important aspects of his life which have had a significant bearing upon his philosophical

perspective. Much of the credit of my biographical account of Mullā Ṣadrā, however, belongs to those scholars whose works I have consulted in preparing Mullā Ṣadrā's biography and bibliography.

The second section - Part II - covers a synoptic view of Mullā Ṣadrā's gnostic ideas. Although I am not entirely unfamiliar with Sufi literature, I sincerely believe that if this very synopsis had been prepared by an initiated disciple of Islamic Sufism, its content could have been somehow different from what it is now, not because of any bias on my or his part, but because his understanding of gnostic ideas may have been different. Not as a member of the family of the Sufis, but simply as a friend of the family, I have tried to understand Mullā Ṣadrā's Sufi teachings. My major concern has been to achieve an understanding about the cognitive aspect of his gnostic ideas. Hoping that this understanding would assist me to discover the epistemological links of his religious and spiritual experience to his rational philosophy.

In the third section - Part III - I have tried to present his major philosophical doctrines. I have concentrated particularly on Ṣadrā's ontological doctrines, his doctrine of substantial motion, and his psychology and eschatology. I have tried to examine critically the logical structure and rational significance of these doctrines. In this examination I have relied on the first hand evidence drawn from his well-known and principal works.

In Part IV, I have tried to analyse the epistemological ideas and implications of his philosophy with reference to both the gnostic and philosophical doctrines presented in Parts II and III. Finally I have presented a conclusion which sums up my account of Ṣadrā's philosophy and evaluates its significance briefly.

In citing the references in the footnotes and in preparing the bibliography of the work, I have tried to conform to Miss Kate Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations.

PART I

HIS LIFE AND WORKS

grown old and had not been blessed with a child. Being desirous to see his progeny, Ibrāhīm made a vow that if God blessed him with a virtuous child, he would give a great part of his wealth to the poor. Soon afterwards, his prayer was granted, and his first and only child, Muḥammad was born.<sup>1</sup>

Our biographical information concerning his childhood and youth is very limited. It is said that he had a very poor constitution. This may explain why his father did not send Mullā Ṣadrā to school, and decided that he should study at home and under his parents and relatives.

Mullā Ṣadrā started his early education in Shīrāz. There he studied Persian and Arabic literature, religious sciences, and certain other subjects which would altogether form the primary stages of learning.

As he was exceptionally gifted, Ṣadr al-Dīn mastered the elementary courses of learning in a short period of time. This encouraged his wealthy father to devote all his effort to his son's education. After his studies in Shīrāz, Mullā Ṣadrā went to Isfahān in order to further his education.

Isfahān at that time was the capital of Iran. The Safavid kings were ruling the country, and their rule had, among other things, already resulted in two major things. The first was the declaration of Shi'ism as the

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1. Browne, Edward G. A Year Amongst the Persians. Cambridge University Press, 1927), p. 141.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

In the year 979-980 H. (1571-1572 A.D.) a child was born to one of the families of Shīrāz, who was later to become an outstanding figure in the history of Islamic philosophy. His name was Muḥammad, and when grown up he was known as Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad. He is often referred to as Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Mut 'allihīn Shīrāzī, Ṣadrā, 'Akhund Mullā Ṣadrā, and even 'Akhund.<sup>1</sup>

Ṣadr-al-Dīn was of the Qawāmī s, an ancient and aristocratic family of Shīrāz. Mullā Ṣadrā's father, Ibrāhīm Ibn Yaḥyā, was also a wealthy and intellectual man, and the governor of Shīrāz. It is said that he had

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1. His name as given by himself in his writings consists of the following elements: Muḥammad, which is his personal name; Ṣadr al-Dīn, which stands for his title; and Shīrāzī which is an adjective which indicates his home town Shīrāz. Sometimes he has added his father's name, Ibrāhīm, and his family name Qawāmī. The order in which he has put these elements slightly differs from one writing to another. In his al-'Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog. Vol.I, p.1), he says: "Muḥammad, famous as Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī." In his 'Arshīyyāh he says: "Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī called Ṣadr al-Dīn. In his Kasr 'asnām al-jāhiliyyah, his name is given as Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī al-Qawāmī. In his "al-Qadā wa al-qadar" (his Rasā'il, p. 148), it appears as Muḥammad known as Ṣadr al-Shīrāzī. In his "Risālah fī al-hudūth" (Rasā'il, p.3) it appears in its most complete form: Muḥammad known as Ṣadr al-Dīn b. Ibrāhīm al-Qawāmī. In his 'İksīr al-'arīfīn" (Rasā'il, p.287) he calls himself Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī well-known as Ṣadr al-Dīn. His name in his "Risālah fī al-tashakkhūss" is the same as it is given in his al-'Asfār al-'arba'ah; and in his Wāridāt al-qalbiyyah it is without Shīrāzī and simply as Muḥammad, known as Ṣadr al-Dīn. It seems that he was not particularly interested in a particular order of the elements of his full name. Biographers do not seem to have followed a standard way of referring to him either. Thus the way to put his name has come to be entirely conventional.

recognized religious school of the country. The Sunni schools of Islam did not encourage the study of philosophy; their strict submission to the transmitted sources and to religious authority did not prove compatible with philosophic approaches. That is why we find that Ibn Taimiyyah the famous Sunni scholar, produced al-Radd'alā mantiq al-yūnān (The Refutation of the Greek Logic), and for the same reason the great number of Muslim philosophers came from among the Shi'a'ites. Thus the recognition of Shī'ism resulted in more favourable conditions for the study of philosophy among the scholars of Iran.

The second achievement was a large centre of learning which the Şafavid kings had established in Isfahān. They had erected magnificent libraries and beautiful mosques and schools - which nowadays are the object of admiration by visiting tourists. They had also assembled a community of the learned authorities of the time, like Mīr Muḥammad Bāqir Dāmād and Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn 'Āmilī called Shaykh Bahā'ī to teach there. Many students and scholars, therefore, flocked to Isfahān, where they found a warm welcome.

While in Isfahān, Mullā Şadrā completed his study of the transmitted sciences as a disciple of Shaykh Bahā'ī

and reached the stage of Ijtihād.<sup>1</sup>

He also enjoyed an apprenticeship under Mīr Dāmād with whom he studied the rational sciences. During this course he covered the whole of the Greek heritage assimilated by previous Muslim scholars, as also Islamic philosophy as worked out by his predecessors, such as al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazālī, Khājih Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and others.

It is said that Mullā Ṣadrā attended the lectures of the eminent philosopher and mathematician, Mīr 'Abul-Qāsim Findiriskī, who might have introduced Mullā Ṣadrā to Indian philosophy.<sup>2</sup>

To appreciate Mullā Ṣadrā's ability and scholarship, it is enough to recall the testimony of his teacher, Mīr Dāmād, as found in the following story.

It happened that Mīr Dāmād undertook the pilgrimage to Mecca. During his absence, his disciples were expected to write a treatise on a philosophic issue to be submitted to their teacher on his return. Mullā Ṣadrā wrote his

1. Dānish-kadh Ma'qūl wa Manqūl, Yādnāmih Mullā Sadra (Tehran University Press, 1340), p.2. Also refer to Dr. Nasr's introduction to Sih'aql (Tehran University Press, 1340) p. 4 ; and to 'Al-Yāsīn, Ja'far, Sadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī: mujaddid al-falsifah al-Islāmiyyah (Baghdād, 1955), pp.30-32.

In the field of Islamic sciences, Ijtihād is defined as "exerting oneself to the utmost degree of understanding Shari'ah through disciplined judgement." It is also "the interpretation of one considered competent to understand shari'ah." Mujtahid is, therefore, an authority in the Islamic jurisprudence. For these and other definitions of Ijtihād refer to Fārūkī, Kamal A. Islamic Jurisprudence (Karachi, Pakistan Publishing House, 1962), pp.287-88.

2. Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, Islamic Studies (Beirut, Librairie de Liban, 1967), p.115.

first book Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah (The Evidence of Suzerainty). After reading the work, Mir Dāmād was so much impressed by it that he said to Mullā Ṣadrā: "Oh, my dear Ṣadrā! Thou hast eclipsed my own book."<sup>1</sup>

In his introduction to al-'Asfār al-'Arba'ah, Mullā Ṣadrā when referring to his student days as days of hard work and perseverance, says:

"Then, in the old days, in the prime of my youth, I spent on metaphysical philosophy as much of my ability as I could afford. I studied the works of the early philosophers and those of their successors while learning from the results of their ideas and views, and benefiting from their first-hand opinions and personal discoveries. I acquired whatever I found in the books of the Greeks and the chief masters..."<sup>2</sup>

After this period, Mullā Ṣadrā was thinking of writing a book covering the best of all philosophical doctrines he had studied, in a systematic and unified form. But circumstances suddenly turned against him, and he temporarily abandoned the idea.

#### Mullā Ṣadrā gets into trouble:

A dilemma in the history of Islamic philosophy is that Muslim philosophers have never revolted or argued against Islam. They have always been of the high religious rank, good believers and followers of the sharī'ah; nevertheless, the dispute between some religious authorities and

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1. Browne, Edward G., A Year Amongst the Persians (Cambridge University Press, 1927), p.142.

2. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-'Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog. 1282 H.), Vol.I, p.2.

the philosophers has been a perennial and rather bitter one which has sometimes had very serious consequences. Mullā Ṣadrā is one of the victims of this antagonism, as his philosophy nearly cost him his life. In order to have a more realistic view of Mullā Ṣadrā's problem, we should take a brief glance at the historical background of the problem, and consider the early roots of the dispute.

It was the tendency of Muslim philosophers to adopt philosophy and use it as a means to support religion. In addition to Islamic scholasticism (kalām) which is merely a philosophical approach towards religious principles, the two main schools of Islamic philosophy, namely the Peripatetics and the Illuminationists, had their own religious orientation. As the result of this trend, Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus for instance, are presented in the context of Islamic philosophy as good Muslims who were not familiar with the technical terms and concept of Islam, as though the essence of their tenets were quite in harmony with the spirit of Islam. This particular view of the Greek philosophers is undoubtedly the result of the attempt made by the Muslim philosophers to assimilate Greek philosophies and fit them into a completely Islamic context.

The attempt, however, has raised fundamental questions in connection with the reason-and-faith controversy: can a philosophy which is predominantly based on reason be of any significant service to religion? Can such a philosophy help the individual Muslim in the

promotion of his inner life in the way of Islam? Or can it have negative effects, disturb the student's faith, and become an encouragement to elements harmful to religion?<sup>1</sup>

Muslim scholars, both theologians and philosophers, have given a variety of answers to such questions. Ibn Sīnā, having conventionally accepted the dangers of the discipline, decided that only a selected group of people should be permitted to study philosophy. The candidate should have a high academic standing, a sound intellect, and above all a strong faith based on solid foundations so that his involvement in whatever philosophical issues could not disturb his faith or weaken his ties with the shari'ah. The student, according to Ibn Sīnā, is not a philosopher in the classic sense of the term; he is an 'arif (gnostic) who brings theory and practice together, and directs all his academic endeavour towards a better understanding of the Ultimate Reality, and finally to

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1. The best example among the orthodox Muslims is al-Ghazālī, who argued against philosophy on the ground that "philosophers confine the principles of their knowledge to reason and thereby they ignore the knowledge based on revelation." ('Amin H. Al-Ghazālī: The Theologian, the Philosopher, and the Sufi (Baghdād, 1964), p.69). His al-Qistās al-mustaqīm is nothing but an attempt to show that the only reliable criterion of genuine knowledge is the Qur'ān. (For the details, please see pp. 41-46 and particularly page 101 of the work). In his al-Iqtisād fī al-'itqād (Egypt) pp.1-6, he maintains that genuine learning leads to the right understanding of Islam, which a philosophy based on reason fails to achieve. Al-Ghazālī is also the first Muslim thinker - and probably the first thinker - who pointed out that such terms as necessity, contingency, and impossibility are nothing but values applicable first to the formal and logical analysis, and have nothing to do with the events taking place in the actual world. ('Amin H. Al-Ghazālī: the Theologian, the Philosopher, and the Sufi, p.68).

become a better Muslim; he wants to know and then to act knowledgeably and wisely. In the ninth chapter of his celebrated work, al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt, Ibn Sīnā has given a full account of the qualities of the 'arīfīn (the gnostics), which is in fact an extended definition of Ibn Sīnā's concept of the philosopher. He ended the work with the statement of his will when he said:

"My brother! In this indication, I have out-lined for you the cream of truth; and have offered you the best of wisdom in eloquent words. Keep it from the ignorant and the abusers; from whoever is not blessed with a sound intellect, courage and the proper attitude, or one whose propensity is toward the herd; and from the herd of infidels, who arrogate to themselves the name of philosopher. Then if you find the right person in the honesty of whose intention and the strength of whose disposition you can trust, give him of it whatever he asks for."<sup>1</sup>

Thus philosophy was a mysterious subject not to be revealed to the unqualified. I still wonder whether this high degree of selectivity could have separated the philosophers as an academic elite; and what role it consequently played in the hostilities between the philosophers and the clergy.

Al-Chazālī, on the other hand, gives a categorically negative answer to these questions. In his Maqāsid al-falāsifah, he first outlined the philosophic issues and problems which constituted the subject matter of philosophy. Then he wrote another book: Tahāfut al-falāsifah, in which

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1. Ibn Sīnā, al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt (Egypt, 1948?), Vol.3, p.256.

he argued that philosophic doctrines were fallacious, refutable arguments which lead to no genuine knowledge. According to him, genuine knowledge should give way to absolute certainty; and this could be attained only through religious and gnostic experience; in other words, what al-Ghazālī himself had already undertaken.<sup>1</sup>

In his al-Munqidh min al-dā'irah al-Ghazālī divides the various schools of philosophy into three: the Materialists, the Naturalists, and the Theists. He considers the first two groups as the zanādiqah or irreligious people. As for the Theists he said:

"The third group, the Theists, are the more modern philosophers and include Socrates, his pupil Plato, and the latter's pupil, Aristotle. It was Aristotle who systematized logic for them and organized the sciences..."

"The Theists in general attacked the two previous groups, the Materialists and the Naturalists, and exposed their defects so effectively that others were relieved of the task. 'And God relieved the believers of fighting' (Koran, 33, 25) through their mutual combat. Aristotle, moreover, attacked his predecessors among the Theistic philosophers, especially Plato and Socrates, and went so far in his criticisms that he separated himself from them all. Yet he too retained a residue of their unbelief and heresy from which he did not manage to free himself. We

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1. Shimālī, 'Abduh, Dirāsāt fī tārikh al-falsafah al-'Arabiyyah al-Islamiyyah. 2nd ed. (Beirut, 1965), p.504.

must therefore reckon as unbelievers both these philosophers themselves and their followers among the Islamic philosophers such as Ibn Sīnā, al-Fārābī and others."<sup>1</sup>

(The emphasis is mine.)

Ibn Rushd took sides with Ibn Sīnā. He wrote his Tahāfut al-tahāfut to refute the arguments produced by al-Ghazālī against philosophy, and defended the discipline on the ground that religion and philosophy guide to the same truth; but that while the primary concern of religion is to guide the masses, philosophy, being a sophisticated discipline, remains as the private territory of an academic minority.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the supremacy of religious knowledge over philosophy is still maintained by Ibn Rushd. For, he argued that philosophers should not get involved in questioning religious principles, and that whenever they are confronted with an insoluble problem in their speculations, their only reliable authority should be the shari'ah.<sup>3</sup> Ibn Rushd also had a very high regard for gnosis ('irfān). Two of his teachers, namely, Ibn Bājah and Ibn Ṭufayl, who cherished strong gnostic inclinations, had introduced him to gnosis. He was very enthusiastic to meet Ibn al-Arabi, and was very enchanted by his society after the meeting was arranged at the request of Ibn Rushd by

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1. Nasr, S. Hossein, Science and Civilization in Islam, (Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 359. Also see al-Ghazālī, Ma'ārif al-'aqliyyah (Damascus, 1963), pp. 56-60.

2. 'Umar Farrūkh, Tārīkh al-fikr al-'Arabī (Beirut, 1966), pp. 677-78.

3. Ibid., p. 677.

Ibn al-Ārabī's father.<sup>1</sup>

The dispute over the value and role of speculative philosophy as compared with religious attainments remained as a live and up-to-date issue even at the time of Mullā Ṣadrā. His teacher, Shaykh Bahā'ī, who himself was a master of both the rational and transmitted sciences, denounced philosophy and regretted the effort people put into the study of philosophy. He went so far in his denunciation as to deny the value of all discursive knowledge and scholarship on the ground that it disclosed nothing of Reality. Then he proclaimed an esoteric knowledge to be attained through love, religious discipline and illumination. Here are some verses from a long piece of poetry which he composed in Persian.

O' addicts of false knowledge,  
 Who have never tasted true knowledge,  
 Busy with the philosophy of the Greeks,  
 Oblivious of the philosophy of faith.  
 For how long this boasting about their philosophy,  
 And mixing true and false together?  
 For how long do you expect his Shifā' to give relief,  
 When you take medicine from this jar of poison?  
 For how long will you joyfully lick scraps,  
 Left over from this Satanic dish?  
 Seek the knowledge which relieves you,  
 From the bond of flesh!  
 Seek the knowledge which illuminates the heart,  
 Let your heart receive the light sent to Sīnā!  
 Seek the knowledge which is not bookish,  
 Which is from insight not based on rhetoric.  
 That knowledge which gives you new life,  
 Is the knowledge of love, listen to my advice.  
 Be a slave only to love,  
 Speak of love, strive in love!  
 This knowledge takes you out of your "self",  
 It saves you from all confusions.  
 This knowledge is beyond all "how" and "why"  
 The gate to it is 'Alī the Exalted.

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1. Austin, R. W., Sufis of Andalusia (University of California Press, 1971), pp.23-24.

Please see p. 12 for Footnote 2.

In this manner Shaykh Bahā'ī ascribes no cognitive value to speculative philosophy. He even warns the student of philosophy against the deceptive nature of so-called philosophic knowledge when he refers to Ibn Sīnā's Shifā as a jar of poison which is mistaken for a relieving medicine. Instead, he encourages an esoteric and rather subjective knowledge based on religion as it had been practiced by 'Alī b. Abī Tālib, the first Shi'ah Imām and his descendents.

As the foregoing accounts show, some Muslim scholars like al-Ghazālī and Shaykh Bahā'ī did not ascribe any cognitive value to philosophy. To them the attainment of truth was beyond any abstract metaphysical system; it was a personal experience attainable only when the individual committed himself to the religious disciplines as confirmed and recommended by the sharī'ah.

Others, like Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd, did not abandon philosophy. In them we find a compromise between philosophy and religion. That is to say, instead of substituting religious attainment for rational philosophy, they attempted to form a mixture of both with the prospect of bringing the advantages of both of them together. The process reached its climax with Mullā Ṣadrā in whose school, as we shall see, philosophy is completely identified with religion and gnosis and has resulted in what

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[Footnote 2, from p. 11]

Shaykh Bahā'ī, Kashkūl (Qum, 1377), pp. 250-280. There is another edition of Kashkūl edited by Tāhir Ahmad al-Zāwī published in Egypt, which lacks the Persian materials of the former edition. The verses translated here cannot be found in it; but they can be found in Shaykh Bahā'ī's Persian Dīwān, pp. 27-33.

Henry Corbin has called "Theosophy".<sup>1</sup> Whether this so-called theosophy is a successful unification of rational philosophy and religious attainment or just a mixture is a question that we shall examine separately.

The legalist Muslims had concentrated on the transmitted sciences and did not show much interest in philosophy since their mission was the careful consideration of the legal sources in order to derive specific

1. Mohaghegh, M. and Izutsu, T. "The Significance of Subzawārian Metaphysics", Sharh-i Manzūmah (Tehran, 1966), p.3. The term theosophy is taken as the equivalent of hikmah by Dr. Nasr and theosopher, as hakīm (Nasr, S. H. Islamic Studies (Beirut, 1967), pp. 117, 121, 126 and also note No.12 on page 125). He does not give any justification for his definition. On the other hand, neither the Arabic-English nor the English-Arabic lexicons consider hikmah as the equivalent of theosophy. In Arabic, hikmah means wisdom, justice, knowledge, the precise and correct word. (See al-Munjid). According to Ibn Manzūr (Lisān al-'Arab), hikmah is "the best knowledge of the best things"; and he who achieves this knowledge is hakīm. Hakīm is also used in the sense of hākim as 'alim is also used in the sense of 'ālim.

Fīrūzābādī (al-qāmūs) has also defined hikmah in the sense of justice, knowledge, wisdom, and figuratively (as it is used in the Qur'ān) in the sense of the Qur'ān, prophethood and the Gospel.

The Persian sense of hikmah is slightly broader than the Arabic. In Fārsī it also means medicine and philosophy. It also means the rationale behind something, and the wise saying too. The medical and philosophical sense of it is still widely used. Even nowadays, the word mahkamah is still used for the doctor's clinic, and philosophers are still called hakīms. I, therefore, believe that Dr. Nasr's definition of theosophy as hikmah is not accurate; and throughout the present work whenever I use theosophy, I simply mean theo-sophy - an academic discipline dealing with the gnosis of God - which is different from the traditional sense of philosophy and its synonym hikmah.

rules applicable to everyday life situations and to ensure the effectiveness of the law. Of course, they did develop a unique methodology called 'usūl (the principles of investigation) which included, among other things, much of formal logic and semantics. But, being the methodology of discovering the practical connotations of the legal sources with regard to the prevailing conditions of the time, 'usūl was included among transmitted sciences and not among the rational sciences which dealt with various philosophical matters.

Due to the difference in the frame of reference, the authorities of the law had their own approach to religion which varied from that of the philosophers; and for this reason they did not prove to be a complement to philosophers. Therefore, to them, the amalgamation of philosophy and religion or the explanation of religious doctrines in philosophical terms was futile; it only created unnecessary lexical complications which might confuse the reader. This was probably the main reason that Mīr Dāmād's Sirāt al-mustaqīm was subjected to the contemptuous attitude of a Shaykh who said: "May the Moselmān not hear nor the unbeliever see Mīr Dāmād's Sirāt al-mustaqīm."<sup>1</sup>

There is a very well known story in Iran, which is still used as a joke to tease students of philosophy. The story is attributed to Mīr Dāmād (and sometimes to Mullā

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1. Browne, Edward G. A Literary History of Persia (Cambridge University Press, 1930), Vol.III, p. 407.

Ṣadrā), and is intended to show how philosophers have complicated communication merely by inserting their pompous professional terminologies into every context including religion:

It is said that Mīr Dāmād (or Mullā Ṣadrā) died. In the night immediately after the burial ceremony, the two angels came and awakened him with the question: "Who is your Lord?" (man rabbuk?) The man, whose mind had been preoccupied with philosophy all through his life, answered "A substance above all substances." The angels did not know whether to praise or to punish him in response to the answer as they did not apprehend the answer. They shrugged their shoulders, and after a moment of hesitation decided to go to Gabriel who would probably know the meaning. When the question was put to Gabriel, he began to think. He finally broke his silence and said that, knowing absolutely nothing about it, he was going to put the question to God the Omniscient. Up there, in the presence of the Almighty, Gabriel repeated the story. Then God, brushing His forehead, said: "I am not really sure what it means. Actually the man himself never understood what he meant when he was alive. My impression is that he was usually correct. So, tell the angels to let the poor man creep into the Heavens."

What had really added to the severe antagonism between the philosophers and the authorities of the law was in fact the gnostic aspects of their philosophy. The

antidote to dry rationalism happened to contribute to the opposition so much as to revive the age-old irreconcilable Sufi-clergy dispute. There is no need for a detailed account of the confrontation between the authorities of the law and the Sufis. It is enough to recall that the history of Sufism provides evidence as to the persecution of several Sufis and gnostic philosophers on the charges of blasphemy and infidelity. Sufi scholars, in their turn, rarely missed the chance to undermine the reputation of their adversaries. The term "qishrī" (shallow minded) which is still used in the Sufi circles of Iran is the adjective they have used to describe the legalist Muslims. They meant by the term that the Shaykhs are satisfied only with the facade of Islam; and because of the superficial attitude they have developed through their excessive involvement in the formal aspect of the sharī'ah, they are particularly incapable of appreciating the core of Islam. These arguments developed into a very serious antagonism; a war between the upholders of esoteric knowledge, and those of the so-called exoteric; or between the profound and the superficial as the Sufis saw it. The matter became more dangerous when eventually the bigoted of the masses took sides with each of the opponents. It was under such circumstances that Ibn Rushd was expelled from the mosque,<sup>1</sup> Suhrawardī was put to death,<sup>2</sup> and Ibn al-'Arabī

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1. 'Abduh Shimālī, Tārīkh al-falsafah al-Islamiyyah wa 'āthāri rijālihā (Beirut, 1965), 4th ed., p. 646.

2. Nasr, S. Hossein, Islamic Studies (Beirut, 1967), p. 115.

was accused of infidelity.<sup>1</sup> And, now, it was the turn of Mullā Ṣadrā to face the opposition of legaliterian opponents. The conflict as he himself has put it, was due to his involvement in metaphysical issues which the legalitarian must not, apparently, have approved of:

"We are already afflicted by a group, remote of understanding, whose vision is darkened before the lights of wisdom and its mysteries, and whose eyes grow dim like the bat's, at the illumination of knowledge and its traces. They consider going deeply into the ways of Lordship and to be greatly concerned with indications of His Transcendence as innovations. Any deviation from the conventions of the common herd, to them, is straying and deception."<sup>2</sup>

Mullā Ṣadrā was accused of blasphemy and condemned in the same manner as Ibn al-ʿArabī. It is said that he was even put on trial and "were it not for his father's influence at court, he might have come to the same end as Suhrawardī..."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Al-ʿAmīn S. Muḥsin, ʿAʿyān al-Shīʿah (Beirut, 1959), V.45, p. 117.

2. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-ʿarbaʿah (Tehran, Lithog., 1282 H.), Vol.I, p.2.

3. Naṣr S. Hossein, Islamic Studies (Beirut, 1967), p. 115.

Mullā Ṣadrā fell into disrepute. He was rejected and despised. It is said that he once attended a mosque in order to perform his prayers. After the prayers he overheard a man beside him recite something in a supplicatory tone. When he listened carefully, he realized that the man was imprecatingly repeating "May God curse Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī." Mullā Ṣadrā, whom the man did not know, approached him and asked why he was cursing Mullā Ṣadrā. He responded, "because he believes in the oneness of the Necessary Being". Mullā Ṣadrā, then, said, "If that is why you are cursing him, he surely deserves it because he definitely believes in the oneness of the Necessary Being."<sup>1</sup> This story shows how the ignorant masses who did not even know the basic vocabulary of his philosophy were so much against him.

Mullā Ṣadrā goes into exile:

Mullā Ṣadrā, who could no more bear the rejection and hostility of the masses, withdrew from public life and went into exile in Kahak. Kahak is a solitary, yet beautiful, village about 25 km. from Qum. The location of the village and its climate are such that Mullā Ṣadrā found the place safe and pleasant. He has explained his self-exile:

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1. Sayyid Ja'far 'Al Yāsīn has recorded the same story; but he maintains that the man attending the mosque was not Mullā Ṣadrā himself. ('Al Yāsīn, S. J. Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, Mūjaddid al-falsafah al-Islāmiyyah (Baghdād, Maṭba'at al-Sharaf, 1955), p. 35.

"When I found the situation such that cities were devoid of any people who could appreciate the arcana and the knowledge of the liberated, I withdrew to a remote place and went into exile, all covered in confusion and despair, devoid of hope and wit, zealous in dealing with my obligations and debts to God. Thus I refrained from mixing with the people and gave up all hope of their friendship and society."<sup>1</sup>

During his residence in Kahak, Mullā Ṣadrā had the time and tranquility to undertake effective religious exercises. He spent his time in performing the rituals and in meditating and reflecting upon his academic knowledge. Mullā Ṣadrā has explained how by intense concentration upon rituals - which provide for self-integration best - and upon other self-purificatory undertakings he had access to esoteric sources of knowledge totally different from what he had attained through academic endeavour. Here is his own account of such personal immediate experiences:

"When I had remained in this position of concealment, exile, obscurity and seclusion for a long time and an extensive period, my soul caught fire brilliantly, because of the duration of mortifications; and my heart was inflamed intensely because of my numerous exertions. The light of the Divine Kingdom poured into it; and the

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn. Al-'Asfār al-arba'ah (Tehran. Lithog. 1282 H.). Vol.I, pp. 2-3.

hidden aspect of Dominion was disclosed to it; there was bestowed upon it divine favours. Then I came to know mysteries which I had not yet known; and some clues were unfolded to me that had never been so clearly revealed."<sup>1</sup>

It was during this period of seclusion that Mullā Ṣadrā established his own school of thought. After about ten years of self-exile, however, Mullā Ṣadrā received an invitation from Allāh Wardī Khān, the governor of Fārs (Shīrāz) to serve as a teacher of philosophy in a large school the governor had already erected in Shīrāz.<sup>2</sup> Mullā Ṣadrā welcomed the invitation and returned to his home town, where he spent the rest of his life in teaching and writing.

In his circle, Mullā Ṣadrā trained many students, some of whom came to be great authorities in various aspects of the rational and transmitted sciences, and who have made valuable contributions to these subjects. Among them are Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (died in 1091) and 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī (died 1051) both of whom were Mullā Ṣadrā's son-in-laws. They have produced some of the best

1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Al-'Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog. 1282 H.), Vol.I, p. 3.

2. The school which is known as Khān's School (Madrasah-i Khān) is still in operation. The building, particularly Mullā Ṣadrā's own room, is kept in its original condition to recall the memory of the great Muslim philosopher of the time. A new library also is named after him in Pahlavi University of Shīrāz.

works in various aspects of Islamic learning.<sup>1</sup>

Mullā Ṣadrā's life, as already seen, had three different periods: the period of formal education in Shīrāz and Isfahān, the period of seclusion and contemplation in Kahak, and finally the period of teaching in Shīrāz. Each of these played a significant role in the formation of Mullā Ṣadrā's personality and perspective.

In his seventies, when undertaking his seventh pilgrimage to Mecca on foot, Mullā Ṣadrā died in Baṣrah. This was in the year 1050 H. (1642 A.D.).<sup>2</sup>

1. Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ was one of the eminent Shīah scholars and an authority in the traditional sciences in particular and in ethics as well. Some of his important works are Muḥajjat al-Bayḍā' (in ethics), Haqq al-yaqīn, 'Ayn al-yaqīn (in philosophy), al-Sāfi, al-Wāfi, and al-Shāfi (in Qur'ānic interpretation and prophetic traditions).

Lāhījī was a famous philosopher and theologian. His celebrated work in philosophy is Gawhar-i Murād which is Persian and is still widely used by the students of the subject. Some of his other compositions are: Sarmāyih 'imān, Mashāriq and Shawāriq.

2. The reader can look up Mullā Ṣadrā's biography in the following sources too:

Ahanī's introduction to Mullā Ṣadrā's 'Arshiyha (Isfahān, 1341).

Al-'Amīn S. Muḥsin, 'A'yān al-Shī'ah (Beirut, 1954), Vol.45, p. 101-120.

Ashtiyānī, Sharh-i hāl wa 'ārā'i falsafī-i Mullā Ṣadrā (Mashhad, 1340), pp. 1-8.

Fasā'ī M. H. Fārsnāmih nāsirī (Tehran, 1313), pp.137-38,149.

Hidāyat R. Q. Rayaḍ al-'ārifīn (Tehran, 1305) pp. 218-219.

Khansāri M. B. Rawḍat al-jannāt (Tehran, 1367) pp.331-32.

Al-Khudayri M. M. "Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī" Risālat al-Islām, 1959, No.2, pp. 218-22, No.3, pp. 318-27.

Nasr S. H. (Ed.) Risālih sih aṣl by Shīrāzī M.S., the introduction.

Nu'mah, Falāsafah al-Shī'ah (Beirut), pp. 345-50.

Zanjānī A. Abdullāh, al-Filsuf al-Fārsī al-kabīr: Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (Damascus, 1936).

Mullā Ṣadrā's Works:

Mullā Ṣadrā has left behind many writings, the most celebrated of which is his al-'Asfār al-'arba'ah.<sup>1</sup> The full title of the work is al-Hikmah al-muta'āliyah fī al-asfār al-'arba'ah al-ʿaqliyyah. The reason why it is so called is given by Mullā Ṣadrā in his introduction to the work:

"There are four journeys for the wayfarer of gnosis and the saints. One of them is the journey from creatures to Reality. The second is the journey within Reality by Reality. The third is the reverse of the first, for it is from Reality to creatures; and the fourth is the reverse of the second in a way, for it is within creatures by Reality. So, I arranged this book of mine in accordance with the stages of their journey in the emanations and

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1. Edward<sup>A</sup> Browne in his A Literary History of Persia Vol. III, p. 430) has translated the title "Asfār" into "Books" since he has taken the word asfār as the plural of sifr (a book). There he says "The two most celebrated of Mullā Ṣadrā's works, all of which so far as I know are in Arabic, are the 'Asfār-i 'arba'ah "Four Books" and ...". Before Browne, M. le Comte de Gobineau, the French Orientalist had interpreted the title of Asfār to "Four Travel Books". Edward<sup>G</sup>Browne, However, considered Gobineau's translation as incorrect and commented: "Gobineau misunderstood Asfār (which is the plural of sifr "a book" not safar "journey") when he writes (Ref. el philos. 1866, p.81) "Il a écrit de plus quatre livres de voyages."

As the passage quoted from Asfār indicates, Browne has also misunderstood the title of Asfār.

effects of Reality. Hence I called it al-Ḥikmah al-muta'āliyah fī al-asfār al-'aqliyyah.<sup>1</sup>

The work has four main parts, each entitled "Safar" (a journey). The first Safar is in metaphysical philosophy in which Ṣadrā deals with the concept and reality of existence and its qualities and traits, and also with other general metaphysical concepts (al-'umūr al-'āmmah) such as nothingness, necessity, possibility, priority, posteriority and others.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Mullā Ṣadrā, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithograph), p.4. Ṣadrā's account of al-Asfār al-'arba'ah given above is very much similar to that of Ibn al-'Arabī of his own al-Asfār, where he said: "Journeys are three and there is no fourth ... A journey from Him; a journey to Him; and a journey within Him." (See Ibn al-'Arabī's Rasā'il.) It is quite possible that Mullā Ṣadrā, being enchanted by Ibn al-'Arabī, decided to develop the work of the Master; hence he composed a far greater Asfār which has a fourth safar too.

2. The term "al-'umūr al-'āmmah" in Ṣadrā's philosophy applies to those concepts which are predicable of everything irrespective of its essential properties. They are, in other words, predicable of things not because of what they are, but because they are. The term has not appeared in Encyclopaedia of Islam. The first English equivalent for this term, so far as I know, is given by the joint editors of Sabzawārī's Ghurar al-farā'id as "general principles". (Mohaghegh M. and Izutsu T., Sharhi manzūmah (Tehran, 1964) p. 597. The editors, to my view, have not been very accurate in their definition because "al-'umūr al-'āmmah" are neither basic concepts nor fundamental propositions; they are simply metaphysical concepts; and that is why they are predicable of everything whether physical or otherwise. I, therefore, avoided the term "general principles" and preferred "general metaphysical concepts".

The second Safar covers an intensive examination of the Aristotelian categories and the developments of Ṣadrā's predecessors, the Muslim philosophers. This Safar is in fact Ṣadrā's natural philosophy.

The third Safar is about "metaphysics in the special sense" (ilāhiyyāt bi al-ma'nā al-'akhaṣṣ) or the science of divinities. The essence of Divine Essence, His existence, His qualities such as perfection and knowledge are discussed under this heading.

The fourth Safar is concerned with man. It covers the problem of the soul, its origin, its stages and its return to its final destiny.

Asfār is one of the most comprehensive sources of Islamic philosophy and is still a major text book for the students of the subject in Iran. It was first lithographed in Tehran in 1282 A.H. and a new edition of it was published in Tehran recently.

Another very important composition of Ṣadrā is al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah. This work is a demonstrative representation of the author's gnosis. The work has five main parts each called Mash-had (scene). The first Mash-had concerns general metaphysics (Ilāhiyyāt bi'l-ma'nā al-'a'amm). The second Mash-had concerns "Ilāhiyyāt bi'l-ma'nā al-'akhaṣṣ" or the science of divinities. The third concerns resurrection; and the fourth is about bodily resurrection which is Mullā Ṣadrā's own doctrine. The fifth is concerned with the meaning of prophethood.

imāmah (leadership), revelation and other things related to these matters. The work was first lithographed in 1286 A.H. It has been commented on by different commentators and has been published several times.

Al-Hikmah al-'arshiyah<sup>1</sup> is another writing in which Ṣadrā ~~has~~ outlined his theosophy and has mainly concentrated on resurrection. Shaykh 'Aḥmad 'Aḥsā'ī and Mullā Muḥammad Ismā'īl Ibn Muḥammad <sup>wrote</sup> commentaries upon it. It was also translated into Farsī by 'Aḥanī and was published in Isfāhān recently.

Al-Mashā'ir is another composition by Ṣadrā, which contains his ontological doctrines. Different scholars have written commentaries upon this work, and it has been published several times. A new edition of it which was edited by Henri Corbin, who also added an extensive French introduction to it, was published in Tehran in 1964.

Another writing of Mullā Ṣadrā is Mafātih al-ghayb which is an extensive account of his gnostic ideas. It has been lithographed (in Tehran?) in 1865. The synopsis of the content of the work constitutes another work of Mullā Ṣadrā, which has the title of al-Mazāhir al-ilāhiyyah. The latter was edited by 'Ashtiyānī, Ṣ. J. and published in Mash-had.

Kasr asnām al-jāhiliyyah is Mullā Ṣadrā's criticism of the Sufis. It has been edited by Mr. Dānish Pizhūh,

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1. Among Ibn Sinā's Rasā'il, there is a treatise with the title of "al-Risālat al-'arshiyah" which concerns the unity of God, and His qualities. It is very likely that Mullā Ṣadrā had seen the work and intended to call his own al-'Arshiyah after Ibn Sinā's work.

who wrote a scholarly introduction for it. The work was published by Tehran University Press in 1961.

A Persian writing of Mullā Ṣadrā is Sih 'asl that contains the author's criticisms of the theologians and the jurists. This work had remained obscure until Dr. Naṣr of Tehran University edited the work and wrote his masterly introduction for it. The work was published by Tehran University Press in 1961.

Mullā Ṣadrā has a compact, yet deep, composition on logic under the title of Tanqiyah, whose main sections are entitled "Lum'ah" (a spark of light). This work was recently edited and translated into Persian. The work was published under the title of Mantiqi-i nuvīn.

In addition to the nine writings already mentioned, Mullā Ṣadrā also wrote the following works:

10. Risālah fī hudūth al-'ālam
11. Risālah fī ittisāf al-māhiyyah bi al-wujūd
12. Risālah fī al-tashakkhuss
13. Risālah fī sarayān al-wujūd
14. Risālah fī al-qadā wa al-qadar
15. Risālah fī al-wāridāt al-qalbiyyah
16. Risālah al-'iksīr al-'ārīfin
17. Risālah fī al-hashr
18. Risālah fī khalq al-'a'māl

The above treaties have been lithographed in one volume with the title of the Rasā'il of Mullā Ṣadrā.

19. Asrār al-'āyāt
20. Mutashābih al-Qur'ān
21. Risālah fī al-wujūd
22. Hall mushkilāt al-falakiyyah
23. 'Ajwibat al-masā'il<sup>1</sup>
24. 'Ajwibat al-masā'il al-Nasiriyyah
25. al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah (according to

Mr. Dānish Pizūh, this work is different from the al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah we have already described; it serves as an index to Ṣadrā's original ideas.)<sup>2</sup>

26. Risālah fī ittihād al-'āqil wa al-ma'qūl
27. Risālah fī al-tasawwur wa al-tasdiq
28. Risālah fī al-jabr wa al-tafwīd
29. Risālah fī tarḥ al-kawnayn
30. Risālah fī al-mizāj
31. Risālah fī al-ma'ād al-jismānī
32. Risālah fī al-kufr wa al-'imān<sup>3</sup>
33. Risālah fī ...-ittihād al-bārī<sup>4</sup>

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1. This work consists of some letters Mullā Ṣadrā wrote to his teacher Mīr Dāmād and to his contemporary, Mullā Shamsī Gilānī, in which he has dealt with gnostic and philosophical issues. See Dānish Pizhūh's account of Ṣadrā's writing in Yādnāmih Mullā Ṣadrā (Tehran University Press, 1340) p.108, and also p.11 of Dr. Naṣr's introduction to Ṣadrā's Sih asl (Tehran University Press, 1340).

2. Dānish Kadih-i 'Ulūmī Ma'qūl wa manqūl Yādnāmih Mullā Ṣadrā (Tehran University Press, 1740) p.116.

3.4. These two works, according to Dr. S. H. Naṣr (see his Ma'ārif-i Islamī, Tehran 1348) are in Rizā Library in India, and are registered under No. 834 and 1546 respectively.

34. Risālah al-qudsiyyah
35. A preface to Mīr Dāmād's al-'Arsh al-qudsī
36. Glosses upon the Commentary of al-Baydāwī
37. Glosses upon Qūsh-chī's Sharh tajrīd
38. Glosses upon the Ilāhiyyāt of Ibn Sīnā's Shāfā'
39. Glosses upon the Commentary on Hikmat al-ishrāq
40. The Diwān
41. Commentary on the 'Usūl al-Kāfi

Mullā Ṣadrā has also interpreted the following

Sūrans of the Quran:

1. Surah al-Fātiḥah (The Opening)
2. Surah al-Baqarah (The Cow)
3. Surah Yā-sīn
4. Surah al-Tāriq (The Morning Star)
5. Surah al-Jum'ah (The Congregation)
6. Surah al-Ḍuḥā (The Morning Hours)
7. Surah al-Zilzāl (The Earthquake)
8. Surah al-Sajdah (The Prostration)
9. Surah al-Wāqi'ah (The Event)
10. Surah al-Ḥadīd (Iron)
11. Surah al-'A'lā (The Most High)
12. The verse al-Nūr (No. 35-40 of Surah of Light)
13. 'Āyah al-kursī (No. 255-258 of Surah The Cow)

He has also interpreted the Prophetic tradition

"al-nās niyām; fa idhā mātū intabihū" (The people are asleep; they shall wake up when they die). There are some other writings which are said to be Ṣadrā's, but their

attribution to him is doubted. They are:

1. Risālah fī ajwibah al-as'ilah
2. Risālah fī ithbāt-i wājib al-wujūd
3. 'Adāb al-baḥth wa al-munāzarah
4. al-Imāmah
5. Baḥth al-mughālatāh
6. Risālah fī bād'i wujūd al-insān
7. Tajrīd-i maqālāti Arastū
8. Glosses upon al-'Anwār al-tanzīl
9. Glosses upon al-Rawḍat al-bahiyyah
10. Glosses upon al-Rawāshih of Mīr Dāmād
11. Glosses upon Sharḥ al-tajrīd
12. Risālah fī rumūz al-Qurān
13. Risālah fī al-fawā'id
14. Risālah fī al-qawā'id al-malakūtiyyah
15. Shubhat al-jadhr al-'aşamm
16. al-Mabāḥith al-'i'tiqādiyyah
17. An article on the commentary of verse 27 of

Surat al-Naml. A brief article in Persian is also reported to be Ṣadrā's.<sup>1</sup> The article itself has no explicit indication to support the claim; and, to my view the writing style seems to be different from Ṣadrā's.

According to Catalogue of Arabic Printed Books in the British Museum, another book is ascribed to Mullā Ṣadrā,

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1. Ra'nā Hosainī K. "Du risālih az Mullā Ṣadrā va Mīr Sayyed Sharīf Gurgānī" Majallih Dānish-kadīh Adabiyyah va 'Ulum Insāni, Tehran, No. 72, 73, 1349, pp. 326-28.

which is identified as al-Tibb al-rawhānī by al-Imām al-Shīrāzī (class No. 14540.b 30). However, the catalogue has a question mark at the end of this item of information to indicate that the information is doubtful. This work has been recently published in Iran and is known to be by al-Imām al-Razī and not al-Imām al-Shīrāzī.

There is also a manuscript in Bibliothèque Nationale which is again recorded under Mullā Ṣadrā's name. (No. 2398 Arabe). It is a collection of seven treatises written by different authors, and all copied by some Muḥammad bin Ḥisām bin 'Abdullah, who has given his name on page 125. He has also given the date of copying on the same page and also on page 164 as well as at the end of the last treatise, all of which indicate that the work was copied during the month of Ramaḍān of the year 928 H. - long before Mulla Ṣadrā's birth. No part of that manuscript can be Mullā Ṣadrā's work. To my understanding the reason for ascribing the work to Mullā Ṣadrā is that two of these treatises have the same title as two of Mullā Ṣadrā's works: Risālah fī al-tashakhkhus̄ and Risālah fī ithbāt al-bārī. Fortunately, the second of these two includes the name of its author too, which is Ṣadr al-Husayn al-Shīrāzī (p.147 of the manuscript). It is also very likely that the name has been misread by the librarians and they, therefore, ascribed the whole work to Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī.<sup>1</sup>

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1. The bibliography of Ṣadrā's writings can be found in the works of many historians of Islamic literature and philosophy such as Khansārī (Rawdāt al-jannāt), Sayyed Muḥsin al-Amīn (in his 'A'yān al-shī'ah), Nūrī (Mustadrak

Şadrā's literary style is very simple as compared with, let us say, Ibn Sīnā or Mīr Dāmād in particular. Edward G. Browne has recorded a story which indicates the contrast between Mullā Şadrā's literary style and that of his teacher Mīr Dāmād:

"It is stated that Şadrā saw Mīr Dāmād in a dream and said: "My views do not differ from yours, yet I am denounced as an infidel and you are not, why is this?" "Because" replied Mīr Dāmād's spirit, "I have written on philosophy in such a way that the theologians are unable to understand my meaning, but only the philosophers; while you write about philosophical questions in such a manner that every dominie and hedge-priest who sees your books understands what you mean and dubs you an unbeliever."<sup>1</sup>

Mullā Şadrā ~~has~~ often, and probably unnecessarily, restated his ideas in different works. One may, therefore, find many repetitions in Şadrā's writings. It may be quite true to say that after studying al-Asfār al-'arba'ah the student of Mullā Şadrā will find not

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(From p.30)

al-wasā'il), Fasā'ī (Fārsnāmih) and Tabrīzī (Rayhānah al-'Adab). But none of these sources include a complete bibliography of his works. In preparing the present bibliography, I have relied on the recent research done by Dr. Nasr (in his introduction to Sih Asl) and also on the works of Mr. Dānish Pizhūh and Mr. Tabātaba'ī as they appear in Yādnāmah Şadrā (pp. 13-26, 101-102) published by Tehran University Press.

1. Browne, Edward G. A Literary History of Persia, Vol. III, p. 424.

many considerably new ideas in the rest of his writings in philosophy.

Mullā Ṣadrā ~~has~~ used many passages and ideas from others in his writings, particularly from Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardi, and Ibn al-‘Arabī, often without giving the references. This, being an indication of Ṣadrā's exceptional memory and knowledge, makes it very difficult to decide what is his own words or ideas and what is not. He also inserts Arabic and even Persian poetry in his Arabic writings. These verses are usually so fit for the context that, beside uplifting the literary value of the text, they assist the reader in comprehending the issue.

Ṣadrā himself is a poet too, though his own compositions are not as eloquent as those he has quoted from others. His poems lack the smoothness and beauty of a natural piece of art. This might be due to the fact that he has so overloaded his poetry with philosophical ideas that it has consequently lost the delicacy and art usually associated with beautiful poetry.

A Few Remarks About Mullā Ṣadrā's System and its Sources.

The common view about Ṣadrā's system introduces it as a philosophy. Traditionally speaking, philosophy was an encyclopedic body of knowledge which was later divided and subdivided into various independent subjects when it had become far greater than one individual's power because of its development. According to Ṣadrā, his system is not a philosophy in this sense. What he has tried to establish is that his system is not a philosophy at all. In his Sih 'asl when referring to the knowledge advocated by him, he explicitly said: "This knowledge is what God has called 'Light', and is not what is known as philosophy, or what philosophers are after..."<sup>1</sup> However, philosophical ideas abound in some of his works especially in his al-Asfār al-'arba'ah. These ideas have apparently overshadowed the gnostic elements which one finds more explicit in Ṣadrā's al-Mazāhir al-ilāhiyyah or in his other theosophical writings. This might be due to the fact that those writings of Mullā Ṣadrā which are of a more philosophical nature found their way to the centres of learning of Iran more easily. Even nowadays, his al-Asfār al-'arba'ah,

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1. Shīrāzī Ṣadr al-Din, Sih 'asl (Tehran University Press, 1340), p.6. Also see his Mafatīh al-ghayb (Tehran Lithog.) p.3 and his introduction to al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran Lithog.), Vol.I, p.4.

Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah, and al-Mashā'ir are better known to students of philosophy in Iran than his Sufī texts. I believe that had the students of Mullā Ṣadrā studied his gnostic works before going to his more-philosophical writings, then the common view would probably have been much different about him.

Another view has considered his system as a reconciliation of religion and philosophy. According to this view "the genius of Mullā Ṣadrā was in his ability to harmonize philosophy based upon rational demonstration with gnosis on the one hand and revelation on the other. Thus he brought to a successful conclusion the attempt begun by al-Kindī, al-Farābī, and Ibn Sīnā (especially in his Quranic commentaries) and continued by al-Ghazālī, Suhrawardī and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī to coordinate faith and reason or religion and science."<sup>1</sup> This view is also questionable on various grounds. Firstly, bearing in mind that al-Ghazālī was the first Muslim scholar who denounced philosophy, and that it was he who frankly considered all the Peripatetic philosophers (and namely, al-Farābī and Ibn Sīnā) as irreligious people,<sup>2</sup> then it requires an over-compromising attitude to consider him and his opponents as members of one team of philosophers who attempted to establish one and the same relation between philosophy and religion.

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1. Nasr, S. H. Islamic Studies (Beirut, 1967), p. 117.

2. Nasr, S. H. Science and Civilization in Islam (Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 309.

Secondly, while the presence of philosophical doctrines in Ṣadrā's system is an undeniable fact, the best explanation of this fact is not necessarily harmonization of faith and reason, or religion and science. Such an explanation would be accepted only when we could at least establish that Ṣadrā had a high regard for discursive philosophy or academic knowledge. But since Ṣadrā had such a contemptuous attitude towards discursive knowledge, why should he have attempted to harmonize philosophy and religion at all?

Thirdly, let us, for the sake of argument, assume that Ṣadrā did bring about the putative harmonization and coordination between religion and the philosophies handed down to him. Is such a harmonization really between philosophy "based on rational demonstration" in general and Islamic revelation? Is it really between "faith and reason or religion and science"? Does the Aristotelian philosophy, which came down to Mullā Ṣadrā, mean reason or science? Aristotle is indeed a great hero in the history of philosophy; and rationalism is also an important trait of his system. Nonetheless, there are things in his system which are neither rational nor scientific. Take for instance the concentric spheres circulating round the earth, and receiving orders and direction from the living intelligences which ran all the affairs of the world, or take the sublunary region with four basic

elements.<sup>1</sup> What is so rational or scientific about these explanations?

In approaching Mullā Ṣadrā's system, the right question might not be whether he did or did not harmonize religion and philosophy; it might be more appropriate to see why Ṣadrā is appealing to philosophy in spite of his opposition to it. Is he really being inconsistent when he warns his reader against the deceptive nature of philosophy,<sup>2</sup> and at the same time includes many philosophical ideas in his works? What aspect of philosophy is condemned by him, and finally what is the meaning or nature of philosophy to him?

Mullā Ṣadrā's attitude towards philosophy seems to have been very ~~much~~ similar to his attitude towards Sufism. Like Sufism, philosophy has two sides to Ṣadrā. In its genuine sense, philosophy is not essentially different from religious knowledge; it is, let us say, an academic expression of religious and spiritual experience. But when it becomes mere speculation, devoid of spiritual experience, then it becomes what Ṣadrā condemns. We may remember that al-Ghazālī, when facing the dilemma of religion and philosophy, decided that only spiritual knowledge was genuine and denied the cognitive value of all philosophy. Mullā Ṣadrā's position is different from

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1. Ross, W. D. Aristotle (London, 1923), p. 174-181; also see Knowles, David, The Evolution of Medieval Thought (Great Britain, 1962), p.4.

2. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al'arba'ah (Tehran Lithog.). Vol.I, p.4.

al-Ghazālī's in the respect that while al-Ghazālī decides to wash his hands of all philosophical knowledge and stuck to religion, Ṣadrā claims that classical philosophy can be best understood in the light of religious and spiritual experience. In other words, from the viewpoint of Ṣadrā there is something particularly esoteric in the Aristotelian philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Interestingly enough, when explaining that the knowledge of the Divine Reality requires discipline and self-purification, Ṣadrā quotes from Aristotle as if he had been a great sage or a Sufi Master.<sup>2</sup> In the same context he refers to "the Ancient philosophy (al-ḥikmah al-ʿatīqah) as well as to the Qurʾān. One cannot refer to Aristotle and the Qurʾān in support of one's position without having considered the two sources of similar significance and value at least in so far as the issue in question is concerned. On another occasion, Ṣadrā said:

"Among the people, there are some groups of philosophers who do not understand of philosophy anything except

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1. In his Kasr asnām al-jāhiyyah (pp.35-36), Ṣadrā has tried to trace Aristotelian philosophy through Plato, Socrates, and the Pythagoreans back to Luqmān to whom wisdom was revealed by the Grace of God according to the Qurʾān (XXXI:12). Therefore Ṣadrā concludes that the Greek heritage is essentially linked to the revealed Truth; consequently he feels justified in putting traditional philosophical doctrines into a religious perspective despite his denunciation of philosophy as such.

2. Shirāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Mazāhir al-ilāhiyyah (Mash-had), p.2.

a description and who know nothing of its mysteries."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, traditional philosophy to Mullā Ṣadrā has been a so-called "genuine" knowledge, essentially not different from the mysterious and esoteric knowledge, or what the gnosis of God leads to. Such a concept of philosophy is quite characteristic of Ṣadrā; and apparently, when he attacks "those who arrogate philosophy to themselves"<sup>2</sup> he means those who have not gone beyond the discursive aspect of the discipline.

However, Mullā Ṣadrā was neither the first nor the last Muslim thinker who had such a peculiar attitude towards the Greek heritage. It seems that the real nature of Greek philosophy was not truly known to some early Muslim philosophers; they conceived of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy not as moral but as religious systems. The aim of these philosophies was simply to formulate a value system which could ensure man's worldly happiness; they were after "happiness" not salvation.<sup>3</sup> It is not a coincidence that ethics is the final chapter of Aristotle; ethics is indeed his final message and the target of his philosophical endeavour. He does speak of

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Mazāhir al-ilāhiyyah (Mash-hād), pp. 57-58. Also see his al-Mabda' wa al-ma'ād p. 233.

2. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran Lithog.), V.I, p. 4.

3. Ross, W. D., Aristotle (London, 1923), p. 190.

God of course, but "if the question be asked, whether Aristotle thinks of God as creator of the world, the answer must certainly be that he does not."<sup>1</sup> His Prime Mover is only a principle which completes the system without any power of interfering in the affairs of the world; He even cannot know the world for He is so defined that He cannot contemplate other than Himself. Such a Prime Mover or "God" does not create; nor does He destroy; He has no angels, no message, no prophets, no reward or punishment, and therefore no Heaven or Hell. But Muslim philosophers converted the moral aspect of the Aristotelian philosophy into a religious one and its Prime Mover into "Allāh, the Necessary Being."<sup>2</sup> Then naturally all the proofs and arguments for the Prime Mover became rational proofs for God.<sup>3</sup> In other words, Muslim philosophers read into the Greek philosophies so much of their religious

1. Ross, W. D., Aristotle (London, 1923), p. 184.

2. Ibn Sinā, al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt, edited by Dunyā Sulaymān, (Egypt) Vol. III, pp. 86, 122, 125. Also see al-Shimālī 'Abduh, Dirāsāt fī Tārikh al-falsafah al-'Arabiyyah al-Islamiyyah wa 'āthāri rijālihā (Beirut, 1965) pp. 364, 405.

3. In adapting the Aristotelian arguments to the problem of Deity, Ibn Sinā was so enthusiastic that he even looked for evidence in the revealed sources of Islam; hence his interpretation of the Qur'ānic verse 53 of Surah XLI. (Ibn Sina, al-Isharāt wa al-tanbihāt edited by Dunya S. (Egypt) Vol. III, p. 80.

perspective that they produced something significantly different from the original version. Consequently, philosophy became quite an appropriate ground for further religious and gnostic development. Thus Mullā Ṣadrā, like the majority of his predecessors, injected so much of his spiritual ideas into philosophy as to make it a philosophical version of mysticism.

The predominance of the religious element in Ṣadrā's system ~~has~~ remolded all the philosophical issues into a new structural pattern which is quite characteristic of Ṣadrā. Specifically speaking, Mullā Ṣadrā's system seems different from other Islamic philosophies particularly in structure. This variance is clearly seen when we consider this philosophy in comparison with other Islamic philosophies and particularly in a historical context.

After the arrival of Greek philosophy in the Islamic centres of learning Aristotle's works attracted the attention of Muslim scholars most.<sup>1</sup> Aristotle had produced his

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1. The answer to the question why Aristotelian philosophy was received by the Muslims with such enthusiasm should be sought in the theological trends of the early Muslim theologians. Prior to the Abbasid Caliphate, some theological controversies are reported to have appeared amongst various scholars and thinkers, which resulted in the emergence of the first school of theology - Mu'tazili - founded by al-Hasan al-Basrī. It is also said that the contact between Muslim and Christian scholars had an active role in the increase of theological enquiry amongst the Muslims (Fakhrī Majīd, A History of Islamic Philosophy (New York, 1970), pp. 57-60). The school of al-Hasan al-Basrī was continued by one of his pupils - Wāsil b. 'Atā'. The main concern of this school was to deal with religious matters on rational grounds, and the basic issues were about the qualities of God. (Ibn Tarākih-i Isfahānī (trans.)

ideas in a special order; formal logic was discussed first; then came natural philosophy; and then metaphysics followed by ethics. To this structural pattern Muslim Peripatetics remained considerably loyal. Apart from Ibn Rushd, who is usually thought of "as the most faithful expositor of Aristotle",<sup>1</sup> there were many others both before and after him who did not deviate from Aristotle significantly; and, whatever developments we observe in the works of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā are still developments upon Aristotle's philosophy and therefore, within the structural pattern set by him.<sup>2</sup>

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(From p.40)

al-Milal wa al-niḥal (Tehran, 1335), p.33). Ma'mūn, the Abbasid Caliph, favoured this movement to the extent that he often invited the theologians to his court to challenge each other in his presence [Simāli, 'Abduh, Dirāsāt fī Tārikh al-falsāfah al-'Arabīyyah al-Islamiyyah (Beirut, 1965), pp.188-9)]. The Mu'tazilī school was later split into different sub-schools, and was eventually succeeded by the Ash'arī School, named after the founder, Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'arī (873-934). The difference between the two schools was in the priority which the former ascribed to reason and the latter to the revealed sources. The supremacy of the revealed sources of Islam and religious experience over reason later held by al-Ghazālī was in fact the continuation of the Ash'arī tradition. The reign of Ma'mūn was, therefore, associated with the reign of rationalism over the academic scene of the Islamic Empire. The many translations of the Greek philosophers during Ma'mūn's Caliphate must not have been a mere coincidence. This also explains the embarkation of Muslim philosophers upon the works of Aristotle whose logic would bring relief to rationalistic inclinations of the schools of that time.

1. Nasr, S. H., Science and Civilization in Islam (Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 317.

2. This pattern is followed by al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazālī (in his Maqāsid al-falāsifah which he wrote just for critical purposes) and also by Nāsir Khusrūw (in his Zād al-musāfirīn) as well as by other Peripatetic philosophers.

The first Muslim philosopher who strove to raise Islamic philosophy out of the Aristotelian rut was Suhrawardī whose Illuminationism introduced new terms and concepts to philosophy in the Islamic world. Suhrawardī's Hikmat al-Ishrāq or Hayākil al-nūr for instance exhibits a significant deviation from Aristotle both in structure and content. In the former work, immediately after an account of formal logic, he discusses his philosophy of Illumination which does not make a sharp distinction between physics and metaphysics; for, according to this philosophy all reality is light which emanates from the Supreme Light (nūr al-'anwār) and which has various degrees in strength and weakness according to its proximity to the Supreme Light. If light is "the light-for-itself", that is, if it illuminates itself it is called al-nūr al-qāhir which remains incorporeal and is the subject of Suhrawardī's angelology;<sup>1</sup> and if it is

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1. Suhrawardī applies the terminology of the pre-Islamic Persian wisdom to the incorporeal light. He calls it Bahman or mazdian vohūman as well as al-nūr al-'aqrab, meaning respectively the Divine Light, and the Most Approximate Light. In his angelology Suhrawardī conceives of this light as a longitudinal hierarchy; it is an angelic order in which each archangel has the aspect of domination and masculinity (qahr) over the one below it and has the aspect of love (mahabbah) for the one above it. From the masculine aspect of the order comes the latitudinal order of "Platonic Ideas" which are the archetypes of the corporeal domain. They are the generative and directive agents of our world. Each member of this order is considered as a Theurgy (tilism) or ikon (sanam) which contains its "angelic influence" and is therefore called "The Master of a Species". For the details see the following sources: Nasr, S.H. Three Muslim Sages (Harvard Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 70-73. Suhrawardī, Hayākil al-nūr (Egypt 1335) pp. 22-29. Carbin, H. (ed.) Majmū'ah-i muṣannafat-i Shaykh Shabāb al-Dīn Yahyā Suhrawardī: hikmat al-ishrāq (Tehran, 1331), pp. 135-149.

"the light-for-other-than-itself" and manifests in a material manner, then it is called al-nūr al-zāhir, which is a synthesis of light and darkness. Darkness is not a reality; rather, it is the negative aspect or the quality of deficiency of light and has not actuality or primordially. It is simply an abstract receptacle or a mold through which light becomes manifest.<sup>1</sup> The element of darkness is in turn divided into an "obscure substance" (al-jawhar al-ghāsiq) and a "dark form" (al-hay'ah al-zulmāniyyah) which subsists upon the former and together with it makes the sensible and three dimensional manifestation of light.<sup>2</sup>

As the foregoing account shows, Suhrawardī tries not to follow the Aristotelian or Peripatetic pattern of logic-physics-metaphysics. Further deviation from the Aristotelian pattern was realized by Ṣadrā, who, unlike Suhrawardi, did not care to eliminate the Aristotelian terminology; instead, due to his strong religious and gnostic preoccupation, he discussed all the physical and metaphysical issues of the Peripatetics in an entirely mystical context, and therefore, in a new structural pattern. Thus in his al-Asfār al-'arba'ah, instead of the

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1. Suhrawardī's own terminology for this receptacle is "barzakh" which Dr. Nasr has translated into "purgatory" which means a condition or temporary stage for the souls of the dead in which they can purify through suffering. Barzakh is used in the Qurān in the sense of bar or barrier (Surah XXIII, verse 101, Surah LV, verse 20).

2. Corbin, H. (ed.) Majmū'ah-i Musannafāt-i Shaykh-Shahāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī: ḥikmat al-ishrāq (Tehran, 1331), pp. 107-109. Also see Nasr, S. H., Three Muslim Sages (Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 70-73.

traditional pattern of logic-physics-metaphysics, we find Four "Journies": from creatures to Reality; within Reality by Reality; from Reality back to creatures; and within creatures by Reality.<sup>1</sup> In this pattern metaphysics comes first; then natural philosophy; afterwards metaphysics in its particular sense; and finally theosophical psychology or eschatology.

Mullā Ṣadrā did not see any need to introduce the concept of light because the already available concept of existence in its literary sense could carry all the properties and qualities which Suhrawardī had tried to ascribe to light. Thus if light was to be used at all, it was only in the figurative and allegorical sense. The philosophy of existence, therefore, eclipsed the Illuminationist concept of "light".

While due to his religious and gnostic perspective, the structural part of Mullā Ṣadrā's system is entirely different from the Peripatetic pattern, the content of his philosophy remains Peripatetic in many respects. His logic, his study of the ten categories, his psychological concepts and terms, his views about the separate intelligences and many of his terminologies remain Peripatetic. His "journey from creatures to Reality" is simply the study of ontology and some other metaphysical concepts; his second "journey" is nothing but an extensive and

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1. Shīrāzī Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol.I, p.4.

detailed analysis of the categories and the cognate matters. Now, can one really call the study of the Aristotelian categories a "journey within Reality by Reality"? It seems to me that the allegorical "journey" in this context should be interpreted as an academic and intellectual journey of the mind of the scholar through various philosophical problems, rather than the journey of his soul through spiritual states. Of course Mullā Ṣadrā does have a lot of ideas and arguments concerning the qualities and existence of God in his "Third Journey" (al-safar al-thālith) and also many eschatological ideas in his "Fourth Journey" (al-safar al-rābi'). But such arguments and discussions are not unprecedented in Islamic philosophy. Moreover, some of these ideas can be discussed absolutely independently of those philosophical issues, and one does not need to appeal to, let us say, the classical psychology in order to argue for resurrection and the Life Hereafter. Thus, despite his fundamental structural deviation from the Peripatetic tradition, Ṣadrā does not seem to be particularly successful in renovating the content of the Peripatetic school.

An interesting quality of Ṣadrā's system resides in its theoretical simplicity as all the principal foundations of the system - the metaphysical, cosmological, epistemological and even axiological foundations - are reduced to one fundamental concept, namely, existence. Existence (or being) which, according to Ṣadrā is the only

primordial reality, comprises all realities; and therefore, everything, whether in the corporeal, psychic, or metaphysical domain is ultimately within the scope of existence. Consequently such dualities as body-soul, or physics-metaphysics are ultimately denied by Ṣadrā.

Nothing is more striking in Ṣadrā's theosophy than the fact that he boldly attacks every school while he employs all of them in the construction of his own. He writes Sih 'aṣl in opposition to the authorities of the law though he himself remains a Mujtahid who maintains that every attempt towards spiritual realization must accord with the sharī'ah. He attacks the Sufis while he often quotes from them and produces his Mafātiḥ al-ghayb which is a Sufi text. He warns his reader against any involvement in philosophy, although philosophical issues abound in his works. One can safely say that Ṣadrā is the critic of every school and, therefore, the meeting place of all schools. As a scholar who is in search of a genuine knowledge of Reality in the Qurān and within the framework of the sharī'ah, Ṣadrā tries to be a theologian, who is not content with mere legalitarian study of the sharī'ah as carried out by some of the legalists. In so far as his means of achieving such a knowledge of Reality is strictly religious experience and spiritual attainment, Ṣadrā is a Sufi who disapproves of the sterile ritualism of many Sufis. And finally, as a man of intuitive and spiritual knowledge who maintains that genuine

knowledge is the gnosis of God and that a true philosophy cannot, therefore, be different from gnosis, Mullā Ṣadrā becomes a philosopher who identifies philosophy with Islamic mysticism, and who tries to subordinate all philosophical ideas to his mystico-religious perspective. For all this versatility, Mullā Ṣadrā may be considered as a man of comprehensive and well-rounded knowledge of his time. Whether his system can be considered as a very successful and rigorously constructed philosophy is a different matter. One crucial problem in his system, however, is that he establishes his philosophical arguments either with reference to his own spiritual experience or upon evidence from religious sources. For in the former case, the argument remains inaccessible to the means and methods of academic and logical scrutiny; while in the latter case his argument would be based on appeal to an authority which might not necessarily be accepted by everybody. We shall see examples of this in his ontological and particularly in his eschatological discussions.

Now, should we call this texture of Mullā Ṣadrā's a school of theoretical mysticism, a theosophy, or a system of philosophy? I do not believe that one should really bother about which of these is the right term for Ṣadrā's system. Firstly, to determine which of these labels is the right one is entirely a matter of definition. Secondly, these terms are often overlapping (at least in Islamic philosophy), and the application of one of them to Ṣadrā's

system does not necessarily rule out the possibility of justifiable application of others. Thirdly, to determine a suitable or appropriate label or term for Ṣadrā's system, as indeed for any system, is the matter of categorization; and to decide under what category Ṣadrā's system falls does not necessarily reveal so much about the actual ideas and doctrines which make up the system itself. What is quite certain is that there are both mystic and philosophical elements in this system; and therefore any study of Ṣadrā's system should be with regard to both aspects of it.

Mullā Ṣadrā has made use of all the sources available to him, from the revealed sources of Islam to philosophical and literary works. But the major sources of his school can be enumerated as follows:

1. The Qur'ān, the Prophetic traditions and the sayings of the Shī'ah Imams constitute the religious sources from which Mullā Ṣadrā ~~was~~ drew in the construction of his theosophy. Apart from the many references to the Qur'ānic verses one can find in his writing, Ṣadrā's account of "the rationale behind the Book", to which we shall refer in his Sufism, shows that Ṣadrā's understanding of the Qur'ān is the cornerstone of his theosophy.

Ṣadrā is a Shī'ite whose belief as such is reflected in his theosophy and gnosis. His concept of Prophethood, imāmah and walāyah, which are explicit in his Mafātīh al-ghayb show the influence of his belief in Shi'ism - a doctrine according to which imāmah is the continuation of

prophethood, and knowledge, the continuation of imāmah.<sup>1</sup> It is in conformity with the Shī'ah doctrine of imāmah that Ṣadrā maintains that the education which leads to spiritual knowledge is the Prophetic education which has been transmitted by the Prophet's family.<sup>2</sup>

2. Islamic mysticism is also an important source for Ṣadrā. The whole idea of "the Path" and of "the Journey" which preoccupied Ṣadrā's mind and which determined even the title of his al-Afsār al-'aba'ah, and the concept of "Name" to which he has often referred are only some examples of Sufi elements in Ṣadrā's system.<sup>3</sup> The concept of dhikr (invocation) which Ṣadrā undertakes to elaborate so lucidly<sup>4</sup> is a Sufi doctrine which appears in Ṣadrā's writings. Intuition or Illumination as a method of attaining knowledge is a mystic methodology which Mullā Ṣadrā not only adopts to his system, but also considers it as the method of achieving certainty par-excellence.

Of the various schools of Sufism, Ibn al-'Arabī's theoretical Sufism has enchanted Mullā Ṣadrā most. In fact many of Ṣadrā's theosophical issues exhibit the profound influence of Ibn al-'Arabī upon him. A simple comparison

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1. Shari'atī 'Alī, Faṭimah fātimah'ast (Tehran, 135-) pp. 11, 31. The same author has also the following volume on the genuine concept of Shī'ism which is worth reading: Tashayyu'-i safawī va tashayyu'-i 'Alawī (Tehran, 1350).

2. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.), p. 4.

3. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Mazāhir al-ilāhiyyah (Mashhad), pp. 19-20.

4. Shīrāzī Sadr al-Dīn, "Risālah fī al-qadā wa al-qadar" Rāsa'il (Tehran, Lithog.), pp. 228-232.

between Qayṣarī's commentary upon Ibn al-ʿArabī's Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam and Ṣadrā's al-Mashāʿir shows that many of Ṣadrā's ontological issues are also found in Ibn al-ʿArabī's. In his doctrine of mental existence and also in his particular view about the faculty of imagination as well as in many of his gnostic ideas, Ṣadrā makes explicit reference to Ibn al-ʿArabī.

3. The Peripatetic school of Ibn Sīnā which introduced among other things Aristotelian or, rather, a Neoplatonized Aristotelian philosophy to Mullā Ṣadrā.<sup>1</sup> Although Ṣadrā could emancipate himself from the structural pattern of Aristotelian philosophy, the content of Aristotle had a very deep influence upon him as well as upon his successors. Apart from Aristotelian logic, which is even nowadays being taught in Iran and many other Islamic countries, many of Aristotle's physical and metaphysical issues are present in Ṣadrā's system. The second Safar of his al-Asfār al-ʿarbaʿah, as we have already said, is just a detailed account of Aristotle's categories plus some other doctrines related to natural

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1. Wallis reports that the philosophical tradition of the Alexandrian school which came to Baghdād, and also the Syriac translations of the Greek texts which were then translated into Arabic, introduced a profoundly Neoplatonized Aristotle to the Muslims. Moreover "the remarkable forgery, the so-called Theology of Aristotle which, in fact, consists of extracts from the Enneads..." brought Plotinus to the Muslims incognito or rather in Aristotle's cloak [Wallis, R. T., Neoplatonism (London, 1972), p.163]. Also see Iqbāl, S. M. The Development of Metaphysics in Persia (London, 1908), p.25 and also Naṣr, S. H. Islamic Studies (Beirut, 1967), p. 117.

philosophy. Ṣadrā's concepts of time, place and movement are very Aristotelian; even many of his ontological issues are found in Aristotle's metaphysics with one major difference: while Aristotle's issues and arguments are about substance, Ṣadrā's are about existence.<sup>1</sup>

4. Suhrawardī's Illuminationism is also one of the main sources of influence and inspiration for Ṣadrā. It is also significant for introducing some elements of Phalavī philosophy to Ṣadrā. Mullā Ṣadrā has often referred to Suhrawardī and many of his ideas are found in Ṣadrā's writings; among them are the doctrine that simple reality is all things, the concepts of "light", emanation, love as the main force or entelechy of all universe, which is discussed in Suhrawardī's "Portuw Nāmih",<sup>2</sup> and also some of his eschatological ideas.

The foregoing account is only a general sketch of the main sources of Ṣadrā's system. In the coming pages we shall examine some of his gnostic and philosophical doctrines separately, and then we shall present an account of his epistemological ideas.

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1. McKeon, Richard, The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York, 1961), pp. 760, 807, 872.

2. Sabzavārī (ed.), "Portuw Nāmih" Chihārdah Risālah (Tehran, 1340), p. 237.

PART II

MULLA SADRA AND SUFISM

A BRIEF HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

In the land of Persia, the homeland of Rūmī and Ṣadrā, the phrase "I am a dervish" is often heard from friends and acquaintances. By the phrase the speaker means that he is a man of simplicity, purity and contentment, and that therefore, all the formalities are to be discarded. As an ethical norm, the phrase gives evidence of the influence of the mystic way of life upon the attitudes of the Persian masses.

The Sufi way of life, simple as it may be, by no means implies the simplicity of the theoretical foundations of Sufism. On the contrary, the mystic doctrines of Islam constitute one of the most complicated and sophisticated aspects of Islamic culture. There are several reasons for this.

1. Sufism is not a set of teachings that one may or may not believe in; it is a unique personal experience without which the doctrinal aspect remains obscure. Therefore, those who approach it merely from the academic point of view can hardly achieve any real grasp of it.

2. The theoretical aspect of Sufism is difficult because it requires profound knowledge of various philosophies as they have been developed in a uniquely Islamic context.

3. Islamic mysticism, like any other discipline, has

its own special terminology, the understanding of which requires advanced professional knowledge. This becomes more problematic when we hear that the Sufis did not record all their knowledge; and the esoteric parts of it, if revealed at all, are in the form of mysterious ciphers which make sense only to the Sufis.

That is why, in spite of the public acceptance of Sufism in the form of ethical norms, there are still many who disagree with Sufism. It was in 1962, when Tehran University was celebrating the four hundredth anniversary of Mullā Ṣadrā, that an opponent published his "Radd-i taṣawwuf va radd-i hikmat al-ishrāq (The Refutation of Sufism and Illuminism). The author tried to explain all knowledge in terms of the physiology of the nervous system, and denied such a thing as illumination; as if the nervous system were necessarily incapable of any functions other than what is called objective knowledge. He maintained that "since Mullā Ṣadrā and Ibn al-ʿArabī were oblivious of the significance of reason, whenever they faced a difficult problem, they appealed to a sort of illusionary illumination".<sup>1</sup> The work has not been taken seriously; yet it does indicate the existence of many who argue against Sufism.

If "I am a dervish" is an invitation to simplicity

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1. Mūsavī Javān, Radd-i taṣawwuf va radd-i hikmat al-ishrāq (Tehran, 1341), p. 83.

and informality, then why so many complications and conflicts? This and many other questions emerge for the student of Sufism especially if he wants to study any Sufi master after Ibn al-'Arabī. Satisfactory answers to such questions demand a thorough investigation of the historical development of Sufism which is an independent study. For a condensed review of Mullā Ṣadrā's Sufism as a part of the present work, a brief historical account might, however, be sufficient.

In the early days of Islam no one was called a Sufi. The more serious Muslims who had more concern for religious obligations and duties were simply called "believers", "pious", "devout" and so on, but not "Sufi".<sup>1</sup> Muslims were not instructed to avoid the pleasures of life. The Prophet himself denounced monkish austerities and celibacy.<sup>2</sup> According to Qushayrī and 'Aṭṭār, the founder of Islamic mysticism was Ja'far Ibn Muhammad al-Ṣādiq (born in 148 A.H.), the sixth Shī'ah Imām.<sup>3</sup> Sulamī, also, in his Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyyah has maintained that al-Ṣādiq was the Imām of Tasawwuf.<sup>4</sup>

Denunciation of mundane interests, ascetism, cessation of human volition in conformity with Divine will and

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1. Ghanī Qāsim, Tārīkh tasawwuf dar Islam (Tehran, 1330), p. 19.

2. Nicholson, The Mystics of Islam (London, 1914), p. 5.

3. Mahmūd 'Abdu'l-Qādir, Falsafah al-sūfiyyah fī'l-Islam (Cairo, 1966-67), p. 159.

4. Sulamī 'Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān Muhammad, Tabaqāt al-sūfiyyah (The Netherlands, Leiden, 1960), pp. 498-505.

~~and~~ other mystic norms are also ascribed to Rābi'ah (born in 95 or 99 A.H.)<sup>1</sup> who is also said to have been one of the early Sufis who "cultivated the seeds of ascetism and self-mortification in Islam".<sup>2</sup> The aim of all these norms and practices was simply to arrive at a better understanding of the Qur'ān and proximity to God.

Prior to the second century A.H. such terms as baqā' (subsistence), fanā' (extinction), sahw (sobriety), sukr (intoxication), waqt (moment), and others were not used in any mystical sense. Various Sufi terminologies which gradually became characteristic of the distinct Sufi literature were defined later in the third century A.H.<sup>3</sup> The term Sufi, according to Ibn al-Jawzī, was first used about the beginning of the third century A.H.<sup>4</sup> The first khāniqāh (Sufi monastery) was established around the end of the second century, when monastic life was not yet practised.<sup>5</sup>

Early definitions of Sufism also reflect its simple and practical nature. Junayd Baghdādī said: "Sufism is the abandonment of bad habits and the restoration of virtues".<sup>6</sup> He also said: "Sufism is neither a habit, nor a body of knowledge; it is a morality. If it were a habit

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1. Smith, Margaret, Rābi'a the Mystic (Cambridge University Press, 1928), p. 5.

2. Ghanī Qāsim, Tārīkh taṣawwuf dar Islam (Tehran, 1330), pp. 30-31.

3. Ibid., pp. 48-49.

4. Ibn al-Jawzī, 'Abdullah, Talbīs al-iblis: naqd al-'ilm wa al-'ulamā' (Egypt, 1340), pp. 173-74.

5. Ghanī Qāsim, Tārīkh taṣawwuf dar Islam (Tehran, 1330), p. 19.

6. Ibid., p. 240.

it could be formed by practice; and if it were a body of knowledge, it could be attained through scholarship. It is a morality which aims at conformity to Divine morality which is beyond all habits and customs".<sup>1</sup>

The simple and practical nature of Sufism did not remain free of theory very long, however. For, at the beginning of the third century A.H. various alien philosophies were introduced into the centres of Islamic learning when Mo'mūn initiated and encouraged his cultural revolution. Sufism, both spontaneously and as a reaction to the intrusion of rationalism, underwent extreme developments; and consequently grew into a sophisticated system the understanding of which required high academic qualities. The ontological doctrine of the Unity of Being was proclaimed by Dhu'l-Nūn of Egypt, who is also said to have been the first who spoke the "allusionary" language.<sup>2</sup> The same doctrine and the idea of incarnation (hulūl) were also upheld by Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī, who said: "There is no one in my garment but God". He also said: "The confirmation of such a duality as 'I and Haqq' is the

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1. 'Attār, Tadhkirah al-'awliyyā' (London, 1905) Vol.2, p. 540. For some other definitions by early sufis, refer to the following sources:  
 Nicholson, R. A., The Mystics of Islām (London, 1914), p.14.  
 Ibn al-Jawzī, 'Abdullāh, Talbīs al'iblis: naqd al-'ilm wa al-'ulamā' (Egypt, 1340), p. 174.  
 'Attār, Tadhkirat al-'awliyyā' (London, 1905), Vol.2, pp.54-55.  
 'Anṣārī, Kh. 'Abdullah, Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyyah (Kābul, 1962), pp. 59, 77, 78.

2. Anṣārī, Kh. 'Abdullāh, Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyyah (Kābul, 1962), pp. 12, 21-22.

denial of His unity".<sup>1</sup> These doctrines were further developed by al-Ḥallāj who, in addition to his famous exclamation of "ana'l-Haqq" (I am the Truth), maintained that:

"The essence of God's essence is Love. Before the creation God loved Himself in absolute unity and through love revealed Himself to Himself alone. Then desiring to behold that love-in-aloneness, that love without otherness and duality, as an external object, He brought forth from non-existence an image of Himself, endowed with all His attributes and names. This Divine image is Adam, in and by whom God is made manifest - divinity objectified in humanity."<sup>2</sup>

Al-Ḥallāj's statement of "ana'l-ḥaqq" is in fact the expression of this mystical unity which had been pronounced by Bisṭāmī before him. It was this reduction of Divinity to humanity in terms of descent or the promotion of humanity to Divinity through ascent that brought al-Ḥallāj the death sentence. Al-Ḥallāj also exclaimed outspokenly the sharī'ah-ṭarīqah duality,<sup>3</sup> in a letter to

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1. Mahmūd 'Abdu'l-Qādir, al-Falsafah al-Sūfiyyah fī al-Islām (Cairo, 1966-67), p. 306.

2. Nicholson, R.A., Studies in Islamic Mysticism (Cambridge University Press, 1921), p.80. This mystical unity which is expressed by al-Ḥallāj is not his original idea; it can be clearly understood from what Khājih 'Abdullāh 'Anṣārī and Jāmī have ascribed to Dhu'l-Nūn of Egypt. For the details see 'Anṣārī, Tabaqāt al-Sūfiyyah (Kābul, 1962), pp.21-22, and Jāmī, Haft 'awrang (Tehran, 1337), pp.153, 249-50.

3. Muḥamād 'Abdu'l-Qādir, al-Falsafah al-Sūfiyyah fī al-Islām (Cairo, 1966-67), pp. 607-608.

one of his disciples he wrote:

"Greetings are due to you my son! May God conceal from you the outer aspect of the Sharī'ah, and reveal to you the reality of denial. Surely, the outer aspect of the Sharī'ah is hidden idolatory, and the reality of denial is patent gnosis. Then you should know that Almighty God manifests Himself from the head of a needle to whom He wishes, and conceals Himself in the heavens and the worlds from whom He wills. God witnesses that He is not He. This gives evidence to that He is other than He. So, the witness to His existence is not praised, nor is the witness to His non-existence blamed. The purpose of this letter is to advise you not to be misled by God; do not disprove Him; and do not crave for His love; and do not be pleased with not being His lover; and do not assert ~~the~~ His existence; and do not commit yourself to denying His existence. Beware of the tawhīd. And that is all."<sup>1</sup>

Such doctrines and exclamations were often considered so heretical that they resulted in the death of the upholders on the charges of infidelity and blasphemy.

The great master who attempted successfully to remove the heretical stains from the face of Sufism was al-Ghazālī, the Sufi-theologian. Instead of embracing the sharī'ah-tarīqah dichotomy al-Ghazālī revived the

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1. Ibn al-'Arabī, "Risālah al-shaykh ilā al-Imām al-Rāzī" Rasā'il Ibn al-'Arabī (Hyderabad-Deccan, 1938), Vol. I, p. 13.

duality of reason and faith (or more accurately speaking, the argument concerning philosophy versus religion), while considering the latter as the only base for arriving at the gnosis of God, par excellence.<sup>1</sup> He avoided the heretical - or at least the seemingly heretical - exclamations of the extremists. In order to modify the extremist view of unification with God as held by Bisṭāmī and al-Ḥallāj, al-Ghazālī mentioned explicitly that "the Suzerain is the Suzerain, and the slave is the slave; one never becoming the other".<sup>2</sup> In this manner, the original agreement of Sufism with the Sharī'ah was restored by al-Ghazālī and those who followed his example.<sup>3</sup>

Theoretical Sufism was further developed by 'Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī, who flourished in the early period of the sixth century A.H. He tried to explain the process of creation in terms of self-projection of a single self-conscious essence. He explained how Divinity with distinctive attributes embraces the whole series of existing beings, "The created world being the outward aspect of that which is in its inward aspect God".<sup>4</sup> In his doctrine of illumination or revelation Jīlānī explained how God revealed His Names, His Attributes, and finally His Essence to man, a process through which man, the micro-cosm, manifests all the Divine attributes.<sup>5</sup>

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1. See al-Ghazālī's definition of Sūfi methodology in his Ihyā' al-'ulūm (Egypt, 1352), Vol.III, pp. 16-18.

2. Mahmūd 'Abd al-Qādir, Falsafah al-Sufiyyah fī al-Islam (Cairo, 1966-67), p. 202.

3. See Hujwīrī's account of knowledge in his Kashf al-mahjūb (Tehran, 1336), pp. 18-19.

4. Nicholson, R. A., Studies in Islamic Mysticism (Cambridge University Press, 1921), p. 84.

5. Ibid., pp. 85-86.

The completion of the theoretical Sufism was achieved by Ibn al-'Arabī, who established a unique mystic philosophy or a theosophy. Bearing in mind that Ibn al-'Arabī was one of the most prolific writers in the history of Islam, who produced hundreds of books and articles, one can judge the enormous contribution Ibn al-'Arabī made to Sufism.<sup>1</sup> In his principal work, al-Futūhāt al-makkiyyah, he gave a complete system of mystic knowledge.<sup>2</sup> The doctrine of the perfect man, with which Jīlānī had dealt,<sup>3</sup> was further developed by Ibn al-'Arabī. In his Fusūs al-hikam, he maintained that the Divine essence was illuminated or revealed in perfect manifestations in the form of the prophets. Each chapter of the work is, therefore, named after a prophet whose general form manifests a divine quality. The final chapter is named after Prophet Muḥammad, in which Ibn al-'Arabī ~~has~~ explained his notion of the Muḥammadan Reality as the archetype of which the Prophet is an embodiment, namely, the manifestation of all Divine attributes in an integrated or synthetic form.<sup>4</sup> This way of treating Divine qualities in terms of prophetic archetypes, in fact, stems from a more fundamental

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1. 'Abu Bakr, Muḥammad b. 'Alī known as Shaykh al-'Akbar (638-1240) is said to have written 298 books and articles. According to Encyclopaedia of Islam (First edition, Vol.II, p. 362), "150 of his writings are known to exist and this is said to have been only half of what he actually composed."

2. Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1st edition, Vol.II, "Ibn al-'Arabī" p. 361-62.

3. Nicholson, R.A. Studies in Islamic Mysticism (Cambridge, University Press, 1921), pp. 103-121.

4. Ibn al-'Arabī, Fusūs al-hikam, ed. by 'Afīfī, A. A. (Egypt, 1946), pp. 214-226.

principle which Ibn al-‘Arabī employs in understanding the objective world. This principle is ta’wīl, "the essential symbolic understanding or the transmutation of everything visible into symbols".<sup>1</sup> Each prophet, in other words, is an anthropomorphic symbol which reveals an aspect of the Divine arcana.

After Ibn al-‘Arabī, Sufi literature was far beyond the access of ordinary scholars. This is probably the reason why Ibn al-‘Arabī found it necessary to give a glossary of mystical terms, which constitutes one section of his Rasā’il. Sufism after Ibn al-‘Arabī was no longer simply a spiritual way of life or morality as Junayad had put it, but a very advanced intellectual discipline. Here is a definition of Sufism as presented by Shaykh Bahā’ī in his Kashkūl:

"Sufism is a science that speaks of the essence of Unity, His Names, and His Qualities since these manifestations and attributes lead to the Essence of Lordship...<sup>2</sup>

It should be remembered that Shaykh Bahā’ī's time was the golden age of Islamic civilization, at least in Persia. The academic disciplines of the time were subjects of hair-splitting scrutiny, and therefore would have to be, first of all, properly defined. Sufism with a rich literature,

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1. Corbin, H. Creative Imagination of Ibn ‘Arabī, trans. by Ralph Manheim (London, 1970), p. 13.

2. Shaykh Bahā’ī, al-Kashkūl (Egypt), Vol.II, p. 393.

was no exception. Thus when Sufism came to Mullā Ṣadrā, it was already a science full of ontological and epistemological problems not necessarily comprehensible by the theologians or by the practical Sufis of the khāniqāh. Moreover, it had been also transferred from the khāniqāh to the school, with the hope that the school could supplement the practical religious undertaking of Sufism with theoretical gnostic education. With the khāniqāh remained, as Mullā Ṣadrā saw it, certain meaningless practices which could not lead to any spiritual attainment.

#### Mullā Ṣadrā's Sufism.

The term Sufism has two different meanings for Mullā Ṣadrā. In one sense it applies to the practices of the Sufis who totally or partially withdrew from public life to the khāniqāh to live a sort of monkish life and who made deceptive claims as to their love of God and unification with Him, while they did not have sufficient knowledge or theoretical background in gnosis.

In the second sense, Sufism applies to the dynamic spiritual life of those religious scholars who have profound knowledge of the theosophical and gnostic doctrines of Islam together with a proper concern for the observation of their practical religious duties. Genuine Sufism, from Ṣadrā's point of view, is an intellectual as well as a spiritual discipline based on Islam; it is a discipline

in which gnostic and theosophical studies constitute the doctrinal side and the intellectual aspect, whereas, the actual religious undertakings prescribed by the sharī'ah form the spiritual aspect. This connotation of Sufism is what Mullā Ṣadrā insists on calling gnosis ('irfān). To him, a mystic who is devoid of the intellectual aspect is not a mystic, but a "mysticizer" (mutaṣawwif), exactly in the same manner that he considers an intellectual who is devoid of religious commitment as a philosophizer (mutafalsif). Thus both those who retire to a spiritual life without aiming at the intellectual aspects of Islam and those who confine their efforts simply to theoretical and intellectual achievements in Islam are equally blamed by Ṣadrā. In his Mafātīh al-ghayb, he warned his reader against both of these groups:

"Do not busy yourself with the inanities of the "mysticizers" (mutaṣawwifīn), and do away with the discourses of the philosophizers (mutafalsifīn)."<sup>1</sup>

In his al-'Asfār al-'arba'ah he ~~has~~ repeated the same warning but instead of the word mutaṣawwif (mysticizer or pseudo-mystic), he used the phrase "the ignorant among the Sufis".<sup>2</sup>

The main distinction between the genuine and the false Sufis for Mullā Ṣadrā, as it seems to me, is that the

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.) p. 3.

2. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-'Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, p. 4.

religious life of the former is supplemented and sustained by theosophical and gnostic studies, while that of the latter is not. No doubt, this distinction advocates the necessity of both intellectual and spiritual achievement for genuine Sufism; however, no admirer of Mullā Ṣadrā should read into his ideas the fascinating idea of the ultimate unification of love and knowledge, or art and science. To avoid such temptations it should be remembered that there is a great difference between a scholar who has mystical inclinations - no matter how profound - and a person (or a scholar) who is actually a member of a Sufi order. There is no guarantee that the theosophical studies of a scholar who has Sufi propensities would lead him to any mystical experience even if the scholar at issue is very conscientious in his religious duties. On the other hand, some Sufis who had experienced the academic approach to theosophical matters before their initiation to the Sufi Way, did not think of their academic knowledge in theosophy very highly after access to Sufi experience. The best evidence of this comes from Shaykh Ahmad al-'Alawī who said:

"When I had reaped the fruit of the dhikr - and its fruit is no less than knowledge of God by way of contemplation - I saw clearly the meagreness of all that I had learned about the doctrine of Divine unity..."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Lings, Martin. A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century (London, 1973), p. 58.

In Sufi tradition academic knowledge has usually been considered as bookish and insignificant. As Hāfiz has put it:

"Cast away all your books,  
If you are in our school.  
As the lesson of love,  
Is not in books." 1

Such being the attitude of the Sufis towards theoretical knowledge achieved through academic approaches, then Mullā Ṣadrā's opinion about the significance of theosophical studies can hardly represent actual Sufi orthodoxy, particularly when there is no explicit evidence in Ṣadrā's writings as to his being initiated into the Sufi path. So far as I know, one may easily consider Ṣadrā as a great scholar in Sufi literature, but not as a Sufi. The contrast between Mullā Ṣadrā's views and those of some of the Sufi masters will be discussed further when speaking of Mullā Ṣadrā's opposition towards the Sufis. The only point to be made here is that Ṣadrā's concepts of Sufism and Sufis, as well as his emphasis upon academic qualifications of the genuine Sufis might be significant only from the viewpoint of those who know "about" Sufism through academic learning and not by way of experience.

Genuine Sufism or 'irfān as defined by Ṣadrā is the cornerstone of his system and it can be traced in many of his writings. He has also dealt with it in some of his

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1. Ghani, Q. (Ed.) Dīvān-i Hāfiz (Tehran, 1320), p. 110.

works independently, like his al-Mazāhir al-'ilāhiyyah and his Mafātīh al-ghayb, to each of which a brief reference will follow.

In al-Mazāhir al-'ilāhiyyah (The Divine Manifestations) Ṣadrā has tried to present the synopsis of his gnostic doctrine. In this work he has used the term hikmah (traditionally used in the sense of philosophy) in the sense of 'irfān (gnosis), which shows that his concept of hikmah as an academic discipline is not much different from what he conceives as gnosis. In the introduction to the work, when defining hikmah, he says:

"The hikmah which is the gnosis of the essence of the Prime Reality (al-haqq al-'awwal), of His qualities and actions, and the manner of emanation of the beings from Him and their return to Him; the gnosis of the soul and its states and stations, its happiness and unhappiness; and the gnosis of the potential intellect (al-'aql al-hayūlānī) is not the philosopher's well-known figurative knowledge which deals with metaphysical concepts. It is a theosophy which prepares the human soul for ascension to the highest state of being and to the ultimate destination; it is a grace from God Himself who said "He unto whom wisdom is given, he truly has received abundant good'."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Mazāhir al-'ilāhiyyah (Mash-had, 1961), p. 3. At the end of his definition, Ṣadrā has quoted verse 269 of 2nd Sūrah of the Qurān.

Such an ascension is impossible according to Ṣadrā unless the individual applies himself to the two aspects of theory and practice (and by theory he means the hikmah or the so-called theosophy, and by practice, gnostic practices):

"Whoever intends to go deeply into the ocean of theosophical knowledge and to contemplate the Divine realities, it is incumbent upon him to undertake both theoretical as well as practical training."<sup>1</sup>

In the rest of his al-Mazāhir Mullā Ṣadrā gives a succinct presentation of his theory of gnosis in two parts. The first part consists of eight sections, each of which he has called a "manifestation" (Mazhar). In the first part Mullā Ṣadrā deals with the rationale behind sending the Book - the Qurān. He maintains that "the ultimate aim of sending the Book is to teach the slave how to promote himself from the abyss of defect to the acme of perfection, and how to establish the journey to the Almighty".<sup>2</sup> Then he continues to say that all sections and verses of the Book are to serve six gnostic or cognitive objectives whose achievement would be tantamount to the realization of that ultimate aim. Of these objectives the three major ones are: (1) the gnosis of the Prime Reality (al-haqq al-ʿawwal) and His qualities and actions; (2) the gnosis of the Right Path (sirāt al-mustaqīm), the stages

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1. Ibid., p. 4.

2. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

of ascending towards Him and the method of undertaking the journey to Him; and (3) the gnosis of resurrection and return to Him. The secondary ones are: (1) the gnosis of the prophets who are the guides on the journey, (2) the story of the Devout ones, and finally (3) guidance as to how to establish the stations and states of the journey.<sup>1</sup>

After setting out the objectives of the Book on the basis of evidence from the Qurān, Mullā Ṣadrā deals with questions as to the essence of God, His existence, His qualities, such as unity and knowledge, his Supreme Name (Allāh) and His act of creation through which all the realities of the world of contingency have become realized .

In all these discussions, his approach is that he first tries to discuss a theosophical matter on the basis of evidence from the Qurān and Prophetic traditions; afterwards, he tries to produce philosophical arguments for the matter. Thus, for every theosophical issue which is developed with reference to traditional sources, there is a philosophical counterpart in which ontology usually plays the key role. For instance, when Ṣadrā wants to demonstrate the existence of God he begins with the following evidence from the Qurān:

Allāh (Himself) witnesses that there is no  
God but Him. <sup>2</sup>

We shall show them Our Portents on

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1. Ibid., p. 5. The same account of the rationale behind sending the Book is repeated in his Asrār al-ʿāyāt. See the manuscript in Bibliotheque Nationale, 5260, pp.15-18.

2. The Qurān, Sūrah III, v:18.

the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifested that it is the truth. <sup>1</sup>

Then he argues that from the Quranic point of view the whole creaturely world becomes "evident" only because of God; it is God who gives evidence to all things; and therefore a wayfarer can prove God both by way of arguing from cause to effect as well as from effect to cause.

After this discussion which is based on evidence from the Qurān, Ṣadrā presents a "rational explanation" (tawdīhun 'aqlī), which is simply an ontological analysis as to that God's being is mere existence which is all-inclusive and therefore encompasses every contingent being.<sup>2</sup> After dealing with the matters of the essence and the qualities of God in this manner and, having considered the totality of the created world as the macrocosmic text in which every single reality is a symbol or a word written down with the pen of His creative Will, Mullā Ṣadrā maintains that the most perfect creation is man to whom the image of God is entrusted, and the most perfect man, the Prophet, is the embodiment of that image or the archetype of perfection. Since Allāh, the greatest Name, envelopes all the qualities of His perfection, the Prophet is the anthropomorphic manifestation of that Name.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., Sūrah XLI, V:35.

2. Shirāzī, Sadr al-Din, al-Mazāhir al-ilāhiyyah, (Mash-had, 1961), pp. 10-15.

3. Ibid., pp. 22-23 and also pp. 47-49.

Thus he explains the position of man in the chain of creation as the final link by whom the cycle of creation returns to its original destiny. In this explanation, the Neo-Platonic idea of "return to the One"<sup>1</sup> which had once been adopted to Islamic gnosticism by Jīlānī<sup>2</sup> and many other Sufis can be clearly seen. Also, the doctrine of "the perfect man" which was initiated by Jīlānī<sup>3</sup> and then completed by Ibn al-‘Arabī,<sup>4</sup> shows the influence of previous Sufis upon Mullā Ṣadrā.

The second part of the work is concerned with man and his journey. In this part, matters related to the human soul and its relation to the body, man's death and resurrection, his presence in the Court of Justice, the meaning of the last day, Hell and Heaven, and the concepts of prophethood and vicegerency are briefly dealt with. The work ends with the statement of Ṣadrā's testament in which he reminds the "traveller" of the endlessness of the ocean of gnosis and of its impossibility for those who are submerged in their animal life. He notifies the man of the journey that his soul is the traveller and his body is the carriage; therefore he should provide for the spiritual food and necessities in order to be able to reach the

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1. Wallis, R. T. Neo-Platonism (Great Britain, 1972), pp. 82-90.

2. Nicholson, R. A. Studies in Islamic Mysticism (Cambridge University Press, 1921), pp. 125-130.

3. Ibid., pp. 87-89, 101-121.

4. Ibn al-‘Arabī, Fuṣūṣ al-hikam (Egypt, 1946), pp. 214-226.

final destination.<sup>1</sup>

Mullā Ṣadrā's arguments in al-Mazāhir are very brief. The brevity, however, does not affect their clarity and régour. On the other hand, every statement is supported and documented by verses from the Qurān which has Divine authenticity. On the basis of evidence from the Qurān and the Prophetic Traditions, Mullā Ṣadrā has tried to explain that his gnosis is in complete conformity with the orthodox tenets of Islam and even stems from the Qurān and the Prophetic Traditions. No doubt, in the face of the opposing conservative theologians and jurists who accused Mullā Ṣadrā of infidelity, so much stress on the conformity of his gnosis to the Qurān must have been necessary.

The gnostic doctrine presented in al-Mazāhir al-ilāhiyyah is in fact the abstract of Mullā Ṣadrā's system, which is further developed in more details in his Mafātīh al-ghayb. There again, the main question is the rationale behind the sending of the Book. The subsequent issues and arguments follow the pattern of al-Mazāhir, but in more detail. Before dealing with the aim of revelation of the Qurān, Mullā Ṣadrā gives a detailed account of the Qurān and the nature of Qurānic knowledge, the word of God, and the meaning of prophethood. This account is very significant in itself in the sense that it shows Mullā Ṣadrā's gnostic view of the relation of One to many, his

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Mazāhir al-ilāhiyyah (Mash-had, 1961), pp. 99-100.

cosmological doctrines including the position of man in relation to God as well as to the rest of the creaturely world.

From Ṣadrā's point of view, there are great mysteries hidden in the Qurān. These mysteries will be revealed only to those who follow the example of the Prophet and his family who were trained and educated under him, and carried the torch after him.<sup>1</sup> While ordinary people cannot go beyond the apparent, and exoteric sense of the Qurānic verses, men of esoteric knowledge whose hearts are illuminated by the Grace of God can understand the meaning of the verses and words as well as that of the letters.<sup>2</sup> This gnostic or cognitive insight which enables the reader of the Qurān to appreciate the symbolic significance of every letter separately, according to Mullā Ṣadrā, is what is called "the day of separation" (yawm al-fasl).<sup>3</sup> He says that the men of this world who are tied to material bonds have apparent and nominal integration, while being spiritually disintegrated. Consequently, they do not have insight into the letters. Hence, they observe the meaningful letters not as such, but as various letters connected together to form the words and phrases.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.), p. 3.

2. Ibid., p. 5.

3. The Qurān, LXXVII : 38.

4. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.), p. 5.

When they look at the phrase "yuḥibbuhum" (meaning "whom He loves"),<sup>1</sup> they see a group of letters forming a phrase. But those who are freed from the bonds of the flesh and have raised the veil of ignorance can see "y - ḥ - b - h - m",<sup>2</sup> i.e. the letters separately. When they ascend to the next stage of perfection, they can go even beyond the letters and see the dots. There is still a higher stage of perfection in which the actual reading is of no help to the meaning because the direct vision of the meaning prevails. This is the stage of immediate experience.

As Mullā Ṣadrā himself has said, the secrets and mysteries of the Qurānic letters and dots are esoteric indications which are beyond the limit of the formal academic approach. Nevertheless, the question still remains as to what, apart from the content of this esoteric knowledge, it means to see the letters and the dots, and how spiritual integration assists the reader of the Qurān in grasping that esoteric knowledge. The next question is as to whether or not there is something significant in "yuḥibbuhum" that Ṣadrā has chosen as his particular example.

The first question concerns the effect of spiritual undertakings upon one's consciousness. To deal with this

1. The Qurān, Surah 5, v:54.

2. In the Arabic script, what is pronounced "yuḥibbuhum" is written with five letters: y, ḥ, b, h and m; for the vowels appear as signs which are not included in the letters of the Arabic alphabet (except for the strong vowels: ā, ū and ī). Had it not been for the sake of conformity with Mullā Ṣadrā's text, I should have written the separate letters of yuḥibbuhum as y, u, ḥ, i, b, b, u, h, u, m.

question it may be enough to recall Ibn al-'Arabī's gnostic view of ta'wīl or symbolic interpretation. The ability of symbolic exegesis, however, varies in people according to their experiences; that is to say, two individuals who are at different spiritual stages can have entirely different symbolic understanding of the same object. In the domain of literary symbols, for some people this ability is limited to the ordinary and lexical sense of the words. There are others to whom the letters of the words are also significant symbols. Allegorically speaking, just as a single word becomes really meaningful in a particular context, so a letter may become so for a special gnostic perspective. Such a symbolic understanding requires the right pattern of thinking and insight; and this is what Ṣadrā apparently means when he speaks of seeing the letters and dots. Hence it is quite conceivable even for those who do not have access to the esoteric implications of the Qur'ān that the letters of the phrase yuhibbuhum can be really significant symbols in a gnostic context.

The Qur'ān is the word of God; it contains many words and phrases which stand for their lexical implications. But for the man of divine knowledge, all its symbols represent the articulation of the Breath of the Compassionate as well. In this respect every letter is a manifestation. The letters need not join together in the form of a word or a phrase in order to become meaningful

as a compound; each letter by itself represents the actual outflow of the Breath of the Compassionate. So does every dot in the Qurān. How far one can appreciate this, depends upon one's insight and the ability of symbolic interpretation.

A symbolic sense, no doubt, is one of man's essential traits, his differentia<sup>e</sup>. The mode of actualization of this potentiality is determined by the quality of experiences that occur to the individual. To develop gnostic symbolic understanding requires appropriate experience too. The botanist can see in a plant what he sees because experience has established the right pattern of observation and thinking in him. Those who can see the letters of the Qurān recommend a long series of undertakings which lead to what they call spiritual integration and perfection, without which the gnostic insight would be impossible.

As for the second question, the phrase "yuhibbuhum" comes from the Qurānic verse "Allāh will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him."<sup>1</sup> The remarkable point in the verse lies on the two phrases, namely "whom He loves" (yuhibbuhum) and "who love Him" (yuhibbūnah). From the gnostic point of view, love has been of paramount importance; it has been considered as the motive of creation, as we saw in al-Ḥallāj. Many Sufi masters, like

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1. The Qurān, V : 54.

Abū Saʿīd Abulkhayr,<sup>1</sup> Jīlānī<sup>2</sup> and particularly Ibn al-ʿArabī,<sup>3</sup> have referred to love as the principal spiritual link between God and the creatures, especially man. That is why "yuḥibbuhum" is Ṣadrā's example. Moreover, the order of the two phrases is also very relevant. That God's love towards man is mentioned before man's love toward God symbolizes the order which exists in the order of the relation in actual fact; it indicates that man's love toward God is always preceded by His toward man, and that man, by loving God, is in fact responding to God's love. As Jāmī has put it, His love to ours is as a person is to his shadow following him.<sup>4</sup> The verse, therefore, brings the best of the solace to the lovers of God since it indicates that their love is mutual.

#### Ṣadrā's Concept of God's Word or Speech:

After giving his own account of the Qurʾān and Qurʾānic knowledge, Ṣadrā illustrates his gnostic view of "Word" which explains the concepts of "macrocosmic text" and microcosm which is man as a synthetic universe. The concept of "Word", as we shall see, is the key concept in Mullā Ṣadrā's theosophy and gnosis. It explains the whole range of contingent beings - all the physical, corporeal.

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1. Nicholson, R. A., Studies in Islamic Mysticism (Cambridge University Press, 1921), pp. 3, 52.

2. Ibid., p. 80.

3. Ibn al-ʿArabī, Fusūs al-hikam (Egypt, 1966-67), pp. 215-17.

4. Jāmī, Haft 'awrang (Tehran, 1337), pp. 153, 249-50.

psychic, and angelic realities - in terms of God's words. Speech is therefore the matrix of creation. In this gnostic cosmology, the whole world of contingency is due to the first word of God, namely, the word kun (Be, the Creative Command). "The universe did not come into being except as the result of this word; it is even the word itself".<sup>1</sup> Since the twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet are the constituent elements of the language, Mullā Ṣadrā assumes twenty-eight stations (maqāmāt)<sup>2</sup> through which the Breath of the Compassionate is articulated, and which represent the symbolic projections of God's consciousness. The literary aspect of these utterances becomes the Qurān; while their existential manifestations appear in the form of the universe. It is in this sense that the universe - the macrocosmic text - is considered as another symbolic form of the word of God. The Qurān and the universe manifest the same thing. Both of them are expressions of the Breath of the Compassionate, though both of them are expressed at a different symbolic level.

God's speech, according to Mullā Ṣadrā, has three hierarchical levels: the higher, the intermediate and the lower.<sup>3</sup> The higher ('a'lā) is that speech which serves no purpose beyond itself. It has intrinsic value, and,

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.) p. 15.

2. Ibid., p. 5.

3. Ibid., p. 6.

therefore, is in itself the ultimate objective of the speaker. The word kun (Be) - His Creative Command - exemplifies this kind of speech. Such speech, Mullā Ṣadrā calls "'Allāh's Complete Words" (kalimātu'llāh al-tāmmah).<sup>1</sup> The intermediate ('awsat) level comprises those words which serve objectives beyond themselves. They are necessary and inevitable orders of God which are completely obeyed by creatures. The laws governing the motion of the heavenly bodies and other physical phenomena are examples of this sort of word. These words are necessary and inevitable; and the subjects have no means of escape from them.<sup>2</sup> The lower sort ('adnā) are also of instrumental significance; they serve purposes beyond themselves. But, unlike the intermediate ones, their subjects enjoy the possibility of disobedience. The duties and obligations prescribed by God and sent to man through prophets fall into this category.<sup>3</sup>

These three stages of the expression of God's Command, according to Mullā Ṣadrā, are found in the Perfect Man. In other words just as there are three levels of expression for God's consciousness, there are also three corresponding stages for the perfect man's consciousness, since he is the best manifestation of God's image. The divine knowledge which is revealed to him corresponds to a higher stage of God's speech. His bodily acts in which his limbs are

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1. Ibid., p. 6.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

obedient to his decisions and orders correspond to the events of nature which occur according to the inevitable natural laws. In other words, the microcosmic nature of man represents the intermediate level of God's speech.<sup>1</sup> And, finally the proclamation of his ideas to others through verbal or literary symbols correspond to the lower stage of God's speech.<sup>2</sup>

Then Mullā Ṣadrā says that if man climbs the ladder of perfection and sets himself in the direction of God, he may reach a stage in his spiritual journey where God speaks to him immediately. In this context, Ṣadrā inserts a statement from Ibn al-‘Arabī which states that man's consciousness becomes the very word of God and there would be no temporal gap between his understanding and God's speech.<sup>3</sup>

#### Ṣadrā's Concept of Prophethood:

If it is true that the individual can reach a stage where his consciousness is identified with God's speech, does this mean that in such a state one becomes a prophet and experiences revelation? Then, when his consciousness manifests the word of God, what would be the content of that word if it is not the Qurān? Mullā Ṣadrā's view of prophethood provides the answer to these questions. He says:

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1. Ibid., p.6. The microcosmic nature of man is explained by Ṣadrā in an article of his (Wāridāt al-galbiyyah, p.296) in which man's body is compared to the physical universe and his soul to the Divine world.

2. Shirāzī, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.) p. 6.

3. Ibid., p. 6.

"You should know that if revelation is meant to be God's guidance to His slaves, thus revelation never ceases. Of course, the special revelation which came to the ears and heart of the Prophet by the Angel has come to an end; and therefore the Seal of the Prophets stated 'There is no prophet after me'. Yet, he retained the authority of the heralds (al-mubashshirāt) and the authority of the Imāms who are sanctioned... He also retained the authority of the mujtahids and ordered that those who did not know should ask the men of remembrance since God said: 'Ask the followers of remembrance if you do not know'."<sup>1</sup>

As the passage indicates, Mullā Ṣadrā has two concepts of prophethood. One is the particular prophethood through which the Qurān was revealed to the Prophet by the Angel. The other is a general prophethood through which God's guidance in general is revealed to man. The latter, according to Ṣadrā, is the one which is permanent and remains continuous. But only particular people can reach this stage of this prophethood; these people, Ṣadrā calls walī (saint).<sup>2</sup> The saints, Ṣadrā maintains, will not add anything to the final message which was revealed to

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1. Shirāzī, Ṣadr al-Din, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.), p. 12. The verse quoted by Ṣadrā at the end of the Passage is from Qurān XVI:43.

2. Ibid., p.12. For the difference between walī and nabī also see Ibn al-'Arabī's "Kitāb al-qurbah", Rasā'il al-ilāhiyyah, (Egypt, 1325), p. 26.

the Prophet; but their knowledge of the message is a divine knowledge which is due to the illumination of their hearts by God. The walī knows what the Prophet has personally experienced. To support this argument, Ṣadrā refers to the statement by al-Ṣādiq, the sixth Shi'ah Imam, which says: "Prophethood is 'explicit' (shihādat) for the Prophet and the 'implicit' (ghayb) for the walī."<sup>1</sup> The walī is, therefore, next to the prophet being his follower and also his heir.<sup>2</sup>

Ṣadrā maintains that after the Prophet, prophethood is bequeathed to the walī by God.<sup>3</sup> He also maintains that there are some, like the members of the Prophet's family ('ahl al-bayt) to whom prophethood is bequeathed by the Prophet himself; they receive the knowledge and the spiritual excellence directly from the Prophet, and after him from God as well. That is to say, they receive it both from the "outward" and from the Unseen.<sup>4</sup> The

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1. Ibid., p. 12.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Sainthood or walāyah is a fundamental concept of Shi'ah doctrine. According to the Shi'ah, the family of the Prophet are the inheritors of the prophetic knowledge and spiritual excellence, and are the Saints par excellence. All the various chains of transmission go back to them, and through them back to the Prophet. The Prophet transmitted his prophetic divine knowledge to 'Alī b. 'Abī b. Tālib, the first Shi'ah Imām, whom he found the most capable of bearing the responsibility. The tradition "I am the City of knowledge and 'Alī is the gate to it" to which Ṣadra has also referred (Mazāhir al-ilāhiyyah, p.92) concerns this position of 'Alī. 'Alī, however, passed the Prophetic heritage to his successors. The clock that,

learned scholars of formal knowledge, then, transmit the prophetic knowledge from one generation to another. This chain of transmission continues to the Last Day.<sup>1</sup> But saints receive their prophethood from God, Who is its inheritor and its bestower.<sup>2</sup> "It is in this sense", says Ṣadrā, "that Biṣṭāmī said: 'You receive your knowledge from one dead person after another, while we receive our knowledge from the Living, the Immortal'."<sup>3</sup>

To sum up Mullā Ṣadrā's view, prophethood is of two kinds: particular and general. The special prophethood or the legislative prophethood (al-nubuwwah al-tashrī'īyyah), through which the Angel brought God's message to the Prophet, has come to an end, and there is no prophet after him. The general prophethood, however, remains continuous; and men of esoteric knowledge have access to this source of knowledge according to their stage on the journey to God. From the viewpoint of its essence, prophethood remains a permanent relation between man and God, which can be experienced only when appropriate conditions are satisfied. The epistemological significance of this will be discussed later.

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(From p.83)

according to the Tradition of Gārmant, was bestowed upon the Prophet in his nocturnal ascension, and which he entrusted to 'Alī is also the symbol of the prophetic knowledge. According to the Tradition, 'Alī made his son, Hassan, wear the cloak after him, and then Husayn and then the descendants of Husayn one after another until Mahdī, with whom the cloak rests now. (Nasr, S.H., Sufi Essays, pp. 109-110).

1. Shirāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.) p. 12.

2. Ibid., p.12.

3. Ibid.

Mullā Ṣadrā's view of God's word or speech, which includes not only the Qur'ān but the whole realm of contingency, sums up his gnostic cosmology. In his system, speech is the act of creation and every existent being is a symbol of God's speech, which manifests God's qualities. Man's nature is explained in the context of such a universe; from the creaturely point of view, he is a creature like any other, but a creature who is created in God's image. It is due to this theomorphic aspect of his nature - the position of vicegerency in the language of religion - that man has the most dynamic spiritual capacity.

#### Mullā Ṣadrā's Opposition to Sufis.

Do not get involved in the inanities  
of the ignorant among the Sufis; and  
do away with the discourse of the  
philosophers.<sup>1</sup>

The statement quoted above shows Mullā Ṣadrā's attitude towards many Sufis and philosophers whom he considers false. In addition to such occasional criticisms of the Sufis, Mullā Ṣadrā wrote a separate treatise under the title of Kasr asnām al-jāhiliyyah (Destruction of the idols of ignorance) in which he criticized all the Sufis except a small minority, whom he did not specifically identify. Of course, there is no doubt that Ṣadrā has great respect for some of the outstanding Sufi masters like Ibn al-'Arabī and Bisṭāmī, whom he often quotes in

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1. Shirāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-'Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, p. 4.

his writings. But it is not quite clear ~~what~~ apart from such individual masters, who are those Sufis that Ṣadrā respects and considers genuine, and who are the target of his attacks.

Throughout the history of Sufism, there have always been some Sufis who have been casual with the practices of the sharī'ah. They claimed that after access to the kernel of religion through the tariqah the sharī'ah would remain nothing but a shell to be thrown away. Such treatment of the sharī'ah - tariqah duality has always been condemned by genuine Sufis. Junayd al-Baghdādī has spoken of them scornfully.<sup>1</sup> Fayḍ al-Dīn Kāshānī,<sup>2</sup> Rūmī,<sup>3</sup> and Suhrawardī<sup>4</sup> as well as other Sufi masters have expressed their disapproval of them.

Mullā Ṣadrā also opposed these careless and irresponsible Sufis. He asked his readers emphatically not to associate with those people who claim that God does not need our acts of worship, therefore there is no need to perform them, and that the sharī'ah is for those who are still behind the veil not for those who have achieved unification with God.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Maḥmūd 'Abdul-Qādir, Falsafah al-Sūfiyyah fī al-Islam (Cairo, 1966-67), p. 191.

2. See his Misbāh al-hidāyah wa miftāh al-kifāyah (Tehran, 1323), p. 20.

3. Rūmī, Jalāl al-Dīn, Mathnawī (Tehran, 1342) edited by Furūzānfar "Book III" p. 205.

4. Suhrawardī, 'Umar b. Muḥammad, 'Awārif al-ma'ārif (Egypt, 1939), p. 57.

5. Shirāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Kasr asnām al-jahiliyyah (Tehran University Press, 1340), p. 21.

It sounds quite acceptable to say that Ṣadrā criticized these irresponsible spongers who played at Sufism in order to make a living out of it; but some of Ṣadrā's criticisms concern many of the Sufis among his contemporaries who were members of Sufi orders and who might have been genuine by the standards of every Sufi order. The question, therefore, remains as to what extent his criticisms concern some of the genuine Sufis. Before attempting any answer to the question, we should see if there is any significant contrast between Mullā Ṣadrā's view about Sufism and that of some of the Sufi Masters, because only if a sharp disagreement between them can be found then Mullā Ṣadrā's criticism of the genuine Sufis is possible.

An important aspect of Sufism to be considered in this context is the definition of Sufism. We have already seen Ṣadrā's definition of Sufism that advocates a kind of intellectual Sufism because he stresses the necessity of academic learning, so much as to imply that without advanced academic endeavour Sufism remains an impossibility. In fact one of Ṣadrā's excuses for attacking the Sufis of his time is that they deny the significance of knowledge. He says:

"... in spite of all that, they recoil from understanding realities, and deny the significance of knowledge which is the path of the ḥukamā'; they explicitly say that knowledge is the veil, and that scholars ('ulamā') are

deviating from Allāh..."<sup>1</sup>

When criticizing the Sufis of his time he said:

"Those who are, nowadays, holding the position of mastership - the majority of them even all of them - are fools and ignorant of the methods of gnosis and the perfecting of the soul... They have closed the gate of knowledge and learning."<sup>2</sup> (The emphasis is mine.)

In his account of the qualifications of a genuine 'ārif Ṣadrā stresses that "He is, in fact, one who knows the Divine Realities, and metaphysical ideas on the basis of convincing proof, which is susceptible of no doubt or hesitation..."<sup>3</sup> Thus, despite his strong Sufi propensities, Ṣadrā expects the 'ārif to base his 'irfān on "convincing proof" or what Ṣadrā calls burhāni yaqīnī, rather than on spiritual attainment. In other words, he relies primarily on rational demonstration and academic knowledge.

While Ṣadrā's 'irfān stresses the academic aspect, the Sufis are concerned with the practical aspect of the discipline. They too may consider Sufism as a science, but not as a science or a body of knowledge that can be acquired in ordinary academic learning situations, rather as a science which is attainable through sincere practice and by way of actual "becoming". To the question "What is

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Kasr asnām al-jāhiliyyah (Tehran University Press, 1340), p. 16.

2. Ibid., p. 23.

3. Ibid., p. 39.

Sufism?", Dr. Martin Lings answers:

"From time to time a Revelation 'flows' like a great tidal wave from the Ocean of Infinitude to the shores of our finite world; and Sufism is the vocation and the discipline and the science of plunging into the ebb of one of these waves and being drawn back with it to its Eternal and Infinite Sources."<sup>1</sup>

The term science or discipline in the foregoing definition should not be taken in the ordinary and academic sense: a body of knowledge with a set of coherent concepts and principles which, if employed methodically, can explain certain phenomenal relations and/or arrive at some new general laws. In this definition "science", "vocation" and "discipline" all designate the actual spiritual journey through which the Sufi transcends beyond all those phenomenal realities which are in fact the very subject of scientific investigation. Therefore, one can correctly say that Sufism both is and is not a science; it is "the Islamic way of transcending one's soul, that is, of letting one's spirit rise above oneself, and it is where the human self ends that the Heavenly Mysteries begin".<sup>2</sup> From the Sufi point of view it is merely because of the Divine Grace that such a spiritual journey becomes possible.

"The full range of Sufism, as it has shown itself to be throughout the centuries, lies summed up in this

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1. Lings, Martin, What is Sufism (London, 1975), p. 11.

2. Lings, Martin, A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century (London, 1973), p. 35.

tradition: 'My slave ceaseth not to draw nigh unto Me with devotions of his free will until I love him; and when I love him I am the Hearing wherewith he hearth, and the Sight wherewith he seeth, and the Hand wherewith he smiteth, and the foot wherewith he walketh'." <sup>1</sup>

A Sufi, therefore, has a disciplined mind; but his disciplinary undertakings are different from those of a scholar. The Sufis, as Ṣadrā said, may deny the significance of knowledge; they do say that knowledge is a veil, not because they do not appreciate what it is, but because they consider discursive knowledge as too irrelevant to the spiritual journey; and consequently, they maintain that it serves as a heavy load which hampers the wayfarer instead of assisting him:

"One of the first things that a novice has to do in the 'Alawī Ṭarīqah - and the same must be true of other paths of mysticism - is to unlearn much of the agility of profane intelligence which an 'Alawī Faqīr once likened... to the antics of a monkey that is chained to a post, and acquire an agility of a different order, comparable to that of a bird which continuously changes the level of its flight." <sup>2</sup>

It is only in this sense that the significance of knowledge is denied by the Sufis; and it is therefore considered as a veil which prevents the vision of Reality.

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1. Ibid., p. 37.

2. Ibid., p. 124.

The attitude toward the significance of knowledge is probably one of the points on which Mullā Ṣadrā and the Sufis disagree considerably.

Another gnostic matter whose consideration reveals a contrast between Ṣadrā's 'irfān or hikmah on the one hand and Sufism as defined by the members of the discipline on the other, is the concept of formal initiation. It is probably true that by performing the ordinary religious duties attentively, and by exercising some degree of vigilance, anybody may succeed in raising his consciousness and achieving some degree of spiritual fulfilment. However, such programmes of spiritual development, according to the Sufis, are entirely different from the actual entry upon the spiritual journey. From the Sufi point of view, attachment to a "chain" is an indispensable part of the entry upon the spiritual Path. It is through this attachment that the transmission of appropriate gnostic instruction takes place. When these instructions are carried out accordingly, the process of "becoming" takes place and the novice, thanks to the mercy and blessing of Allāh, goes through the various states and stations of the journey in each of which he still needs the guidance of the spiritual master:

"No Sufi would consider himself qualified to practice methodically an invocation unless he had been formally initiated into it."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 73.

In other words, from the first step on the journey to the end all the spiritual undertakings should be performed according to the instruction and guidance of a spiritual guide or master.

While the Sufis regard the presence of a guide or a shaykh as an essential part of Sufism, Mullā Ṣadrā not only remains entirely aloof from the issue, but also attacks many of the shaykhs and masters amongst his contemporaries. In this context, after enumerating five kinds of defects that can keep a man astray from the Right Path,<sup>1</sup> Mullā Ṣadrā claims:

"No doubt, the majority of those who are nowadays in the position of mastership and guideship and arrogate self-purification, who entertain rows of disciples, who widen their throats to upraise their cries of invocation, and ... are those who have these five defects all together."<sup>2</sup>

In his account of the general prophethood, Ṣadrā makes explicit reference to "imām", "walī", and "mujtahid"; but he makes no mention of murshid (spiritual guide) or qutb (the pole or the head of Sufi order). His reticence in this respect is a clue to his opinion about the established Sufi orders, particularly when we do not hear from him any explicit indication of his being formally initiated to the discipline. On the other hand, he

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Kasr 'asnām al-jāhiliyyah (Tehran University Press, 1340), pp. 11-12.

2. Ibid., p. 15.

ascribed the chain of transmission of prophetic knowledge not to any spiritual guide or a master in the Sufi sense, but to "the learned men of formal knowledge".

With regard to ~~the~~ ideological and methodological differences that one can find between Mull`Şadrā's 'irfān and formal Sufism, it may be understood that Şadrā was against the institutionalized Sufi orders of the khāniqāh, but his opposition was based on his impression of the Sufi orders of his time. From his emphasis on a discipline which combines formal learning together with spiritual endeavour, one may conclude that his 'irfān is to be sought in the school and under a pious hakīm, not in the khāniqāh or under a murshid.

In his introduction to Kasr asnām al-jāhiliyyah, Şadrā considers the Sufi practitioners of his time as misguided people who neglected their business and followed meaningless incantations. He maintains that they are deceived by a group of imposters who appear in the Sufi cloak and play at Sufism. Some of them, Şadrā says, undertake harsh disciplines and go to forty days' retreats to fulfil self-mortification and achieve full identification with the Sufis. They usurp the position of the spiritual guide, while they are entirely ignorant of the gnosis of God, His qualities and actions, His Books and prophets, and the story of the human soul and its destiny.<sup>1</sup> He, therefore, proclaims that "any one who attempts ascetic

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1. Ibid., pp. 3-7.

practices and self-mortification before completing his knowledge of the principles of worship and of the sharī'ah is misleading others as well as misled, and deceptive as well as deceived".<sup>1</sup> Then Mullā Ṣadrā presents his own view about worship which contains a clue to the nature of Mullā Ṣadrā's 'irfān. He divides all acts of worship into two kinds. One is physical worship (al-'ibādah al-badaniyyah), which he considers overt and open; the other is intellectual, which he calls secret and covert (al-'ibādah al-sirriyyah) which he also calls "essential".

His concept of overt or physical worship comprises all the religious duties and obligations which are incumbent upon the individual according to the sharī'ah. In other words, to act in accordance with the sharī'ah, for Ṣadrā, means to perform physical or overt worship. This kind of worship includes, among other things, faith in Allāh, submission to His authority, belief in His prophets and Books, and hope for His mercy...<sup>2</sup>

The intellectual or covert worship is the gnosis of Prime Reality (al-ḥaqq al-'awwal) and His angels, prophets and messengers, the knowledge of the human soul and its destiny as well as all other details that Ṣadrā has given in his definition of gnosis in his al-Mazāhīr al-'ilāhiyyah. He finally calls this kind of worship "the essential worship" (al-'ibādah al-dhātiyyah) without explaining why

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1. Ibid., p. 21.

2. Ibid.

he does so.<sup>1</sup> It is very likely that since he was preoccupied with the philosophical concept of the essence of man - rational animal - he considered this kind of worship as the function of the rational faculty and therefore called it "essential". The essential worship fulfils three objectives, according to Ṣadrā. (1) It leads to the rejection of interest in other than Allāh, whatever it may be; (2) it devotes all the intellectual and spiritual powers to the ultimate aim for which they are created, namely, to promote the heart from the state of darkness and obscenity to the state of illumination and purity so that it may become capable of receiving the Light of Divine Reality, which is the source of all goodness and happiness; and (3) to become the mirror of Divine manifestation.<sup>2</sup>

This classification which is apparently based on Mullā Ṣadrā's concept of man, seems to be a careless and casual classification. His concept of physical worship covers faith and belief in some fundamental aspects of Islam which, contrary to what Ṣadrā said, are not included in the sharī'ah; rather they constitute the foundations upon which the whole sharī'ah is established. Besides, faith or belief can hardly be considered as a physical act, and there is no justification for considering them as physical or overt. Furthermore, one can hardly think of an act of worship which remains exclusively or even

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1. Ibid., p. 22.

2. Ibid., pp. 22-23.

mainly physical. Take, for instance, praying, fasting, pilgrimage or any other ritual; how can an act of worship be an act of worship and still remain simply physical? How can commitment, intention, concentration and peace of mind be considered as mere physical acts when they are essential to every act of worship? If all the obligations of the individual as they are defined in the sharī'ah are simply physical or overt acts of worship, then there is no reason to consider the cleansing of the heart, and the rejection of interest in the mundane world as non-physical. On the contrary, one has every reason to believe that what Ṣadrā has considered as categorically two different acts of worship are essentially one. No one can practice the elements of "the essential worship" without undertaking some part of "the physical worship"; nor can anybody theorize some kind of physical worship acceptable to the standards of the sharī'ah without covering some spiritual and intellectual element in it. The classification, however, serves one important purpose, namely, it justifies Mullā Ṣadrā's criticism of the Sufis. The physical concept of worship stresses "the sharī'ah"; and the sharī'ah as commonly defined might not cover some of the details of the mortifications and exertions of some Sufi tradition. The intellectual or the essential worship, on the other hand, can cover all the academic elements for the lack of which Ṣadrā has persistently blamed both the Sufis and the theologians.

Mullā Ṣadrā is also against mystic ecstasies (shathīyyāt). A complete section of his Ḳasr asnām al-jāhiliyyah is devoted to "the refutation of mystic ecstatic utterances". Mystic exclamations, for him, are either exorbitant heretical utterances or pompous statements which might sound nice but have no meaningful content.<sup>1</sup> Ṣadrā regrets the attribution of some of those utterances to Bisṭāmī. He, therefore, doubts the authenticity of their attribution to him. He maintains that Bisṭāmī must have been paraphrasing others if he ever pronounced such claims; and his students or audience must have taken the shathīyyāt for the master's own opinion.<sup>2</sup> With regard to Ṣadrā's criticisms of the Sufis, it may be true to say that had the conservative Mullās seen Ṣadrā's Ḳasr 'asnām they would probably have not caused so much trouble for him as to make him go into exile.

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1. Ibid., pp. 28-30.

2. Ibid., p. 29.

PART III

SADRA'S MAJOR PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS

PHILOSOPHY OF EXISTENCE

Ontological discussions, which are the fundamental part of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy, constitute some of the contemporary philosophical and even linguistic issues in the West, although many Western philosophers and linguists have still remained almost completely ignorant of Ṣadrā and his contributions.<sup>1</sup>

Modern linguists are involved in ontological discussions in their analyses of the verb to be. On account of the fact that the verb be is a local peculiarity of Indo-European languages and of no general importance in linguistics, some modern linguists have reduced all ontological problems to linguistic ones. In his article "On the Theory of the Verb 'To Be'" Charles Kahn quotes a recent linguist who, when speaking of the absence of the copula in Chinese, said: "There is no concept of Being which languages are well or ill equipped to present; the functions of 'to be' [as verb of predication in Indo-European] depend upon a grammatical rule for the formation of the sentence [namely, that every sentence should have a verb], and it would be merely a coincidence if one found

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1. For the familiarity of the West with Mullā Ṣadrā, please see the following:  
Nasr, S. H. "Āshinā'ī bā Akhund-i Mullā Ṣadrā dar maghrib zamīn", yādnāmih Mullā Ṣadrā (Tehran University Press, 1961), pp. 51-62.

anything resembling it in a language without this rule."<sup>1</sup> It must be interesting for the adherents of these views to know that Ṣadrā has produced all his ontological analyses in Arabic, a language in which the verb is just does not exist. It may even surprise them that from the viewpoint of Ṣadrā, the notion of existence has no dependency upon the presence or absence of the verb to be, and it is the actual predication which matters not the sentence structure in which the assertion is expressed.

Modern philosophers of the West also have been trying to find their way out of the riddle of existence. Berkeley, for instance, tried to find out the meaning of existence, not by contemplating upon a personal notion which every individual may develop for himself, but by examining what such phrases as, let us say, "there is a table in the room" communicate. He concluded that when someone says "There is a table in the room", he simply means that he himself or someone else has experienced (or/and can experience) the table. To say that something exists in such a way that it can by no means be experienced, makes no sense to Berkeley because what would be the difference between existence and

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1. Kahn, H. Charles, "On the Theory of the Verb 'To Be'", Logic and Ontology, edited by Milton K. Munitz (New York, 1973), p.4. Also see John Lyon's account of the three constructions of the verb to be in his Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics (Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 389-390.

2. See Ṣadrā's opinion about relative existence (wujūd-i rabtī), al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, p. 72.

non-existence if our experience remains completely indifferent and non-committal?<sup>1</sup> In other words, Berkeley reduced ontology to epistemology.

Kant, on the other hand, when arguing his refutation of the Ontological Argument for the existence of God<sup>2</sup> maintained that "Being is obviously not a real predicate; that is, not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing."<sup>3</sup> Kant's view was fully worked out in Frege's doctrine that existence is a second-order concept and not a first-order concept which applies to individual things directly. "This Fregean view is incorporated in the symbolism of modern logic where existence is normally represented by a quantifier; that is to say, by a kind of sentence-operator and not by a first

1. Copplestone, F., A History of Philosophy (New York) Vol.5, part II, p.26.

2. What is known as the Ontological Argument for the existence of God in the West is originally by St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109). He argued that "God cannot be conceived not to exist". This argument, which was then adopted by Descartes, introduces the concept of God as a priori concept and, as Kant put it, as a concept of pure reason. [See Richard Taylor's introduction to The Ontological Argument edited by Plantinga (London, 1968) and also Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol. 1, p.128 and Vol.5, p.538]. There is also another Ontological Argument for the existence of God, which is apparently developed by Muslim Peripatetics independently of the former. Having differentiated for the first time between existence and essence, they argued that contingent beings lead to a Necessary Being, in the sense that the existence of that Necessary Being be the logical consequence of the Contingent Beings.

3. Smith, N. K. (trans.) Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (London, 1958), p. 504.

order predicate."<sup>1</sup> Thus the symbol ( $\exists$ ) was introduced as the quantitative term for the existential proposition, and was, therefore, called the existential quantifier.<sup>2</sup> Afterwards, the question "Is existence a predicate?" became the central idea of several articles; and philosophers and logicians attempted to tackle this question and often came to a negative answer since they could easily see that the predicate in "the book exists", is not an attribute added to the subject as "red" is in the case of "the book is red".<sup>3</sup> The most peremptory opinion in this line was probably that of Donald C. Williams, who decided to dispense with existence all at once. To quote his own words:

"I suggest that we slash the affair down the middle, so to speak, by asking whether the reason for so much gingerly indecision about Being is that Being is not (though we may grant to Parmenides that not-being is not either). There is no Being or existence as such, even in the sense in which there are singing, desires, societies, shapes, numbers, and even perhaps it, and, and but."

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1. Munitz, K. Meltonk, Logic and Ontology (New York University Press, 1973), p.2.

2. It should be noted that the introduction of " $\exists$ " as the existential quantifier should not be considered as an ontological issue. This symbol is just a quantifier which stands for some exactly in the same manner that the symbol " $\forall$ " stands for "all" or "every". There is a point in saying that all the propositions which are quantified with "some" or " $\exists$ " imply or presuppose the existence of the subject. But it does not mean that " $\exists$ " stands for existence or it becomes an ontological issue.

3. Typical attempts of this sort are the articles written by D.F.Pears and James Thomson [Strawson (ed.) Philosophical Logic (Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), pp.97-107], and by G.E. Moore [Flew, A.G., Logic and Language end series, (Basil Blackwill Molt Ltd., Oxford 1973), pp. 82-94.

In other words, he does not consider existence even as sentence-operators. He, then, continues:

"'Being' and existing as gerunds, like the technical coinage 'existence' in its original meaning, are abstract nouns which would be quite synonymous with 'to be' and 'to exist' if English did not so stubbornly resist most of the substantival uses of the infinitive. To fasten on this 'essential' meaning I shall use 'Beingness' as we might evade a similar slipperiness of 'pleasing' with 'pleasingness' and I shall also be generous with capital letters, not from piety or irony but because an abstract noun is a sort of proper noun."<sup>1</sup>

Opposed to such views is the opinion held by Joseph Owens, some aspect of whose approach is very near to Mullā Ṣadrā's. Instead of arguing whether existence is or is not a predicate, he first tries to clarify that when we assert the existence of something, our judgement is positive and highly significant, although when this judgement is expressed in a statement the predicate of that statement will not be an attribute added to its subject. Now, can we conceptualize that state of objectivity which we have asserted in our judgement? His answer is a negative "yōs" because after his positive answer he adds:

"... But this conceptualization of existence is not a victory without casualties. What perishes in the process

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1. Williams, C. D., "Dispensing with Existence" The Journal of Philosophy, Vol. LIX (1962), p. 749.

is that which is most characteristic of existence, the fact that something exists. The concept of brownness represents what is most characteristic of the colour brown. But the concept of existence, detached and just in itself, does not give the knowledge that anything exists. In regard to any content that would be characteristic of existence, it is entirely lacking. It is the concept of something else used to focus upon what is known through judgement. There is no characteristic concept or proper concept of existence. There is merely the use of other concepts to spotlight it and to represent it in this way for the purpose of consideration and discussion. But once the notion ceases to spotlight what is known through judgement and accordingly comes to be used as an independent concept it causes trouble."<sup>1</sup>

In other words, according to Owens, existence can be known only through judgement, for its reality vanishes as soon as its conceptualization begins.

Ṣadrā's view of existence is different from those already given. He does not reduce existence to a second-order concept, nor does he make it so much dependent upon judgement although he does not totally disagree with Owens. His view is different because his major question is not whether existence is or is not a predicate, even though his answer to such a question would be definitely negative.

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1. Owens, Joseph, "The Content of Existence" Logic and Ontology, edited by Munitz (New York, 1973), p. 29.

Before going into his actual arguments, it may be useful to make an introductory statement about his whole ontological ideas.

In his ontological discussions, Mullā Ṣadrā has two existential scenes, two states of being, or let us say, two domains of discourse. One, and in fact the more significant one, is the domain of actuality or the external world, where<sup>1</sup> existent beings stand independently of our consciousness. The other domain is our state of consciousness, our mind, (dhihn) which is quite a different state or mode of being. According to Ṣadrā, there are things which exist and stand out (or can do so) both in the external and mental domain. A book, for instance, that is an external reality has a mental or noetic reality too. But there can be things which are realized in the domain of consciousness (like all the things that we can think of and that may not exist in the world). The main difference between these two domains is that the mental domain is primarily our creative domain; we can create in it whatever we want to; good and bad, false and true, possible and impossible, and so many other terms can impose no restriction upon our imagination; it is a dream and in a dream nothing is impossible or false. This absolute freedom is due to the fact that our mental creations are so personal to us that they can have no effect upon or interference in the external domain. The external domain, on the other

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1. The fact is that Ṣadrā thinks of the external world as a significant mode of existing and not as a spatial reality inside which beings are stored. Thus the use of the adverb "where" in this context is just due to the limitation of language.

hand, has effects and efficacies which are not the function of our imagination. And the realities of this domain are not so obedient to us as the mental realities are. In this manner, there are two domains in which things can be considered. These "things" when considered as such, that is to say, irrespective of any existential (wujūdī) or non-existential ('adamī) values - whether these existential values be external or mental - are what Ṣadrā calls essences. And then he conceives of essences as being associated with mental being when he is conscious of them as mental realities, and with external being when he experiences that they are entities entirely independent of his consciousness. What Ṣadrā is driving at in these abstract analyses is that the external existence of a given thing is the very objective reality whose outward manifestation has become the essence of that thing, and it is responsible for the objectification and individuation of that thing. Essence, therefore, is considered as a mould, as a non-existential form in which the existence of a thing is wrapped up. Speaking in Hegelian language, essence is the antithesis of existence. Essence, which is nothing, finds its identity in existence. Ṣadrā believes that objective existence as such can be experienced but not known; we can know of it but we do not "know" it; it is experienced even before we become conscious of anything objective, but it cannot be conceptualized because conceptualization is nothing but de-externalization. Thus

first comes the existence of things and then and only then their "thinghood". In this manner the concept of existence becomes an all-inclusive concept which envelops every reality, from God to the faintest being. In other words, Ṣadrā identifies the subject of his ontological dialectic with the Sufi Being. Ṣadrā's problem is that he is not happy with a descriptive and allegorical language when explaining his ideas; he wants to "prove" them logically so that they carry an absolute logical validity. Whether he can do so or not is to be decided after going through his arguments.

#### The Indefinability of Existence<sup>1</sup>

The first point which strikes Mullā Ṣadrā's attention is that existence is indefinable, and there is nothing more evident than existence to serve as a definition for it.

As Ṣadrā himself put it:

"The reality of existence is the most evident of all things as it is a present and immediate experience; while its essence remains the most obscure."<sup>2</sup>

To him existence is the very external thing, and the object of our experience whenever we experience a concrete being. He stresses that "it is the most particular of all particulars, individuates all individuals, and

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1. Ṣadrā has used "kawn" and wujūd interchangeably (see, for instance, his argument of the Primordially of Existence in his al-Mashā'ir, p.15). Assuming that of the two terms (wujūd and kawn) one would mean existence and the other being, I have used the English equivalents interchangeably.

2. Shirāzī, Ṣadr al-Din, al-Mashā'ir (Tehran, 1964), p.6.

objectifies whatever positive and objective reality."<sup>1</sup>  
 As the very positive reality of all "real" is enveloped by existence, it remains beyond all the delimitation of things. Hence, it is an absolute reality with such an "incommensurable" nature, which is not susceptible of any definition "because it is irreducible to anything or any of the categories of reason and logic."<sup>2</sup>

"As for its definition, it is impossible for definition would surely be either a connotative definition (definition by genus and differentia), or a definition by description. The former is impossible because existence has neither a genus nor a differentia, so is the latter because it is impossible to apprehend existence through something else because other things are either less evident than, or as evident as, existence itself."<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, Şadrā maintains that any definition formulated for existence would be a purely lexical and a synonymous definition which explains only the word existence, without spotlighting the concept of existence. Hence, an attempt in vain.

Mullā Şadrā demonstrates the impossibility of defining being by analysing the process of conceptualization. He says that conceptualization is the presence of the meaning (concept or image) of a given thing in the mind, the meaning being similar and correspondent to the thing.

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1. 'Abdul Haq, Muḥammad, "An Aspect of the Metaphysics of Mullā Şadrā", Islamic Studies, Vol.9 (1970), p. 332.

2. Shīrāzī, op.cit., p.6.

3. Ibid., p.6.

This applies to the concepts and essences which are associated at one time with external and real existence and at another with mental and noetic existence; but not to existence itself. For, existence is not associated with any existence other than itself. Therefore, it is impossible to excise existence from existence and transfer it to the mind so as to associate it with mental existence. Hence, it is impossible to have a concept of it. In other words, to be what it is, external being must remain external; and as soon as it is conceptualized and revealed in the form of a mental being, it is no more external. And, anything for which there is no mental existence is beyond such characteristics as generality, particularity, commonness and partiality, which are ascribed to concepts. Since it is beyond all the categories, it is not a genus, differentia, species, or an accidental attribute for anything nor can anything be its constituent. In brief, it is not a concept to be defined.<sup>1</sup>

As his view about the definition of existence indicates, Ṣadrā, like many of the Western logicians and philosophers, does not consider existence as a first-order predicate; he, too, maintains that existence is a second-order concept, a concept of pure reason, or as he himself put it a secondary intelligible like "thinghood",

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1. Ibid., p. 6-7. Also see his al-Asfār al-'arba'ah, Vol.1, (Tehran, Lithog.), pp. 25-26.

"possibility", "substantiality", "manhood" and "blackness" which are nothing but abstract ideas.<sup>1</sup> But, he also believes that ~~his~~ is only one of the two senses of existence, and in fact the one which Mullā does not have in mind. The second connotation of existence, which is the subject of Ṣadrā's ontology is not a secondary intelligible, but the very external and positive reality of the external entities, the one which is outside the mind and as such cannot be a mental object, and therefore remains indefinable. This connotation of existence can be conceived, not as a concept, but as a preconceptual awareness. Even that awareness, according to Ṣadrā, requires a gnostic insight achieved by spiritual methods. Ṣadrā is quite explicit upon this point, and he claims that the reality of existence can be apprehended only by the 'urafā' (the gnostics) who penetrate into knowledge (al-rāsikhūn fī al-'ilm); he also identifies this sense of existence with what the Sufis call "the Breath of the Compassionate".<sup>2</sup>

Mullā Ṣadrā's view on the definition of existence raises very serious issues which occupy the main corpus of his ontology.

1. The objects of the external world are things like tables, books, trees, buildings, people, mountains, and

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arbā'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, p. 81; and also his al-Mashā'ir (Tehran, 1964), p. 7.

2. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Mashā'ir (Tehran, 1964), p. 8.

so on and so forth; and all these things are essences or quiddities. To say that the reality of objective entities is nothing but existence is tantamount to saying that existence is nothing but the quiddities which occupy the scope of the objective world. Things being what they are, essence, then, becomes the reality of the objective world; and there would be no reality apart from it to be identified as existence and as opposed to essence.

2. If existence is the reality of objective things, since these things are in fact essences, then the meaning of existence in everything would be identical to the essence of that thing. That is to say, existence is susceptible of as many meanings as the possible number of essences. Consequently existence becomes an ambiguous and equivocal term whose real meaning remains completely vague and unidentifiable until it is predicated of a given essence which will determine and allocate the sense of existence all at once.

Mullā Ṣadrā has dealt with these issues extensively, and his discussion on these matters constitute three of his major ontological doctrines, namely, the Primordiality of Existence, the Unity of Existence, and the Unequivocality of Existence.

#### The Primordiality of Existence (ʿaṣālat al-wujūd)

We have already seen that according to Mullā Ṣadrā existence is the very positive reality of all things and

not a concept, hence undefinable. We have also pointed out some of the undesirable consequences of this view. In his doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence Mullā Ṣadrā is not adding anything new to his previous view; under the heading of the Primordiality of Existence, he only tries to prove his previous view about existence on rational and logical grounds. In other words, he is going to establish that the objects of our experience in the external world are "existences", and that whatever a given essence, it is as such nothing but an abstraction, a corollary of existence and therefore dependent upon it. Existence would then be the reality, the noumenon, the underlying substance of every "this"; and essence would become the appearance, the phenomenon, or the outward aspect, hence secondary and dependent; consequently, the inconsistencies and discrepancies which, as we saw, followed from his view about existence would no longer disturb the validity of his doctrine.

Worth mentioning is the fact that Ṣadrā did not believe in the Primordiality of Existence at the beginning of his philosophical career. He says that he, like many of his predecessors, believed that essence was primordial and existence was nothing but an abstraction, until God guided him to the right path and disclosed to him that the contrary was correct.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, p. 10.

Mullā Ṣadrā has tried to prove his doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence on rational grounds. He has, therefore, produced eight demonstrations which became classical after him, and were never seriously questioned. One may, however, be suspicious about the rigour and cogency of his demonstrations, even without going to the content of Ṣadrā's arguments; for, if existence, as Ṣadrā claimed, is the positive reality of all things, the most evident of all things, and therefore, beyond all categories of reason and logic, then any attempt in producing rational proofs for its primordiality cannot be without absurdity. What proof other than personal experience can one have for something which is absolutely evident, positive and beyond all categories of reason? Thus, it would not be strange to find his arguments without enough strength and cogency. One might even find some of his arguments too formal; so much so as to make the demonstration a typical example of a tedious logical argument. This is probably due to the fact that in order to strengthen the rational ground of his position, Ṣadrā has reduced his whole issue to very strict and concise syllogisms, with two premises and a conclusion. Take, for instance, the following demonstration:

If existence were not primordial, there  
would not exist anything. The consequence  
is false.

Therefore the antecedent is false too.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 13.

From the formal point of view, this argument is valid, but validity is not sufficient. All that formal validity establishes is that if the premises are true, the conclusion is true. But how do we know that the premises are true? And how can we examine their truth value? The hypothetical premise, for instance, says:

- (1) if existence were not primordial, nothing would exist.

The truth value of this premise is the same as the following:

- (2) Since things exist, existence is primordial.

The truth of (2) not only cannot be taken for granted, but also it is precisely what Ṣadrā's opponent denies. For the opponent does not deny the entities around him; all he says is that from these entities one cannot deduce that existence is also an entity. Thus Ṣadrā has committed the falacy of assuming the issue in his argument. Of course he does give further elaborations on this premise. He says that essence qua essence is devoid of all existential properties; therefore, it cannot be responsible for the positive reality of things. But these elaborations are definitions not facts.

In another demonstration, Ṣadrā argues that if existence were not primordial, then there would be only "primary and essential" predication. Predication is not only that, therefore existence is primordial.<sup>1</sup> Afterwards,

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1. Ibid., pp. 12-13.

he elaborates upon his classifications of predicates into "primary and essential" predicates and "secondary and synthetic" predicates, without recalling that these classifications, no matter how useful and workable, are not statements of fact to be true or false in the sense of correspondence or lack of correspondence to the external world.

In another demonstration he says:

"If there were not a reality for existence in the objective entities, then there would be no individual for any species."<sup>1</sup>

Then he explains that the concept of every individual reality is a universal concept plus as many characteristics as are necessary to make that concept applicable to only one individual. Since each of these characteristics is still a general concept, no matter how many they may be, the concept will still remain universal. Thus if it were for the sake of essence, there should be no real individual; for, essence could not lead to an individual.

Now is it realistic to say that our image of John is in actual fact the universal concept of man - a rational animal - plus particular characteristics which are altogether found in one person, who is John? What about one's image of himself?

In brief, such arguments can hardly prove Ṣadrā's doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence. One may even

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1. Ibid., p. 14.

doubt whether it is a genuine doctrine which has really something to say, or just a spurious matter emerging from a semantic ambiguity. But, given that it is a "legitimate" doctrine, it does not seem to be necessary to "prove" it syllogistically. If it were a mathematical problem, of course the solution had to follow from the premises logically. But a philosophical doctrine which is even one of the few fundamental principles of a system is not necessarily to be judged in terms of whether or not it follows from certain premises. Many philosophers explain their ideas without saying: this is the minor premise, and that is the major premise; therefore... A doctrine can be a philosopher's choice not simply because it follows from such and such premises, but because the philosopher has good practical, humanitarian, or some other kind of reasons for his choice. While having so much concern for demonstrating his doctrine of the Primordially of Existence, Mullā Ṣadrā has failed to realize that the conclusion of a logically valid argument is only logically true in the sense that it is true only on the hypothetical assumption that its premises are true. This means that the conclusion has no value for someone who has the slightest doubt about the truth of the premises.

Instead of examining whether Ṣadrā could prove what he wanted to prove, we might as well probe into another aspect of the doctrine of the Primordially of Existence: how can we classify Ṣadrā's system with regard to the

implications of this doctrine? The whole contention of the doctrine is that, for Ṣadrā existence is the objective reality which is independent of our consciousness. Since he believes in the existence of reality apart from consciousness, he can be considered as a realist and his philosophy as a kind of realism.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, existence and essence are mutually exclusive, then Ṣadrā cannot (and does not) uphold the primordality of both essence and existence. Can one say that since Ṣadrā maintains that essence is not primordial, he is ultimately denying the actuality of the things around us and therefore he is an idealist<sup>2</sup> in this respect? Yes, it is quite possible, even though Ṣadrā does not entirely deny the externality of the essences. Ṣadrā upholds that essences have no reality other than that they are the outward projection of existence. That is to say, without existence there would be nothing; and with existence there is everything. But this can also mean that things as they are for themselves are nothing save existence; essence, therefore, appears on the stage when presentation to, or perception by our consciousness is concerned.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Realism is defined as "the doctrine that reality exists, apart from its presentation to or conception by consciousness; or that if, as a matter of fact, it has no separate existence to divine consciousness, it is not in virtue of anything appertaining to consciousness as such. (See Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology, edited by J. M. Baldwin, Vol. II, p. 421).

2. Idealism is defined as the view which holds in opposition to realism, that the reality of the external world is its perceptibility. (See Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology, edited by J.M. Baldwin, Vol. I, p. 500).

3. See his account of "māhiyyah" in al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.). Vol.I, p.52.

In this sense, Ṣadrā becomes an idealist too. Thus, the doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence, which is the foundation of Mullā Ṣadrā's realism, may paradoxically become the basis of his idealism as well.

The next, and probably the most significant implication of the doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence, is its religious implication. For a religious individual, the view that all diverse realities of the world when considered apart from the phenomenal wrappings are nothing but existence, and that existence is the only objective reality behind all the appearances can easily become the philosophical counterpart of a religious world-view, namely, that the universe is created by God. Then the religious concept of creation stands as the equivalent of "existentiation" ('ijād); God or the Creator, as the counterpart of the Necessary Being (wājib al-wujūd); and the creatures of God, as the contingent beings (mumkināt) or existents (mawjūdāt). Between the doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence and the religious concept of God as the Agent of all creation, there is still a theoretical gap for Mullā Ṣadrā to fill. An upholder of the doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence can, of course, demonstrate the comparison between the philosophical view at issue and the religious world-view. However, to show this comparison is something, and to identify the two as the same is another. To fill this theoretical gap, Mullā Ṣadrā introduces another doctrine which seems to be both philosophical and

religious. Philosophical; because it is discussed and developed on the basis of the ontological view of the Primordiality of Existence; and religious because it explains the religious concept of creation though in a philosophical way.

This doctrine is the doctrine of origination or ja'1. The major issue of the doctrine of origination (ja'1) is whether the object of origination is essence or existence. With regard to his doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence, Mullā Ṣadrā's answer to the question is quite clear. From his point of view essence is nothing but a fake corollary of existence, which becomes manifest, not because of any intrinsic merit of its own, but by virtue of mere pertinence to existence. The object of Origination (maj'ūl) can, therefore, be nothing other than existence.<sup>1</sup>

Thus in a religious context, where faith in the Originator (jā'il) is taken for granted, Ṣadrā tries to transform his ontological doctrine to a religious ideology. Consequently, existence, this time not simply as a philosophical concept but as a religious one, covers the entire range of reality, from Reality to the so-called metaphorical realities of the realm of contingency.<sup>2</sup>

It should not be overlooked, however, that the doctrine of ja'1 does not really fill the gap between the

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Mashā'ir (Tehran, 1964), pp. 37-45. See also his al-'Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, pp. 98-103.

2. Op. cit., pp. 52-53.

doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence and God as the Agent of creation in the religious sense. For, the doctrine of ja'1 presupposes the Primordiality of Existence; and, it is the element of faith, and not the cogency of the doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence which makes Ṣadrā's doctrine of ja'1 acceptable to a religiously minded person. There are Muslim philosophers who argued against the doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence very strongly. The best representative of this group is Suhrawardī. In his Hikmat al-ishrāq Suhrawardī held the view that:

"Existence is equally predicable of blackness, substance, man, and horse. It is therefore an intelligible concept which is applicable to all of these things in one sense. So is the concept of essence or the concept of reality. Thus we maintain that all of them are concepts of pure reason."<sup>1</sup>

He also maintained that in the same manner that "one" is not a positive property of any object, nor is substantiality a property of any corporeal entity, likewise existence is not a positive property of any objective thing either. He divided the qualities of things into two kinds: one, positive and objective (al-sifāt al-'ayniyyah wa al-khārijiyyah); the other, subjective and

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1. Corbin, H. (ed.) Majmū'ah duvvum-i musannafāt-i Shaykh-i ishrāq (Tehran, 1952). p. 65.

mental (dhahni); and decided that such concepts as essence, existence, substance, accident, thinghood (shay'iyah) and others are in the second category and are nothing but terms of our classification and reasoning and therefore, correspond to none of the qualities of things.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Suhrawardī, unlike Mullā Ṣadrā, considers existence as a matter of logical analysis and not as the individuated reality underlying the entities of the world.<sup>2</sup>

The Unity of Existence (wahat al-wujūd).

After pondering upon the doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence, the student of Ṣadrā can hardly help questioning whether there could be anything new in the doctrine of the Unity of Existence. That existence is the only objective reality which is manifested in variegated appearances can be already understood from the doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence. Hence a philosophical doctrine of the Unity of Existence upholding what is already covered by the doctrine of Primordiality may sound quite unnecessary. However the role of the doctrine of

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1. Ibid., pp. 67-71.

2. Suhrawardī, because of his rejection of the doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence, is usually considered as the follower of the primordiality of essence. Nasr, S. H. Islamic Studies (Beirut, 1967), p.118.) This view is commonly accepted on the assumption that if someone does not subscribe to the Primordiality of Existence, he is automatically a follower of the doctrine of the primordiality of essence. However, Suhrawardī is neither an advocate of the Primordiality of Existence nor of essence, as both of these concepts are concepts of pure reason.

the Unity of Existence as a major bridge between Sufism and Ṣadrā's ontology cannot be denied; it has been through this doctrine that many religious and mystic values have been poured into Ṣadrā's philosophy.

The doctrine of the Unity of Existence is commonly viewed as the philosophical expression of a mystical doctrine which some Sufi authorities have translated as the "Oneness of Being". It is the doctrine "that behind the illusory veil of created plurality there lies the one Divine Truth - not that God is made up of parts, but that underlying each apparently separate feature of the created universe there is One Infinite Plenitude of God in his Indivisible totality".<sup>1</sup> The Sufi doctrine of the "Oneness of Being" remains entirely aloof from all the logical arguments and the current philosophical analyses which constitute the content of ontological studies.

"This doctrine is only concerned with Absolute Reality. It has nothing to do with 'reality' in the current sense, that is, with lesser, relative truths which the Sufis call metaphorical. Ghazālī says: 'The Gnostics rise from the lowlands of metaphor to the Peak of Verity; and at the fulfilment of their ascent they see directly face to face that there is naught in existence save only God and that everything perishes but His face, not simply that it perisheth at any given time but that it has never not perished'..."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Lings, Martin, A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century. 2nd ed. (Great Britain, 1973), p. 122.

2. Ibid., p. 123.

Mullā Ṣadrā's doctrine of the Unity of Existence remains mostly philosophical; it is tied up with his analyses of another metaphysical concept, namely, unity. He says: "Unity and existence go together; they are the same not in connotation but in denotation."<sup>1</sup> That is to say that existence and unity do not mean the same, but refer to the same thing or both designate the same thing. Ṣadrā divides unity into two kinds: unreal unity (wahdah ghayr haqīqīyyah), and real unity (wahdah haqīqīyyah). Unreal unity is the one which appears among different things when they have something in common. The common element is called equality if it is quantitative, similarity, if qualitative; and identity, if the common element encompasses all the properties of the things. This kind of unity presupposes, and is therefore based on diversity. If there are different things, then equality, similarity, or identity makes sense.<sup>2</sup>

Real unity, on the other hand, does not depend upon diversity. In order to conceive real unity, one has no need to think of diversity. In this context, Ṣadrā compares the meaning of unity with existence in order to show how identical they are in all respects. He says that unity is true of whatever existence is true. Unity applies to things in various degrees, some of which are similtude, equality, and identity. Numerical unity is the

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran Lithog.) Vol.I, p.124.

2. Ibid., p. 130.

highest degree of unity; that is to say, whatever is one in number possesses, and manifests, the highest degree of unity. Similarly, existence applies to the existing beings in various grades. And, as unity is not a constituent property of anything, so existence does not fall within the essential properties and constituents of any of the quiddities.<sup>1</sup>

Mullā Ṣadrā does not eliminate diversity from existence. He recognizes diversity within unity and unity within diversity; and believes that this view is not compatible with the doctrine of the Unity of Existence. Existence, per se, is one and has only one meaning; yet it admits of diversity in as much as it is viewed in respect of its manifestations. He says:

"On some of the terminologies of the men of God:

The reality of existence, when considered with the condition of not being associated with anything, it is called... the state of Unicity (ahadiyyah), in which all the Names and Qualities are absorbed and exhausted; it is also called the Total Entirety (jam' al-jam'). The Quintessence of realities (haqiqat al-haqā'iq), and the state of Unconsciousness (al-ghimā'). But, when it is considered as conditional-with-something, it is such that it is associated with all things from general to particular - the things which are called Names and Qualities - and it is the state of Divinity which is called Oneness (wāhidiyyah) as well as the state of Totality (maqām al-jam'). Since it leads the manifestations and names - which

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1. Ibid., p. 188. See also his al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah (Maah-had, 1346), p. 41.

are the entities and realities - to their appropriate stage of perfection, it is called the State of Suzerainty (rubūbiyyah). And when it is considered neither with nor without the condition of being associated with something, then it is that identity which permeates through all things."<sup>1</sup>

In other words existence as such, that is irrespective of every condition, is the very thing which is present in all its conditioned forms, because all the various conditioned forms of it are in fact kinds or classes which are still under the "simple" concept of existence. Now when it is conditioned, it is either conditioned with the condition of not being associated with anything, or with the condition of being associated with something. The former, Ṣadrā thinks, is what the Sufis call the State of Unicity; and the latter, what

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn. al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran Lithog.), Vol.I, p.188. Mullā Ṣadrā has applied all these considerations to essences (see his al-Asfār al-'arba'ah, Vol.I, p.114), and he maintains that it is essence which can be considered as conditional-with-no-association, conditioned-with-association, and unconditioned. There, he is quite specific in saying that "indeed essence can be considered..." Moreover, the whole issue of the consideration of essence concerns Ṣadrā's explanation about the difference between "genus" and "matter or potentiality", which are elements of essence and have nothing to do with existence. The application of these analyses to existence cannot be appropriate or correct unless by existence Ṣadrā meant the concept of or the essence of existence; and in this case his study of existence would be nothing other than language or a concept analysis. Thus his equating the various considerations of existence to the terminologies of the Sufis might as well be purely allegorical, not really significant.

they call the State of Oneness. However, when it is considered as conditioned-with-something, then existence admits of diversity without having been detached from its essential unity because, as Mullā Ṣadrā sees it, this diversity of existence is simply due to its being considered with regard to its manifestations and not as such. Thus with regard to the reality of existence, there is entire unity; and from the viewpoint of its diverse emanations, there is diversity.

Ṣadrā also believes that the appreciation of the unity of existence and the manner in which it engulfs and embraces all the beings is a special spiritual knowledge which occurs only to "those who penetrate into knowledge",<sup>1</sup> and the gnostics, since he considers this issue as an esoteric knowledge about the relation between "the One and many".<sup>2</sup>

In upholding the doctrine of the Unity of Existence Mullā Ṣadrā stands in opposition to the old theologian's ontological view maintained by Abu al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī. Al-Ash'arī had suggested that since the existence of God was categorically different from that of His creatures, the term existence should have different meanings when applied to different essences. According to this view existence is an equivocal and ambiguous term, with different meanings. Ṣadra himself quotes al-Ash'arī that

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Mashā'ir (Tehran, 1964) p. 8.

2. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I. p. 139.

the existence of everything is the very essence of that thing.<sup>1</sup> Ṣadrā's doctrine of the Unity of Existence denies al-Ash'arī's view because it suggests that existence is just one reality and applies to all beings in one sense. The difference between the Necessary Being and the contingent beings, and also the existential differences of the contingent beings are not in kind; they are, rather in degree.

#### The Gradation of Existence.

Existence is predicable of different subjects in various degrees. In other words, existing beings have various degrees of existentiality. The degree of existence revealed in them determines their degree of completeness and perfection. The highest level of existence is the state of Necessary Being where Being is absolute and mere existence. Below this level is the state of contingency where the emanations and emissions of existence are manifested or embodied in various forms in accordance with the amount of existential illumination they receive from the Absolute.<sup>2</sup> To illustrate this point Mullā Ṣadrā provides the allegory of light.<sup>3</sup> Light is one reality, which

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol.I, p.49. See also Sabzavārī's al-Manzumeh (Tehran, 1966), p. 49.

2. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol.I, pp.21,65. See also the following: 'Abdul Haqq Muhammad, "An Aspect of the Metaphysics of Mullā Ṣadrā", Islamic Studies, Vol.I, pp.333-34, and his "Mullā Ṣadrā's Concept of Being", Islamic Studies, Vol.6 (1967), p.271.

Ashtiyānī, Hastī az nazārī falsafih va 'irfān (Mash-had, 1974), pp. 122-23.

partakes of a variety of degrees. The light of the sun and that of a candle are one in nature; the difference between them is due to the degree of intensity. Similarly, the light of existence has various degrees. The differences in existing realities are due to the variance in the degree of illumination which is revealed in them. This implies that things, according to Mullā Ṣadrā, are in a vertical hierarchical order.

For the entire existence, Mullā Ṣadrā considers three different levels.<sup>1</sup> The first and the highest is the state of pure existence which is absolute and has no dependency upon anything in any respect. Of this state of existence nothing is conceivable, since it is beyond apprehension. It transcends all and every being. It is The One, The Prime Reality, and the source of all beings. Since it is beyond our consciousness it remains as an Obscure Identity, or Absolute Obscurity. The second is that being which is revealed in the form of the various specific entities. In other words, it is moulded or conditioned by its limited aspect, and has, therefore, become manifested in the form of existent essences.

The third is the "unconditioned" and absolute existence which is permeated through the whole realm of contingency, and is not limited by any demarcation. This state of existence, according to Ṣadrā, is what the Sufis call the Breath of the Compassionate (al-nafas al-Rahmānī).

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Mashā'ir (Tehran, 1964), p.40.

"The created reality" (al-haqq al-makhlūq), and also "The Permeating Light" (al-nūr al-sārī).<sup>1</sup>

Thus, in Ṣadrā's allegory of light, the sun which is the source of all light stands as the symbol of the first level of being; the light which has come into a room through a window and has accepted the shape and the colour of the window glass symbolizes the second level; and the light which is reflected and has illuminated the vast space around us without having a shape or colour other than its own demonstrates the third level. And in the same manner, all aspects of light are dependent upon the sun, all creaturely beings and the whole domain of contingency are dependent upon the One. The Absolute Being is, therefore, the only Primordial Reality<sup>2</sup> in the true sense of the term, and other beings are just shadows and reflections which depend upon His Grace always and at every moment. Their reality is dependent relative, and perishable. In this manner, the doctrine of the Unity of Existence and the Divine Unity are the same in Ṣadrā's system.

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1. Ibid., pp. 40-41. These three levels of existence are in fact the same as the three considerations of the concept of existence to which we referred before. It seems that according to Mullā Ṣadrā what is true of a concept essentially characterises the object of that concept too even when the object is considered as essentially beyond human cognition for one reason or another.

2. Ibid., pp. 52-53.

Mental Existence.

One of the very significant ontological issues raised by Ṣadrā is his doctrine of mental existence. This doctrine is described by Ṣadrā in two categorically different terms: one is philosophical, and involves logical argument and demonstration; the other is connected with a purely mystical and religious experience, and it may therefore interest those who enjoy a foretaste of 'irfān.

The first explanation is based upon the Principiality and gradation of existence. As Ṣadrā has put it,<sup>1</sup> the contingent beings consist of existence and essence, the former being the positive part in every objective being, while the latter is just an abstraction. The actual effect of the agent on the contingent beings is therefore existence, not essence.<sup>2</sup> Existence has various grades of intensity, the foremost of which belongs to "Existence" which is above all beings and beyond flux and annihilation. Contingent existence which is spread along a wide range of gradation is the one which is revealed and illuminated by enough existential light to manifest objective effects and identity. This level of existence is what Ṣadrā calls external existence, by which he means existence apart from and independent of human consciousness. When

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Aṣfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, p.65.

2. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Mashā'ir (Tehran, 1964), p.44.

the existential light of a given essence is so weak as not to reveal that essence in the objectified, external entity, it remains purely noetic and mental, and has no realization apart from its presence in human consciousness. At this level of existence the being has no external effect and remains merely as an object of human consciousness. In other words, while at one end of the gradation, there is Absolute Being, at the other end of it, there is a weak and pale form of being which can be manifested only within the context of human consciousness.

The spiritual and gnostic explanation is this: God has bestowed upon man an angelic nature which provides him with a creative power. By virtue of this power man can actually participate in creating "corporeal" and intellectual entities whose realities do not go beyond their very presence in man's imagination. In this context, Ṣadrā quotes from Ibn al-'Arabī's Fuṣūṣ al-hikam, where he maintained that imagination was man's creative power by which he could beget and originate his own creations.<sup>1</sup>

The two descriptions given above serve as the preliminary steps for giving the final proofs for the doctrine of mental existence:

1. We are able to imagine things which are devoid of any external existence, or even things which are utterly impossible like nothingness or contradiction. If we accept that these things have absolutely no existence

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Aṣfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, p. 65.

whatsoever, then we shall be denying the fact of their very presence in our mind. If, however, we face the fact of their presence in our mind, then we are bound to accept that they have a share in an existence which is nothing but mental.<sup>1</sup>

Ṣadrā conceives of a possible criticism which he tries to defend in advance. An opponent may claim that it leads to a contradiction to assume existence for nothingness, no matter how imaginary that existence may be. Mullā Ṣadrā's defence is based upon his own analysis of predication. He maintains that it is true that the acceptance of mental existence leads to the apparently self-contradictory assertion that nothingness exists, but in actual fact there is no contradiction involved. For when we say "nothingness is nothingness", it is true from the identity point of view. But when we say "nothingness exists" we do not mean in the tautological sense of predication; rather we take it as a synthetic predication and since of the two statements ("Nothingness is nothingness" and "Nothingness exists"), one is meant to be a tautological predicate and the other synthetic, they do not contradict each other.<sup>2</sup>

2. We have noetic objects to which we ascribe properties totally irrespective of whether those objects have any objective existence. Nevertheless, our assertions are

1. Ibid., p. 65.

2. Ibid., p. 66.

true. For instance, we imagine a specific triangle and assert that the sum of its angles is  $180^{\circ}$ . Where does the truth of that proposition occur, since we are totally oblivious of the external existence of the triangle in question? In other words, if the truth of a proposition is merely a formal truth then its occurrence must be at the mental level. Hence mental existence.<sup>1</sup>

3. We also speak of people and objects which existed in the past and do not exist at the present time. But the assertion we make is true at the time of the conversation too; moreover it is not a formal truth which is involved; it is an empirical truth about an external entity. For instance, when we say "Ibn Sīnā was a Person" our statement is true at present, and it is about an individual not about an illusory or hypothetical person. This means that the individual Ibn Sīnā we have in mind is exactly the individual Ibn Sīnā who lived hundreds of years ago, or else we will not be talking about Ibn Sīnā, and our assertion cannot be true. We also make assertions about universal concepts. Therefore, there must be mental individuals which are exactly the same as the external individuals with the only difference that the former exist only mentally.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the human mind is *man's* creative domain in which he invents and innovates by virtue of his creative imagination. This excellence is entrusted to him as he is the

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1. Ibid., p. 66.

2. Ibid., p. 67.

vicegerent of the Creator and must therefore be creative in order to be a proper vicegerent. This doctrine has a special epistemological significance to which we shall refer in due course.

The Qualification of Essence to Existence.

The positive attribution of a predicate to any individual subject in a synthetic proposition presupposes the subject because what does not exist cannot have any existential property. This universal assumption is signified by Ṣadrā in the following principle: "In order for a given property to be true of a subject, the subject itself must exist".<sup>1</sup>

Does this principle apply to the attribution of existence to essence? If it does, then a given essence

1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Mashā'ir (Tehran, 1964), p.45.

This principle should not give the impression that according to Ṣadrā the truth of a universal proposition like "every A is B" presupposes the existence of A. Muslim philosophers even before Mullā Ṣadrā knew that a universal proposition is in fact a hypothetical proposition which can be true when its subject term or antecedent has no individual instance. But they (including Ṣadrā) recognized two kinds of universal propositions: essential and existential. A universal proposition was essential for them, when its predicate was predicable of its subject in virtue of the essence of the subject; and it was existential when the predicate was true only in virtue of the existing individuals of the subject. Thus, the existence of the subject is implied only the latter kind and in the non-quantified propositions; and the principle in question concerns only these two kinds. However, the division of the universal propositions into the above two classes is irrelevant from the viewpoint of modern logic. For further information see the following:

Mishkāt al-Dīn, A.H.(ed.), Mantiqi nuvīn (Tehran), pp. 273-280.

Shihābī, Maḥmūd, Rahbari kharad (Tehran, 1340), pp. 161-164.

must be an existing reality before the quality of existence is attached to it; and if it does not, then how is it that the essence, which is putatively without any reality, can be qualified by existence? In other words, how can we attribute existence to a non-existing subject? Mullā Ṣadrā's solution to this problem is that in the actual world there is no such duality as essence and existence. The external world, to him, is the realm of existence not analytical abstractions; and therefore he argues that the two are one and the same in the actual world. Here is his own argument:

"If the existence of any given thing were not the same as, and unified with, its essence, then it would either be a constituent part of it, or an added quality to it as an accident. Both these two are false; for, the existence of parts should precede that of the whole, and the existence of a quality occurs after that of the qualified thing. Consequently, essence should be an already existing reality before it exists, and also there should be an existence before existence. These (consequences) are impossible as they imply the priority of something to itself and an infinite regression. Therefore, the opponent is bound to accept the other alternative, which is the unity of existence with essence in the outside world."<sup>1</sup>

As for the mental level, Mullā Ṣadrā accepts that

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Mashā'ir (Tehran, 1964), p.29.

there does exist such a duality as existence and essence; otherwise we could use the two notions interchangeably and synonymously. Thus existence and essence become two different things but only neotically.<sup>1</sup>

Essence, therefore, remains a notion without any positive counterpart apart from that of existence; it remains just an abstract idea which is intended to represent the boundary or delimitation of existence, a borderline, which, so to speak, indicates where the excellence of a given portion of existence comes to an end. Metaphorically speaking, essence is to existence what the area of piece of land is to the land itself. As the owner of the land does not possess two things - one the land, the other its area - similarly, he who experiences an existing thing does not confront two different things, one the essence and the other, the existence of that thing.

To sum up Mullā Ṣadrā's ontological doctrine, existence is the positive and objective reality, a homogeneous totality with infinite degrees of intensity, all-inclusive, ever-expanding in all directions and dimensions, a reality which is always in a "this", not in a concept, and therefore undefinable. As Mullā Ṣadrā has a religious frame of reference, this ontological view becomes a theosophical one in which existence becomes much more than an impersonal prime matter, upon which all the corporeal phenomena rest or Prime Mover in terms of which all change and flux can

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1. Ibid., p. 29.

can be explained; it makes of the position of God who creates not that of a cause or agent that generates. For, the Necessary Being, which is at the positive end of the gamut of existence is far beyond a mere logical necessity. For Mullā Ṣadrā there is God, and nothing but God, since he ultimately denies the reality of all beings by upholding that "all stages of contingent beings are nothing but reflections and emissions of the Real Light, which is the Necessary Being..." He even maintains that in every experience, we are in direct contact with an aspect of His emission which, in a sense, stands for the Essence of God.

"... And therefore the perception of any given thing is nothing but the consideration of that thing from the viewpoint of its relation to the Necessary Being, a relation which is at once its being as well as its becoming. This consideration is either impossible, or else the perception of the Essence of the Reality is involved in it."<sup>1</sup>

In this context Ṣadrā substantiates his argument by quoting Imām 'Ali (May His peace be upon him), who said: "I did not see something without having seen Allah before it."<sup>2</sup> Of course, he by no means ever claimed that the profundity of the Essence of Allah is conceivable; all that he means is that the essence of Allah is present in

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, p. 26.

2. Ibid.

every object to the extent that it manifests or represents an aspect of Allah. That is how ontology, which is (or at least can be) a purely philosophical and secular issue, became more of a religious doctrine than ever before; and that is probably one of the reasons why Ṣadrā's ontological doctrines, despite their logically unstable grounds, were transmitted from one generation to another uncritically and dogmatically up to the present time.

Whether or not Mullā Ṣadrā's theosophical achievement was really a service to either religion or philosophy remains a controversial issue. No definite answer will be attempted here. One may even suggest that in the absence of gnostic and spiritual experience it is impossible to give the right verdict about Ṣadrā's work, as his theosophy is tied up with esoteric and spiritual knowledge. In so far as the introduction of a spiritual element into rational philosophy is concerned, it seems a reasonable conjecture to say that many Sufis would probably find the rational and logical aspect of Ṣadrā's philosophy inappropriate for and uncongenial to spiritual knowledge. Rūmī, for instance, considered the rational approach as an ineffective wooden crutch and explained his teachings in a purely allegorical and symbolic language, the language of the "reed"<sup>1</sup> whose melodious message can bring relief to the maladies of the soul.

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1. Rūmī, Jalāl al-Dīn, Kullīyyat mathnawī ma'nawī, ed. by Frūzānfar, (Tehran, 1342), p.56.

An alternative answer is put forth emphatically by a contemporary of Ṣadrā. Just when Ṣadrā was deeply engaged in the formulation of his theosophy in Iran, far away in the Occident, Francis Bacon, the English hero of the philosophy of science and the beloved of Renaissance was strongly opposing him:

"... Let no man upon a weak conceit of sobriety or an ill-applied moderation think or maintain that a man can search too far, or be well studied in the book of God's word, or in the book of God's work, divinity or philosophy; but rather let man endeavour an endless progress or proficiencie in both; only let man beware that they apply both to charity; and again that they do not unwisely mingle or confound these learnings together."<sup>1</sup>

I wish Ṣadrā and Bacon had met each other at that time instead of now.

#### Existence and Axiology.

For a philosophy which upholds existence as the only principal element, a criterion of judgement other than existence is virtually excluded. That is how Mullā Ṣadrā's doctrine of the Primordiality of Existence is reflected in his axiology.

Mullā Ṣadrā's axiology can be summarized in a very simple equation: existence = the good. By equating his

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1. Bacon, F. The Advancement of Learning, 5th ed. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1959), p.10.

concept of "good" (khayr) with existence, he prepares the ground for dealing with all axiological issues on an ontological basis. Then "good" and "evil" become the axiological expression of being and nothingness. The "good" to him is something which is essentially sought by all other things;<sup>1</sup> and the only thing which is the objective of all things and the axis of all motion is existence because without existence everything would be nothing. Therefore existence is the "Good" par excellence, and that is all. In other words, that very thing which is called existence in an ontological context is called good in an axiological one. Thus for each of the qualities and aspects of existence explained in his ontology, one can develop a counterpart in axiology. Is good relative? Yes, it is gradational. Is there an absolute good? Yes, there are as many stages of the good as there are stages of existence. Does evil have a reality? No, evil is just nothingness which is nothing but a concept without any objective equivalent. And so on and so forth. To quote his own words:

"Thus existence is mere good and nothingness is pure evil. The more complete the existence of a thing, the higher its goodness."<sup>2</sup>

Mullā Ṣadrā's concept of "good" is clearly different from ethical good, which concerns rules of conduct. In a

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.) Vol.I, p. 179.

2. Ibid., See also his discussion of al-'ināyah in the third Safar of al-Asfār al-'arba'ah. (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol.II, pp.111-114.

theosophy, as Mullā Ṣadrā's, where religious norms and values are predominant, there is very little point, if any, in attempting rationalistic ethical justifications for actions and decisions. His concept of good is in fact a particular objective or positive value which he considers as embodied in existence and which makes existence a motivating agent responsible for all changes that take place in the world. "Good", therefore, has a broad sense which includes all positive values in all fields; it is beauty in an esthetic context, happiness in a moral one, truth in a scientific context and reality in an ontological one. Existence is, therefore, not only the subject matter of the ontological studies of Ṣadrā, it is the subject of his axiology as well.

#### Substantial Motion.

After his philosophy of existence, Ṣadrā's doctrine of substantial motion (harakat-i jawharī) is his most famous philosophical achievement. Amongst the students of philosophy in Iran, Ṣadrā is known for his doctrine of substantial motion in the same way that Newton is known for his law of gravity or Einstein for his theory of relativity.

The fame of this doctrine is not merely due to its cosmological implications or its role in providing solutions to certain theological and eschatological problems; it is also because it is thought of as an area in which Ṣadrā exercised considerable critical thinking and produced

something original, since it is in this doctrine that Ṣadrā strongly opposed Aristotle and outdated an important Aristotelian heritage which his loyal Peripatetic followers accepted rather dogmatically and uncritically.

Mullā Ṣadrā, however, does not claim that the doctrine of substantial motion is a totally original one, and unprecedented in the history of philosophy. Indeed he considers himself as the reviver of the doctrine, not its originator although his arguments for the doctrine seem to be his own.<sup>1</sup>

Substance:

The concept of substance is not of Semitic origin; nor is there an Arabic equivalent for it. The Arabic word jawhar is borrowed from Fārsī, and is, in fact an Arabized form of the Persian word gawhar, which means ink, precious stone, pearl, jewellery in general, the inner reality of things and metaphorically speaking, anything intrinsically worthwhile. It is not a derivative noun for an abstract idea such as "sub-stance"; it is primarily a concrete noun. Its Arabic version, jawhar has more or less the same connotations; and therefore etymologically speaking, it is not a very good translation for substance.

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1. Ṣadrā has cited the various sources in which the physical universe had been considered as a fluxing reality, which implies the doctrine of substantial motion. But, between a fluxing nature of the material world and the formulation of the doctrine of substantial motion there is a gap which Ṣadrā tried to fill. For the sources of his doctrine see: Malikshāhi, Hossein, Harakat wa istifāyi aqsām-i 'an (Tehran University Press, 1343), pp. 297-302.

In Aristotle, substance is an important class in his well known categories,<sup>1</sup> which he worked out as an exhaustive classification of all concepts. These categories and their Arabic equivalents, which are also used in Fārsī, are as follows:

1. Substance (jawhar)
2. Quantity (kamm)
3. Quality (kayf)
4. Relation (idāfah)
5. Place ('ayn or makān)
6. Time (matā or zamān)
7. Position (wad')
8. State (milk or jidah)
9. Activity (fi'l)
10. Passivity (infi'āl)

There is a fundamental difference between Aristotle's concept of substance and that of Muslim philosophers. Muslim philosophers have used "substance" in the sense of one class among the ten categories. To them, essence was the dividend or the place of partition for the categories; accordingly, substance and essence could not be used interchangeably because no class can be logically one of its own subclasses. According to the Muslims' approach,

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1. The term category is translated to maqūlah; but an imitation of its Greek pronunciation (qātīghūrīās) has also been recorded and used in Arabic, even though such intrusions sound highly eccentric in Arabic and much more so in the old days.

therefore, substance which was considered as a kind of essence could by no means be an interchangeable term for it.

In Aristotle, however, substance has a much broader and more principal meaning. Of course, to him too, substance is a category included among the categories; but with one major difference: while Muslim philosophers use substance only in the sense of a class, Aristotle used it in the sense of being and essence as if one sense of substance were synonymous with being and essence.<sup>1</sup> Substance or essence, according to Aristotle does not simply mean the whatness or quiddity of a given thing or a class under which the thing comes; rather he means the very external thing because he holds that "substance signifies that which is individual", and continues: "... while remaining numerically one and the same, it is capable of admitting contrary qualities".<sup>2</sup> This concept of substance, which is claimed to be the individual "this" and numerically one, and also constitutes one of the main problems of metaphysical investigation in Aristotle, corresponds to Muslim philosophers' concept of wujūd (existence), and not to that of jawhar which Muslims defined of just as a class of essence. Aristotle's account of substance in his

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1. McKeon, Richard, The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York, 1961), pp. 303 and 809. See his definition of being and substance (pp.760-61) too. See also Ross, W.D. (ed.) Aristotle's Metaphysics (Oxford, 1929), Vol.VI, p.103.

2. McKeon, Richard, The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York, p. 12.

Book VII *leaves* no doubt about the idea that at least one of the senses of his substance corresponds to Şadrā's existence or being;<sup>1</sup> and those who consider Mullā Şadrā's doctrine of substantial motion as an opposition to Aristotle on the part of Şadrā might not realize that Mullā Şadrā and Aristotle might be talking of two different things.

Motion:

Aristotle defined motion in terms of change which, according to him, takes place between opposites, namely, (1) from a positive term to a positive term; (2) from a positive term to its contradiction; (3) from a negative term to its contradiction; (4) or from a negative term to a negative term. But the last one is not a change because it is not between opposites. The third one, he calls generation, and the second one, destruction; and only the first kind which is from one contrary to another he calls movement.<sup>2</sup> And since substance has no contrary,<sup>3</sup> it is not susceptible of any change or motion. Thus Aristotle concluded that "there are three kinds of movement - of quality, quantity and place - not of substance."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 783.

2. Ross, W.D. Aristotle (London, 1923), pp. 81-82. See also Ross, Aristotle's Metaphysics (Oxford, 1924), Vol. VII, pp. 234-235.

3. Ibid., p. 238. See also McKeon, R. The Basic works of Aristotle (New York, 1961), p. 303.

4. Ross, W.D. Aristotle's Metaphysics (Oxford, 1924), p. 338.

This Aristotelian account of motion was first translated into Arabic,<sup>1</sup> and was then adopted as a part of the Peripatetic philosophy amongst the Muslims.

Muslim philosophers, adopting the Aristotelian categories, accepted that there would be no change in the category of substance. Ibn Sīnā for instance denies substantial motion on the ground that the subject of motion or the moving body should be retained in order for motion to take place; and since substance is the moving object in all motions, motion occurs in the accidental properties which attach to the substance not in the substance itself.<sup>2</sup>

Sadra's View:

Mullā Ṣadrā does not accept the common view of the impossibility of substantial motion held by Aristotle and his followers. On the contrary, he maintains that all accidental change is based on a change in the very substance of things. The difference between the two views is that while Aristotle and his followers would explain the growth of, let us say, an apple only in terms of

1. Badawī, Abd. R. (ed.) Turāth Arastū (Cairo, 1964), pp. 243, 502-503, 511.

2. Musleh, J. Falsafeh-i 'Alī, hikmati muta'āli (Tehran University Press, Vol.I, pp.124-130. Prior to Ibn Sīnā, Muslim philosophers, in conformity with Aristotle, believed that motion took place in three categories of accident: quality, quantity and place. But, Ibn Sīnā differentiated between motion in place and in position and thus introduced position as the fourth category in which motion takes place. See Ibn Sīnā, al-Najāt (Cairo, 1938) p.106, and also Malik-shāhī, Hossein, Harakat wa istifāyi aqsāmi ān (Tehran University Press, 1343), p. 274.

change in its size, weight, colour, taste and other accidental aspects. Ṣadrā would say that all these accidental changes are due to a substantial change in the apple. This implies that according to Ṣadrā the very form of the species of apple is not a constant and fixed thing, present in the embryo of an apple; rather every new form which becomes imprinted upon the apple in its developmental process, is a novel stage in its applehood. Thus the substance of the apple in Ṣadrā's view is something gradational and relative. In his 'Arshīyyah Ṣadrā said:

"Indeed, the substantial identity is something that changes and partakes of degrees although it maintains its identity all along the continuum of motion."<sup>1</sup>

Here again Ṣadrā maintains that in this doctrine, he has been inspired by the Qurān. In his Mashā'ir, he said:

"There is no such thing whether corporeal, terrestrial, heavenly, or spiritual which is not a renovating entity, according to the indications which occurred to me after contemplating certain Qurānic verses."<sup>2</sup>

In his al-Asfār al-'arbā'ah Ṣadrā adduces rational arguments for the doctrine of substantial motion. There he maintains that the motion of a given thing through the developmental stages of its growth is in fact a change in

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1. Ahanī (ed.), 'Arshīyyah (Isfahan, 1341), p.246. See also Ṣadrā's Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah (Mash-had, 1346) pp. 95-96.

2. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Mashā'ir (Tehran, 1964), p.64.

the nature of the thing in order to achieve higher stages of perfection. Such a change leads to new existential manifestations for that thing while its identity or essence is retained and perpetuated in a processional and continuous form, not as something fixed and stationary. In this process accidents which are nothing but functions of substance, and therefore depend upon it in every respect, cannot change unless the substance itself changes.<sup>1</sup>

In another demonstration Ṣadrā argues that any explanation for accidental motion would prove self-contradictory unless it is based on the assumption that substance moves. The essence of corporeal things, he says, is an inner nature which manifests itself in all aspects and qualities of those things. The accidents of the things, are therefore, the effects of the substantial inner realities and have no existentiality independently of them. Now, to say that the accidents of a given thing move without its substance implies that the accidents are considered as independent of the substance; this contradicts the very nature of accidents. Therefore, for every stage of the changing accident, there must be a stage of substance to support the accident. Thus substance becomes inevitably gradational and moving.<sup>2</sup> In connection with this demonstration Ṣadrā

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, pp. 227-28.

2. Ibid., p. 231. See also Qazwīnī, "Sharḥi Hāl-i Ṣadrā al-Muta'allihīn Shīrāzī wa sukhanī dar harākati jawharī" Yādnāmih Mullā Ṣadrā (Tehran University Press, 1340), pp. 5-10.

maintains that:

"Indeed every corporeal substance has a fluid nature (tabī'ah sayyālah), and also a constant aspect which remains subsistent, the latter being to the former what the soul is to the body. The human soul, because of its immateriality survives, whereas the nature of the body undergoes permanent change and flux as it is essentially a processional reality whose subsistence resides in the constant renovation of its form. And, people are oblivious of this even though they are always incurring a new physical nature. The case of the nature of things is the same; similarly, they are also renovating in so far as their material being is concerned, for they, too, have a gradual, and essentially non-constant existence. But, in respect of their intellectual ('aqlī) existence - their Platonic, separate form - they also remain permanent in God's Knowledge. I say that they remain permanent, of course not by themselves, but by God."<sup>1</sup>

Thus according to Mullā Ṣadrā all substantial changes are peculiar to material substances; as for the spiritual realities, there is absolute rest. Each material being is considered as a sign of an immaterial perfect form on the lowlands of metaphor, though not entirely ex-communicated (because otherwise it would be just nothing). It is, therefore, trying to achieve union with its archetype by

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, p. 231.

virtue of a mysterious inner force which keeps the thing in permanent agitation and unrest until it attains perfection. Substantial motion is, therefore, the natural course of everything's journey towards perfection. The perfect model of each thing, which is the ultimate destination of the journey is as Ṣadrā says, the Platonic archetype of that thing which is permanently present in the Divine Knowledge. In the language of Sufism, it is a "constant form" or 'ayn thābit which is imprinted by the Pen in the Preserved Tablet.<sup>1</sup>

Another demonstration is developed on the basis of the essential homogeneity of cause and effect. The effect of every cause, maintains Ṣadrā, manifests a special similarity congenial with the cause. The immediate cause of a changing effect must be changing as it is impossible for a static agent to produce a dynamic effect. Since accidents are changing, the essence which produces those accidents must be changing.<sup>2</sup>

In the course of proving his doctrine of substantial motion, Ṣadrā makes his opposition to the Peripatetic view of accidental motion quite clear.<sup>3</sup> As to what extent he has actually opposed Aristotle, I am not quite sure. It

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1. See Ibn al-ʿArabī's account of The Slate and the Pen in S.A.Q. Husein's The Pantheistic Monism of Ibn al-ʿArabī (Lahore, 1945), pp.81, 84.

2. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-ʿarbaʿah (Tehran Lithog.), Vol.I, p.223. For Ṣadrā's doctrine of substantial motion see also his Risālah al-hudūth, pp.23-26, 35-36.

3. See for instance his al-Asfār al-ʿarbaʿah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol.I, p.226, or his ʿArshīyyah (Isfahan, 1341), p. 246.

is true that Aristotle, as we have seen, repeatedly denied the occurrence of movement in the category of substance; but it is also true that his concept of substance was totally different from Ṣadrā's. One may, therefore, safely say that, despite their apparent opposition, they are speaking of two different things without actually contradicting each other.

The Implications of the Doctrine of Substantial Motion:

An important implication of the theory of substantial motion concerns the old theological issue of the relation between the temporal and the "Eternal". With regard to the congeniality of cause and effect, how can the Eternal be the cause of the temporal? Prior to Mullā Ṣadrā, the answer to this problem was found in the motion of the heavenly bodies.<sup>1</sup> According to this explanation the movement of the heavenly bodies is eternal as time comes from it and therefore succeeds it; while each portion of that movement is temporal because it occurs in time. This movement which exhibited both properties of eternality and temporality, was considered a link between the temporal world and the Eternal Cause.

Mullā Ṣadrā's substantial motion has also the same dual character because all planetary movements are, after

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1. See Dr. Nasr's introduction to Mullā Ṣadrā's Sih'abī (p.23) and his Islamic Studies (pp.1190-120), and also the following:

Malikshāhī, H. Harakat wa ietifāyi aqsāmi ān (Tehran, University Press, 1341), pp. 302-303.

all, accidental movements which, according to Ṣadrā, are the outward effect of the substantial movement. Thus, substantial motion becomes the original motion which precedes all planetary motion which is the basis of our concept of time. In this sense, it is eternal, while its phases and stages are temporal. In this manner, substantial motion is considered as the essential link which connects every being and every change directly to the Eternal Cause without the intermediation of planetary motion.<sup>1</sup>

Another implication of the theory of substantial motion concerns our concept of time. For, if beside the visible motion of the heavenly bodies on which our concept of time is usually based, there is another inherent motion in the nature of beings, then we have another concept of time abstracted from this substantial motion which I would like to call "substantial time", although this sense of time can hardly have any use except in the context of the spiritual life. For instance, two persons who are at two different stages of a spiritual journey and have a totally different speed and cycle in their substantial motion are by no means contemporaries, even though they are living in the same calendar years. Speaking in a broader sense, we can say that every thing and every individual has its own unique motion towards perfection, and is to be judged with respect to its own substantial form and motion; and,

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, p. 236.

a temporal norm defined and developed on the basis of planetary movement is totally irrelevant to the events which take place not with regard to planetary movement, but according to their own substantial motion.

Incorporated within the concept of substantial time a new cosmological view is suggested by the doctrine of substantial motion in which all the universe is in a state of constant change, a change which far from being a blind and aimless dynamism is oriented towards perfection and existential completion.

In the context of the implications of substantial motion, the final point to be raised is that which, strangely enough, has not been raised by any of the students of Mullā Ṣadrā despite its significant bearing upon one of the fundamental proofs of the existence of God. Under the influence of Aristotle, who explained all motion in terms of a Prime Mover, Muslim philosophers and theologians established one of their proofs of the existence of God on the grounds of motion. According to this proof, the chain of moving creatures in which each thing is moved by the one preceding it must go back to a Prime Mover who is free from all change and motion. The fundamental assumption and the key concept in this proof is that things are essentially static and not dynamic; and only then the explanation of the movement of one thing in terms of another could make sense. But, with the introduction of Ṣadrā's doctrine of substantial motion any

causal question concerning the motion of things would be entirely irrelevant because no movement would be unexpected or problematic. Things must change because motion is inherent in their nature. If there is anything to be explained it is stasis and not motion. This means that the entire causal explanation of motion and the Aristotelian principle of Prime Mover are repudiated and discarded, and not even refuted. As Ṣadrā made it explicit things do not need a mover; they need an "existentiator" (mūjid); for, it is their very being which requires explanation, not any of the properties of their essences.<sup>1</sup>

#### Psychology.

The study of the human soul, according to Ṣadrā, is an essential aspect of theosophy; it is in fact the crucial a part of the spiritual journey as it is equated with the gnosis of God.<sup>2</sup> Due to its primal importance, the discussion of the soul occupies an entire "Safar" of Ṣadrā's al-Asfār al-'arba'ah while it appears in his other books and treatises as well. Nevertheless, Ṣadrā's account of the human soul seems to be more of a quasi-empirical psychology than a mystical description of the dynamics of the human soul and its states and stages. His psychological doctrine is very much like an extension of the account

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1. Ibid., p. 224.

2. Nasr, S. H. (ed.) Sih asl (Tehran University Press, 1341), p.13 and 14. See also Ṣadrā's "Iksir al-'ārifīn" Rasā'il-i Ṣadrā (Tehran, 1285), p.288.

given by the Peripatetics with some modifications. Yet this very philosophical psychology is viewed by Ṣadrā in a totally religious and theosophical context and, therefore, the various internal and external faculties of the soul, like various sense organs, sensation, memory, fantasy, imagination and the rational faculty are considered by him as the various stages of the spiritual changes and as the dynamics of the human soul. Consequently, one finds in Ṣadrā's Mafātih al-ghayb, which is more gnostic and theosophical, the same account of the human soul as one does in al-Asfār al-'arba'ah, which is more of a philosophical work.<sup>1</sup>

#### Ṣadrā's Concept of the Soul:

The fourth "Safar" of Ṣadrā's al-Asfār al-'arba'ah begins with an extensive account of the definition of the soul. There he treats the vegetable soul, the animal soul, and the human soul as if they were all various states or manifestations of one continuous reality. In other words, there is one being which passes through various stages of perfection; and, in every stage it exhibits unique behavioural patterns appropriate to that stage. Thus in the vegetable stage, the soul becomes the agent of the actions characteristic of the vegetable life; in the next stage it manifests itself through qualities and traits peculiar to the animal kingdom; and in the

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Mafātih al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.) p. 128-29.

final stage, the soul becomes rational, which is the privilege of human beings. Here are Ṣadrā's own words, from the beginning of the fourth "Safar":

"... And for each of these kinds of life there is a perfective form (al-sūrah al-kamāliyyah) by which the effects of that (particular stage of) life are bestowed upon matter. That form is called the soul. The lowest aspect of it is the vegetable soul; the intermediate, the animal soul, and the highest is the rational soul of man. And these three have an essential meaning in common and hence an inclusive definition."<sup>1</sup>

Then Mullā Ṣadrā tries to prove the existence of the soul as a continuous reality, extended along these three stages of life by looking into their generic behavioural traits. Thus, he says:

"Indeed, we do observe material things which demonstrate special effects not in a constant and mechanical way or without volition, like sensation, locomotion, consumption, growth, and breeding; and, the genesis of these effects is not the prime matter because of its mere reciprocity and lack of activity and effectivity, nor is it the form of the state of materiality which is common in all material things. For there are material things which are devoid of these effects ... And, any active force which generates these effects, ... we call "soul".

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. II, p. 185.

This term applies to such a potentiality not by virtue of its simplicity of nature but because it is the agent of the effects in question."<sup>1</sup>

In other words, Ṣadrā argues that the traits of living beings are not explicable in terms of matter or form; then he introduces the concept of the soul which by definition becomes the apriori source of all these traits while it is to be understood in the sense of a "state of perfection".<sup>2</sup>

In Mullā Ṣadrā's view, life is, therefore, defined as "a state of perfection of material things"; it is considered neither as the consequence of their matter, nor as that of their material forms. Rather, it is a form of a higher order which becomes imprinted upon matter and promotes it to higher or more perfect existential states. Mullā Ṣadrā agrees that this latter form is still a form; the point he wants to stress is that this latter meaning of "form" is not exactly the same as the thing in which matter as such becomes manifest. Therefore he says:

"Consequently, in accordance with what the philosophers have said, we maintain that there are different considerations for the soul, with regard to each of which the soul is called by a different name such as potentiality,

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1. Ibid., p. 185.

2. In his definition of the soul, Mullā Ṣadrā remains in conformity with the Peripatetics. The concept of "the primary perfection" (al-kamāl al-'awwal) in Ibn Sīnā's definition is an essential property of the soul. See al-Rāzī's commentary upon Khājih Naṣīr's glosses of Ibn Sīnā's al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt (Cairo, 1325), pp.120-121.

perfection or form. When regarded as the genesis of such activities as sensation and perception of the sensible and intelligible forms, it is called potentiality; with regard to the matter upon which it comes into action, it is called a form; and with regard to the fact that the essence of the genus is imperfect before the occurrence of the differentia to it, and it becomes a perfect species only after the emergence of the differentia, it is called a perfection."<sup>1</sup>

This by no means indicates that the soul is considered as a quality of the body. On the contrary, to Ṣadrā, the soul is a substance which is immaterial in essence while material in performance and function. In other words, it is a substance whose functions become manifest by way of maintaining bodily temperament, growth, deliberate movement, and rationality; in the sense that all biological and intellectual functions of the human organism are nothing but the outward manifestations of a single, simple substance which passes through various stages of its nature.<sup>2</sup>

The Corporeal Origin of the Soul:

Thus human nature, according to Ṣadrā, is an expanded reality which evolves through various stages. In its

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-ʿAsfār al-ʿarbaʿah, (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. II, p. 186.

2. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, ʿArshīyyah ed. by Ahanī (Isfahan, 1344), p. 235.

initial worldly existence, it is revealed in a totally corporeal entity; and by undergoing its substantial motion it gradually transcends beyond its corporeal phase and achieves complete catharsis.

In connection with this doctrine, it is important to see Şadrā's view about the particular kinds of attachment (ta'alluq) that Şadrā sees between the human soul and the body. He first divides the modality of the attachment of something to another into the following kinds, the order of the classification being indicative of the degree of intensity or strength of the connection involved.<sup>1</sup> The first and the strongest attachment is that of essence to existence. The second is that which concerns the actual dependency of a positive entity upon another, like the attachment of a contingent being to the Necessary Being, or that of an effect to its cause.

The third is the essential attachment which exists between accidents and their subjects. The fourth is the attachment of two essences to each other in the advent of their existence as well as in their substance, like the interdependency of form and matter.

The fifth is the attachment of an essence to another in its existence and identity, but not in its substance. Şadrā's example of this kind is that of the soul to the

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. II, p. 259.

body "since in the initial stages of its existentiation (takawwun), the soul has the mode of the corporeal qualities".<sup>1</sup> He, thus, concludes that the human soul comes into being in the form of bodily existence and then through its substantial motion it passes through physical stages towards its refined nature. In this context, after having considered the element of spiritual knowledge as an integral part of understanding the nature of human soul, Ṣadrā says:

"However, those who have penetrated into knowledge and brought 'theory' and 'practice' together, maintain that the soul has various modes and cycles, and that despite the simplicity of its nature it partakes of different existential phases, some precede nature, some associate with nature, and some subsist after nature. According to their vision, the pre-natural existential state of the human soul is due to the absolute perfection of its cause; the complete and perfect cause always necessitates the effect. The soul, therefore, exists with its cause, for its cause is a Complete and Perfect Essence with Complete Beneficence; and whatever is like this remains inseparable from its effect. But the activity of the soul in the body depends upon certain capacities and particular conditions on the part of the body. It is evident that the temporal advent of the soul occurs within the total capacity of the body; and because of the

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1. Ibid. See also Ṣadrā's 'Arshīyyah, ed. by Ahanī, (Isfahan, 1344), p. 235.

eternality of its cause it remains after the body, having achieved completion. Thus when you have access to certainty about the existence of its cause prior to the body and appreciate the significance of causality and effectivity . . . , then you will realize that it exists before the body and that its bodily existence is but one of its modes of being.."<sup>1</sup>

The natural phase of the existence of the soul begins with a physical nature. It is not the case that the soul comes to the body from outside; rather, the very reality of the soul, as Ṣadrā saw ~~to~~ it, emerges in a material reality at the beginning of its temporal course. And, then the actualization of the physical reality under the principle of substantial motion ends in the spiritual stage of the soul.

"The truth is that the human soul is physical in its temporal occurrence and participation, whereas it is spiritual in its subsistence and intellection; that is, in its participation in the material world, it is corporeal, while by its intellection of its own essence and of the essence of its cause, it remains spiritual."<sup>2</sup>

In this manner the traditional duality of human nature in Mullā Ṣadrā's approach tends to a unity. Man, instead of being a composite of body and soul, is viewed as a single, simple reality which comes into being in a

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran Lithog. ), Vol.II, p.268.

2. Ibid.

body and gradually becomes transformed into its spiritual substance; as if the body of man were a catalyst by which the physical reality ascends to the spiritual. Or, as Şadrā put it: "It is evident that the human form is the ultimate stage of the physical reality as well as the initial stage of the spiritual reality".<sup>1</sup>

The substantial motion of the human soul from a material genesis to a spiritual entity leads to the total actualization of the rational faculty which is just a potentiality in the primitive stages of the development of the soul, i.e. when the soul has not yet cast away its vegetable and animal shells. The soul is the inner force behind all the developmental processes; it is in its vegetable stage when man is still a fertilized cell; then it passes through animal kingdom, which in turn culminates in the initial stage of manhood, wherein the rational faculty is about to achieve actualization. Thus, the intellect becomes manifest after the full realization of the sense organs and the internal faculties like perception, memory and others.<sup>2</sup>

The intellect is of optimal significance for the developmental stages of the soul. It is through the intellect that man can perceive the intelligible forms

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah, (Mash-had University, 1346), p. 95.

2. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, Mafātih al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.), pp.128-32. See also his al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol.II, pp.223-43; and Muṣliḥ, J. Ravānshināsī Sadr al-Muti'allihīn, (Tehran University Press), pp.146-151.

(the knowledge) from the active intellect (al-‘aql al-fa‘‘āl) wherein, as Ṣadrā thinks, all realities manifest themselves as they really are. With the actualization of the rational faculty, the process of completion becomes more of a deliberate and personal effort. Here the individual is required to cleanse his heart of the rust of hesitation and bewilderment, and participate in his own becoming.<sup>1</sup>

Mullā Ṣadrā stresses the necessity of self-purification through the religious undertakings prescribed by the sharī‘ah; but, as to what spiritual stages man will go through in his journey and by what means, Ṣadrā remains reticent. Instead he continues his discussion of eschatological matters. Consequently, it seems to the student of Mullā Ṣadrā that by the study of the human soul and its journey Ṣadrā does not mean much more than the developmental stages which are suggested by Præpatetic psychology.

#### The Unity of the Intelligent and the Intelligible.

Amongst the many creatures known to us, man is the only one that can know, and be conscious of, his own self. This unique quality of man's cognitive process has added a new dimension to the scope of human knowledge. Without the gift of self-consciousness, introspection would have been impossible. In the absence of introspection, if any

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran Lithog.), p. 130.

knowledge were possible at all, it would be confined to the outward aspects of realities, while we would most likely remain totally ignorant about whether there is an inner dimension. Through self-consciousness, we are able to present ourselves to ourselves - a cognitive process in which we have access both to the outer relations as well as to the inner.

Self-consciousness or the knowledge of one's self is the unique experience wherein the knower is the known and the known is the knower; it is an instance where the human mind reflects upon itself without anybody's or anything's intermediation, where man is left to himself to enjoy the utmost privacy and enjoy his most private knowledge. The significance of the knowledge of self was best appreciated by Ibn Sīnā who said that the human mind can perceive and know realities, one of which is the mind itself.<sup>1</sup> Ibn Sīnā's doctrine became known as "the unity of the intelligent and the intelligible". Under this title Mullā Ṣadrā defined a new doctrine, which holds that the knower and the known are one and the same reality, not only in the case of self-consciousness, but in every cognitive experience. Before presenting Ṣadrā's argument in support of the doctrine in question, there are two points to be mentioned.

One is that in the discussion of the unity of the intelligent and the intelligible, whenever Ṣadrā uses the term existence, he means mental existence, not external

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1. Ibn Sīnā, al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt, ed. by Sulaymān Dunyā, Vol.II (Cairo, 1948, p. 421.

existence, because it is quite obvious that two external realities are never one in number if they are two, and they cannot be two if they are really one. Of course two things can be one only in the sense of being of one kind, but not numerically one. What Mullā Ṣadrā means by unity in the present discussion is simply this, that the duality of mind and knowledge is not like that of a container and what is contained in it; nor is mind a tabula-rasa upon which items of knowledge can be printed. On the contrary the duality is that of two approaches to one reality, or two stages of one reality.

The second point is to remember that the present doctrine is the inevitable consequence of Ṣadrā's general perspective. As we have seen up to now, unity is the major principle which governs every aspect of Ṣadrā's system. The duality of essence-existence was denied by upholding the primordality of existence; the observable diversity of things was denied by the doctrines of unity, unequivocality, and gradation of being; the duality of the Creator and creatures was denied partly by the doctrine of gradation and partly by denying the entire significance of all the relative existence in favour of the Absolute Being. The doctrine of substantial motion explained the realities of the domain of contingency in terms of a continuum displaying the same unity which was understood from the doctrine of gradation. Finally the body-soul duality also disappeared in the doctrine of the corporeal origin of the

soul. And now the principle of unity is going to apply to the process of knowledge by removing the apparent distinction between the knower and the known. Here is Mullā Ṣadrā's argument:

"The existence of any perceptible feature - whether intelligible or sensible - is in unity with the existence of the perceiver according to a proof bestowed upon us by Almighty God. And that is that the existence of any perceptible feature, its intelligibility, when it is intelligible, and its existence for the intelligent, are but one in the sense that it is impossible to assume an existence for an intelligible feature without being perceived by the intellect of an intelligent; or else it is not what it is."<sup>1</sup>

In other words, any intelligible, in order to be what it is, must have been perceived by an intellect; in the sense that the very existence of an intelligible as such and its intelligibility find their reality in the mere act of intellection by an intelligent. The intelligible, therefore, cannot have any other kind of existence except mental. Mental existence is not something separate from the mind or different from it in nature. Therefore, it is the mind - the knower itself - that becomes manifest in the form of the known at the level of consciousness. In this manner the mind is the intelligent when regarded as

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Mashā'ir (Tehran, 1964), pp. 50-51.

the subject of intellection, whereas it is the intelligible with regard to the fact that the existence of the known for itself is the same as its existence for the intelligent.

As the foregoing argument shows, Ṣadrā's explanation of the doctrine of the unity of the intelligible and the intelligent is essentially an ontological one. This is because knowledge to Ṣadrā is nothing but a mode of existence which he called mental or noetic. When explaining the doctrine of the unity of the intelligent and the intelligible, in his al-Asfār al-'arba'ah, Ṣadrā's ontological analyses are more elaborate. There he says:

"Verily, things have two sorts of forms: one is the material form whose being rests upon matter and material qualities like place, position and others. It is impossible for such material forms to become actually intelligible, or even sensible... The other is the form which is excised and separated from matter, and its qualities, and is, therefore, an actually intelligible form. If this excision is partial, the form remains actually sensible or imaginable. It is an established fact among the philosophers that every actually intelligible form and its existence for its intelligent are but one, and there is no difference of modality between the two; and so is the case of the sensible; the existence of the sensible qua sensible and its existence for the sensing substance are just one. This being the case, then, if it is assumed that the existence of the actually intelligible form is different

from that of its intelligent in the sense that they become two separate and independent things...., then it follows that one of them is conceivable without any reference to the other. For the indispensable aspect of every duality is at least the assumption of an in-itself existence for each of the members so that each becomes conceivable irrespectively of any reference to the other. But this is impossible in the case of the actually intelligible: for, the actually intelligible cannot have any existence other than being actually intelligible."<sup>1</sup>

Some admirers of Ṣadrā's philosophy have strongly commended this doctrine in its implying that every man is ultimately what he knows.<sup>2</sup> The doctrine itself (regardless of the arguments in support of it) is quite capable of bearing such an implication. But the arguments for it are so unexpectedly rationalistic as to spoil all the profundity of the doctrine. Thus, the entire art and profundity of the doctrine vanishes as soon as the supporting arguments emerge. This is because the arguments, as we have seen, do not go beyond the morphological verbalism of a semantic game. To say "An intelligible, in order to be what it is, must be perceived by an intelligent" is no more than saying "We should not call a given concept an intelligible, unless we really mean that it has been perceived by some intelligent agent; after all it is what the word

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.). Vol. I. p. 277.

2. Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, Islamic Studies (Beirut, 1967), p. 120.

intelligible implies by definition". In his entire argument Mullā Ṣadrā sticks to the lexical definition of "sensible", "intelligible", "intellection", "sensation" and other abstract nouns such as sensibility, and intelligibility in order to arrive at some logically true proposition which he simply mistakes for facts. He does not discern that the verbal analyses of such derivatives reveal no knowledge about the actual process of intellection - given that intellection is a real cognitive process - or about the unity (or lack of unity) of the factors involved in the process.

Ṣadrā said: "the existence of any perceptible feature ... is in unity with the existence of the perceiver according to a proof bestowed upon us by Almighty God". Fair enough. One can understand the possibility of a spiritual illumination of a sort in which, thanks to the Providential Grace, a flash of insight occurs to "the wayfarer" and reveals to him a precious item of knowledge. But why should this miraculous experience become a discursive argument such as "... it is impossible to assume an existence for an intelligent; or else it is not what it is". This argument simply means that the concept of an intelligible presupposes both the act of and the agent of intellection; and this presupposition has to do with the lexical and morphological peculiarities of the three terms involved, and proves no ontological unity of any sort. We can rightly say that it is impossible to conceive

of an employee without presupposing the act of employment and the agent of this act. In fact, every transitive verb presupposes a subject and an object; and the subject of such verbs, likewise, presupposes the verb and the object, while the object also presupposes the verb and the subject. This interrelation does not prove any existential unity for the terms involved in the triad.

Here is another example. The concept of blindness presupposes the existence of eyes. We never seriously say that the table is blind although the table cannot see anything. Here we have a purely lexical or, let us say, a dialectical relation and not a mere morphological one. Due to this relation our concept of blindness is always connected with the concept of eye, simply blind means the destitute of eye; but this lexical connection does neither prove that a given individual is blind or is not blind; nor does it prove that the man with healthy eyes is in unity with a blind person (or vice versa). In actual fact it is sheer absurdity to read into such concept analyses ontological ideas. A more important point is that none of such analyses are so miraculous or unexpected as to represent a gnostic flash of insight.

But the doctrine of the unity of the intelligent and the intelligible is of course very pithy and has far reaching implications when it is studied entirely regardless of the validity of its logical bases. It implies that man is ultimately what he knows; it implies that the

acquisition of knowledge is the very becoming of the human consciousness; it is with respect to this doctrine that one can explain the "positive" denial of every part of the contingent world in favour of the Unity of Allah, knowledge being one of His Qualities. There is no doubt that Ṣadrā has been quite aware of these implications too. For, in his Sih asl he maintained that "he who has no knowledge of the soul has no soul at all";<sup>1</sup> and for the same reason in his account of the unity of the intelligent and the intelligible he said:

"Whatever man observes in this world including the vision of his journey to the next world, he sees them within his own essence and in the realm of his angelic nature; he does not see anything outside his own world as his world is within him."<sup>2</sup>

Indeed the whole universe for an individual is tantamount to what he really knows about the universe, so much so that the question of what things in themselves are may sound entirely irrelevant. Thus, the only road to the attainment of a better grasp of the reality of the world would be through developing, raising, and extending our consciousness. Nevertheless, the doctrine of the unity of the intelligent and the intelligible in so far as it depends upon proofs and so-called logical arguments remains unstable and weak.

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Sih asl (Tehran University Press, 1340), p. 14.

2. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.) p. 148.

Bodily Resurrection.

That people in the life Hereafter will face the Day of Judgement and reap the recompense of their worldly deeds is a cardinal principle of Islamic orthodoxy, and indeed an important tenet of most religious perspectives. Whether man in his bodily person will attend the Court of Justice in the next world, or only in his soul to be rewarded or punished is one of the theological questions that has been treated by Muslim philosophers. Mullā Ṣadrā, whose system was intended to be gnostic in content and philosophic in structure, and who viewed eschatology as an indispensable part of the rationale behind revelation,<sup>1</sup> has given a special consideration to the matter of resurrection. His doctrine of bodily resurrection is considered as the final solution to the once perennial question mentioned above in Islamic theosophy and philosophy.

There is no need to elaborate upon the fact that the question as to whether resurrection in physical or spiritual presupposes the duality of man's nature, and becomes relevant only in philosophies where such a duality is maintained. Mullā Ṣadrā, having considered human nature as a continuum in which the corporeal and spiritual aspects have a longitudinal unity, one may suppose that Ṣadrā's approach to the matter of resurrection would be in keeping with his view about the unity of human nature.

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Mazāhir al-ilāhiyyah (Mash-had University), p. 5.

Mullā Ṣadrā's whole effort in the doctrine of bodily resurrection is focussed upon showing how the life Hereafter is nothing but the actual continuation of this worldly life. In the same manner that an individual at every moment of his life span is exactly the person who has been before, and perpetuates his physical being without constantly retaining the same mineral and organic components, in the life Hereafter, also, the individual will recapitulate all his physical, intellectual, and apiritual qualities without preserving those worldly mineral and organic components.

In his al-Asfār al-'arba'ah, Mullā Ṣadrā appeals to almost all his philosophical doctrines in order to arrive at such a conclusion about bodily resurrection. The conclusion, however, does not really depend on all those doctrines. In his al-'Arshiyah, which is primarily about his eschatology, Ṣadrā arrives at the doctrine of bodily resurrection without referring to all those philosophical ideas. The array of the doctrines in his al-Asfār al-'arba'ah does not, therefore, serve as indispensable premises from which the doctrine of bodily resurrection derives; to my understanding, they are simply to ensure that the reader can clearly see the consistency and coherence that Ṣadra himself sees in the entire system.

However, the following arguments constitute the premises of Mullā Ṣadrā's demonstration for the doctrine of bodily resurrection.

1. The individuality of an existing being - whatever it be, - material or immaterial - is due to its appropriate existence.<sup>1</sup> This proposition is based upon Ṣadrā's philosophy of existence, and implies that the characteristics of things, like their quality, quantity, time, and others, are not the components of things; rather, they are phenomenal, and are associated with the realities of things without having any participation in the formation of those realities. Thus, reddish cheeks, curly hair, particular weight and age, and other physical qualities are not what a person is made of; therefore, these aspects of an individual can change, while the person remains who he has always been.

2. The doctrine of substantial motion, which explains accidental changes in terms of a basic movement in the essential and generic traits of things.

3. The doctrine of the corporeal origin of the soul, which sees the human soul, not as a partner for the body in forming a bilateral nature for man, rather as something whose reality is initially corporeal and ultimately spiritual.

4. The immortality of the faculty of imagination in addition to the rational faculty.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-ʿAsfār al-ʿarbaʿah (Tehran Lithog.), Vol. II, p. 331.

2. Ibid., p. 333. See also his al-Arshīyyah (Isfahan, 1344), p. 248.

5. The consistency of matter and its unity with form throughout all the phases and stages of its existence.

This doctrine is based upon the following principle:

"The subsistence of the quiddity<sup>d</sup> of everything is due to its form which is in fact the totality of the essence of the things and its whole reality."<sup>1</sup>

In his al-Asfār al-'arba'ah, Şadra states the same principle not in terms of form and matter, but rather in terms of soul and body, and says:

"Verily the identity of the body and its individuality are due to the soul not to the corpus. A given person, for instance, is he who is by his soul not by his corpus; and, for this reason his individuality and personality subsist so long as his soul remains."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, form manifests the total reality of things. The question remains as to what is matter and what its function is in respect to form. Mullā Şadrā's answer is that the potentiality of form is matter; this potentiality is within the form itself and is in complete unity with the form. "This is the reason why some have been inclined to accept the unity of matter with form, and they are correct according to us."<sup>2</sup>

1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. II, p. 334.

2. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-'Arshīyyah (Isfahan, 1344) p. 246.

This unity of matter with form means the subsistence of the former within the latter in the sense that with the changes of the form the matter also changes and thus keeps itself appropriate to and in accordance with the new aspects of form.

From these premises, Ṣadrā concludes that resurrection is physical in the sense that this very sensible individual will be present at the Court of Justice. But his physical being, in order to be what it is, does not need to carry the qualitative and quantitative accidents it does in this world. That body is the physical reality which is preserved all along the changing features of the worldly existence, and which perpetuates ones personality in its continuity. In brief, it is this very physical corpus, but not in its static aspect, that appears to us.<sup>1</sup>

Mullā Ṣadrā also tackles the problem of reward and punishment in the life Hereafter.<sup>2</sup> He believes that the recompense that man gains in the life Hereafter is in actual fact within him. The actions of man in this world affect his total reality, and have consequential effects upon the quality of his further deeds and thoughts. The pattern of his attitudes, imagination in particular, and interests will be determined by what he has made of himself in the past; and all of these will influence his soul.

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. II, p. 335.

2. Op. Cit., p. 80.

and the body in which it manifests itself in the life Hereafter. In this manner man's daily actions determine the mode and scope of the creativity of his faculty of imagination which will recapitulate ones past achievement into one's present. It is, therefore, due to his previous achievement that the good doer will be in a state of happiness and the evil doer will be in an undesirable and vicious personality for, his imagination will never be able to bring other than viciousness, pain and suffering upon him.<sup>1</sup>

As can be understood from his eschatology, Mullā Ṣadrā does not really prove the idea of bodily resurrection in the sense of having produced arguments, so cogent and convincing as to convince the unbeliever or even the sceptic. The idea of resurrection itself, which, for Mullā Ṣadrā as a Muslim is revealed truth and therefore unquestionable, is based on faith. Empirical knowledge, having access to no evidence for or against resurrection, remains absolutely agnostic towards it. Rational science, independently of the premises acceptable on religious grounds, can prove no contradiction entailed from the denial of resurrection. Consequently, with regard to any commitment towards the Life Hereafter empiricism and rationalism remain indifferent and aloof. And whatever eschatological knowledge is attained through illumination remains the

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1. Ibid., p. 80.

subjective experience of those who can achieve such experiences. Thus the question arises: What has Mullā Ṣadrā proved in the doctrine of bodily resurrection? My answer is "nothing". He only suggests some philosophical ideas that, if and only if accepted, can explain the idea of bodily resurrection to those who believe in the idea of resurrection already, and are interested in a semi-philosophical explanation for it as well. Apart from the fact that this statement assumes a particular definition of philosophy, it is a fairly objective description of Mullā Ṣadrā's achievement in terms of bodily resurrection. But, let us see whether Ṣadrā himself would agree with such a modest statement. After presenting his preliminary principles and premises Mullā Ṣadrā's final conclusion about bodily resurrection is preceded by the following:

"As the conclusion of what we have forwarded and the fruit of what we have established, I profess that whoever thinks sufficiently and ponders efficiently upon those ten principles and laws [they are in fact eleven] whose foundations we have fortified and whose props we have stratified by emanating demonstrations and illuminating proofs presented in our books and articles, especially in the present work; provided that his nature is safe and sound from the devil, deviation, jealousy, antagonism, bigotry and selfishness, he will have no doubt or hesitation

about the problem of bodily resurrection..."<sup>1</sup>

The passage clearly shows how Ṣadrā himself thinks of the doctrine of bodily resurrection, and of those who may for one reason or another disagree with him.

However, as an explanation for the religious notion of bodily resurrection, the doctrine is, first of all, not binding. One cannot be accused of heresy, schism, or heterodoxy on the ground that one disbelieves in Ṣadrā's doctrine of bodily resurrection. The doctrine is not a religious dogma; it is just a philosophical explanation based on an analogy seen between various stages of man's temporal life on the one hand, and the state of being that Ṣadrā has envisaged for man in the life hereafter. It therefore remains just an analogy, let alone the fact that even this analogy is so much dependent upon such terms as matter, form, quantity, quality, accident, substance, and other categories which can be considered as conventional classifications only, not as knowledge of reality or Reality.

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadrā al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. II, p. 335.

PART IV

EPISTEMOLOGY

EPISTEMOLOGY

The epistemological implications of Ṣadrā's system hold an exceedingly important position in relation to the whole system because they constitute the fundamental logic underlying the system. As a matter of fact a systematic approach to some of the crucial issues embraced by Ṣadrā may prove almost impossible without an understanding of the epistemological nature of his system simply because all those issues are ultimately epistemological. Take for instance Ṣadrā's often-cited idea of genuine and un-genuine philosophy, his search for a "genuine knowledge", his denunciation of one kind of Sufism in favour of another, or his unmitigated attack on some of his adversaries among the jurists; they are all due to his peculiar stance in epistemology; and all of them stem from the fact that Ṣadrā advocates a special theory of knowledge, different from that of his adversaries.

In spite of the fundamental significance of Ṣadrā's epistemology, he does not speak of his theory of knowledge as an independent philosophical issue. His explicit accounts of epistemology are very brief and as part of a metaphysical or psychological matter.

The reason for this is probably that Ṣadrā's interest in philosophical issues is in proportion to the role a given philosophical problem plays in the construction of Ṣadrā's theosophical model: all being has descended from the Necessary Being and will ascend to Him, man in this

cycle being the mysterious final link through whom physical reality achieves transmutation to the metaphysical. Every philosophical issue that has been primarily coherent with and useful to this model is produced by Ṣadrā very seriously whereas so many other issues, such as Zeno's paradox, the atomic view of the physical and spiritual entities and so many other possible issues, are entirely ignored. Naturally in the context of this theosophy to argue over the possibility of knowledge or knowability of the objective world might have seemed simply an academic triviality beyond the aim of the whole model. Hence Ṣadrā's explicit epistemological views became secondary issues.

While the explicit epistemological ideas of Ṣadrā are subsidiary issues often discussed in the context of metaphysical and psychological matters, the implicit epistemological assumptions upon which the whole system is built are at work all through the system. These assumptions come to the fore whenever Ṣadrā attacks his opponents on epistemological grounds; yet they do not constitute any of the principal doctrines of his theosophy.<sup>1</sup> This is probably because the underlying logic of a system might not be a constituent of the content of the system.

To sort out Ṣadrā's epistemological ideas one must therefore take into account not only what Ṣadrā has stated explicitly about knowledge, but also the implicit

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1. This aspect of Mullā Ṣadrā's epistemological ideas can be traced in his Sih aṣl that he wrote against the jurists and in his Kaṣr aṣnām al-jāhiliyyah which he composed against the Sufis.

principles and assumptions which make up the epistemological network underlying Ṣadrā's system.

### The Definition of Knowledge.

Our inquiry into Mullā Ṣadrā's epistemology can begin with the question as to his definition of knowledge. According to Ṣadrā, knowledge is a reality whose quidity is its very entity; that is to say that its essence and individuated existence are nothing but one. And, like existence, knowledge cannot be conceptualized.<sup>1</sup> For the concept of knowledge is already a noetic existence (wujūd-i dhēhnī), hence it is impossible to assume a concept or an essence for knowledge outside the realm of noetic existence. Therefore, knowledge and existence go together. Here again Ṣadrā maintains that knowledge is a self-evident concept which is not susceptible of analysis into such components as genera and differentia; and - like existence - knowledge remains indefinable.<sup>2</sup>

Such a view of knowledge is, in fact, alluded to in Mullā Ṣadrā's ontological doctrine that explained all realities of the world in terms of existence. His view of noetic existence held that all concepts and ideas which in one way or another appear in the human mind were noetic existents. The definition of knowledge is, therefore, bound to be the same as that of existence. Thus, in his account<sup>u</sup>

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, p. 270.

2. Ibid.

of the definition of knowledge in al-Asfār al-'arba'ah we find that Ṣadrā restates the arguments for mental existence and concludes that knowledge is the same as existence; then he continues to the unity of the intelligent and the intelligible.

In his Mafātīh al-ghayb Ṣadrā is more specific about knowledge. There he holds that "knowledge is the occurrence of something's essence for something else which is existentially independent of the former".<sup>1</sup> What he means is that the process of knowledge is the presence of an essence - the known concept - for the knower when the knower is existentially independent of the known. Ṣadrā realizes the difficulty of this definition as to excluding one's knowledge of oneself because the knower in this case would not be existentially independent of the known. He therefore removes the condition of independence in existence in order to make the definition inclusive of self-knowledge as well. Then he maintains that the actual knower is nothing but the soul; that is, in all cognitive processes such as sensation, perception, imagination and others, the soul is the active agent that "invents the objects of knowledge"<sup>2</sup> without being passive to any outside effect. The sense organs and the faculties are therefore not to be seen as receptive organs but as channels through which the soul casts out or projects its creation.<sup>3</sup> This view implies

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.), p.30.

2. Ibid., p. 31.

3. Ibid.

that the realities of the world around us are ultimately nothing but functions of human consciousness.

In the face of such an epistemological view one should resist the temptation to conclude that Mullā Ṣadrā denies the realities of the world around us. For, existence is the very thing which, according to Ṣadrā, remains entirely external and independent of human consciousness. He, therefore, does assert the external existence of the realities of the world. But to assert the existence of things is something; and to say that things in themselves and for themselves are exactly as they are manifested in our consciousness is another. There is no evidence for the idea that all things would still seem as they do, even if we could approach them by different receptive organs and different states of consciousness; whereas the contrary view seems to be more acceptable, namely, that our images of the realities, and our cosmological perspective are always a function of our sensory organs and of our consciousness. If our eyes were as strong as a powerful microscope, then all the present beauty and charm of the flowers would vanish, and all realities would display themselves in a totally different scene and sense. And all that Ṣadrā says is that if we could look at the world through different eyeglasses, then we would see a different world; and, therefore, the present scene of the world is the art of our creative consciousness. In this context, Ṣadrā has said:

"Whatever man observes in this world including the vision of his journey to the next world, he sees within his own essence and in the realm of his angelic nature. He does not see anything outside his own world and his own world is within him."<sup>1</sup>

In brief, in Ṣadrā's view knowledge is the existence which is begotten by human consciousness. So we create or existentiate whatever we know. And, since this creative power is just the function of the human soul, for Ṣadrā, then knowledge to him is, we may say, the self-realization of the human soul.

Khayyām has given a somehow similar account of human knowledge in one of his *Rubā'īyyāt* that Ṣadrā has quoted in his al-Wāridāt al-qalbiyyah:<sup>2</sup>

Man is the ant in a china bowl;  
 Searching a way out, creeping up and down,  
 Set on a journey of no beginning or end;  
 Bewildered and hopeless, muddling round and round.

Khayyām has concluded that human knowledge is a closed circle, and that no matter how far man goes, he can never break the spatial and temporal limitations of his knowledge, or go beyond the boundaries of subjectivity. He is, therefore, in a circular maze, always going from one item of his own experience to another and never grasping the object as such.

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.), p. 184. See also his al-Asfār al-'arba'ah, Vol. I, p. 51, where he considers the essence as the function of human intellect.

2. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, "Risālah fī 'wāridāt al-qalbiyyah" Rasā'il (Tehran Lithog.), p. 271.

Mullā Ṣadrā seems to have incorporated the same view into his doctrine of noetic existence, and has, therefore, come out with the idea that all knowledge is the product of the creative nature of the human mind which begets all mental realities. What follows from this view is that reality, and no doubt the Ultimate Reality, remain beyond the ken of human knowledge. Reality qua an objective being, as Ṣadrā has also upheld in his doctrine of the indefinability of existence, cannot be conceptualized, whereas, whatever is conceptualized is already translated into human experience and has become a state of consciousness; it is therefore no longer an objective and external being. The same thing applies when man strives to "know" God because the putative knowledge of God would ultimately prove to be man's knowledge of his own experience.<sup>1</sup> This is probably one of the reasons for the Sufis' denunciation of all knowledge and their concentrating all the ways to God into what they have so expressively called the Journey.<sup>2</sup> But, whether Mullā Ṣadrā has the same epistemological view about God or not, we shall soon discover in the rest of his theory of knowledge.

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1. I have treated this subject more extensively in my Khudā shināsi va 'ulūmi tajribī (Tabriz University Press, 1350), pp. 57-65.

2. It seems to me that the Qurān has also no indication as to God's being an epistemological reality. The term "Knowledge of God" or "gnosis of God" (al-'ilm bi'llāh, or al-ma'rifat bi'llāh) is not used in the Qurān. Also, Ali bn. Abi Tālib has referred to Allāh as a Reality beyond the ken of human fantasy and inaccessible to human cognitive power. See the first article of his Nahaj al-balāghah.

It should be noted that so far as the existential nature of knowledge is concerned, Ṣadrā sees no difference between true and false knowledge. Whatever appears in our mind is a mentally existing reality. But some of these noetic entities do not and cannot go beyond the realm of mental existence, whereas others correspond to a counterpart which subsists outside and independently of our mind. As Ṣadrā sees the matter, if a given essence is not self-contradictory, it can enjoy external existence as well; and, if it is, then our knowledge of it has no external significance whatsoever.<sup>1</sup>

The other point to be mentioned here is that concepts and propositions are also treated in the same way in his theory of knowledge, probably because the doctrine of mental existence makes it possible to consider every concept as a judgement with an existential predicate.

#### Knowledge and the Categories.

The definition of knowledge in terms of existence is exclusive to all the categorical peculiarities that have been ascribed to knowledge by earlier Muslim philosophers. Muslim philosophers prior to Mullā Ṣadrā had often attempted to determine under which of the ten categories knowledge would fall. For, due to the exhaustive character of the categories, every definition of knowledge would automatically bring the definiendum under one of the categories.

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, p. 71.

On the other hand, a consistent definition of knowledge would imply that knowledge be under one category and always under the same one.<sup>1</sup> A given definition of knowledge can be controversial not necessarily because of its practical or literary significance, but rather on the grounds of its categorical implications. A typical example of this is Ṣadrā's own dispute about Ibn Sīnā's concept of knowledge. He says that knowledge for Ibn Sīnā is something negative when he considers God as both The Intelligent and The Intelligible on the grounds that He does not admit of any plurality (kathrah), neither in His Essence nor in His Qualities. The meaning of being the intelligent and the intelligible, Ṣadrā says, is nothing other than being immaterial, which has a negative sense. In other times he has considered knowledge as accident since Ibn Sīnā has also defined it as the forms which are imprinted on the substance of an intelligent being. He also considered it under the category of relation when he defined it as a relation between the mind and external objects, whereas somewhere else he has put it under the category of quality as he has considered it as amongst the spiritual qualities.<sup>2</sup> Ṣadrā maintains that his concept of knowledge is essentially free from all these categorical arguments. For it is the essence which is to be classified into the categories. There are many metaphysical concepts such as existence,

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1. See some of the issues related to the categorization of knowledge in Shihābī Mahmūd, Rahbar-i khirad (Tehran, 1340) 3rd Ed., pp. 5-7.

2. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol.I, pp. 272, 274.

nothingness, unity, possibility, necessity, and others that fall into none of the categories.<sup>1</sup> Thus, knowledge being defined in terms of existence, remains absolutely free from all those categories; and therefore, the definition itself - at least from the viewpoint of Mullā Ṣadrā - becomes less vulnerable and this sense better.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Ṣadrā's definition is not really any better. The purpose of defining a concept is not simply to produce a definition strongly safe-guarded against all possible categorical arguments. Ṣadrā's account of knowledge, as we have seen, is a mixture of his ontological doctrine of mental existence, and the doctrine of the soul. Therefore, his concept of knowledge is, on the one hand, closely tied to every problem and controversy associated with his ontology, and, on the other, it is linked to the mystery of a metaphysical entelechy; thus, it remains a very mysterious concept that Mullā Ṣadrā himself found undefinable. The most important weakness of this definition lies in that it remains indiscriminate with regard to truth and falsehood. How can a reasonable definition of knowledge imply that whatever comes to our mind is knowledge simply because we have decided that it is called mental existence? If knowledge simply means mental existence then who is ignorant? And on what grounds does Mullā Ṣadrā feel justified to attack his opponents? For, with regard to

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1. To put it in terms of modern logic, Ṣadrā has differentiated between first order predicates which fall into the categories and the second order predicates which do not.

2. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, pp. 271-274.

his definition, whatever occurs to someone's mind is knowledge, even mistakes, delusions, fantasies and day-dreamings. Now, if knowledge and mental existence are the same, then there is no justification for Mullā Ṣadrā's preferring his own ideas to those of his opponents, because they are both mental existence and therefore equally knowledge. On the other hand, ignorance for Mullā Ṣadrā must have been "mental nothingness", an absolute absence of mind, or lack of consciousness, which might be ascribed only to the inanimate beings.

It seems to me that Mullā Ṣadrā has been so enchanted by the all-inclusiveness of his concept of knowledge that the disadvantages of his definition of knowledge never occurred to him. But even regardless of these difficulties, to say that knowledge is mental existence and as a self-evident concept remains undefinable, cannot be considered as an informative definition of knowledge.

#### The Classification of Knowledge.

In his Iksīr al-'ārifin, Mullā Ṣadrā gives a full description of his classification of knowledge. At first he divides all knowledge into two major classes: Worldly Knowledge (al-'ulūm al-dunyawīyya), and the knowledge of the next world (al-'ulūm al'ukhrawīyyah). Then he elaborates as follows:

"The worldly sciences are three. The first is the science of words; the second is the science of deeds; and the third is the science of thoughts which is the

border-line between light and darkness... As for the knowledge of the next world, it covers the sciences of vision and intuition (mushāhadah and mukāshafah), like the knowledge of God, His angels, Books, and His Prophets, as well as that of the Last Day..."<sup>1</sup>

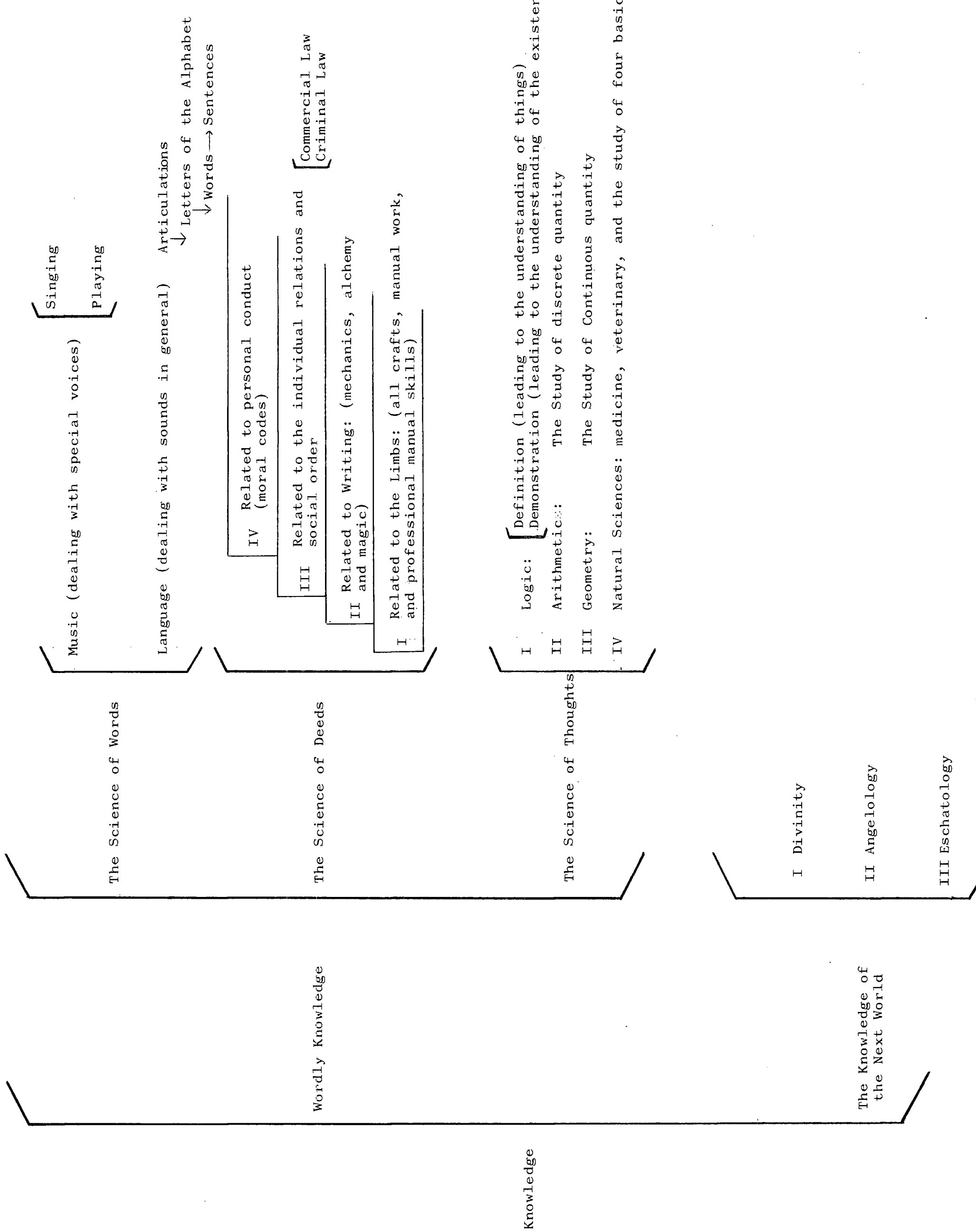
A detailed outline of Ṣadrā's classification of knowledge is given in the diagram on the next page. As the diagram indicates, the first area of Ṣadrā's worldly knowledge is the science of words. This science is involved in considering the voices, sounds and vocalizations. If the sound is a particular voice produced by intelligent agents, in deliberate acts of singing or playing an instrument, then the science concerning it is music. But when sounds in general are meant, then they become the subject of matter of the science of language. For, as Ṣadrā put it, sounds are the elementary components of sentences. Sounds, when articulated become letters, which then constitute words, which in turn constitute parts of speech and sentences."<sup>2</sup>

The second area of worldly knowledge is called the science of deeds. This science either concerns those actions of man which require only the work of the limbs, as Ṣadrā said, or they are intellectually a bit higher and are therefore only partially physical; or they concern the social affairs of the individual; or, finally they are

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, "Iksīr al-'ārifin", Rasā'il (Tehran, Lithog.), p. 279.

2. Ibid., pp. 279-80.



Knowledge

The Knowledge of the Next World

related to one's good behaviour and manners. The first of these four, Ṣadrā calls manual work. The second, he believes, is writing and covers such things as mechanics, kimiyā (alchemy), and magic (shu'badah). The third one has no connection with any physical activity apparently because Ṣadrā makes no reference to any limb or bodily work. Instead he includes some aspect of the sharī'ah in this section, which concerns trading regulations and also the criminal law. So, this section can be called the administration of social relations of the individual. The fourth is the moral code of conduct according to which one must behave.<sup>1</sup>

The third area of worldly knowledge is what Ṣadrā called the science of thoughts. This science has four sub-sections. The first is logic, which deals with definition and demonstration. Ṣadrā explains that definition leads to the understanding of things and demonstration or reasoning arrives at the existence of those things. The second section is arithmetic or the study of discrete quantities; the third is geometry or the study of continuous quantity; and the fourth part covers natural sciences, namely medicine, veterinary, and the study of the four basic elements.

Of the knowledge of the next world, three sciences are reported in Ṣadrā's classification. One deals with the Divine essence, His Names and qualities. This can be

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1. Ibid., p.280.

called the science of divinity. The second is the study of angels or the immaterial, separate souls and intelligences, which are, as Ṣadrā has maintained, the inhabitants of the spiritual domain. This science, we have called angelology. The third is the study of the human soul, and matters concerning resurrection, Hell and Heaven, which might be called as eschatology.<sup>1</sup>

As for the difference between worldly knowledge and the knowledge of the Hereafter, Ṣadrā holds that the former is merely dependent upon the body and therefore perishes with it, whereas the latter does not decay with the body.<sup>2</sup> Due to this essential distinction that Ṣadrā makes between worldly and unworldly knowledge, he considers the former unworthy, and devoid of every intrinsic value; and the latter as the genuine and worthwhile knowledge to be pursued by everybody. He even refers to all worldly knowledge as "techniques" (funūn) and expertise which are of only insignificant instrumental value.<sup>3</sup>

#### A Critical Review of the Classification:

While Mullā Ṣadrā emphasises the preeminence of the knowledge of the next world, he remains absolutely reticent as to the logical order and criteria according to which the overall structure and the content of the classification are defined. For instance, he does not tell us on what basis all worldly knowledge should be divided into

1. Ibid., pp. 281-82.

2. Ibid., p. 281.

3. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Kaṣr asnām al-jāhiliyyah (Tehran, 1340), p. 10.

the science of words, the science of deeds, and the science of thoughts.<sup>1</sup> Or, he does not tell us on what basis he did not include history, geography or, let us say, literature in his classification. More important still is the fact that he does not define the criteria of his classification so clearly as to enable us to determine the place of these sciences in the classification. Consequently all what we can say about geography is that it is definitely not included among the sciences related to the next world; but where does it come among the worldly sciences? We do not know.

Within the branches and sub-branches of the three worldly sciences too, there are inaccuracies and discrepancies. For instance, he does of course tell us that there are three sciences of words, deeds and thoughts; but we do not know the order of hierarchy between them or the internal relation each of them has with the other. Consequently we do not know which comes first, and which, last. Thus the classification gives us no guideline or clue as to which of these three is really the pre-requisite of the other. Some of the criteria of the classification seem strange and somehow arbitrary. In the science of words, for instance, Ṣadrā puts music and language under one

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1. He might have been influenced by the Zoroastrian maxim that outlines the whole philosophy of life as "good words, good deeds, and good thoughts". It might also be true that the whole classification is very individual-centred and as all the deliberate actions of the individual are simply verbal, physical and mental, then Mullā Ṣadrā classified all worldly knowledge according to such activities of the individual and at the same time he opposed all of them to the spiritual aspect as well.

category, merely on the grounds that both of them have the element of noise in common. Ṣadrā does not realize that it is not enough to classify things on the basis of a common quality. A librarian who classifies the books according to the colour of their covers might be very successful in dividing his books into a number of departments; but his library could be of no service to those who are interested in the contents of those books rather than in the colour of their covers.

In his science of deeds, there is an area of knowledge which is related to the limbs. Ṣadrā's examples for this kind of knowledge are crafts and manual works and skills. Meanwhile, there is another area of knowledge which is related to writing under which, quite strangely, come kīmiyā (Alchemy) and magic. Let us ignore the fundamental question as to the essential connection of kīmiyā and magic to writing. Our question is why did Ṣadrā not include writing in the department related to limbs? Is writing not really related to limbs? Is it not a manual skill? Of course it is intellectual too; but every skill has some intellectual element in it. Which is that skill or manual craft which is entirely physical and not intellectual in any way? Is there any reasonable justification or explanation for Ṣadrā's presenting the science related to writing separately from the science related to the limbs and as opposed to it? This sort of haphazard classification is very much like the one mentioned in the passage which Foucault quotes from a Chinese encyclopaedia:

"Animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) et cetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies."<sup>1</sup>

One can say that Ṣadrā's classification is not as illogical as this. It may be quite true; but if mere illogicality is concerned, they will remain similar. Their difference is therefore a matter of degree not of kind.

Ṣadrā considers definition as the means of understanding things (not concepts) and demonstration as the method of arriving at the existence of things. This view of logic is not representative even of Mullā Ṣadrā's time. The whole idea of essential and existential propositions (qaḍāyā haqīqīyyah wa khārijīyyah) in logic - an issue that was raised long before Mullā Ṣadrā - is just to tell us that the assertion of a proposition does not necessarily imply the existence of its subject. That the truth value of a universal proposition is independent of the existence of its subject (an important logical matter which was not until very recently known to the West) is one of the

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1. Foucault, Michel, The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences (Great Britain, 1974), p. XV.

2. For instance, there is a section on essential and existential proposition in Kātibī's Shamsiyyah which was written in the seventh century A.H. Even the commentary upon the work by Quṭb al-Dīn Rāzī was written long before Mullā Ṣadrā as the commentator's death is reported to be in 1347 (8th century A.H.).

valuable contributions of Muslim logicians prior to Mullā Ṣadrā. His account of definition and demonstration in the classification is rather inaccurate, and with very little attention to the science of logic of his time.

However, there is something peculiar about the overall structure of Ṣadrā's classification. Very similar to what Lévi-Strauss reports about some primitive taxonomies Mullā Ṣadrā's classification reflects the nature of man as perceived by Mullā Ṣadrā. Like man's life, knowledge is polarized into worldly and unworldly. The worldly knowledge too reflects the three important traits of man, namely, words, deeds and thoughts. In this way, one can clearly see that the various divisions and subdivisions of Ṣadrā's classification are not developed with regard to any internal relation between the content or the structure of those parts; rather, they are developed in such a pattern as to project Mullā Ṣadrā's concept of man best.

The second, and in fact, the most important section of the classification from the viewpoint of Ṣadrā - the knowledge of the next world - comprises three sciences, namely, divinity, angelology and eschatology. These are what Ṣadrā considers the supreme knowledge with immortal and eternal value. The content of his divinity is what he has discussed in his ontology; his angelology is again the story of the concentric spheres and the separate

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1. See the passage he quotes from page 29 by Jenness in The Savage Mind (London, 1974), p. 37.

intelligences,<sup>1</sup> the cosmological order we find in Aristotle.<sup>2</sup>

In his eschatology (which according to Mullā Ṣadrā should - and therefore does - include psychology)<sup>3</sup> he speaks of the definition of, the proof of existence of, and the substantiality of the soul in addition to the stages of its development from the vegetable soul to the rational soul and the details of bodily resurrection and Heaven and Hell.<sup>4</sup>

On the basis of his theory of substantial motion, and in his doctrine of the material origin of the soul, as well as in his theory of bodily resurrection, Ṣadrā has tried to show a processional continuity in all aspects of the being of the individual including his corporeal and spiritual life in this world and in the world to come. The reader of Mullā Ṣadrā is, consequently, persuaded to anticipate the reflection of this continuity in Ṣadrā's epistemological account concerning worldly knowledge and the knowledge of the next world. For, if the Hereafter is the continuation of the present worldly life, it sounds quite reasonable to expect worldly knowledge to be theoretically leading to the knowledge of the next world. But contrary to this expectation, when we compare the worldly section

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.) p.72. See also his "wāridāt al-qalbiyyah", Rasā'il (Tehran, Lithog.), pp. 242-44. Kal-

2. Crombie, A.C., Augustine to Galileo (London, 1957), pp. 52-55.

3. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Sih ahl (Tehran, 1340), p.7.

4. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.), p.149-53. See also his "Iksīr al-ʿarifīn", Rasā'il (Tehran Lithog.), pp.323-24; his Arshīyah (Isfahan, 1341), pp.142-147, 273-277, and his al-ʿAsfār al-ʿarbaʿah (Tehran, Lithog.) Vol.II, pp. 368-383.

of the classification to the section concerning the knowledge of the next world, we find the link between the two entirely missing. There is no sequential order or structural pattern to connect the worldly sciences to the other-worldly disciplines. Consequently, if someone wished to become an advocate of Mullā Ṣadrā's classification of knowledge and then wanted to establish a school in order to bring up and educate students according to Mullā Ṣadrā's ideals, Ṣadrā's classification of knowledge could hardly provide for any practical guideline in terms of curriculum planning for the school. The educator in question would have to rely on his personal initiative, rather than on Mullā Ṣadrā's chart of knowledge.

A strange aspect of Mullā Ṣadrā's classification concerns the absence of almost all religious sciences included in or related to the sharī'ah from it, in spite of the fact that Ṣadrā has emphatically required the conformity of all disciplinary undertakings with the sharī'ah.

Another peculiarity of the classification is the absence of a body of knowledge to be called philosophy from it. This is not so much unexpected, of course, in the face of Mullā Ṣadrā's opposition to philosophy. However, many of component parts of what was called philosophy at the time of Ṣadrā are already included in one part or another of Ṣadrā's classification. Logic and natural philosophy, for instance, have come under the science of thoughts; music, under the science of words; and metaphysics and psychology, under divinity and eschatology

respectively. That is how philosophy is converted to an intellectual effort with a religious orientation and outlook.

### Methodology.

We have, up to now, discussed Ṣadrā's view about the meaning and nature, as well as the classification of knowledge. It is now time to consider Ṣadrā's view concerning the means and methods of distinguishing between true knowledge and false or illusionary ideas. This consideration becomes very important when we remember that knowledge, for Mullā Ṣadrā, was essentially noetic being which was, in turn the function of the creative nature of human mind and imagination, which recognises no boundary or limitation. Thus when man is the master of his creative power, and free to beget whatever he wishes, then a measure of distinguishing between real knowledge and false knowledge is of prime significance, and practically necessary in spite of the fact that such measures presuppose some inconsistency in Ṣadrā's concept of knowledge.

In Mullā Ṣadrā's classification, we observed that Ṣadrā had two major classes of knowledge: one, worldly knowledge which was mundane, perishable and therefore worthless; the other, the knowledge of the next world, which was permanent, immortal, and therefore worthwhile. These two classes of knowledge are distinct from each other not only in content and merit but also in means and methods as well as in their degrees of reliability and certainty. That is to say,

while the truth of the worldly knowledge, for Ṣadrā, is only relative and temporary, the truth of the immortal knowledge is absolute and permanent. The questions "What is true?" and "What is false?" are therefore ambiguous unless we know what particular area of knowledge they refer to. For the theory of truth in worldly knowledge is not necessarily the same as that of the knowledge of the next world. In the area of worldly knowledge two theories of truth can be traced in Ṣadrā's system: the correspondence theory and the consistency theory.

#### The Correspondence Theory.

In Ṣadrā's ontological and psychological ideas, there are indications of the fact that Ṣadrā, at least implicitly, maintained the correspondence theory of truth, i.e. a given idea is true when it corresponds to facts. Reference to such a correspondence is observed in Mullā Ṣadrā's definition of conception:

"I would say that the conception of something generally means the advent of its meaning to the mind corresponding to the actual thing."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, correspondence between mind and the external world, in Ṣadrā's view of conception, is a measure of distinguishing between a concept which is formed realistically and the one which is not so formed.

His doctrine of the primordially of existence which was the claim to the externality of being and his distinction

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Mashā'ir (Tehran, 1964), pp.4-5.

between mental existence and external existence on the grounds that external effects and efficacies are associated with external being,<sup>1</sup> not with noetic entities, imply that Ṣadrā would consider the external world as a criterion of judging the truth value of the mental world. In his al-Asfār al-'arba'ah, he maintained that the duality of existence and essence is a purely mental duality and an analytical matter; and in so far as the external entities are concerned, there is only one being from which our mind excises the two concepts of essence and existence.<sup>2</sup> The whole argument of the primordially of existence is that since in the external world there is only one thing, then of the two elements present in our mind - existence and essence - one of them and only one must be the counterpart of the external thing; and, that is why that he tries to deny essence in favour of existence in order to have resolved the paradox of mental duality in favour of the external unity. Now, the point is that the whole argument makes no sense without presupposing the correspondence between the mind on the one hand, and the external world on the other. It is, of course, questionable that to what extent Ṣadrā was knowingly and consciously referring to this correspondence. What we know is that he never attempted to develop a theory of truth on the basis of correspondence between mind and world. Yet there is no

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah, (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, p. 61.

2. Ibid., p. 60.

doubt that the underlying theory of truth in some of his arguments is in keeping with the correspondence theory; and this theory is, therefore, implicit in his arguments.

The Consistency Theory of Truth:

Another theory of truth found in Ṣadrā implies the consistency of ideas. A given proposition in this context is true when it is consistent with the other statements which are already accepted as true. Evidence for this concept of truth in Ṣadrā's system is overwhelming. All his syllogistic arguments for the Primordiality of Existence, or his arguments in support of the doctrine of the unity of the intelligent and the intelligible exemplify the concept of truth in the sense of consistency of ideas.

Besides, Ṣadrā is a logician himself, who has contributed to the field of traditional logic Lama'āt al-mashri-qiyyah fī funūn al-mantiqiyyah. As a logician, Ṣadrā is undoubtedly committed to the consistency theory of truth. The only thing that can be brought up against him in this context is that logic to him is not simply a method of verifying the consistency of ideas; it is rather a means of understanding "things" as well as understanding the existence of things (as his account of definition and demonstration in the classification implies). Thus, when he deduces a conclusion from some putatively accepted premises, he thinks that he has achieved more than demonstrating a structural relation between those premises and the conclusion.

On the whole, one can safely say that formal logic constitutes the major instrument of arriving at truth at least in the domain of worldly knowledge. Thus far Ṣadrā can be considered as a rationalist. To give an example of his rationalism we may quote the following passage from his al-Asfār al-'arba'ah, wherein he maintains the possibility of attaining knowledge about both material and immaterial entities merely through definition:

"Concerning the possibility of the knowledge of the reality of things... As it may be found in some of the sources, the reality of the composite entities can be known; and, this is because of the possibility of defining them in terms of generic properties and constituents. As for the simple and immaterial entities, they cannot be conceptualized. Hence, the final purpose in their knowledge would be their definition in terms of their effects and consequences. For instance, if it is said that the soul is the mover of the body, then the known aspect would be only that it is the mover of the body. As for the reality of the soul and its essence, it remains entirely obscure..."<sup>1</sup>

As the passage indicates, Mullā Ṣadrā relies in his rationalism not only on reasoning and demonstration but also on definition. As for the slight indication of the correspondence theory which is traceable in some of Ṣadrā's

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1. Shīrāzī, Sadr al-Dīn, al-Asfār al-'arba'ah, (Tehran, Lithog.), Vol. I, p. 96.

passages, they cannot be taken very seriously. For one can hardly consider Ṣadrā as someone who really meant to encourage the pursuit of knowledge through observation of facts and experimentation. There is no evidence of Ṣadrā's engagement or interest in any empirical work. Reason, therefore, remains the chief and probably the only method of attaining worldly knowledge for Ṣadrā. Even in the field of the knowledge of the next world, the predominance of the role of formal logic can be observed in Ṣadrā's theosophy, although his Sufism brings a new epistemological dimension to his system and for this reason it deserves separate consideration.

#### Gnosis.

While the consistency theory of truth seems to be Ṣadrā's chief yardstick for measuring truth and falsehood in the domain of worldly knowledge, his concept of truth in the field of the knowledge of the next world is tied up with a totally different cognitive experience to be achieved by religious and spiritual discipline and mystical undertakings. This gnostic experience is a new epistemological phase in Ṣadrā and requires us to review his ideas about ʿirfān (gnosis) from the epistemological angle, and point out some of their implications in terms of means and method of attaining true knowledge.

Before the epistemological consideration of Ṣadrā's gnosis, it should be noted that from the viewpoint of Islam knowledge is a divine grace, a gift which is bestowed upon

man by Allāh. In the Qur<sup>ʾ</sup>ān man is introduced as the vicegerent of Allāh in the Earth by virtue of the divine knowledge entrusted to him.<sup>1</sup> Thus every individual man has already got the seed of the divine wisdom within his intelligent nature which can flourish when it is nurtured and nourished with spiritual nourishment. Allāh has promised knowledge in return for piety.<sup>2</sup> The idea is that by cleansing one's "self" and by living the religious life of Islam one can, thanks to the Grace of Allāh, fulfil his spiritual quest and the transmutation of his soul. The cognitive manifestation of such a spiritual transformation is the advent of a unique insight and intuition, which symbolically, stands for the presence of the Divine Light in the heart of the slave.

Mullā Ṣadrā has tried to develop his gnostic doctrine on the basis of such Quranic views of knowledge. He, therefore, begins with the idea that since all knowledge comes from Allāh, the Qur<sup>ʾ</sup>ān is the only reliable source of genuine knowledge which is to be "studied" and understood in the light of the Prophetic Tradition. Therefore, the system of religious and spiritual education as already set out and practised by the Prophet and his family (may peace be upon them) constitutes the only channel of gnosis in Ṣadrā's view. As we have noticed in his Sufism, Ṣadrā maintains that by exerting oneself to religious undertakings

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1. The Qur<sup>ʾ</sup>ān, II: 29,30,31. See also 54:4 and 96:4,5.

2. Ibid., 2:282.

and by following the model of the Prophet, one's heart becomes illuminated and one's consciousness becomes receptive to the divine inspiration. In order not to be misunderstood or misinterpreted, Ṣadrā made it specifically clear that by inspiration he did not mean the kind of experience through which the Qur'ān was revealed to the Prophet. He emphasized that revelation was complete with the Qur'ān. But to know the Qur'ān, according to Ṣadrā, and to appreciate the Qurānic truth, requires a unique intellectual excellence essentially different from the ordinary academic skills. It is a particular intuition which the slave of Allāh may develop, and through which, thanks to the Grace of Allāh, he may gain spiritual attainment.<sup>1</sup> By virtue of spiritual experience, Ṣadrā said, one may penetrate beyond the lexical and commonly-understood meaning of the Qur'ān to such an extent that, not only every sentence or word, but also every letter and every dot becomes meaningful. Then one can decipher those mysterious Qurānic symbols which reveal nothing to the ordinary reader.<sup>2</sup> In the light of this symbolic understanding, every sign in the Qur'ān becomes a representative of the Breath of the Compassionate, through Whose articulations both the Qur'ān and the cosmic text have been revealed.<sup>3</sup>

Worth mentioning is the point implied in Ṣadrā's account of the spiritual journey, namely, that the entire

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Maḥāṭih al-ghayb, (Tehran, Lithog.), p. 15.

2. Ibid., pp. 3, 15.

3. Ibid., pp. 6-8.

journey from the beginning to the end seems as a mutual process in which God and man both participate; but, while God is the active partner, man seems to be passive and receptive. The seed of knowledge enshrined in human nature assumes an essentially passive position for man. When he actively participates in his spiritual enhancement by rituals and other undertakings, he is in fact engaged in making his own heart receptive to the Divine illumination, which is ultimately a passive position; and, also in his moment of inspiration he is passive. It may, therefore, be true that, from the viewpoint of Ṣadrā, religious and spiritual knowledge is a mutual experience for both God and man; the Qur'<sup>3</sup>ān is the actual context in which this experience takes place. It is very likely that Ṣadrā's reference to "yuhibbuhum"<sup>1</sup> as an instance for an individual's symbolic understanding of the Qur'<sup>3</sup>ān is meant to be as an implicit indication of the mutuality of the experience. For, the phrase "yuhibbuhum", as we have said before, is extracted from the verse 54 of the 5th Surah (al-Mā'idah). In the context of this verse God reveals that "Allāh will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him". Beside the explicit reference to the mutuality of the love between God and the men of God, the active role of God in this process can be understood from the fact the the phrase yuhibbuhum (which signified God's love toward His people) precedes that of His people toward Him, as though the love of the people toward God always

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1. Ibid., p. 5.

follows that of God to the people like the shadow which follows a person and remains his effect.

To sum up the epistemological implications of Ṣadrā's gnosis so far, all genuine knowledge comes from God. The only reliable source of this knowledge is the Qur'ān; and the method of attaining this knowledge is spiritual realization in the light of the instructions and recommendations of Prophet Muḥammad (may peace be upon him).

What is spiritual realization? And how does it lead to knowledge? In his Mafātīh al-ghayb, Mullā Ṣadrā introduces a new classification of knowledge which reflects his method of acquisition of knowledge more explicitly. First, he divides all knowledge into two kinds: religious (shar'ī), and rational ('aqlī). Religious knowledge is divided into the knowledge of the principles, (a knowledge which includes Divine Unity, prophethood, imāmah and resurrection), and the knowledge of the sharī'ah. Rational knowledge is also divided into two parts: theoretical (nazarī) and practical or applied ('amalī). The first section covers the branches of traditional philosophy, namely, metaphysics, mathematical philosophy, and natural philosophy; and the second section includes the practical branches of traditional philosophy: moral philosophy, domestic or home economy (tadbīr al-manzil), and politics.<sup>1</sup>

For the acquisition of the various branches of knowledge mentioned above, Mullā Ṣadrā recognizes two different methods of learning. The first method is academic study,

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran Lithog.), p. 39.

which requires reading and writing. This kind of learning he calls "external learning" (al-ta'allum al-khārijī). But when the academic knowledge requires thinking and reasoning, it is considered as "internal". The second method of learning is intuitive discovery or mukāshafah. Mukāshafah is also of two kinds: formal (sūrī), and spiritual (ma'nawī). The former, according to Ṣadrā leads to the formal knowledge of the material world. Through this experience the learner learns about the qualities of material things and their benefits; but since his discipline is oriented towards spiritual development, he does not take advantage of this kind of knowledge for the purpose of material welfare. In other words, he is not primarily interested in the formal knowledge and its benefits; therefore he takes no notice of it.

The spiritual knowledge which is the main target of intuitive discovery is the emanation of the Divine Name. This kind of intuitive discovery may be achieved as the result of particular invocations and prayers. The spiritual aspect of intuitive discovery has three levels, or three hierarchical stages:

1. Guess or intuition (hads)
2. The presence of knowledge in the heart.
3. Direct vision of the known through the heart.<sup>1</sup>

The main distinction between academic learning and intuitive discovery is that the former is associated with academic skills and activities; while the latter is

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1. Ibid., p. 40.

attainable through an ecstasy (jadhbah). This ecstatic experience, which is the result of particular religious undertakings, may lead to what Ṣadrā calls spiritual, intuitive discovery (al-mukāshafah al-ma'nawiyah).<sup>1</sup>

Mullā Ṣadrā does not tell us very much about the details of the practical procedures and stages of the academic aspects of learning, or about how intuitive discoveries relate to academic knowledge; and this is probably the major epistemological gap in his system. For, in the field of academic knowledge, there are, among other things, almost all fundamental aspects of philosophy, which as such do not necessarily have any Divine authenticity. They are subject to modification, refutation and rejection, either because they no longer accord with new facts and findings of human discovery, or simply because scholars of a given time may not be interested in them. Therefore, it is of utmost epistemological significance to see in what way Ṣadrā's intuitive discoveries can confirm the validity of philosophical knowledge - a knowledge which is often considered as metaphorical and relative by the Sufis - and how ecstatic experience can be grafted on the so-called rational philosophy. Since in our present approach we cannot actually experience or examine the three stages of the intuitive discovery maintained by Ṣadrā, we have to concentrate upon those ideas which, according to him, are the results of his gnostic experience.

Mullā Ṣadrā's spiritual knowledge, as we have seen, is putatively based upon the revealed sources of Islam. This knowledge, in so far as it is developed from the Qur'ān and its method requires strict conformity with the Prophetic Tradition, seems to be an entirely religious and spiritual discipline both in structure and content; and since it is attainable through ecstatic experience, it remains personal and subjective.

The trouble is that when this discipline remains so much of a private and personal experience, how can the wayfarer know that his private experience - whatever it may be - is really the right one and not just a state of elation that might happen to anyone? Bearing in mind that we communicate, not by exchanging the actual cognitive experience within us, but through conventional symbols, then (1) how can it be ensured that a given symbol is really carrying or communicating exactly or approximately what the speaker wants to communicate? (2) and how can the listener be sure that what he perceives is not really his own experience read into the message, but the meaning that the message is supposedly, let us say, carrying? In other words, in a very simple setting there are at least three factors involved in a communication: (1) an agent who wants to communicate; (2) a receptive person to whom the message is sent; and (3) a message which is transmitted, let us say, in vocal symbols. In an ordinary communication, we can say that in so far as the receiver of the message reacts in the way the speaker

expects, then the communication serves its purpose. For instance, if the listener passes the water to the speaker who has said "I am thirsty", (assuming that the speaker expects the reaction of passing the water on the side of the listener) the speaker is quite satisfied and does not really need to make sure that the listener understands from the word "thirsty" exactly what the speaker has in his subjective feeling. A behaviourist, in this way, is merely interested in the right reaction, and therefore he can establish communication with Pávlov's dog and Skinner's pigeon because both animals have apparently "learned" to respond correctly. But Mullā Şadrā's case is different. The wayfarer is interested in the actual experience, and if he communicates at all, he wants to be sure that the listener is receiving exactly what he is transmitting.

For the disciple of Sufism who is under the spiritual guidance of a master, there is no problem, at least from his point of view, because he has a shaykh who himself has been through all these stages and knows every twist and turn of the road. All that he has to do is to follow the guideline of the master. But what about Mullā Şadrā, who denounces all the established and so-called institutionalized Sufi orders?

There is a still more fundamental question connected with the content of Şadrā's spiritual knowledge. No doubt, the Qur'ān has promised "observe your duty to Allāh; and Allāh will teach you"; but the details of what Allāh will teach are not specified. The teachings of Allāh can be in

the form of a general wisdom or a sound judgment to lead the individual to the right course of action and decision; they could be in the form of flashes of insight which change one's learning ability; they could be in the form of elimination of doubt and restoration of certainty, peace of mind, and spiritual tranquility. They could be any or all of these or even any other kind of knowledge. The Qur'ān's account of the Divine teaching is so general and all-inclusive that it covers all knowledge. But Mullā Ṣadrā's account of spiritual knowledge is much more specific.

In his al-Mazāhir, his account of the rationale behind the revelation of the Book confined the objectives of the Quranic revelation to a system of gnostic knowledge comprising the gnosis of God, His qualities and angels, the knowledge of the soul, and the knowledge of the life Hereafter.<sup>1</sup> Then he concludes that anyone who wants to become engaged in deciphering the revealed code and to attain the Divine knowledge must focus all his intellectual effort into these three fields.<sup>2</sup> And, when we study the actual issues and problems of this trilateral discipline, we find them more philosophical than Qurānic; and Mullā Ṣadrā's approach to those problems, too, proves to be more rationalistic and logical than religious or spiritual. For instance in the fifth Miftāh of his Mafātih al-ghayb he gives five demonstrations for the

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Mazāhir al-ilāhiyyah (Mash-had) p.5.

2. Ibid.

existence of God, after an introductory statement which says:

"The quality of the relation of the existence of a thing to its essence comprises necessity, possibility, and impossibility. A given thing is therefore necessary, possible or impossible from the existential point of view. The necessary is what does not accept nothingness, i.e. it is impossible to be considered as non-existent. The impossible is that which does not accept existence; i.e. it is impossible to consider it as existent. The possible is that which is susceptible of both being and not-being..."<sup>1</sup>

Being a logician, Mullā Ṣadrā is quite aware that the three modes in question are related to predication not to things. Traditionally speaking, modal logic has always been included in propositional logic. Neither Mullā Ṣadrā himself (in his al-Lama'āt al-mashriqiyyah) nor any one before or after him among the Muslim logicians, has ever discussed these modal analyses other than in connection with propositional logic. Nonetheless, he speaks of the necessary or impossible "things" (not propositions) in the context of his gnosis. Then Ṣadrā tries to prove the existence of God on the basis of logical demonstration, hence, he produces five arguments, most of which suffer from irremediable logical or philosophical impediments.

In one of them, for instance, Ṣadrā refers to the necessity of form for matter. The combination of the two,

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, al-Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran, Lithog.), p. 60.

which according to Ṣadrā is the basis of the material beings, requires a cause outside the two. This cause is identified with God by Mullā Ṣadrā.<sup>1</sup> He does not realize that this argument makes sense only in the context of Aristotelian cosmology, in which corporeal entities are explained in terms of matter and form.

In another argument he tries to arrive at the existence of God on the premise that the presence of the soul, as an immaterial substance, in the body also presupposes a cause.<sup>2</sup> Here again Ṣadrā ignores the fact that the entire argument is based upon the belief in the existence of the soul, which is itself a religious belief. To prove God on the basis of the soul is ultimately the same as to prove the soul on the basis of God; such is the case at least for someone who does not believe in God; let alone the fact that the soul-body duality was essentially denied by Ṣadrā.

The principle of causality is employed, in fact, in all his arguments wherein he arrives at a *primum mobile* or a first cause.<sup>3</sup> Let us for the time being ignore the fact that the principle of causality itself is a controversial matter which is not universally agreed upon, and assume that every opponent will be finally cornered by Mullā Ṣadrā's arguments, and hence convinced that there must be a prime active cause or a *primum mobile*. This does not

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1. Shīrāzī, Ṣadr al-Dīn, Mafātīh al-ghayb (Tehran Lithog.) pp. 63-64.

2. Ibid., p.64.

3. Ibid., pp. 64-65.

necessarily lead the opponent to any religious faith, for what he has arrived at is nothing but a logical necessity. In other words, a logic which proves God might be a very effective logic; but a "God" which is so worked out by logic is not necessarily a very "good" God. But the major difficulty, still, lies outside all of the arguments he produces for the existence of God. The difficulty is as to how a system of gnosis, a spiritual system which is putatively based upon the Qur'ān and the Prophetic Traditions, results in arguments for the existence of God. If the existence of God is to be proved, then what is the notion of the Qur'ān and the Prophetic Tradition all about?

When speaking of the angels of God, Ṣadrā appeals to the old story of the separate intelligences and souls and the concentric spheres of the classical planets.<sup>1</sup> Such an angelic order seems to be more Aristotelian than Quranic; and to understand such an angelic order the knowledge of the Aristotelian cosmology is what really works not spiritual realization. Many atheists can, indeed, learn this so-called angelic order by direct reference to the Greek sources. I do not see why the Quranic concept of the angel should be interpreted in terms of the Aristotelian or Ptolemaic cosmology at all. Of course, one can say that the philosophical and cosmological concepts of the Greeks are used in Mullā Ṣadrā's system only symbolically and not

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1. Ibid., p.72. See also Ṣadrā's "Iksir al-'ārifīn"  
al-Rasā'il, (Tehran, Lithog.), pp. 282-83; and his wāridāt  
al-qalbiyyah", Ibid., pp. 243-44.

literally. But what was wrong or inadequate about the Quranic symbolism itself? However, Ṣadrā has also interpreted in this context the verse "And with Him are the keys of the invisible. None but He knoweth them..."<sup>1</sup> Had he paid any attention to "None but He knoweth them", he would have probably given up the idea of interpreting "the keys of the invisible".

With regard to the foregoing account, one can hardly uphold that the content of Mullā Ṣadrā's gnosis is totally the same as an orthodox view of the Qur'ān, despite the fact that the fundamental justifications of his system as a whole seem to be based upon evidence from the Qur'ān and hadīth. Hence, there is apparently a discrepancy within Ṣadrā's theory of Sufism; namely, while the epistemological aspect of his gnosis views knowledge as the consequence of the mutual participation of the Divine Light on the one hand and man's disciplined mind, on the other, the content of his Sufism includes among other things a bunch of rationalistic arguments which are acceptable to those who advocate the Greek philosophies dogmatically. This incongruous aspect of the content of his Sufism imposes upon the epistemological doctrine of his Sufism a methodological variation which is perhaps entirely uncongenial to Sufism. Whereas the method of achieving spiritual knowledge, as suggested by Ṣadrā himself is mainly religious effort and spiritual attainment, it practically tends towards classical rationalism. In conclusion, rationalism

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1. The Qur'ān, VI:59. Ṣadrā's interpretation mentioned above appears in his "iḳsīr al-'ārifīn", al-Rasā'il, p.283.

characterises not only Mullā Ṣadrā's worldly knowledge, but also his knowledge of the Hereafter as well. This is probably because of Ṣadrā's profound preoccupation with the plenum of the philosophical ideas handed down to him. Thus, his keen interest in spiritual and religious experience could not really sever his ties with the lore of traditional philosophy.

However, Ṣadrā claims that beneath this rationalistic structure lies what he considers gnostic experience. Mullā Ṣadrā's account of the practical method of this intuitive discovery is very general. He stresses religious effort according to the sharī'ah; but he does not recommend any specific ritual exercise or invocation for any spiritual state or station, either because he considers them as confidential instructions, or probably because he thinks that the acts of ritual as they are commonly prescribed by the sharī'ah are the right procedures for spiritual undertaking provided that they are performed deliberately and meaningfully, and not habitually or carelessly. As for the actual spiritual stages of the dynamics of the human soul, he is again very reticent. All what we hear from him is the story of traditional psychology, which begins with the definition of the soul, its vegetable, animal, and rational stages, through all of which the individual soul passes, and then proceeds to its different cognitive faculties and functions from sensation to intellection. Is Ṣadrā really speaking of the dynamic spiritual stages symbolically? Or does he really mean nothing but the

psychological ideas of traditional philosophy? These questions are beyond the ken of my knowledge, and are left to those who have access to Sufi experience.

It is also left to the same authorities to decide whether Ṣadrā did really have access to gnostic spiritual attainment or whether he was just a religious philosopher with a profound interest in Sufi literature. What I can say in a philosophical context is that, if spiritual experience is associated with "genuine knowledge" and certainty, then Mullā Ṣadrā, who mixed rational philosophy with gnosis, ~~has~~ put himself in a dangerous position. For with regard to his claim to spiritual knowledge, he might have considered all his knowledge - spiritual or otherwise - as genuine. This might explain his failure to realize the fallacies involved in some of his philosophical arguments.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Muḥammad Ibn Ibrāhīm, Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī was a Persian Muslim with a strong religious background. Having completed the elementary courses of learning in his hometown, Shīrāz, he went to Isfāhān, where he continued his studies in the Islamic sciences and philosophy. Because of his peculiar philosophical and mystical ideas, he came into conflict with some of the legal authorities and decided to take refuge in a remote village called Kahak. After about ten years of self-exile, during which he was engaged in religious undertakings, he returned to Shīrāz where he spent the rest of his life in teaching and writing. In his seventies, when making his seventh pilgrimage to Mecca, he died in Baṣrah in 1050 A.H.

Ṣadrā's intellectual system is based upon his understanding of the Qur'ān. According to him, the purpose of the revelation of the Qur'ān is to inform man of the reason behind his creation and to instruct him to carry out his duties accordingly. Mullā Ṣadrā, therefore, attempts to draw from the Qur'ān the essential duties of man and the method according to which man must perform those duties. Hence, with reference to evidence from the Qur'ān, he concludes that there are six objectives to be sought by man so that he may succeed in achieving what is essentially incumbent upon him. These objectives, according to Ṣadrā, constitute a comprehensive scheme which, if carried out properly guarantees the individual's happiness. The first

three of these objectives concern the kind of knowledge which should be sought; and the other three demonstrate the practical method of attaining that knowledge. These objectives are as follows:

1. The gnosis of God, His qualities and angels.
2. The gnosis of the Right Path.
3. The gnosis of resurrection.
4. The gnosis of the Prophets, who are the practical models and guides to the Right Path.
5. The history of the devout men.
6. Guidance as to how to establish the states and stations of the journey.

These objectives are the central idea of Mullā Ṣadrā's intellectual system. He maintains that if philosophy is to be a worthwhile discipline, it must reflect the essence of the Quranic intellectuality. Thus he embarks upon the formulation of a philosophy that can fulfil this purpose.

Muslim philosophers prior to Mullā Ṣadrā had already introduced foreign philosophies (mostly of Greek origin) to their intellectual tradition and had developed them so much that they became an integral part of the Islamic heritage. Before Mullā Ṣadrā there was a Neoplatonized version of Aristotle which constituted the Peripatetic philosophy. There was also the Illuminationist philosophy, which was an integration of various elements coming from different sources, mostly from the old Persian philosophy, Plato, Aristotle and others.

There was also Islamic Mysticism, which, though essentially based upon the spiritual tradition of Islamic orthodoxy, contained some philosophical traces. Of these three schools, the Peripatetic and Illuminationist traditions were more of a philosophical nature mixed with religious ideas, while Sufism remained Islamic, particularly in its inward aspect. In addition to these three, there was also Islamic scholasticism ('ilm al-kalām), which was concerned with the explanation of the principles of Islam in rational terms. Of course, despite the presence of many religious ideas in these disciplines (though not equally in all of them), there have been very serious controversies about the significance of these disciplines from the religious point of view.

Mullā Ṣadrā was, therefore, not going to fulfil his intellectual aspiration by starting from nothing. Part of the task, and probably a very important part of it, had already been achieved by his predecessors both fortunately and unfortunately. Fortunately, because many philosophical terms, concepts and ideas were already prepared, defined, and grafted into certain Quranic ideas. This facilitated Mullā Ṣadrā's task considerably. Unfortunately, because Ṣadrā was in a rut, already preoccupied with certain philosophical ideas and trends, from which he could not extricate himself in order to be able to produce something really original and purely Islamic. Thus to realize his ideal of an Islamic philosophy, he simply reshuffled the philosophical ideas of his predecessors, rearranged them

in a new order and used them as materials for the construction of the Islamic philosophy that he had in mind. There follow some of the fundamental features of his philosophy.

1. Ontology: Ṣadrā's philosophy of existence comprises his doctrines of the Primordiality, the Unity, and the gradation of existence, as well as his analyses of the attribution of being to essence, and mental existence. He maintains that existence or being is the positive reality behind the phenomenal world. He does not define existence, on account that it is a self-evident concept which cannot be defined because there is nothing more evident than it to stand for its definition. Existence is the "this", the very objective factor which makes all external entities. Although it is one reality with one meaning, existence is predicable of things in various degrees. In other words, various entities of the world differ from one another simply because the existential light revealed in them varies in strength and weakness. The doctrine of gradation therefore explains the diversity of things in terms of their degrees of existence.

The highest state of existence is that of the Necessary Being, which is pure being and has absolute perfection; and contingent beings become manifest because of the emanation of existence revealed in them. They are, therefore, purely phenomenal, unreal and metaphorical pictures on the screen of objectivity, which totally disappear as soon as the light of existence is turned off. The subject-predicate duality in the propositions signifying the

attribution of existence to a subject is also a noetic duality and has no external equivalent. Even the mind itself is one of the grades of existence, but only a non-primordial grade, or a state in which things become manifest without possessing any of the effects or efficacies associated with external existence.

2. Substantial Motion: In this doctrine Mullā Ṣadrā tries to explain the nature of change in the phenomenal realities. Phenomenal realities, according to Ṣadrā, are in a state of permanent change and flux. This change is not taking place simply in the accidental properties of things as the Peripatetic philosophers believed; rather, it is the very substance of things which undergoes change; and the accidental changes are the consequence of the changes in their substance. The form of every species, in other words, does not remain constant as being wrapped up in changing accidents. The form of the species has a wide range, and the individual member of the species moves within this range from the lower to the higher states of substantial perfection; hence the phenomenal changes emerge.

3. The Body and Soul relation: Mullā Ṣadrā does not conceive of man as having a dual nature, a partnership of a body and a soul. According to him, man has a monistic nature which comes into being as a corporeal reality; but this corporeal entity, when undergoing its substantial change, passes through vegetable, animal and rational stages until it actually becomes a rational being with various internal and external cognitive faculties. In

this developmental task, every stage serves as a potentiality for a higher stage. The vegetable stage, being an actuality in itself, becomes a potentiality for the animal stage; as does the animal stage for the rational one. Likewise, the rational stage develops into spiritual aspects until it achieves complete catharsis and is capable of becoming entirely isolated from the bodily vehicle.

4. The Unity of the Intelligent and the Intelligible: This doctrine concerns the nature of human knowledge. According to this doctrine the knower and the known are but one. We become conscious of something when our mind reveals itself in the form of that thing. Mind is a domain of existence in which essences can become manifest, the mind and the known essence being one and the same in existence.

5. Bodily Resurrection: This doctrine concerns Mullā Ṣadrā's eschatological theory in which he tries to suggest a rational explanation for a very important religious belief, namely that every individual in the Hereafter will appear at the Court of Justice in his bodily form. Since the physical components of the body of each person are continuously changing, the question arises as to what particular aspect of the body will be present there. For if it is the soul which is going to experience the pleasure or pain of the fruit of our worldly deeds, we do not need to believe a bodily resurrection; and if it is the body which is to be rewarded or punished, then

what is the justification for punishing a corpus which did not really participate in all the sins committed by the individual.

According to Ṣadrā's account, resurrection is corporeal; but he defines the body in such a way as to be understood without reference to the mineral and organic components that constitute this worldly corpus. He maintains that the existence of the body is not made up of the material qualities like colour, size, weight, and others. The qualities are only accidents which do not determine the existence of the body; rather they are determined by it. Body, for Mullā Ṣadrā is the outward projection of the soul; when the individual is in the form of a fertilized cell, it is because the soul is in its vegetable stage; and when the soul develops into the animal form, it manifests itself in animal properties. Thus, the soul in every stage of its developmental process manifests itself in a certain bodily manifestation which accords with that particular stage of the soul. When the soul reaches its rational stage, that is to say, when the cognitive faculties are developed, the individual participates in the perfection of his soul by the quality of the abilities, attitudes and habitudes he develops. Every action and intention in this worldly life, therefore, imprints its consequential effect upon the state of perfection or imperfection of the soul, and hence characterizes its outward projection. The body of the soul in the Hereafter is a recapitulation of the individual's

worldly deeds, and is therefore a synthetic representation of his worldly life. By its very nature, this body gives evidence of all the vices and virtues of the individual and receives all the rewards and/or punishments it deserves. Hence the question as to the spirituality or corporeality of resurrection remains irrelevant.

The epistemological implications of Ṣadrā's system can be summarized as follows.

1. Mullā Ṣadrā's concept of knowledge is tied up with his ontological doctrine. He considered the human mind and all its aspects and the ideas which might possibly occur to it as a state of existence. Consequently knowledge and noetic existence meant the same to him. Having considered existence as a self-evident concept which is not susceptible of any definition, Mullā Ṣadrā ruled out the possibility of defining knowledge. The items of knowledge are the existential manifestations of the creative nature of the human mind which is, according to Ṣadrā, the agent of all noetic existence. Moreover, since essence (which is the dividend or the place of partition of the categories) and existence are mutually exclusive, knowledge does not fall under any of the ten categories.

2. Ṣadrā has divided all academic disciplines into two major classes: worldly knowledge, and the knowledge of the next world. The first class covers, (1) the science of words, (2) the science of deeds, and (3) the science of thoughts. The science of words comprises music and language since both of them deal with sounds. The science

of deeds comprises (1) those learning activities which require the use of limbs such as manual work and professional manual skills, (2) those related to writing like alchemy and magic (these are Ṣadrā's examples), (3) those related to individual relations and social order such as commercial and criminal laws, and (4) those related to personal conduct like moral codes.

The science of thoughts includes logic, arithmetic, geometry, and natural sciences. The knowledge of the next world covers three sciences: (1) divinity, (2) angelology, and (3) eschatology.

This classification is based on rather primitive and crude criteria, some of which are functional and are, therefore, derived from the purposes that knowledge is to serve; others are derived with respect to the degree of the physicality and intellectuality of the activities required for the sciences involved.

3. Mullā Ṣadrā's method of arriving at true knowledge is based upon the consistency theory of truth. The consistency and inconsistency of ideas determine their truth and falsehood. Of course, in his account of knowledge, Ṣadrā maintains that knowledge is the noetic existence of the form of the known corresponding to facts. This gives the impression that Ṣadrā refers to the correspondence theory of truth by way of implication. But there is no evidence of Ṣadrā's having examined any of his ideas in the light of facts. Many of his views are actually beyond the scope of such an examination. He only assumes that

his ideas virtually correspond to facts, without ever attempting to examine them from the correspondence point of view. This is because he believes that of the two major aspects of logic, namely, definition and demonstration, the former leads to the understanding of things, and the latter, to the existence of things. Therefore, as soon as he is satisfied with a definition, it becomes an undeniable fact for him; and when he arrives at a conclusion through a syllogism, he believes that the content of that conclusion must be a positive reality. Hence, there is no significant justification for considering Ṣadrā's instrument of knowledge other than logical reasoning, at least in so far as his worldly knowledge is concerned.

While, with respect to the instrument of knowledge, rationalism characterizes Ṣadrā's system, Mullā Ṣadrā remains an authoritarian, with regard to the sources from which he derives the content of his arguments. He appeals to two authorities: (1) the revealed sources of Islam, and (2) the philosophical heritage which is handed down to him. Ṣadrā has drawn from these sources both in his philosophy as well as in his religious and gnostic ideas.

4. The mystical aspect of Mullā Ṣadrā's system requires a separate epistemological review because mysticism is a religious and spiritual discipline essentially different from philosophy. According to Mullā Ṣadrā's religious and gnostic perspective, all true knowledge comes from God. Thus every person, by virtue of his

intelligent nature is capable of achieving this knowledge. But mere capability is not sufficient. Therefore, the revealed message of God has provided a guideline - the sharī'ah - that when followed methodically, the individual may actualize his cognitive potentialities, and attain knowledge. Knowledge in this context is the result of a unique experience in which Divine Grace illuminates the heart of man.

Mullā Ṣadrā's concept of knowledge, so far, seems to be based upon the revealed sources of Islam. But, having maintained that all knowledge comes from God, Mullā Ṣadrā has apparently considered all that was called knowledge at his time as true knowledge. He, therefore, did not hesitate to include in his gnostic views a great many arguments which are essentially philosophical and not so much based on religious experience or religious authority. His arguments for the existence of God, his account of the concentric spheres, and his psychological ideas concerning the developmental stages of the soul have marked his gnostic system with rationalism. The classification of knowledge that he presents in the context of his gnosis has given way to almost all the elements of rational philosophy to form a class of knowledge next to religious knowledge. In the face of the fact that some Sufi masters have found it necessary to "unlearn much of the agility of the profane intelligence",<sup>1</sup> one cannot help asking why

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1. Lings, Martin, A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century: Shaikh Ahmad al-'Alawi, 2nd ed. (London, 1973), p. 124.

Mullā Ṣadrā should arrive at the same philosophical arguments and issues in the context of his gnosis. However, if Mullā Ṣadrā's knowledge of Sufism was the result of his profound interest in, and familiarity with, Sufi literature and not due to genuine spiritual experience by himself (as it seems to be the case), then the idea that he succeeded in the final unification of rational philosophy and religious experience should not be taken seriously.

To present an overall evaluation of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy, we may say that Ṣadrā attempted to formulate a system of philosophy parallel to his peculiar understanding of the Qur'<sup>ān</sup>. Although, this philosophical counterpart of Ṣadrā's religious perspective might be acceptable to a religious minded person, particularly if he has a foretaste of 'irfan, the philosophy at issue does not prove to be quite convincing when the doctrines involved in it are examined by the bisecting knife of logic. One can, of course, claim that Ṣadrā's system must not be cut apart by logical probings; but Mullā Ṣadrā himself has encouraged the challenge by trying to prove each doctrine on logical grounds. The student of Mullā Ṣadrā, therefore, feels quite justified in examining Ṣadrā's philosophical doctrines logically; and it is this examination that often results in disillusionment. As for the philosophy as a whole, it is only structurally comparable to the religious perspective that Ṣadrā has developed from the Qur'<sup>ān</sup>. In other words, since Ṣadrā's account of the rationale behind the revelation of the

Qur'<sup>ān</sup> requires the gnosis of God and His qualities and angels, the gnosis of the Right Path, and the gnosis of the Life Hereafter, Mullā Ṣadrā assumed that these objectives could be achieved by a reconstruction of <sup>the</sup> philosophical concept of existence (which he ultimately equated with God and from which he deduced the contingent beings), and ended up with his eschatological discussions which concern the developmental stages of the soul from a material state to resurrection. This philosophical structure has an analogical similarity to Ṣadrā's account of the Qur'<sup>ān</sup>, and no more. The major difference between Ṣadrā's account of the Qur'<sup>ān</sup> and his philosophical representation of that account lies in the categorical duality of their sources; while his Quranic account is derived from the Qur'<sup>ān</sup> in which no sincere believer has any doubt, many of his philosophical ideas come from Aristotelian philosophy in which a sincere student of philosophy can have every doubt, a doubt which did not so much occur to Mullā Ṣadrā and, consequently many of these philosophical arguments occupied a considerable area of his religious and mystical teachings.

What Mullā Ṣadrā was trying to achieve in his philosophical and gnostic accounts is the establishment of a philosophical monism, which could explain the phenomenal realities in such a way as to trace them back to the first principle, hoping that this philosophical cycle could demonstrate the religious concept of God and His creation. Apparently, Mullā Ṣadrā did not very much appreciate the

distinction between a philosophical monism and a religious monism. A philosophical monism results from an intellectual attempt aimed at a general principle, an umbrella, which covers our diverse experiences. One can always remain philosophically a monist without having committed oneself to any of the revealed faiths. Religious monism, particularly in Islam, is a revealed truth. God is not a principle or a grand theory covering our working hypotheses for the explanation of facts; He is the creator of all things, not a general concept, an axiom, or a general principle that we hypothesize in order to integrate all our explanations into one system. Religious monism is not a scientific hypothesis or a philosophical principle. It is the first message of God to the Prophets; it requires faith and belief and assigns duties and obligations; it promises everlasting happiness and salvation. When a Muslim establishes his prayer with the intention of proximity to God, he does not set off toward any philosophical concept; and God the invocation (dhikr) of Whose Name brings relief and tranquility to the hearts,<sup>1</sup> is not a philosophical principle like the primordality of essence or existence. A philosophical or scientific monism is interested in an elementary particle, a Prime Mover, or a first cause, which completes a system of knowledge; it is the final stage or the terminus of the train of our thought, while religious monism is the first and basic tenet of our religious life. There is no reason to identify a religious monism with philosophical monism even if

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1. The Qur'ān, XIII:28.

the structural order of the two appears somehow similar. Nor does the Quranic view that all knowledge comes from God necessarily imply that we have to convert every philosophy into theology.

Another point which was apparently not quite clear to Ṣadrā, or probably to many scholars of his time, is the epistemological consideration of our academic knowledge in general. In all our studies we are dealing with our experiences. Unless a phenomenon is experienced by man in one way or another, it cannot be studied. From our experiences, we work out a logic, which can systematize and explain the phenomena under investigation. That is to say, we transform the realities of the world into human experience, and this humanization of the external reality is indispensable to all our studies. The properties we predicate of things, the qualities we see in them, and in fact all our judgements about the world around us are relative to our terms. As Philip Frank quotes Nietzsche:

"That things have a quality in themselves, quite apart from any interpretation and subjectivity is an idle hypothesis: it would presuppose that to interpret and to be a subject are not essential, that a thing detached from all relations is still a thing."<sup>1</sup>

This implies two things. When Mullā Ṣadrā speaks of existence as an objective reality entirely detached from our consciousness, he is still speaking only of a concept

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1. Frank, Ph., Science and its Philosophy (New York, 1955) p. 77.

which is simply assumed to be detached from human experience, an assumption which is self-contradictory. For, we can speak of the idea of "detachment from human experience" simply because we know the meaning of detachment and also that of human experience; but we cannot in any way speak of something which is actually detached from our experience because in respect of such a thing our consciousness is absolutely blank and we have no awareness of it whatsoever. Therefore, Mullā Ṣadrā's account of existence (granted that there is something to be called existence, which is entirely detached from consciousness) is simply about a concept and no more. Even if this concept is that of a Necessary Being it is still a concept and has nothing to do with God. An advocate of Ṣadrā can, of course, claim that by external existence he simply means things as they are in themselves, entirely detached from our consciousness. But if this is what Ṣadrā means by existence, he should say nothing else about existence; and such accounts as the unity of existence, gradation of existence, qualification of existence to essence, relative existence, and all the rest of his ontological ideas as well as his accounts of ja'1 or generation are entirely irrelevant because in these accounts he is in fact qualifying something about which he knows absolutely nothing; or else he is still speaking of a concept which is not only undetached from his mind, but also is entirely created in his mind and has no external entity as Suhrawardī said. Therefore, Mullā Ṣadrā's knowledge of existence applies to a concept, a

creature of the human mind, and not to God, Who is the creator of man.

The other implication of our epistemological consideration is that since, in our studies, we are dealing with our own experiences (which are relative to human terms) it is virtually impossible to arrive at any absolute knowledge about any absolute being. In other words, our studies of things concern things not as they are in themselves, but as they are experienced by us. The immediate object of our investigation is therefore our own experience. As we have already said, with reference to these experiences, we develop a logic, a method of systematization and explanation which can classify and organize those experiences in regular patterns; and as soon as we face new events and new experiences which our mill cannot grind, we modify our system of knowledge in such a way as to regulate the new irregularities. Through these modifications and adjustments, thanks to the uneven and irregular occasions, the whole structure of human knowledge constantly develops. Our knowledge of the realities of the world is therefore relative both to our human terms, to the logic according to which we want to explain, as well as to the novel experiences that are going to be studied. May I at this point paraphrase very briefly a very expressive allegory, which I recall from Arthur Eddington? He likens the physical scientist to a fisherman whose knowledge of the size of the animals of the sea is always relative to his net; of those animals which are too big to go into his

net or too small to remain in it, he knows nothing. Though the point Eddington is trying to make concerns physical sciences, the notion of the relativity of human knowledge applies to all our knowledge. All human knowledge remains relative. A man-made philosophy is, therefore, an intellectual system, a world view, which is based on human experience and remains relative; hence it is irrelevant to God. The application of any such philosophy to the matters of Deity is bound to be a failure; let alone the fact that it also shackles the spiritual agility of the soul. The question remains as to how we can speak of God at all if our intellectual network is essentially irrelevant to the matters of Deity.

According to the Qur<sup>ʾ</sup>ān it is not man who suddenly discovers God in the context of his experience; it is God who awakens man from the slumberland of his unconsciousness: "Then Adam received from his Lord words (of revelation), and He relented toward him. Lo! He is the Relenting, the Merciful".<sup>1</sup> Initiation into the way of God is therefore a Divine Grace, a Revelation to all prophets of God, from Adam to the Seal of the prophets, and through them to all mankind to the end of time. The knowledge of God is, therefore, a knowledge of a higher order, different from the pretty patterns that we design to regulate our mundane experiences. This knowledge is to be sought only in the revealed sources. Hence any attempt at the formulation of philosophical religion is

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1. The Qur<sup>ʾ</sup>ān, II:35.

simply an intellectual exercise, a mental gymnastics, which is significant only as such, and not as a way to Divine Truth. So is Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy. A plastic apple may look exactly like an apple; so much so as to deceive even the artist; but it cannot be eaten.

This epistemological consideration of Mullā Ṣadrā's system may disappoint those who have found in Ṣadrā the image of a great hero who "is a unique synthesizer of metaphysics, revelation and gnosis ('irfān), solving and reconciling various knotty problems, that seemed insoluble and irreconcilable previously".<sup>1</sup> These admirers of Ṣadrā should remember that the great giants of learning remain great as the centuries pass, not because whatever they said was true, but because they sincerely devoted all their lives and effort to the search for the truth. Ptolemy's astronomical system has been discarded for centuries; yet he remains a great giant of all times particularly in the field of astronomy. Thus it does not really matter how much of a permanently authentic knowledge is achieved by a great master. According to a Persian maxim "all knowledge will be attained by all men; and all men are not yet born".<sup>2</sup>

Plato, Aristotle, Ptolemy, Galen, Ibn Ṣinā, al-Ghazālī, and many others remain great even if their ideas are revised or refuted. Mullā Ṣadrā is also a man

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1. 'Abdul Haq Muhammad, "An Aspect of Metaphysics of Mullā Ṣadrā", Islamic Studies, Vol.9, 197-, p.331.

2. This saying which is often referred to by the Persians is attributed to Buzurg Mehr, who is said to be a wise minister in Sāsānī court.

of the same calibre. He made a historic scholarly record in his era. He was a great master of many of the rational and traditional sciences of his time. His significance in the transmission of the past to the future is undeniable. He was an impressive personality who dominated the entire course of the intellectual life of a nation for centuries. But he was not a prophet. Like other scholars and scientists he could see only a bit further; and like many scholars, he too made mistakes. The soul of a devotee of learning such as Mullā Ṣadrā would be much happier to see us study him critically than to see us merely defending his ideas dogmatically.

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This manuscript, as we said in the text, is mistakenly registered under the name of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī.

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