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Music and ‘Irfan

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Abstract

This article analyses the relationship and connection between music and ‘Irfan from an ontological perspective, epistemological perspective and functional perspective. From an ontological perspective ‘Irfanic music is the manifestation of the Divine Beauty and Voice, which manifested in the human domain based on the rank of the soul of the composer and musician. From an ‘Irfanic epistemological perspective music and ‘Irfan are a form of existence, which means that they are a type of participated beings and both are methods for reaching the Exalted Origin. In the sense that music is a manifestation of the Divine Names and also through ‘Irfanic music it is possible to reach the angelic world and the World of Divinity. This is the complimentary and intimate relationship between ‘Irfan and music, and the result of their close and intrinsic relation is awareness. Awareness, wisdom, serenity and beauty are the inseparable parts of ‘Irfanic music. ‘Irfanic music is one of the keys of reaching the Divine Reality. Although it is important to note that from the perspective of Sufis, music which causes negligence, ignorance and sin is dispraised and disqualified and is not permissible.

Keywords: music, ‘irfan, Sufism, Islam, Iran.

Introduction

The history of human culture is testimony that music has been a part of communication with the divine and has been utilised in worship of the Divine in all religions from the beginning of human history. This includes the Abrahamic religions and religions such as Shintoism, Daoism and Buddhism. In general, there has been no human society without music. Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei the Supreme Leader of Iran has the following opinion about original music, “the art of music, is an integration of science, thought and God given nature. The manifestation of God given nature in the first instance is human vocal cords and in the second instance musical instruments invented by humans. So you can see that the foundation is a Divine foundation. If in this regards we examine the poems of Rumi and say that music is the reflection of the sounds of heaven and connect it to the ‘Irfanic world that he refers to, we have bored from realities to the imaginary [world]. Because his sayings in this regards, are similar imagination, and naturally have a different meaning.”¹ For example, the fifth symphony of Beethoven and the sixth symphony of Tchaikovsky are enjoyed and respected by most seekers of the Divine across human societies.

‘Irfanic music is a deep and spiritual genre of music which is amalgamated with Divine Wisdom and Beauty and eases the path of worship and spiritual wayfaring towards God.

As Professor Nasr has written music is considered as the voice of the Beloved². In Islamic Sufism, even scholars such as Ghazali and Kashani have issued religious rulings for *sama*. The majority of Muslim sects, including Shi’a, Sunni and Sufis such as the Mevlawiyya, Naqshbandiyya, Qaderiyya, Khaksariyya and Safaviyya and others consider *Sama*’ as part of religious spiritual wayfaring and see ‘Irfanic music as an integral part and tradition of spiritual wayfaring and as one of the techniques for attaining union with the Beloved. Roozbahan Baqli Shirizai in his treatise titled *al-*

Quds has offered an explanation of the different types of *Sama* ' and the meaning of 'Irfanic music³.

The renowned figures of Iranian and Islamic literature and 'Irfan have practiced *Sama* ' or 'Irfanic music; these include prominent figures such as Junaid Baqdadi, Abu Sa'id Abu al-Khair, Ghazali, 'ayn al-Quzat Hamadani, Sheikh Najm al-Din Kubra, 'Attar Naishaburi, Roozbahan Baqli, Shams Tabrizi, Jalal al-Din Rumi, Fakhr al-Din 'Iraqi Dehlawi, Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili, Mahmoud Shabestari, Lahiji and Shah Ni'matallah Wali.

'Irfanic Music From a A Priori and a A Posteriori Perspective

'Irfanic music can be analysed from two perspectives; firstly, there is differentiation between the a priori and a posteriori perspectives, and secondly there is distinction between the epistemological and ontological perspective. The result of examining the issue from a priori perspective is that in addition to the possibility of existence of 'Irfanic music, music in it's essence, is in profound and real symmetry with 'Irfan, both from the perspective of ontology and also from the perspective of knowledge, tolerance and harmony.

History of art can also be viewed from a posteriori perspective. Without a doubt one of the types of music that has manifested itself in world culture and civilisation, particularly in Iranian culture and civilisation is 'Irfanic music, which specifically in Sufi orders such as Mawlawiyya, Khaksariyya, Naqshbandiyya, Qaderiyya and Safaviyya, in Iran, Turkey, Balkan, Central Asia, Qafqaz and North Africa can be seen in a a posteriori manner in history of art. This music has evolved over the centuries and portrays a mutual relationship between 'Irfan and music. This mutual relationship can be seen in *Sama* ', in the effectiveness of music in creating spiritual ecstasy.

‘Irfanic Music from an Ontological and Epistemological Perspective

From an ontological perspective the first question is in regards to the quiddity of *‘Irfan*. In theoretical *‘Irfan*, the manifestation of God in the existence of the spiritual wayfarer is considered to result in him or her becoming an *‘Arif*.

What is *‘Irfanic Music*? From an ontological perspective, it is the manifestation of Divine Beauty and Songs that become manifested in the human domain. Thus, *‘Irfan* and music from an *‘Irfanic* epistemological perspective are both types of existence, and both are a method for reaching the Exalted Origin. In addition to music being a form of manifestation of the Divine Existence, by utilising *‘Irfanic* music reaching the Divine Realm becomes possible. This is the complimentary and intimate relationship between *‘Irfan* and music, and the result of their accompaniment is awareness. Awareness, wisdom, serenity and beauty are the inseparable parts of *‘Irfanic* music. The foundation of *‘Irfanic* music is in the framework of the modality of the appearance of the Divine Realm in the human realm, and the modality of the human realm becoming Divine.

Evaluating the relationship between *‘Irfan* and music is similar evaluating the relationship between nature and the Divine Word or the relationship of nature and the degrees of existence. From an *‘Irfanic* perspective, the *‘Arif* is constantly confronted by the different manifestations of the Beloved that at times appear in the form of words and at other times in the form of sounds or the form of movement. Music in itself is Divine. *‘Irfanic* music is a special genre and type of music in which there is a conflux of music and *‘Irfan* both from an ontological and an epistemological perspective, and in a sense it is the manifestation of the Beloved. From another perspective it is possible to communicate and reach the Divine through *‘Irfanic* music. This theory is of great importance and needs further study.

Truth is one, but its manifestations are many. When Divine Beauty manifests itself in the form of movement it is referred to as *Sama*'; when this reality manifests itself in the form of songs and sound, it is referred to as music. In other words, music is one of the ways in which union with the Beloved can be attained, and these varied manifestations are all paths leading to the same Truth. Music and sound are of the most original paths of reaching God. 'Irfanic music is one the best tools which can be employed by the human being for reaching Reality, and an important part of it is *kashf* (spiritual vision). Although it is important to note that music is graded (*tashkik*). One of the gradations of music is such that it not possible to enter it without the purification of the soul and the vacation of the soul from vices, and at the other end of the spectrum it can turn the human being into the lowest of the beasts.

In 'Irfanic thought, the reality is a participated being, meaning that it is a subsidiary of the existence of *Haqq* (Truth) and as such is not independent, rather it is contingent and dependent and is not necessary.

The Difference Between the View of Mulla Sadra and 'Urafa.

In the Sadrean view to music, music can be seen as one of the ranks of existence. But the manifestation of music is fully comprehended from the 'Irfanic perspective. Does music act as a signifier for something else or is it original in and of itself? This topic is subject to an important debate in the philosophy of art, whether art acts as a signifier for something else or whether it is original in and of itself. Sadrean philosophy's answer in this regards is that arts, and naturally music, in and of themselves are a type of existence and a rank among it's ranks, however, in 'Irfanic thought where there is only one existent, which is God, and everything else is a phenomenon and because 'Urafa see the contingent world as participated and a manifestation and further for them there are no ranks of existence, 'Irfanic music is also considered to be participated and a manifestation of the Divine Manifestations.

There are two topics which are discussed in this regards, spiritual vision (mukashifah) and manifestation. In music there is also spiritual vision, and in this topic the manner in which music was created, the relationship between music and the composer and the degrees of sense are discussed. For example, the degrees of sense depend on the existential rank and the ranks of the musician's heart. The luminosity and clarity of the heart of the musician or the composer has a direct correlation with the luminosity and existential rank of the music that is issued forth from his or her heart, and the lower his or her existence is the lower the existential rank of the music he or she produces is. Divine music or material and sensual music are all reflections of the soul of the artist. According to the holy Qur'an, In Islamic 'Irfan one of the divisions of the soul are the three ranks of the carnal soul (*nafs al-Ammarah*), repentant soul (*nafs al-lawwamah*) and peaceful soul (*nafs al-mutma'innah*). These divisions of the soul have been covered in-depth by Rumi in his poetry and short tales in the second book of the Mathnawi whose structure has been interpreted through hermeneutics with the synoptic approach in Mahvash al-Sadat Alavi's recent book titled *Decrypting Rumi's Mathnawi*. Roozbahan Baqli in the seventh chapter of his treatise titled *al-Qudsi* has offered a considerable explanation of the different types of relationship between the music and the heart and spirit of the human being.

The Services of 'Sufism to Original Music

Music has played different functions in different eras of human history and for different tribes, societies and civilisations. In the Islamic world from the onset of the appearance and growth of Sufism 'Irfanic music had a significant presence. In this sense it must be accepted that Sufism has had an important role in the promotion and propagation of spiritual music; although naturally music and its spiritual and mystical dimension are not related to the appearance of Islam. From the time of Prophet Adam to the time of the Last Prophet of Allah Muhammad (SAAWA) and until the day

of judgement the relationship between music and spirituality has and will continue to exist. Music and 'Irfan have always had a close relationship and in all religions from the religions in the east to Abrahamic religion, 'Irfanic music or in general spiritual and worshipping music have existed and have played an important function in religious rituals and spiritual wayfaring.

In the framework of Islamic culture, 'Irfanic music has existed from the beginning, for example it is mentioned in Islamic history that in the marriage ceremony of Lady Fatima the daughter of the Prophet of Islam they have used Daf, which is a form of drum instrument. Further, later on in Islamic history by the creations of different scientific and social communities in Islamic culture and civilisation such as that of the jurists, specialists of hadith, philosophers, theologians, interpreters of the Qur'an and historians, a community was formed in this historical framework of Muslim society which focused on those who placed sole emphasis on spirituality and they were referred to as the 'Urafa or the people of *tassawuf*. As the first priority of 'Urafa is pure spirituality and 'Irfan, the aspect of spiritual wayfaring (*tariqah*), attaining union with the Beloved and reaching the Truth (*haqiqat*) is a priority for them, and naturally as a prerequisite they have attention to *Sahri'at* or religious law, music gains special importance for them both because of its aspect of manifestation and also the discourse between sounds, behaviour and the heart; as this helps ease the path of spiritual wayfaring.

Some are of the opinion that supplications given by the Prophet or the Imams are the best form of music. Without a doubt it is so, however it must be noted that music is not in contradiction with supplications. The supplications and chapters of the Holy Qur'an are considered as the best type and artistic manifestation of God, but not all of these exalted and holy things are considered music. music has different types. The thirtieth chapter of the Holy Qur'an, is "Divine Music". The music found in nature and that of the supplications of the 14 infallibles is also a type of music. However, there is another type of music which is the music that is issued forth

from the heart and spirit of artists who are on the path of spiritual wayfaring.

With the formation of Sufism because of its aspect of aestheticism and its ability to aid Sufi's in their ecstatic state, 'Irfanic music eventually gained more influence and prominence. In this way 'Irfan has played an important role in the preservation and promotion of spiritual music. Worship music has always played an important role in the spiritual journey of spiritual wayfarers, however, in the social sphere 'Irfan has played more important role in the continuation of the presence and prominence of music in a religious community. Thus, 'Urafa and the different Sufi orders by keeping music alive and promoting it, are owed a great debt by musicians.

Islam appeared in the conditions of the cultural poverty of the Arabian Peninsula, and naturally because of these conditions in Islam's initial manifestation the possibility of artistic manifestation was low. Gradually art, under the influence of the holy art of the Divine Word (Qur'an) came to play an important role in the history of Islamic civilisation and culture. The verses of the Holy Qur'an, are filled with melody. The importance of art in different eras of the Islamic civilisation are clear. In the architectural monuments of Islam, there are many unique artistic manifestations present. In the fourth century after *hijrah*, which is the period of blossoming of Islamic culture and civilisation, all Islamic sciences became formalised. In this period sciences such as Arab literature, 'Irfan, Jurisprudence and theology became formalised and institutionalised. Some of the Muslim scholars attempted to form specific principles and rules for music, and this was not because of their Sufi orientation, as Sufi orientation also existed in the previous centuries. Thus, in this period the principles of Islamic music were also formed. The effective role of Iran in this program is of significance and is not comparable to other Muslim countries. The reason for this is the existence of prominent Iranian musicians in the second century after *hijrah* such as Ishaq Mowaseli the author of

alnaqm al-iqa', Ibn Khordadbeh the author of *al-adab wa al-sama'*, Abu al-Abbas Sarakhsi the author of *al-musiqi al-Kabir*, Abu Bakr Ahwazi the author of *fi al-Jahl al-musiqi* and Abu al-Faraj Isfahani the author of *al-Aqani*, Zakariya Razi, Farabi the author of *al-Musiqi*, Khawjah Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, Safi al-Din Armawi the author of *Shawqiyah dar khawas musiqi* and *Adwar*.⁴

'Urafa such as Hujwiri, Ghazali, Qushairi, Roozbahan Baqli Shirazi, 'Attar Naishaboori, Rumi, Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili, Shah Ni'mat Allah Wali and 'Iz al-Din Kashani have discussed the relationship between music and spiritual wayfaring and existence. Hujwiri in *Kashf al-Mahjub* writes: "Whoever says that I do not like songs, melodies and psalms either is lying or is being a hypocrite, or has no feelings and is not one of the humans". Some of the 'Urafa such as Rumi, Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili and Baqli Shirazi are of the opinion that 'Irfanic music is a Divine song that the exoteric ear is not capable of comprehending and a heart which is illuminated with the Divine light is familiar with, however, the person who has no musical talent is unable to see the Divine Beauty. Those who categorically deny music suffer from a misunderstanding of religion and their understanding of God in the sphere of aesthetics and the Divine Names is weak, and in reality they are deprived from understanding the aspects of Divine Aesthetics⁵.

Music Plays a central role in the end of creation, as the angel 'Israfil blows into his trumpet on the day of resurrection, in order to once more bring to existence all that existed; as the Qur'an says "'And the trumpet shall be blown, so all those that are in the heavens and all those that are in the earth shall swoon, except him whom Allah will; then it shall be blown again, then they shall stand up awaiting."⁶ It can be stated with certainty that Israfil's blowing in the trumpet will not emit a bad sound. The blowing in the trumpet must be of such beauty so that on the Day of Judgement it resurrects all creations. In the beginning of creation, it was also the same, as it was by the manifestation of the words, that creation occurred, as the Holy Qur'an states, "The originator of the heavens and the earth.

When he decrees a matter, He only says to it ‘Be, and it is’”
(Qur’an, 2:117)

In the Day of Judgement two great events will occur, from one side the destruction of the world and from the other resurrection. From the perspective of taste, from one side absolute intoxication and annihilation of participated existence and from the other resurrection and renewed life. Similar to the manifestation of God to Mount Tur which destroyed it, this manifestation in the Day of Judgement will occur through sound or in other words music. This means that in the Day of Judgement music will once cause the world to be loose it’s self and on the other hand it will cause for it’s participated existence to be resurrected so that it’s relation with Exalted Origin and the Absolute Existence can be clarified, and its station in Divine existence and eternity can be specified. In this sense music plays a key role in the Day of Resurrection.

The Relationship Between Lyrics and Sound in ‘Irfanic Music

Is ‘Irfanic music influenced more by lyrics or by sound? For example, when some of the ‘Urafa improvised verses during their *Sama*’, in this type of ‘Irfanic music is the priority with the word or the sound. Each design and colour has its own unique characteristics. To consider that there is a serious and strict distinction between verbal music and instrumental music results in a form of heterogeneity. An issue which in modern times because of the dominance of quantity is visible. But in the past, music was directly related to spirituality and this conformity did not exit. The relationship between vocals or words and instrument or the song in ‘Irfanic music even in terms of the pauses and silences must be observed. For the pauses and silences, are a scale or a ratio, and ratios, because of manifestation and ranks of existence, each have their own specific effects. In the sense that, for example, in traditional Persian music the *Dastgahs* in the *Radif* are separated by their tonal space, and terms such as *chahargah*, *segah*, *panjgah*, or

Mahoor, which each specifies a *Dastagah* in the Radif are not only terms but are relations, which from an ontological perspective have their own specific definition, and the concepts presented in each differ based on their ontological definition. Music must be placed in relation with the truth, and if this relation is ontological and based on wisdom, based on its rank will have a specific influence on the listener, regardless of whether it is 'Irfanic music or not.

'Irfan, results in the transcendence of music and this fact is not only true with regards to music but also other arts such as sculpturing, painting, arabesque design and others; as if the concepts that have been witnessed through spiritual vision in the abstract world are presented in the artistic medium. In music the same principle is at work, from the natural *gushes* of *mahur* there is movement towards *Shur*, and from there towards *nawa* and *rast panj gah*, and finally the music becomes so abstract that no external equivalent can be found for it. When this music reaches the ears of a listener it is as if the beginning of creation is portrayed. Thus, music, by transferring the human being beyond the realities which are material, spatial and bound in time, guides him or her to pre-eternal truth. This transcendence and abstraction originates from creating categories and divisions for types of music, for example 'Irfanic music or other types of music, otherwise categories and divisions have no value. Thus, as music is defined as the ranks of existence, the ranks of categorization of music must also be discovered in those ranks and we must discover what relation they have with the Truth. Similar the Qur'an, the truth of which has ranks and the lowest rank is the literal rank that we read in the book. The manifestations of 'Irfanic music or any other religious art must become more transcendent and as much as possible matter must be removed from them, and in a platonic sense they must become nearer to their archetypal counterparts so that they become close to the Divine World. When their materiality is removed and the different colours are removed from it, naturally it gains the potential for influence⁷.

Music and Spiritual Ecstasy

In the topic of ecstasy and spiritual vision in 'Irfanic *music*', it seems that those who enter 'Irfanic *music* in a sense enter the world of spiritual ecstasy. A world which has a specific meaning and emotional state, and this melody takes the people of music to the world of spiritual ecstasy. Spiritual music is universal and Islamic 'Irfanic music is one of its categories. Spiritual music is comprised of a number of elements, the composer who is the creator of this music, the musicians and finally the audience of the music who are subject to the atmosphere of this music and at the same time might practice Sama'. The composer whose music results in spiritual vision and sight (in principle art is based on spiritual vision and sight), is confronted by creation and innovation. In the sense that the first step is practice and learning the skills necessary, however, the original art, is a result of spiritual discovery and spiritual vision which results in the blossoming of existence. Musicians and in particular musicians of 'Irfanic music normally play the music with a strong belief and consider their instrument as holy. This group of artists, at the time in which they practice music, empty their mind and heart from all that results in negligence. Although this state requires certain preparations that only after the preparations have been made the person enters the state of spiritual ecstasy, becomes intoxicated and as such each moment that he or she is playing the music is ontologically and epistemologically different from the other moment. The third group are the listeners of the music. Music can be contracting or expanding, it can cause absolute euphoria or sadness and despondence. These states can be achieved through concentration and contemplation which will result in ecstasy and expansion.

At the time that music is being played it has different effects. Music, because of the thought that is embedded within it, places the listener in the station of art and creativity, a station that is better than the station of knowledge. For the listener of music can also have creativity. This idea is of two kinds, at times it leads to

concentration and at other times to ecstasy and *Sama*'. The first type normally attracts those who are the people of thought, and the second type attracts those who are the people of worship and praise. Although the second type is more prominent, because in the second type the intended meaning and state is transferred faster to the listener, and as such it has a large audience.

'Irfanic music is the *sama*' of The Truth. Sama' from The Truth, within the the Truth and with the Truth. However, if it leads to self-worship, ostentation or thought of other than God, it does not lead to the Divine, and the practitioner does not drink from the wine of Union with the Divine⁸. Daf and reed are the most important musical instruments in the gatherings of Sama' of Sufis. Daf, is the symbol of the Greater World and the reed is the symbol of the lesser world (human). In Iranian Sufism, Tanbur and different types of Tar are also utilised. In the contemporary era, 'Abd al-Wahab Shahidi, Muhammd Reza Shajarian, Shahram Nazeri, Hisam al-Din Siraj, Iftikhari, Jalal Dhulfunun, 'Andalibi, Hussain 'Alizadeh, and the vocal music groups of Khorasan, and Kurdistan, Qawali of Pakistan, the music of the Darwishes of North Africa and the music of the Mevlaviyya order have played an important role in the promotion of 'Irfanic music.

Conclusion

'Irfanic music is the result of the incorporation of two types of manifestation, namely 'wisdom' and 'method' which are in direct relation with knowledge of God, Divine Beauty, and the ranks of the soul of the individuals involved in the creation and consumption of music. They are comprised of the theoretician of music, composer, orchestra, the poem or lyrics and the poet, the singer and the listener. The rank of the soul of each of the elements of this group has a direct effect on the production, performance, generated wisdom and influence of 'Irfanic music. 'Irfanic music results in consciousness, wakefulness, awareness and the activation of esoteric senses for the purpose of connection with the unseen world.

'Irfanic music is one of the important keys of reaching the Divine Truth. Those types of music that result in sin and negligence are *haram* or forbidden in Islam. Those who consider music to be utterly and categorically *haram* or forbidden, are deprived of and unable to comprehend the aesthetic and beautiful aspects of God and the artistic and aesthetic aspects of religion.

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Endnotes

¹ <https://goo.gl/TE21QQ>

² Nasr, S. H. "Islam and Music: The Legal And The Spiritual Dimensions". *Enchanting Powers: Music In The World's Religions*. Lawrence E. Sullivan. 1st ed. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997.

³ See: Nasr, S.H. "Islam And Music The Views Of Rûzbahân Baqlî, The Patron Saint Of Shiraz". *Studies in Comparative Religion* 10.1 (1976): Web. 1 Oct. 2016.:

'Know O Brothers—May God increase the best of joys for you in listening to spiritual music—that for the lovers of the Truth there are several principles concerning listening to spiritual music, and these have a beginning and an end. Also the enjoyment of this music by various spirits is different. It can be enjoyed according to the station of the Sacred Spirit (*rûh-i muqaddas*). However, no one, save he who is among those who reign in the domain of gnosis (*ma'rifat*), can be prepared for it, for spiritual qualities are mingled with corporeal natures. Until the listener becomes purified from that filth, he cannot become a listener in the gatherings (*majâlis*) of spiritual familiarity (*uns*). Verily, all the creatures among the animals have an inclination toward spiritual music, for each possesses in its own right a spirit. It keeps alive thanks to that spirit and that spirit keeps alive thanks to music.

'Music is in the coming to rest of all thoughts from the burdens of the human state (*bashariyyat*), and it exites the temperament of men. It is the stimulant of seigneurial mysteries (*asrâr-i rabbânî*). To some, it is a temptation because they are imperfect. For others, it is a precept ('*ibrat*) for they have reached perfection. It is not proper for those who are alive on the natural plane, but whose heart is dead, to listen to music, for it will cause their destruction. It is, however, incumbent upon him whose heart is joyous, whether he discovers or fails to discover the soul, to listen to music. For in music there are a hundred thousand joys, of which with the help of a single joy one can cut across a thousand years of the path of attaining gnosis in a way that cannot be achieved by any gnostic through any form of worship.

'It is necessary that the passions in all the veins of the seeker after music becomes diluted (as far as the passions are concerned) and that the veins become filled with light as a result of the purity of worship. In his soul, he must be present before the Divine and in the state of audition so as to

remain free, while listening to music, from the temptations of the carnal soul. And this cannot be achieved with certainty except by the strongest in the path of Divine Love. For spiritual music is the music of the Truth (*al-Haqq*). Spiritual music comes from God (the *Truth-Haqq*); it stands before God; it is in God; it is with God. If someone were to conceive one of these relations with something other than God, he would be an infidel. Such a person would not have found the path and would not have drunk the wine of union in the spiritual concert.

‘The disciples of love (*mahabbat*) listen to music without recourse to their carnal soul. Those who walk upon the path of yearning (*shawq*) listen to spiritual music without recourse to reason. The possessed followers of intense love (*‘ishq*) listen to spiritual music without recourse to the heart. Those agitated by spiritual familiarity listen to music without recourse to the spirit. If they were to listen to music with these means they would become veiled from God. And if they were to listen to it with the carnal soul they would become impious (*zindîq*). And if they were to listen with the power of reason (*‘aql*) they would become creditable. And if they would hear with the heart they would become contemplative (*murâqib*). And if they were to listen with the spirit they would become totally present. Spiritual music is the audition and vision of Divine Presence (*hudûr*). It is terror and sorrow. It is wonder in wonder. In that world canons cease to exist. The man of knowledge becomes ignorant and the lover is annihilated.

‘In the feast of Divine Love, the listener and the performer are both one. The truth of the path of lovers is accompanied by music but the truth of its truth is without music. Spiritual music comes from discourse (*khatâb*) and the lack of it from beauty (*jamâl*). If there is speech, there is distance, and if there is silence there is proximity. As long as there is audition, there is ignorance (*bîkhabar*) and the ignorant dwell in duality. In hearing spiritual music, reason is dethroned; command becomes prohibition and the abrogator (*nâsikh*) the abrogated (*mansûkh*). In the first stage of the spiritual concert, all the abrogators become abrogated, and all the abrogated abrogators.

‘Spiritual music is the key to the treasury of Divine Verities. The gnostics are divided: some listen with the help of the stations (*maqâmât*); some with the help of the states (*hâlât*); some with the help of spiritual unveiling (*mukâshifât*); some with the help of vision (*mushâhadât*). When

they listen according to the stations, they are in reproach. When they listen according to the states, they are in a state of return. When they listen according to spiritual unveiling they are in union (*wisâl*); when they listen according to vision they are immersed in the Divine Beauty.

'From the beginning to the end of the stations (*maqâmât*), there are thousands upon thousands of stations each of which possesses thousands upon thousands of pieces of spiritual music, and in each piece of music there are thousands upon thousands of qualities, such as change, warning, elongation, union, proximity, distance, ardour, anxiety, hunger, thirst, fear, hope, melancholy, victory, sorrow, fright, purity, chastity, servitude and lordship. If any of these qualities were to reach the soul of the ascetics of the world, their soul would involuntarily depart from their bodies.

'Likewise, from the beginning to the end of the states (*ahwâl*), there are thousands upon thousands of *maqams* in each of which there are a thousand allusions (*ishârât*) within spiritual music. And in each allusion there are many kinds of pain such as love (*mahabbat*), yearning, intensive love (*'ishq*), ardour, purity, aridity and power. If one of them were to pass within the heart of all the disciples, the heads of all of them would become separated from their bodies.

'Also from the beginning of spiritual unveiling to its end during the hearing of spiritual music, there is one theophanic display after another. If the lovers of God were to see one of these displays they would all melt away like quicksilver. Likewise, in mystical vision during the spiritual concert hundreds of thousands of qualities become revealed, each of which prepares a thousand subtleties (*latâ'if*) within the being of the gnostic. Such qualities as knowledge, truth, calamities, flashes and gleamings of the Divine Lights, awe, strength, inconstancy, contraction, expansion, nobility and serenity, will cast him to the Invisible beyond the invisible world, and reveal to him the mysteries of his origins.

'Through each leaf in the paradise of spiritual vision, and from the trees of the qualities, the birds of light will sing the eternal song with uncreated notes before the soul of his soul. One syllable of that song will annihilate the gnostic from the state of servitude and make him subsistent in the state of Divinity. It will seize the foundations of his being and bestow another foundation upon him. It will familiarize him with himself and make him a stranger to himself. It will make him know himself, audacious *vis-à-vis* himself and fearful of himself. While he is amidst the assembly, it will

transform him into its own colour. It will speak of the Mystery of mysterious with him and enable him to listen to the discourse on Divine Love from its tongue.

‘Sometimes it says ‘thou art I’, and sometimes ‘I am thou’. Sometimes it makes him annihilated in subsistence and sometimes subsistent in annihilation. Sometimes it will draw him near; at other times provide peace for him through familiarity. Sometimes it fatigues him with the scorching of Unity; at other times it brings his soul to life through perplexity. At times it makes him listen; at other moments to flee or to recite. Sometimes it casts him into the state of pure servitude; at other times into the essence of lordship. Sometimes it makes him inebriated with beauty; at other times humbled by majesty. Sometimes it makes him sober, or strengthens him, or makes him inconstant. Sometimes it takes his soul through the languor of spiritual music. At other times, through the eradication of the calamities caused by the unceasing light shining from the dawns of Unity upon the roof of Majesty, it will place him upon the throne of kingship. Sometimes it will make him fly with the aid of the mystery of blessedness through the space of pre-eternity. At other times, by means of the shears of transcendence, it will cut the wing of resolution in the space of self-identity.

‘All these are to be found in spiritual music and still more. He knows this truth who, at the moment of spiritual vision and through the beauty of this vision in the presence of the Divine Presence, acquires from the eternal *saki* without the toil of non-existence the wine of spiritual familiarity; one who is able to heal the sublime words issuing from the blessed dawn within the invisible dimensions of the “rational spirit” (*rûh-i nâtiqah*). He will know who is there. Those who are here do not know its exposition. These teachings are neither for the unripe who would fall into a state of doubt through them, nor for strangers who would become stranded by them. For this is the heritage of Moses, the secret of Jesus, the ardour of Adam, the sincere friendship of Abraham, the lamentation of Jacob, the suffering of Isaac, the consolation of Ishamael, the songs of David, the familiarity of Noah, the flight of Jonas, the chastity of Joseph, the calamity of Jacob, the remedies of John, the fear of Zackarias, the yearning of Jethro and the spiritual unveiling and vision of the friend, Ahmad (Prophet of Islam)—May the blessings of God the Merciful be upon all of them.

'These words are the secret of 'I am the Truth' (*ana'l-Haqq*); they are the truths which glorify God. The reality of spiritual music belongs to Sarî Saqatî; the speech of this music to Abû Bakr Wâsitî; and the pain of this music to Shiblî The spiritual concert is permissible (*mubâh*) for the lovers of God; it is forbidden (*harâm*) for the ignorant.[

'Spiritual music is of three kinds: one for the common people, one for the elite and one for the elite among the elite. The common people listen through nature and that is destitution. The elite listen with the heart, and that is being in quest. The elite among the elite listen with the soul, and that is being in love. If I comment upon music, I fear that it will cause constraint in the world of those with large ears. For I come from the ruins of annihilation and I have brought the mystery of subsistence. If I speak, I speak without foundation. I speak according to the foundation of the listener. My musician is God and I speak of Him. My witness is God and I see Him. My words are the song of the nightingale of the eternal covenant. I hold discourse with the birds in the pre-eternal nest.'

⁴ Hashemi, Ali Reza, *sair tarikhi musiqi dar iran ba'd az islam*, Dayerat al'ma'arif Bozorg Islami, Tehran.

⁵ See: Safavi, Seyed G., *The Structure of Rumi's Mathnawi*, London, 2006. & *Thaqalain 'Irfan: Theoretical and Practical Principles of 'Irfan and Safaviyya Spiritual Path*, London, 2013.

⁶ Holy Qur'an 39:68

⁷ Na'imayi, interview of Safavi and Na'imayi concerning the relationship between music and 'Irfan, *Ayineye Khiyal Journal*, Tehran, Farhangestan Honar, Tir 1387

⁸ Roozbahan Baqli, *Risalat al-Quds*, Chapter Seven

Religion and Dialogue Among Civilizations

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Abstract

Dialogue among civilizations requires an examination of “what is civilization?” and defining civilizations as the application of world-views to given human collectivity. Furthermore, it is necessary to acknowledge the plurality of civilizations throughout history and in existence today, and the central role of religion in human civilization; for as all civilizations were begun by religion, such a dialogue requires the creation of understanding between religions. Dialogue among civilizations necessitates a willingness to take, to learn, to teach, and to have bilateral communication. It needs an acknowledgement of the possibility and viability of the existence of different world-views. The article, examines three types of dialogue: dialogue between remains of traditional civilizations, dialogue between the West and the non-West, and intra-civilizational dialogue.

Keywords: Religion, dialogue, civilization, tradition, tolerance, Islam, Islamic philosophy, art

Introduction

Firstly, we must define the concept of civilization. Much has been written in this regard, a brilliant example being the late Anada

Kumansrami in an article “*What is Civilization?*” As he and many other serious metaphysical students of various traditions have pointed, the concept of civilization is not merely related to the etymology of the word *civitas* in Latin, meaning city. Rather, it involves the application of a given world-view, a particular vision of reality, to a human collectivity. Today, this definition has become quite ambiguous in the minds of many people, owing to the eclipse of religion in the Western world and its spread to the rest of the world in the 19th century. That is, it is necessary to turn back in history and cast a glance upon all the civilizations that we have in the world, and see how they originated and what it was that made them “civilizations.”

In addition to this, we must also seek to understand the plurality of civilizations. One of the most tragic and unfortunate heritages of 19th century and 18th century European thought, for the whole globe, was the reduction of “civilizations” to “civilization.” This was an intellectual disease which came to its peak in 18th century France during the Age of Enlightenment, and in 19th century Germany and England when the concept of progress began to reign supreme. This concept of progress revolved around the idea that there is only one single civilization and all others are mere building blocks on the way to constructing this one civilization. Even in everyday English, and even after becoming politically correct (so-called), we still use the “civilized” in such a pejorative way. If one kills several million people with advanced nuclear weapons and other sorts of technology we call such a person civilized, while if 15 people are killed with a spear one is called uncivilized.

The very act of discussing “the dialogue of civilizations” is to recognize the plurality of civilizations and to come out of that cloud of total ignorance and misunderstanding which marked this earlier period of not just European history, but the world at large. To continue with our previous linguistic example, we may examine how the word “civilized” has entered into Arabic and Persian. In my own mother tongue, Persian, we say someone is *mutemaden* or

not *mutamaden*, which means civilized or uncivilized. Such terms mean as little in Persian as they do in English, but they are the result of the impact of this European “Age of Enlightenment” style of thinking. Fortunately, we have come out of this error of denying plurality. But we now have to understand the origins of the various civilizations of the world, and understand what historically constitutes a civilization and why they have been multiple.

If we look at the origins of the various civilizations of the world, including those counted by Huntington in his *Clash of Civilizations* (which has caused so much discussion on this issue), we will discover that in every case, without exception, civilizations were founded by a religion. If we refuse to use the word religion, as many do, then we may use a wonderful phrase coined by the late Marco Palis namely “the presiding idea.” Over every civilization, there has hovered a presiding idea or total world-view, which is a religion in the vast sense of the term. Some may ask about “modern civilization,” which is secular. But the reality is that modern “civilization” is merely a residue of a religious civilization. Secularist philosophy was not the origin of the modern West. When Christianity came to Europe, a European civilization was established. The fact that now only a handful of Englishmen may attend Church on Sunday does not mean a new civilization has been formed. Rather, this pseudo-civilization is a deviation from the norm of the civilization that had been founded before. If you look at Islamic civilization, Hindu, Buddhist, Southeast Asian, Confucianist, Daoist, the Maori in New Zealand, the Native Americans, the heart of a civilization has always been religion. It is extremely important to not forget this historical reality.

The situation we have today does not entirely conform with this historical reality. For we now have one very powerful civilization which claims for itself globality, which nonetheless claims to not be religiously based. Although there are strong religious elements in this civilization than many people are wont to accept, Western civilization is essentially controlled by a secularised intellectual

elite. This elite is more secularised than the population as a whole, and determines and reflects the values of the general population.

It is this “civilization” that creates a major problem for dialogue. In order to have dialogue one must have a common ground. Plato, who is the founder of the dialogical tradition in the Western and Islamic context, says as much. In order to have a dialogue, one must have a common measure, a common ground. The great question we face today is how to distinguish dialogue amongst civilizations, who despite the plight of time are nevertheless still rooted in that presiding idea of religion, understood in its vast sense, and dialogue with modern Western civilization (and its offshoots in other parts of the globe) which does not accept religion.

Before doing this, we must ask ourselves honestly: Why dialogue? If one begins with the thesis that there is not just one civilization in the world, but rather multiple ways of viewing the world and that there is plurality in terms of the presiding idea that determines how we see things, how we see life, our goals, and the spiritual quality that dominates over us, then we must ask ourselves: Why do we want to have dialogue? This year, which was announced internationally as a year of civilizational dialogue, would be meaningless if we are not honest in answering this question.

Requirements for Dialogue

For a long period of time, civilizations were in a state of informal dialogue. There are spiritual, philosophical, and artistic traditions that carried out a practical dialogue with each other. Islam and Hinduism in India, Islam Christianity and Judaism in Spain, Buddhism coming into Confucian China and Confucianism going into Shinto Japan, and many others. But during the last several centuries, the dominant political and military civilization in the world, which is Western civilization, has not been interested in carrying out dialogue with other civilizations. There are, of course, exceptions; but the attitude of the British in India or the French in

Algeria was not, to put it mildly, based on a desire to carry out dialogue. This must be understood.

Those societies whom the West has sought to dominate fall into two groups. The first is composed of those who tried to protect themselves from being wiped off the earth as a distinct identity, who tried to keep away this new impinging power. An example is our own *ulama* in the Islamic world, who, for two centuries, have tried to keep aloof from Western thought. This situation was devoid of dialogue. The first serious intellectual dialogue between Islam and the West took place between Allamah Tabatabai and Henri Corbin in the 1950s and 1960s in Tehran, and not during the 19th-century. The second group of dominated civilizations are those that tried to join the Western bandwagon. This group was not interested in dialogue either. They longed to be the West, or at least a second-hand West. This mentality spread like a wave through all non-Western cultures, and just in the Islamic world. Some societies were more apt imitators than others, but no society was ever able to become more than a second hand imitation.

Imitation is not the same as dialogue. In dialogue one gives and takes while preserving one's identity. Imitation means the absorption of one identity into another identity. As such, this whole question of dialogue is not an old one. If we are to have dialogue, it means a profound change of attitude on both sides. It means the dominant civilization of the West must accept the existence of other civilizations, and accept that they have something of value. Conversely, it means that the dominated civilizations must have enough sense of confidence to believe that they exist. I was personally raised as part of a generation in Iran where everybody thought by the year 2000 that all Iranians would be like Frenchman and Swedes. The people that held to this view would turn in their grave to see how religion has been revived in the world, and the coming of an inevitable rejection of Western values. It is crucial that the other partner in dialogue must have confidence in its own existence.

A third factor is the willingness to share. We see in the non-Western world a movement of total exclusion, such as the Taliban in Afghanistan or the Takaray in Bombay. Similar groups exist in the West. The only difference is that those who in the West reject all other values are not called fundamentalists, but are instead called open-minded liberals. Such people accept freedom as long as one accepts their point of view. They accept human rights as long as it is their view of human rights. If one believes human beings are images of God and made for the transcendent, then you are not accepted. What is presented is a kind of pseudo-openness.

What we find in the world, then, are two attitudes: those that reject completely the other, and there are others that want to give and take, and to learn and to teach, and have dialogue. This is a very important chapter in our history if it is taken seriously. If it is not taken seriously, it is nothing but a political gimmick.

There are many people in the non-Western world who are afraid of having dialogue in the West, because they believe it's a bit like globalization, which under the name of freedom one can steal things more easily from other nations. Dialogue would then be giving a light to the thief more easily. Some people have this attitude in the Islamic world, in the Hindu world, in the Buddhist world. There is no doubt that this attitude exists, and it needs to be confronted.

The next few years will tell if this "dialogue" was a flash in the pan. We will see if there was any substance to this, and if Western civilization was really willing to have dialogue with other civilizations, and vice-a-versa. We should note that this vice-a-versa is not an entirely correct term for this discussion, in the sense of one side of the equation replacing the other, because there is not a quality of power structure. I know in this very city of London very eminent Muslim speakers and writers have said: "Now that we have entered this age of civilizational dialogue, look at the Englishmen listening to the *wali* as they would never have done in the Victorian

period.” What is misunderstood is that such an Englishman may *choose* whether or not to listen to a *wali* or not, whereas in Tehran it is not so easy to choose if you want to listen to Michael Jackson or not. The physical and psychological pressures are not equal between the Western and non-Western world. This is part and parcel of how we are going to deal with the confrontation of civilizations.

A remarkable dynamic is occurring in the world. On the outside, it seems that modern Western or post-modern civilization is becoming ever more dominant. But on the inside it seems that the civilization is crumbling, and values from those other civilizations that are being dominated are coming right into its bosom. This place you are standing in now [Islamic Center of England] is a place where Peter O’Toole once played, and now it is an Islamic Centre, while Michael Jackson is getting into Lahore or Tehran or Karachi. It is in terms of this dynamic that we must understand the meaning of civilizational dialogue means.

Dialogue between the Remnants of Traditional Civilizations

There are three very important forms of dialogue that are involved. One is dialogue between what remains of traditional civilizations, something which I have been involved throughout my life. We say “remains” because there is not any completely intact traditional civilization in the world. But in spite of whatever people may say about globalization, there is still a big difference between a street in Cairo and one in New York, in terms of the presence of the transcendent and the realization of the spiritual element. This realization is apparent in certain parts of the world, and eclipsed in others. An example of dialogue between these types of civilizations would be a dialogue between Islamic India and Hindu India. At least 30,000 people have died in Kashmir, thousands in the rest of India, and we know what it would mean if there could really be a dialogue that would create understanding between these two civilizations. That kind of dialogue is not too difficult, because once

one moves beyond emotions and psychological factors, the human greed for money and power, and the various ethnic issues, still have very stark and definite values which can act as bridges over which we can build understanding. This is something that was understood a thousand years ago when Muslims first went to India. It is remarked that although strange things were going on in India, there are still many that believe in the unity of God. This was later repeated in a much more elaborate form by Dora Shakob.

Dialogue that remains amongst what is left of traditional civilizations has been facilitated during the 20th-century by the appearance of the great traditional writers, who have brought out what is universal in traditional civilizations, and which can act as means of discourse. As Komar Somi once said: The various traditional teachings are the same truth spoken in different languages. Though they are not identical they are still very close, and it is in the inexpressible Divine Unity where there is supreme identity is to be found.

Dialogue between the West and Non-West

Then there is the second dialogue, much more difficult, which is imposed upon us. This is the dialogue between the modern West and the non-West. The first difficulty in this dialogue is the difference in power structure. Behind one civilization there stands B-52 bombers, nuclear missiles, ballistic missile submarines, and so forth, and behind other civilizations there stands nothing. What is worse, once the other civilizations try to obtain such things, they unwittingly forfeit their own character. Many Muslims do not understand this reality. Many Muslims talk about the Islamic bomb, saying that since the Christians and Jews have a bomb, we must have an Islamic one. How many times has one read this in Pakistani newspapers? But at what price does that have for Islamic society? Secondly, one thing that many Muslim thinkers have not understood fully, is that in the ordinary course of things each civilization would create its own agenda, and would then have a dialogue with other

civilizations. Today the West determines all agendas for all other civilizations. Why is it so many Muslims today have to write about women in Islam? Look at something like *Female Saints of Morocco*. Why not male saints of Morocco? This sort of thing has been prompted by the West, and it is the West that has created the agenda. Everyone now talks about human rights, The West was never interested in human rights in 1750, but now it has changed the agenda. Now it talks about animal rights, so we as Muslims have to talk about animal rights. The list is endless. The sooner non-Western thinkers understand this the more intellectual independence they will gain.

Certain other agendas are imposed not by Western thinkers but by Western actions. When a million animals are killed in England in order to make money, this creates a global environmental problem. These problems are created an unbelievable imbalance between modern technology and the natural world. These are the actions. Most of the agendas, though, are not actions, but thoughts, theories, and ideas. Suddenly someone in France wakes up one morning and creates deconstructionism, redoing the understanding of sacred scriptures so that they mean nothing, and everybody else in the world has to struggle to try and answer that. This is the way that the world goes on today. Not only is the dialogue between civilizations is not based on equality of power, military power, media power, political power, economic power, but we now have very strange situation, which has never existed in world history, where one civilization sets the agenda for world discussion. Even if other civilizations want to give their own answers, they have to give answers to questions posed by the West. Recently there was a large conference in Washington in which a number of very famous women assembled to show their sympathies for poor women in Africa and the Middle East and so forth. I wish there was a conference in Cairo right now about poor boys being shot in schools in America left and right. But there is no conference in Cairo about the shooting of American teenagers. This lack of equality which if

we do not take into consideration seriously, all religious dialogue is a waste of energy. Non-western civilizations must also be able to set their own agenda, even though they do not have the power to set the agenda for the West. Those thinkers who make decisions in the non-Western world cannot decide what to think about, and what they must think about it is established by another civilization. This is not dialogue.

Even if dialogue were to be carried out in this realm, we still must discover what common principles there are for us to base such a dialogue. I would argue that human nature is not sufficient in and of itself for becoming a common principle for dialogue among civilizations. Human nature is too fluid, and too changing, and no humanism is sufficient for establishing a common basis between civilizations. This is a great assertion to make in a so-called humanistic age. The history of the 20th-century clearly demonstrates the poverty of humanism. There might be some value to humanism if one means spiritual humanism, but in that context the word humanism becomes superfluous. There is discussion about Christian humanism, Islamic humanism, Hindu humanism and so forth, but this is not a correct usage of the term. If humanism goes back to the Declaration of Independence, and the substitution of the kingdom of God for the kingdom of man, then this sort of humanism is not sufficient ground for serious dialogue. It needs something more.

The best that one can do with this sort of humanism is to show where there are certain areas of agreement, but if there cannot be agreement on principles of the nature of reality, the origin of the world, where do we come from, where are we going, we cannot have agreement for the sake of peace. Peace does not come through appeasement, as the British suddenly learned in 1939. Peace must be based on truth, and if there is no common truth, expediency will not be sufficient. The best one can do in this sort of dialogue is to come to a realization about the other side's position, if we have the good intention of not interfering with that position. Unfortunately, there are many in the West, with good intention and honesty, think

that nothing could be better for people in Sri Lanka than to live like Americans. The mentality of such people is the best you can do for Sri Lankans is to convert them to the Western way of life. There is a secular missionary zeal, a missionary zeal that has been a speciality of the West since the Roman time. This is the reason that the Crusades were not carried out by Muslims, even though Islam is supposed to be the religion of the sword, but were rather carried out by the French monks. There are many in the West who possess this missionary zeal of making everyone into themselves. The best a dialogue with the secularised modern world could make people with good intention to realize that a simple peasant woman in Bengal may not be more unhappy than a secretary in New York, and leave her alone to determine her life. A dialogue might be able to prevent such people from attempt to dictate for her what her happiness should be, based on some whimsical idea that will ten years down the road.

What is strange is that the West combines this missionary zeal with a total lack of commitment to the ideas it is attempting to spread. The modern West has proven itself to not be constant about anything. I have coined the term which I very rarely do, the “absolutization of the transient.” It is a characteristic of the modern West. In the old days, the transient was a forty-fifty year period, but now it is a 10-year period. The 60s, in London, could be the time of Queen Elizabeth I as far as people are concerned. We absolutize transient trends of thought, make a huge idol out of it, and then decide the whole world should follow it. This idea is then abandoned several years down the road. Civilization dialogue could possibly ameliorate this situation, at least to some extent.

Intra-civilizational dialogue

The third kind of dialogue is an intra-civilizational dialogue that results from inter-civilizational dialogue. As has been said, there is no traditional civilization that is intact, nor is there a modern secular

civilization. If there was we would not be here now at this conference. What we have instead is called in Arabic *tadakhul*, or an interpenetration, of the modern secularised world into those non-Western civilizations and vice-versa. There is tension in both world, though it is certainly more pronounced in the Oriental world than the non-Western world, owing to the length of the colonialist period. But on the other hand there are still many in the West who are seeking to embrace a more traditional life, and as such have embraced religions such as Islam or Buddhism. This process is less pronounced in Europe, which is the least religious continent in the world. But in America these questions come right into the open, and we find enormous questions about the sacredness of life with regards the legality of abortion. These are questions that are decided in an off-hand way over a cup of cappuccino, the way things are often dealt with in Europe. Such debates are out in the open and people die for it on both sides. This phenomenon is relatively new in the West. Fifty years this tension was highly pronounced in the Islamic world, between modernizing and traditional elements. But today it is also found in the West. This phenomenon will only increase.

The Role of Religion

All civilizations, without exception, were begun by religion. If dialogue is going to lead to understanding, then the heart of it must be the creation of understanding between religions. If religions come to understand each other on more than a formal level, on the level of inner respect for the same truth that is beyond the ordinary understanding of tolerance, then we have already laid the foundation for true civilizational dialogue. What is called the transcendental unity of religions, is absolutely essential, and those amongst the Muslims who say that this is against the Qur'an have not read the Qur'an. The Qur'an is the most universalist of all sacred scriptures explicitly stating that to every nation is a prophet, combined with the long tradition of Islam being regarded as the last

religion of humanity. This is an embodiment of the idea of the universality of revelation.

Some religions have a lot of trouble with this idea, and the one with the greatest trouble is Christianity. This is because Christianity identifies God with a particular locus of the manifestation of God in the form Christ. It is Christo-centric rather than Theo-centric for many, and as such it is difficult to unify all other religions under the name of Christ. The only way to remove this difficulty is to change the identity of Christ into that of universal *logos*, something that is not in the common everyday theology of any Church. Other religions have less difficulty in this regard, such as Islam and Hinduism. The key is to have a common understanding between religions, but this is outside the scope of this talk.

What we must realize after fifty years of ecumenical discourses is that dialogue cannot be based only on politeness and expediency. God will never forgive any people who have forsaken Him for the sake of terrestrial peace, and this is absurd. A person who says “I will put my belief in God half aside you put yours half aside, then the half that remains gives us peace between each other” will not be able to answer for himself on the Day of Judgement. This is absurd for anybody who believes in religion, and it is not this kind of ecumenism of which I speak.

Nor do I speak of tolerance. This is a key word today for the Western mindset. What it means in practice that we tolerate everybody unless they are against us, and then write nasty things about them in the *Guardian* and call them fanatics. This pseudo-tolerance is one of the pseudo-virtues of the modern world. Even if we accept it as a virtue it is not enough. Tolerance is something one has about something one does not like. When your tooth aches, and your dentist is on vacation, your wife tells you to tolerate the pain until the dentist comes. You tolerate pain and other things that you dislike. This is not helpful in creating understanding between religions. It is not going to lead to understanding between societies

and religions. Rather, it must be based upon the truth, upon *Al-Haqq*, which in Arabic means both truth and reality. Without that, there is no use talking about coming to an understanding.

There are a great number of of political consequences that result from this, but when we only do things in terms of political consequences we go nowhere. I carried on a forty-year dialogue with the Catholic Church, since I was twenty-four years old in Morocco. Then after forty years Cardinal Ratzinger declares that all non-Catholics go to hell. The sad fact is that he was defending what was left of Catholicism, and this was the result of the tragic dilution of the Catholic Church. But for me, such a declaration meant that I had wasted forty years of my life. If am going to hell and he is going to Paradise, why are we having a dialogue and wasting each other's time? I personally know Cardinal Ratzinger and he is one of the most respected Cardinals in the Church. The tragedy is that he holds a position of spokesman for the Catholic Church, while those who want to understand what I say are non believing Catholics, nor even good Christians.

I was attacked by someone in the city of Qum I said that John Hick should not cease believing in the Incarnation in order to come into an agreement with me. I have been taken to task in two separate articles demanding to know how I could say such a thing. The reason for this is that myself and John Hick have carried on a discourse for a long time, and there is no significance if John Hick comes to an accommodation with me by sacrificing belief in the Incarnation. If I agree with him, one man in the city of Birmingham with another million people following him, what have I accomplished? What each religion has to represent is the collectivity of political views. I cannot take one step from my *umma* in order to placate someone in the West. People do that all the time in order to get a sixth month job in the West or a visa or what have you. This goes nowhere. The important thing is to cling to the truth, but on the basis of that try and come to an

understanding. Unless this issue is solved, civilizational dialogue will not get anywhere.

I'm a bit worried that this has been launched by UNESCO, for this acronym U N E S C O is missing one letter, R, which means religion, which was banned from UNESCO by the Soviets and Chinese communists. It is, by definition, a secularist organization which has always avoided speaking of religion. If we speak about Al-Ghazali in UNESCO, we must speak about "a thinker from Khorasan," and avoid any religious appellations. If we do not take into consideration the centrality of religion in this, then the whole thing is not worthwhile. If Islam and Hinduism cannot come together, then to compare the Taj Mahal with some Hindu building is of no use.

This is also true in the West. Fortunately, in the West, something still remains of Judaism and Christianity, and they have not totally died out. So this dialogue between Islam and the West and the Hindu world in the West must address those people who still believe in a metaphysical reality and ethical system that is, in many ways, like our own, and in the West this means those who are still Jews and Christians and who, in one way or another, still cling to their beliefs. Unfortunately, there is so much aberration going on inside Christianity that it is hard to say who is a Christian and who is not. There is a joke going around in the US that: One man told another "What do you believe in?" "He said I don't believe in anything." He said: "Are you an Anglican?" This is a great tragedy that this joke is going around.

World-View

Now, although religion is at the heart of civilizations, we can see that there are several elements all based on religion, which must be taken into consideration. First of all is the world-view, the presiding idea, which is the religion itself, in its metaphysical, theological understanding. This is primary. There will be no accord amongst

civilizations without an accord of world-view. There will never be complete accord. Perhaps an agreement to not kill each other, but not accord. Accord means harmony, two notes that play with each other. The reason I am using the term world-view instead of religion is because someone might come along claiming Buddhism or Confucianism are not religions. This is rubbish though much has been written about it, but in order to placate such people we use the term world-view which encompasses a wide number of beliefs regarding the ultimate understanding of reality. It is that world-view determines how we think how we look at ourselves, and our view vis-à-vis the ultimate determines everything we do. That is the heart of dialogue. This is precisely why religion is so significant.

The question of what is man is of paramount importance for any world-view. By man I mean, of course, humanity, but I desire not to enter into the absurd feminist distortion of the English language. The question about man and the meaning of life is something every religion has tried to answer. Some religions, like Confucianism have not spoken much of where have come from, in terms of cosmogony and anthropogenesis. But all have spoken about how we act and where we are going, and if religion doesn't do that than it is not really a religion. This is the first important element that issues forth from this world-view. Related to that is the nature of the world around us, the cosmos, and that is why if we go back to the Qur'an and to the poems of Imam Ali (as) and to the Prophets (as) there is always reference to *insan* and to *kaun*, man and nature. The Qur'an refers to man, and the moon, heavens and earth and so forth, bees, pomegranates, everything. There is this concordance between the two: how we see ourselves determines how we see the world. Look at the modern world: The modern world first secularises thought and then creates secularised science, which itself further secularised man, which has created a vicious circle that has left us at the edge of the precipice.

Then there are social interactions and social structures as defined by a world-view. We are not only individuals living as human beings within a society. All great civilizations have created remarkable

social structures, social structures which are not identical. The identity is only in their principal unity, and everything else is a difference of expression. It is remarkable that even though the Confucian family structure and the Islamic family structure are not identical, there is still a remarkable resemblance there are between all traditional civilizations. Take, for example, the hierarchy within the family. Whether you are an American Indian or a Hindu or a Japanese Shintoist or a Muslim, there is a hierarchy in the family. The ancestor is always closer to God, because he is closer to the origin of the human race. In Islam we do not have ancestor worship as in China, but respect for parents and grandparents is a great part of the *Sunna* of Islam. Those Muslims of my generation and later have been deprived of this blessing. One of my Persian friends described how he had to stand in great respect, before his father, always saying yes to whatever he asked. I thought that when I was 50 my son would do this for me, but instead I stand before my son and do this for him. This is, perhaps, an exception, but this is a destruction of the hierarchy that existed.

The importance of ethics is a critical part of the world-view. There is no civilization that has not emphasized ethics, that actions do have an effect on the soul. Actions are not indifferent. There are some who might say Yogis in India do not believe in ethics, but this is foolishness. The idea is present in every society that social structures must be bound by certain ethical norms, which ultimately affect us as human beings borne from immortality. Social structures are based on mere expedience. They are there to preserve certain values and preserve a certain religious life that is essential for human existence.

We also have art as a key expression of world. Art includes the whole domain of making of things. I use the word art in its traditional sense, *sana*'. God is Al-Saana', and he has given us this power to make. This is a very important component of dialogue of civilizations. Art can often convey meanings that are difficult to convey in philosophical or theological words. Even at the height of

Western opposition to Iran, if someone heard a concert of Persian music or saw Persian miniature exhibition at the Royal Albert, everyone would be attracted to it. Remember, though, that in traditional civilizations art was always an expression of the truths of religion. Today, religious art might not be religious at all, even if its subject is religious. This is why I distinguish between religious art and sacred art. Religious art is simply an art whose subject happens to be religious. Sacred art is an art whose very form reflects divine realities, whose symbols are meta-individual. That is why Britten's musical rendition of the psalms are much less religious than drinking songs of the Middle Ages, for the tavern of the 13th-century is closer to Christian art than many contemporary London churches. The two should not be confused, and the art of traditional civilizations was always related to the sacred heart of civilizations.

Here we have a great paradox: In the modern West, art has become very important. For many people it has taken the place of religion. If you desecrate the name of Christ, no one will do anything to you. But if you desecrate a Michelangelo, you're finished and are uncivilized. That is the mystery of this tragedy that occurred in Afghanistan recently. This Taliban, which was created by Wahhabism in the heartland of Eastern Islam, with the help of the Pakistani army, desecrated and destroyed these Buddhist statues. This is against the Islamic tradition entirely. When Umar entered Jerusalem, he refused to pray in the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, and ordered that no Christian images be destroyed. This was by a *khalif* who has the same name as the present leader of the Taliban, and he was the most austere of the *khulafah*. What was really going on? The Taliban wanted to hurt the West because of an embargo that was killing millions of Afghani children. They knew that if they cursed Christianity nobody would care, but if they destroyed art, everybody would be up in arms. When over ten thousand Afghan children died of malnutrition because of the embargo, a few articles appeared on page 55 of the New York Times. But as soon as this demolition took place, it was on the front page of every newspaper.

This is precisely the meaning of religious dialogue, the meaning of art.

Now, for many in the West, art is usually meaningless, a road straight to hell that is an expression of the lower psyche in its worst form. But nevertheless art is almost sacrosanct and has taken the place of religion for many people. If one is going to have a dialogue, this is one of the most important issues. Today, America sees its victory in any non-Western civilization if they listen to rock music. That is a sign of the victory of American culture, and they are in a sense right, for it is a penetration into the psyche of the young. No art is without a message. The message is not the same between two civilizations.

It is very important for this dialogue. This is where that intra-element comes in. There are many in the Islamic world have no idea about the impact of Western art. That is why there are so many ugly mosques in the Islamic world. Suharto asked me for my advice about the future of Islam in Indonesia. My first advice was to tear down the national mosque. This hideous mosque was built by a Belgian priest who had become an atheist. This building is, without a doubt one of the ugliest buildings, used for worship. Why is that so? Because Muslims do not understand the impact of art on the soul.

Conclusion

Finally, I want to conclude by saying that in contrast to what many secularists, especially in Europe religion is not going away. I want to the recently published book *The De-Secularisation of Society*, by Peter Berger, one of the great theoreticians of secularisation. All of the works in this anthology present the thesis that religion is in an incredible rise, except in Western Europe. South America, Africa, Middle East, even in Communist China. In Hindu India, all the secularism of Nehru is gone. In the Islamic world, the one secularist figure who still holds any respect is that of Atatürk, one of the great

anti-Islamic figures in the 20th-century, and this will not last long. This wave of secularisation that occurred in the early 20th-century and mid-20th century is being reversed. The idea that many had, which is still held by many English and French historians, that religion is merely a passing epiphenomenon based on social and economic factors, has been proven totally false, and the thesis that religion will vanish is nonsense, at least for the foreseeable future. Those who dream that Iran and Egypt will enter into a post-Islamic phase the way England has entered into a post-Christian phase

Music and Islamic Law

Rana Shieh

Abstract

What does *mūsīqā* mean in the context of Islamic culture and what fields does music in the English sense cover in this culture? Historical examples are given along with the views of muslim jurists, both Sunni and Shi'ite, about music. Different types of specifically religious music are discussed from Qur'ānic chanting to *nawha-khānī* and the fatwā of Ayatollah Khomeini and its historical importance mentioned. The essay then turns to *samā'* and its widespread presence in the islamic world. Different types of music prevalent among muslims are then considered from music for weddings to music associated with different professions to military and music along with their legal aspect. Also both classical and folk music are studied in light of their status in Islamic society. The views of a major Persian religious scholar who was also a master musician, Master *Ilāhī* are summarized and the significance of the fatwā of Ayatollah Khomeini for the life of music in present day Iran and to some extent elsewhere brought out.

Keywords: The technical Arabic term *mūsīqā*, Qur'ānic chanting, *adhān*, *rawda-khānī*, *nawha-khānī*, Ayatollah Khomeini and his fatwā, *samā'*, classical music, folk music, Master *Ilāhī*, Ayatollah Khomeini and classical Persian music

Introduction

Few issues have caused as many diverse and opposing views as the question of the permissibility or illegitimacy of music from the point of view of Islamic Law and among devout Muslims. Is music *ḥalāl* (permissible) or *ḥarām* (forbidden)? And when we say music what kind of music are we speaking about? Such questions have occupied the minds of numerous jurists (*fuqahā'*), both Sunni and Shi'ite, not to speak of philosophers and Sufis, over the ages. Muslim authorities have provided a whole spectrum of responses to such questions and this diversity is due to a large extent to the fact that there is no explicit reference in the Qur'ān concerning the licit or illicit nature of music; nor is there a definitive edict for or against the playing or hearing of music in the *Ḥadīth*. That is why, "Few subjects have been debated or have raised as many contradicting emotions and opinions as the statute (*ḥukm*) of music vis-à-vis religious law and at the heart of Islamic society." To deal with this complex issue, it is necessary to clarify first of all what we mean by the term music when used in the Islamic context although it is hardly possible to define such a universal term as music in English. The term closest to music in Arabic is *mūsīqā* (*mūsīqī* in Persian), both derived from the same Greek word. *Mūsīqā* and *mūsīqī*, however, do not cover the same field of meaning in Arabic or Persian as does music in English. What would be called music in English, as far as the Islamic world is concerned, would not always be called *mūsīqā*. For example, the chanting of the Qur'ān would be called music in English but not *mūsīqā* in Arabic. There are several terms in Arabic and Persian, besides *mūsīqā* and *mūsīqī*, which would be translated as music such as *qirā'at al-qur'ān*, according to the discipline of *tajwīd*, as well as *ghinā'*, *ṭarab*, *rāmishgarī* and *khanyāqarī*. Even the Muslim call to prayer (*al-adhān*) is sung and is musical although not called as such. The diversity of terminology used in the experience and production of sounds that would be called music in English is an important element to consider when discussing the relation of music to Islamic Law. A jurist might consider music sung by an Arab or Persian singer to be *ḥarām*, but

if someone sings the *adhān*, which is the usual practice in the Islamic world, that same jurist would not protest even if the notes of the music of the chanting of the *adhān* could be written down.

In this study we shall turn our attention to the whole phenomenon of what in English would be called music and not only *mūsīqā* or *mūsīqī* in Arabic and Persian. Only in this way will it become clear what kind of music is considered as *ḥalāl* or *ḥarām* according to different authorities and also the consensus (*ijmā'*) of the Islamic community and go beyond such often-heard simplistic statements that music is *ḥarām* in Islam or some other general statement which does not correspond to the reality of the status of music in Islamic civilization over the ages.

Diverse Views Concerning Music and Islamic Law

The diversity of views of Islamic authorities, jurists as well as philosophers and Sufis, resulted not only from their views concerning the nature of music, which of course before modern times was traditional music, but also from the effect of music upon the soul of the hearer which means considering also the nature of the soul of different types of human beings. Many from al-Fārābī to the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' to al-Ghazzālī were favorable to the audition of music under the right spiritual conditions, while at the other end of the spectrum such jurists as Ibn Abī'l-Dunyā and Ibn al-Jawzī along with many Shī'ite jurists condemned music outright.

Those Muslim jurists, who were concerned only with the outward aspects of the religion, usually condemned music because they claimed that it led to the strengthening of the negative passions and base desires, what they usually called *al-laha wa'l-la'ib*. Other Muslim jurists who were also connected to the inner dimension of Islam, that is, Sufism and esoterism, did not condemn music outright and usually provided a more nuanced answer, defending the legitimacy of types of music that had a spiritual content and helped one to remember God. We can see an example of the former

in Ibn al-Jawzī and the latter in al-Ghazzālī. If it were otherwise, music would not continue to exist on a wide scale and many forms of music would not flourish in different Islamic countries.

As an example, one can cite the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans were Ḥanafīs and Islamic Law was promulgated throughout their realm. The Shaykh al-Islam of the Ottoman world was one of the most powerful figures of the land and the Turks were pious people with strong faith. And yet, classical Turkish music, especially the music of the Mawlawiyyah Order, was not only allowed, but thrived throughout the land, forming the foundation of classical Turkish music. Similar situations can be seen elsewhere, but not everywhere. For example, when Wahhābism took over Arabia, the traditional schools of music were harmed and today if one wants to hear traditional Hijāzī music in Jeddah, one has to contact underground groups which have preserved the musical tradition outside of the view of the public during the past century since the Wahhābīs conquered Hijāz. Such a situation must not, however, be generalized. In most other Sunni countries there is a spectrum of views of jurists about the legal status of music. This fact itself creates a situation in which governments can permit music to be played on the radio and television as well as in concerts or private gatherings without any notable opposition from the *fuqahā'* or jurists. The question of what kind of music should be played and especially the introduction of anti-traditional and modern music from the West into the Islamic world is another question to which we shall turn later in this essay.

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The diversity of views of the *fuqahā'* is not confined to the Sunni world but embraces the Shī'ite world as well. From the Safavid period onward, when Persia became Twelve-Imam Shī'ite, many forms of music were developed in relation to the Shī'ite rites such as 'Āshūrā, commemorating the martyrdom of the third Shī'ite Imam, Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī—upon whom be peace. At the same time, however, the Shī'ite jurists were in general more strict in their legal

edicts concerning music in general than were their Sunni contemporaries. In this context the famous edict (*fatwā*) of Ayatollah Khomeini, to which we shall turn later, are of particular interest. While earlier he had expressed his views concerning the negative effects of music and forbidding it in most cases, after he became the supreme leader of Iran, he expressed a much more nuanced opinion. After the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, for some time there was no music in the ordinary sense (not including *adhān*, Qur'ānic recitation, etc.) on the Iranian radio or television, but such an interdiction was not practical and could not continue. And so, the head of National Iranian Radio and Television (*Jām-i jam*) among others wrote a letter to Ayatollah Khomeini asking for directions. His *fatwās* on this question are of significance both religiously and historically, coming from one of the most politically powerful '*ulamā*' in Islamic history. He made a distinction between traditional and classical music (with Persian music mostly in mind) and popular music that arouses the lower passions. He also allowed male singers to perform for everyone and female solo singers to perform only for female audiences but not banning two or more female voices singing together, nor banning men or women from playing musical instruments. The effect of these *fatwās* in a country ruled by a jurist (*faqīh*) was immense. Classical Persian music was revived and the conservatory of music re-opened. Gradually more modern expressions of Persian music returned, but so did Western music including pop music which is now widespread in Iran.

Although Islamic philosophers and Sufis were not always also jurists, although some were, they did also express their views concerning the effect of music on the soul and what kind of music should be heard by those who seek God. Among philosophers who dealt with music and its spiritual, psychological and even physical effects one can mention al-Fārābī, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', Ibn Sīnā, Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrazī and Fayḍ Kāshānī and among the Sufis the two Ghazzālīs, Abū Ḥāmid and Aḥmad, Rūzbihān Baqlī and Rūmī. In later centuries fewer philosophers wrote about music, but Sufis

continued to be concerned with it both practically and intellectually, as well as in many cases legally.

Different Types of Music and Legal Views Concerning Them

There are many types of music in the Islamic world in the English sense of music and even *mūsīqā* in its Arabic connotation. The relation of the major views of Islamic Law concerning various forms of music in the Islamic World need to be treated at least as far as the most important forms and kinds of music are concerned.

1. Qur'ānic Recitation and Chanting

Muslims most often experience the Qur'ān through its recitation which is usually combined with beautiful chanting. Only the human voice is used in this art without any instrumental accompaniment, a situation similar to the singing of Gregorian Chant in the West during the Middle Ages and even later. In contrast to Christianity which later allowed instruments to accompany the human voice in its sacred music, however, Islam has remained faithful to this day to its teachings of restricting the chanting of the Qur'ān to the human voice exclusive of any instrumental accompaniment. To the Muslim ear the Qur'ān, when chanted by someone like the celebrated Egyptian *qārīs* 'Abd al-Basiṭ 'Abd al-Ṣamad and Shaykh al-Ḥuṣarī, is the purest and highest form of music although not called music in Arabic. Needless to say, the vast majority of jurists of the orthodox schools of Islam not only accept but also encourage the musical art of Qur'ānic chanting that is taught usually under the discipline of *tajwīd*, which has been able to preserve and continue the tradition of Qur'ānic chanting through all the centuries of Islamic history.

One should add that although the tradition of Qur'ānic chanting has been well preserved over the ages, since the last century some Egyptian *qārīs* submitted to some extent to the influence of European operatic style of singing. Strangely enough, however, such innovation (*bid'ah*) did not bring forth any appreciable

reaction by the *fuqahā'*. Fortunately from the traditional point of view such innovations have been until now marginal phenomena and have not affected the main tradition in an appreciable manner. The music of Qur'ānic chanting has, therefore, survived as a strong, living tradition, influencing directly or indirectly many other forms of music of the Islamic *ummah*. One needs only to recall that to this day many of the most notable singers of classical Arabic, Persian, Turkish and other schools of music of Muslims have begun their singing careers as Qur'ānic chanters. A major example is Iran's most famous contemporary traditional singer Muḥammad Riḍā Shajariyān.

2. Religious Songs such as *Madā'iḥ* and *Nu'ūt*

There are many forms of religious chanting in Islamic society including poems in praise of the Prophet and in the case of Shi'ism also of the Imams, works dealing with themes of Islamic sacred history, songs dealing with the lives of saints and even epic works that have a religious dimension. In the Sunni world one needs only to cite as examples *al-Ṣalāt al mashīshiyah* by Ibn Mashīsh, that is usually chanted and is very popular in North Africa especially Morocco, and the *Burda* by al-Buṣṣirī which is recited in its totality every Friday after the Congregational prayers in the mausoleum of al-Buṣṣirī in Alexandria, Egypt. The text is recited melodiously and has a clear musical element in it.

In the Shi'ite world likewise there are many works chanted in praise of God, of the Prophet and the Imams. An example is the chanting of the prayer *Jawshan-i kabīr*. This type of art is often called *nawḥa-khānī* and is accompanied by some of the most sorrowful chanting imaginable especially when the subject of the chanting is the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusayn. Singing of religious songs and chanting and/or the use of percussion and wind instruments are to be found also in such Shi'ite practices as *rawḍa-khānī*, *sīna-zanī* in which large crowds of men beat their chest rhythmically and the passion play (*ta'ziyah*) which has its own distinct music. A

particularly interesting case of this kind of religious music is *naqqāra-khānī* which is still very much of a living art in the mausoleum of the eighth Shī'ite Imam 'Alī ibn Mūsā al- Ridā in Mashhad. There is tower in the area of the sanctuary where musicians play a loud wind instrument called *Karnāy* accompanied by *naqqārah* which is a percussion instrument and also with human voices. The music is meant to arouse and awaken people religiously speaking and is a reminder of trumpet of the Archangel Israfil (*sūr-i Isrāfīl*) which will be blown on the Day of Judgment to bring the dead back to life. Music dealing with such rites forms an important *genre* of traditional music not only in Persia, but also in Iraq, Pakistan, India and other lands where there is substantial Shī'ite presence. Except for the passion play whose performance has been opposed by a minority of Shī'ite jurists, the other *genres* of religious chanting or singing or chanting combined with various religious rites have been fully supported by the jurists who realize its significance for the preservation of religious fervor and faith among the masses.

3. Sufi Music

In discussing the relation of music to Islamic Law, few subjects are as significant as Sufi music which pervades the whole of the Islamic world and is associated with most spiritual and profoundest *genres* of the music of the Islamic peoples. The music being of spiritual nature bears deep religious significance. Its practitioners are usually very pious and strong followers of Islamic Law. The Sufi concerts called *samā'* (literally audition) usually begin with Qur'ānic recitation and benediction upon the Prophet and the music is combined with the essential element of all Sufi gatherings which is the *dhikr* or invocation of the Names of God as revealed by the Islamic revelation. The music accompanying the *dhikr* and the sacred dance, that is often performed with it, can range from simple drum beats whose rhythms govern the movements of the bodies of the invokers (*al-dhākirūn*) as one finds for example in the Shādhiliyyah and Khalwatiyyah Orders to elaborate orchestral

music involving many instruments that one sees in the Mawlawiyyah Order in Turkey or the Chishtiyyah Order in the Indo-Pakistani sub-continent. Sufi gatherings combine the *samā'* with canonical prayers (*ṣalāh* or *namāz*) as promulgated by Islamic Law when the *Sharī'*ite times specified for various prayers arrive. All laws of the *Sharī'ah* are observed strictly during the *samā'*. Sufi masters have been careful to point to the conditions necessary to perform *samā'* which included the practice of the *Sharī'ah* including abstentions from what is forbidden by the Law and ritual purity both outward and inward.

The practice of *samā'* has for its goal to help the soul to fly to the spiritual world and experience God's Presence. It often conduces a spiritual state called *khalṣah*, that is, a state that is combined with contemplation and ecstasy. Again Sufi masters have warned that the disciple who wants to participate in *samā'* must have the necessary spiritual qualities which includes both good character and obedience of God's laws and that there can result from *samā'* not only authentic *khalṣah*, but a false one that is injurious to the soul, false *khalṣah* resulting from the disciple not possessing the right qualifications and not fulfilling all the necessary conditions, including following the promulgations of the Divine Law, in order to participate in *samā'*. Despite such warnings there have been, however, some people who have performed *samā'* only superficially without fulfilling all the necessary conditions. In modern times this type of phenomenon that used to be marginal has become more common and there are even those who perform *samā'* for the general public as a show. The most notable example of this pseudo-*samā'* is the performance of the elaborate Mawlawī dance for tourists in modern Turkey while the authentic Mawlawī *samā'* also continues to exist and is performed privately, as has been the traditional practice in all Sufi orders, only by and for authentic *fuqarā'* or members of a Sufi order.

Despite the deeply religious nature of Sufi music and its vast influence upon the phenomenon of music in Islamic society, it is mostly this kind of music that, along with some forms of popular

music, became the target of attack by certain jurists over the centuries. That is why so many Sufi masters and gnostics from the two Ghazzālīs and Rūzbihān Baqlī to Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ to many contemporary masters have felt and still feel it necessary to not only explain the spiritual significance of Sufi music but also to respond to the opposition of those jurists who usually attacked Sufi music without being aware of its real nature. How limited the effect of some of the jurists against Sufi music actually was can be seen in the vast religious popularity of classical *qawwālī*, a form of Sufi music in the Indo-Pakistani Subcontinent, *qawwālī* being performed almost continuously at the tombs of saints such as Niẓām al-Awliyā' in Delhi and Mu'īn al-Dīn Chishtī in Ajmer for millions of devout pilgrims or *samā'* being held inside the mausoleums of Sayyidunā Ḥusayn and Sayyidatunā Zaynab in Cairo on Thursdays and Fridays after the canonical prayers.

4. Music for Special Events and Occasions in the Social Calendar

Many events in the life of traditional Muslims are accompanied by music. As in other civilizations, the newly born in the Islamic world have lullabies (*lālā'ī* in Persian) chanted to them by their mothers to other women in the family and this is usually the first music that the infant hears along with the chanting of the Qur'ān. Likewise, on another major occasion of life, weddings, the playing of music is very prevalent throughout the Islamic world and it was specifically permitted by the Prophet. Then there are works of literature, usually but not always poetry, that are chanted to young and old by professional story-tellers and chanters. An example is *Shāhnāma-khānī* in Iran, the chanting of verses from the *Book of Kings* or *Shāh-nāmah* of Firdawsī. Music also accompanies traditional physical exercises called *zūr-khānah* (The House of Strength) which is related to traditional chivalry and has a deep religious significance. People participating in these ceremonies are usually among the most pious in the community and few jurists have

spoken against this type of music, or the other types mentioned above.

5. Music Dealing with Various Professions

In traditional Islamic society, which belonged to the pre-industrial ages, objects were made by hand and there were numerous guilds whose members made various objects from metallic utensils to porcelain, from weaving carpets to building edifices. In almost every profession music played a role. For example, to this day carpet weavers move their dexterous hands in weaving a carpet in tune with musical rhythms. Traditional brick-layers still lay bricks in order in building a wall according to the rhythms of a chant. In older days when there were caravans of camels everywhere and even today when some still survive in such areas of the Sahara, caravan songs accompanied and still accompany the caravan and the bells around the necks of the camels also create a haunting music as the camels moved and still move through the desert.

Numerous other examples could be given of songs, chants, melodies and rhythms that were connected to the creation of all kinds of objects as well as different forms of agriculture. Again in this domain the jurists did not usually object to such types of music. Usually in Islamic cities the bazaars are the loci of the most pious elements of society and it is also in the traditional bazaars where one hears a symphony of musical sounds intermingled with the cacophony of the market place. One hears people selling their products through the chanting of songs as well as various manufacturers making various objects while taking recourse to singing.

6. Military Music

The Prophet had allowed the use of drums accompanying soldiers going to war and since then military music has thrived in the

Islamic world. Everyone who has studied Islamic history has heard of the bands of the Janissaries in the Ottoman Empire but not everyone knows that the military band in the West was created on the basis of what was learned from these bands. In addition to instrumental military music, the human voice was also used in the old days when often one person from one army would engage someone from the army of the enemy. Before engaging in battle, such warriors would often chant a song to strengthen their own morale and weaken the morale of the enemy. Called *rajaz-khānī* in Persian, this type of military music developed a particular style of its own with variations related to each local culture. As with music of different professions, military music was rarely criticized by the jurists and even strict interpretation of Islamic Law accepted its permissibility pointing to the practice permitted by the Prophet himself.

7. Classical Music of the Islamic Peoples

There are several traditions of classical music in the Islamic world, the main ones according to most musicologists being the Western Arabic, the Eastern Arabic, Persian, Turkish and North Indian with several branches of each. The *dastgāh* system of Persian music and the *maqāmāt* in Arabic, Persian and Turkish music belong to this category. This category is also penetrated by Sufi music on the one hand and some forms of music that would be called folk music on the other. In some places such as West Africa and Indonesia the two intermingle more than elsewhere and all the traditional music of these regions is often categorized as folk music.

Putting these considerations aside, it can be said that the several traditions of classical music in the Islamic world are considered by connoisseurs of music in both East and West as being among the richest and most precious musical traditions of the world.

Often the *fatwās* issued against music by jurists have included in discriminately these traditions of classical music of the Islamic peoples as well but most often it is the more popular music that has

borne the brunt of their criticism. Historically most performers of these schools of traditional music have very pious people, many devoted to the practice of the spiritual life. One of the greatest among them in the contemporary period, Bismillah Khan, the peerless master of the *shahnāy*, used to say that for him there were only two essential realities in life: *sāz* and *namāz*, that is, music and prayer.

8. Folk Music

The category of folk music embraces a vast field whose boundaries are vague. On the one hand it intermingles with classical music and on the other with the categories of religious and Sufi music mentioned above. As for what is generalized usually under the category of folk music, it includes such types as music associated with agriculture from the planting of seeds to the harvesting of plants and the picking of fruits, social songs sung in villages on various occasions outside big cities, music connected with the herding of various animals, even popular love songs, etc.

Usually these types of music, especially when belonging to outside of cities, have not been the subject of condemnation by jurists. In the Islamic countryside one can often see an *‘ālim* or jurist present without his objecting to the music being played. The very rich traditions of folk music that exist to this day in the Islamic world from Morocco to Indonesia have not survived and even flourished in spite of the objections of the doctors of Islamic Law but because most of the jurists have not considered this category of music to cause *lawh wa la‘ib* and so have not usually opposed it but have seen it as a part of the traditional life of the people. The few jurists who have done so have not won the day.

9. Court Music

At the other end of the spectrum from folk music socially speaking stands court music, which was not quite the same thing in Islamic civilization as it was in the West where it was often juxtaposed to

church music. In the Islamic world we have such diverse and even opposing types of music as the passion-inciting music played at the court of Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiyah and the music of Mawlawī ensembles at the Ottoman court where the music performed was of a highly spiritual nature.

Nevertheless, most jurists opposed court music which they associated with dancing girls and passion arousing qualities. In the courts, the jurist who was close to the ruler did not usually give a *fatwā* against the ruler and his courtiers for hearing music but did not participate in such sessions themselves. There is such diversity in the type of music played at courts in the Islamic world that perhaps one should not even consider court music in Islamic lands as a separate category when it comes to the question of the relation of this category of music to Islamic Law. Nevertheless, we found it necessary to mention at least this category.

In this essay it is not possible to consider every kind of music that has flourished in the Islamic world. Our aim has been to cover most of the important and widespread *genres* and the views of Islamic jurists concerning them. To consider every type of music would simply not be possible in a single essay of the nature being presented here.

The Views of a Religious Authority Who Was Also a Master Musician

It is rare to have a master musician who is also an authority on Islamic Law and religion. One such person was the Persian spiritual and musical master, Nūr ‘Alī Ilāhī, from Western Iran, to whose teachings, as explained by one of his choicest students, Dariush Safvat, himself a master musician and also authority in the philosophy and science of traditional Persian music, we now turn. Ilāhī mentions that there are in the Islamic Law five categories that determine the duties of Muslims. They are called *al-aḥkām al-taklīfiyyah*, that is, obligatory injunctions. The five categories are

wājib (obligatory), *mustaḥabb* (recommended), *mubāḥ* (allowable), *makrūḥ* (disapproved) and *ḥarām* (forbidden). The music that is *ḥarām* is called *ghinā'* in the language of jurists. The music that is *mubāḥ* is one in which there is doubt as to whether it is *ghinā'* or not and so he considers it to be *mubāḥ* like drinking water that is also *mubāḥ*. As for the music that is *mustaḥabb*, it is a music that helps in furthering the welfare of society and/or purifying one's character, making one more ethical and spiritual.

Ilāhī summarizes his views on the legal status of music as follows:

1. On the basis of *aḥādīth* and transmitted traditions musical sound is of three basic kinds: forbidden *ghinā'*, permitted *ghinā'* and beautiful sound that is *mamdūḥ*, that is, commendable.
2. *Sharī'ite* injunctions about music are not absolute but conditioned and relative.
3. The criterion for forbiddenness of music is its leading to *lahw wa la'ib*.
4. The criterion for the permissibility of music is that it exalt and elevate ethics in human actions and distance the person from *lahw wa la'ib*.
5. The criterion of approbation of music is the purification of the soul and its leading to worship.
6. The perfection sought and the end to be achieved in music is to attain the state of remembering God (*dhikr*) and worship.
7. To generalize illicitness associated with *lahw wa la'ib* to all music is an irrational interpretation removed from justice.
8. One should never make what is *ḥalāl ḥarām* and what is *ḥarām ḥalāl*.

These words by such an authority as Master Ilāhī reveal how complex the issue of the relation of music to Islamic Law actually is. This truth was also recognized by some leading Shi'ite '*ulamā'*' such as Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī in the 11th century (AH), Shaykh Murtaḍā Anṣārī and Akhūnd Mullā Muḥammad Kāẓim Khurāsānī (13th century AH) who also wrote with nuance about the

licitness or illicitness of different kinds of music. A similar situation to that of Shi'ism can be found in the Sunni world.

A Critical Appraisal of the Edicts of Some Jurists

Most jurists over the ages and even today identify all music with *ghinā'* which they consider to be *ḥarām*, there being some important exceptions to one of which we shall turn shortly. In this discussion we shall limit ourselves to Shi'ite jurists especially those in Iran, but the situation is more or less similar elsewhere. The most important source for Shi'ite teachings about the relation of music to Islamic Law is *al-Makāsib* of Shaykh Murtaḍā Anṣārī on which many commentaries have been written. But many other Shi'ite scholars have also given *fatwās* on this subject from early authorities such as 'Allāmah Ḥillī and Shaykh-i Ṭusī to Safavid '*ulamā'* such as Fayḍ Kāshānī to contemporary authorities such as Ayatollah Burujirdī, Ayatollah Gulpāyigānī and Ayatollah Khomeini. Some like the Qajar '*ālim* and jurist Mullā Aḥmad Narāqī (in his *Mustanad al-shī'ah fī aḥkām al-sharī'ah*) have gone to great lengths to define the meaning of *ghinā'*. Mullā Aḥmad in fact mentions twelve meanings for the term *ghinā'*. Still, such figures as Fayḍ and Muḥaqqiq-i Sabziwārī, in contrast to most other jurists who consider all *ghinā'* to be *ḥarām*, have distinguished between *ghinā'* being *ḥarām* in its essence and being so only accidentally and do not condemn all forms of music as *ghinā'*.

Despite such wide condemnation by most jurists of *ghinā'*, which is then generalized by many to include all music, problems remain. First of all why limit the meaning of *ghinā'* rather than use it in its original sense? Why associate it with only *lahw* and *la'ib*? Some like Fayḍ have in fact pointed out that considering *ghinā'* to be illicit by jurists, both Sunni and Shi'ite, involved the music at the court of the Umayyads and Abbasids, not all chanting and singing. The jurists who oppose *ghinā'* cannot draw a clear line, musically speaking, between what is *ghinā'* and what is a religious song that they permit and even encourage. And then what about forms of

music of other Islamic peoples not to speak of Westerners with which they are not acquainted? Who decides what kind of music incites passions or *lahw wa la'ib* and what kind does not or which listener will be reminded of the love of God and which will think of illicit love in hearing a traditional love song?

These and many other questions have lingered on over the centuries while the jurists have continued to issue their legal edicts or *fatwās*, and while at the same time music has continued to be cultivated in many forms in the Islamic world, the most important of which we have discussed above. But the situation changed dramatically when the Islamic Revolution in Iran succeeded in 1979 and for the first time in the history of Islam a jurisprudent (*faqīh*), who was at the same time a philosopher (*ḥakīm*) and gnostic, became the leader of a major Islamic country. We mean of course Ayatollah Khomeini. His views on the legal status of music were so important in themselves and for the future of music in Iran that we have to treat his views separately.

Ayatollah Khomeini and the Legal Status of Music

Let us not forget that Ayatollah Khomeini was not only a jurist, but primarily a philosopher and gnostic who in his earlier days in Qom used to teach mostly Ibn 'Arabī and Mullā Ṣadrā. Moreover, he loved classical Persian Sufi poetry especially Ḥāfiẓ whose poetry has such a strong musical dimension. Moreover, Ayatollah Khomeini was a fine poet himself, composing poetry in the tradition of the mystical love poetry for which the Persian language is so famous. Yet, before the 1979 Revolution, he expressed the same views concerning the illicitness of *ghinā'* as did most of the other '*ulamā'* as we can see in his *al-Makāsab al-muḥarramah* and *Tahrīr al-wasīlah*.

After the Revolution for a while there was silence on this issue, but soon Ayatollah Khomeini realized that in the new situation in Iran the juridical views were not only theoretical (*naẓarī*), but also had a

practical (*'amalī*) importance and that, therefore, the question of music from the point of view of Islamic Law had to be reconsidered in light of the needs of society. In answer to questions posed by various people or sometimes on his own Ayatollah Khomeini issued a number of *fatwās* and general responses about the legal status of music that opened a new chapter in the history of this subject in Islam. Moreover, these views, coming from the politically most powerful jurist that Islamic society has seen, a figure who was both a *faqīh* and the supreme political authority in a major Islamic country, had a great effect on the whole subject of the relation of music to Islamic Law in Iran and even in some other Muslim countries. The new views on music of Ayatollah Khomeini, following the success of the Islamic Revolution, are contained in his *Risāla-yi istiftā'āt*, *Tawḍīḥ al-masā'il* and *Ṣaḥīfa-yi Imām* as well as in some reports from him conveyed by those close to him.

Here are some of his views concerning music that had a major effect on the life of music in the Islamic Republic: When Ayatollah Muṭahharī was martyred, a Persian musician named Aḥmad 'Alī Rāghib composed a song to commemorate the occasion and Ayatollah Khomeini heard the song. He ordered the composer to come and see him and told him that it was the most beautiful music he had ever heard and that the composer should continue to compose such songs. In 1367 (AH solar) he issued a *fatwā* that the buying and selling of musical instruments did not pose a problem from the *Sharī'ite* point of view. He even discouraged other jurists from declaring the buying and selling of musical instruments to be *ḥarām* and pointed to the new conditions in which Muslims live today. Ayatollah Khomeini pointed out that even if a senior *'ālim* would be aware of all the issues in circles of religious learning (*ḥawzah*) and that alone, he would be in no position to give edicts in matters outside the *ḥawzah*, matters that concerned society as a whole, problems that of necessity included the arts including music. Altogether Ayatollah Khomeini, through the practice of *ijtihād* (giving a fresh legal view), distinguished between a music that leads to *lahw wa la'ib* and a music that has spiritual qualities or fulfills

legitimate needs of society. He encouraged music that brings the listener closer to God or strengthens positive virtues such as courage and compassion. Far from closing the door on all music as *ghinā'* as understood by the earlier jurists, he distinguished between different types of music thus opening a space for the flourishing of classical Persian music and even new expressions of music that possessed some redeeming features but paradoxically also other kinds of music with no spiritual quality and even negative psychological content, music coming mostly from the West or of modern Western inspiration.

A Critical Appraisal

The post Revolution views of Ayatollah Khomeini concerning music have of course had much positive effect upon the cultivation of music in Iran, but they seem to have left out whole categories of music which have affected the Iranian musical scene greatly, most of their effect being negative from the point of view of the Islamic tradition and Persian traditional culture. As he said, there are many new conditions and factors that require new examination and the practice of *ijtihād* by the *fuqahā'*. This new situation includes the tidal wave of Western music that has flooded the Islamic countries including Iran from Western classical to pop music. One does not expect Ayatollah Khomeini to have known the difference between Schönberg and Mahler, Tchaikovsky and Bach, Western folk music and hard rock not to speak of traditional ballads and rap music, the last of which did not even exist at the time when he issued his *fatwās* concerning music. But at least he could have established some principles and asked those who knew these imports to issue directions concerning them.

The result of this omission is that thirty-seven years after the advent of the Islamic Revolution the musical space in Iran especially for the young, is filled more with pop music and even rock and rap in Persian that are almost pure *lahw wa la'ib* rather than with traditional Persian music. These days one even hears rap music in Ira with the gnostic poetry of Hāfīz and Rūmī combined with a

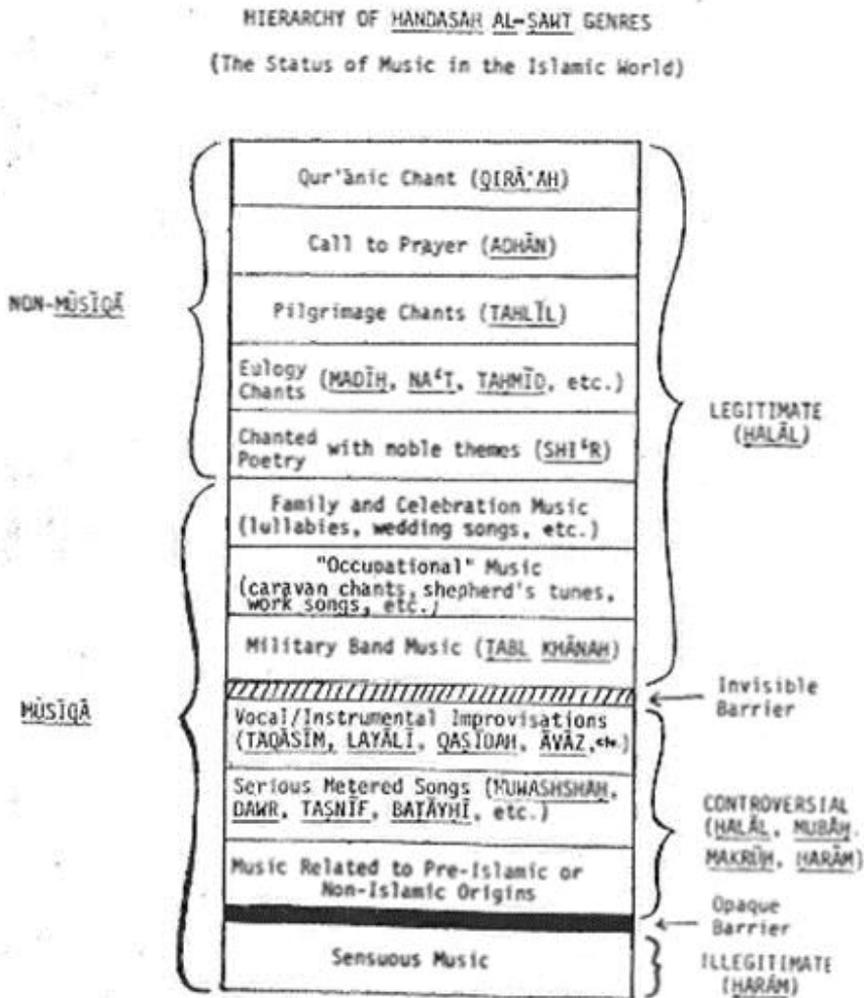
music that is completely devoid of spiritual quality. As for traditional music, these days many of its practitioners speak of mystical music (*mūsīqī-yi 'irfānī*) while knowing nothing of real *'irfān* and even without practicing the *Sharī'ah*. This situation in turn has had a devastating effect upon authentic Persian traditional music. One has to ask how such a situation came about? How did the trajectory of music in Iran go from the positive *fatwās* of Ayatollah Khomeini to what we observe today? We cannot provide answers here to these complex questions that need a separate study, but we have to pose here at least the questions concerning a society that has chosen to live according to Islamic norms and sees itself as a fully Islamic society, yet within which music is in such state.

A Summary Treatment

The American scholar of Norwegian origin of Islamic art and especially music, Lois al-Faruqi, who was a devout Muslim and also well acquainted with both Islamic Law and music has provided a synthetic study of the relation between music and Islamic Law which is worthy of study and analysis.¹ She uses the traditional term sound arts or *handasat al-ṣawt* to embrace all kinds of music and summarizes the result of her study of the hierarchy of *handasat al-ṣawt* in relation to categories of Islamic Law as follows:²

As we can see, from this table she uses four of the five traditional categories of action according to the classical texts of *fiqh*, that is, *ḥalāl*, *mubāḥ*, *makrūḥ*, and *ḥarām*. She then classifies various types of music in Islamic society according to these *Sharī'ite* categories. Her categorization is clear and does not need further explanation. One needs to add, however, that she skips over the category of *mustaḥabb* and certain types of religious music which fall under that category. She also fails to include Sufi music (*samā'*) which has played and continues to play such an important role in the musical life of the Islamic world. Moreover, since she was acquainted most of all with Arabic music, she fails to include such forms of music of non-Arabic Islamic countries as the music of

religious mourning in Shī'ite countries (which in this case also includes some Arab countries such as Iraq and Lebanon), the music of the *zūr-khānah*, *qawwālī*, etc. Nevertheless, the schema of al-Faruqī provides a helpful synthesis and reveals how superficial the opinion that music is *ḥarām* in Islam actually is.



Conclusion

The discussions above reveal albeit briefly, the complex nature of the relation between music and Islamic Law especially if we consider music in its English sense rather than as *mūsīqā* or *mūsīqī*. In its English meaning but in the Islamic context it includes all the way from the recitation of the Qur'ān to religious songs to caravan songs to various forms of classical and popular music of the Islamic peoples. When one looks upon the full spectrum in the Islamic world to what must be called music in its English meaning, it becomes clear how simplistic and false the often expressed view that music is forbidden in Islam is. The ambiguity in the views of various authorities expressed over the ages concerning the relation of music to Islam seems itself to be providential resulting in the survival and even flourishing of a set of rich musical traditions in the Islamic world while reducing to a large extent until recently until recently the presence and impact of music related to the lower passions or in the language of jurists *lahw wa la'ib*. The opinions of the jurists, at least those who considered music to be *ḥarām*, is that they identified *mūsīqā* with *ghinā'* as understood in a limited sense by them, such figures as an al-Ghazzālī in the Sunni world and a Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī in Shi'ism, men who were both jurists and Sufis, being exceptions.

In recent decades with many cultural and social changes occurring in the Islamic world, the issue of the relation between music and Islamic Law has been revisited by a number of authorities. None is more important in this domain than Ayatollah Khomeini whose *fatwās* and less formal declarations concerning this issue have had great bearing upon the life of music in Iran and even elsewhere. We have analyzed his views separately because of their importance but have also criticized the fact he did not pay the necessary attention to the flood of music, mostly from the West and most of it devoid of any redeeming religious or spiritual features, that has inundated the sound space of much of the Islamic world including the Iran that is governed by the Islamic Republic. Nor has he or most other religious authorities paid attention to the status of other forms of

traditional music outside the Islamic world from the perspective of the Islamic *Sharī'ah*. Those who are devoted to traditional Islamic culture including its music cannot but be deeply saddened and upset by the turn of events in the musical scene and must remain critical of the present situation as far as the playing and listening to music in Iran and in fact much of the rest of the Islamic world are concerned.

The relation of music to Islamic Law and in fact to the whole of the Islamic tradition must remain a major concern of all those who are concerned with the preservation of both the Islamic religion, including its laws, and the rich culture, including music, that Islamic civilization created and caused to flourish over the centuries, a culture that is now threatened from both within and without. Nowhere can this sad situation be seen, or rather heard, more clearly and easily than in the domain of music. The survival of the very rich set of musical traditions in the Islamic world depends not only on preserving the music in its authentic form, but also in re-examining, in the context of the present day situation, the attitude of Islamic Law and Islamic thought in general to the whole spectrum of the music to which present-day Muslims are exposed and which is available to them so easily.

Endnotes:

1. J. L. Michon, "Sacred Music and Dance in Islam," in S. H. Nasr (ed.), *Islamic Spirituality*, vol. II, New York, 1991, p. 469.
2. See A. Shiloah, *La Perfection des connaissances musicales*, Paris, 1972, pp. 65–68, where the views of al-Fārābī and Ibn 'Alī al-Kātib are mentioned.
3. See N. Kermani, *God Is Beautiful: The Aesthetic Experience of the Quran*, trans. T. Crawford, Cambridge (MA), 2015.
4. See my essay "*Tajwīd*," forthcoming.
5. See Hamza Yusuf (trans.), *The Burda* (part of a three-CD recording of the *Burda* by Sandala, Turkey, 2002).
6. See J. Raḥmānī, *Ā'in wa usṭūrah dar Īrān-i shī'i*, Tehran, 1394 (AH solar).

7. On Sufi music and *samā'* see J. L. Michon, *op. cit.*; S. H. Nasr, "Islam and Music" and "The Influence of Sufism on Traditional Persian Music," in his *Islamic Art and Spirituality*, Albany (NY), 1987 pp. 151–174; and J. Dering, *La Musique et l'extase*, Paris.

It is worthwhile to mention in this context that the soul of the great master of Sufism Rūmī was so attuned to the rhythm of *samā'* that once when he was in the bazaar of ironsmiths, the rhythm of the beating of their hammers put him in such a *hāl* and spiritual state that he went into a swoon and lost his ordinary consciousness.

8. See D. Şafwat, *Hasht guftār dar bāra-yi falsafa-yi mūsīqī*, vol. 2, Tehran, 1391 (AH solar), pp. 30 ff. See also N. Caron and D. Safvat, *Iran* (Collection *Les Traditions musicales*), vol. 2, Paris, 1972.

9. Safwat, *Hasht guftār*, p. 32.

10. See Shaykh 'Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī and Ayatollah Muḥammad Hādī Ma'rifat, *Barrisī-yi fiqhī-yi padāda-yi ghinā' māhiyyat wa ḥukm-i ān*, trans. M. Ilāhī Khurāsānī, Qom, 1380 (AH solar).

11. This fact is based on the information given to us by Seyyed Hossein Nasr who has first hand knowledge of this matter.

12. See 'A. Muḥammadian, "Bāzpazhūhī-yi ḥukm-i fiqhī-yi mūsīqī wa ghinā' az manzar-i Imam Khumaynī," in *Majatta-yi muhandasī-yi farhangī*, vol. 8, No. 79, 1393 (AH solar) pp. 182–184.

13. Imam Khumaynī, *Istiftā'āt*, vol. 5, Qom, 1422 (AH lunar); and Imam Khumaynī, *Şahīfa-yi Imām*, vol. 4, Teharn, 1386 (AH lunar) on.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

15. See L. al-Faruqī, *Islam and Art*, Islamabad, 1985, chp. VIII, pp. 175 ff.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 179.

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***Suhrawardī* as a Scientartist in Psychology**

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Abstract

Scientart refers to bilateral relations between art and science, including artistically-inclined science, science-minded art or involvement, by and large, both artistic and scientific approaches. Suhrawardī, as a scientartist with both artistic and scientific approaches, having an intellectual grip, conveys philosophical meanings and rational issues with art and literature. In his psychology, representing ten internal and external senses, he uses five allegories: ten towers, ten graves, ten flyers, ten wardens, five chambers and five gates. His philosophical works and his artistic treatises are intertwined.

Keywords: Suhrawardi, Scientartist in Psychology, Philosophy, Islam, Iran.

1. Introduction

Suhrawardī, otherwise known as *Shaykh-i Ishrāq*, is reckoned as the founder of the philosophical School of Illumination in the Islamic East. Marcotte says of him¹:

Suhrawardī provided an original Platonic criticism of the dominant Avicennan Peripateticism of the time in the fields of logic, epistemology, psychology, and metaphysics, while simultaneously elaborating his own epistemological (logic

and psychology) and metaphysical (ontology and cosmology) Illuminationist theories.

She deems that his new epistemological perspective led him to critique the Avicennan theory of definition, introduce a theory of presential knowledge, elaborate a complex ontology of lights, adding imaginal world.

But there is another side to me: *Suhrawardī* as a scientartist or sciartist.

Scientart might be deemed as an interaction between the worlds of art and science.² Types of art and disciplines of science commingle in scientart. For instance, Arthur Clarke raised the astronomical artist.³ And Elaine Quave said, exhibiting their artworks:

I'm fascinated by scientific methods of observing, collecting, dissecting, and classifying to define the world around us...In my artwork I hope to challenge our assumptions and to lead the viewer to a place where the scientist's lab and the artist studio collide, a place where the reflection of our selves can have a terrifying beauty and an ethereal sensation.⁴
I lead off with giving an account of scientartist.

2. An Account of Scientart

Scientart refers to bilateral relations between art and science and we should be therefore clear about science and art from start. Example fields of science include different disciplines such as physics⁵, metaphysics⁶, economics⁷, and medicine⁸. And in this analysis, literature and different types of art as diverse as painting, printmaking, sculpture, architecture, murals, music, poetry, theatre, film, photography, and conceptual art are reckoned as art.⁹

Scientart means sort of relation between science and art, for instance, science in theatre¹⁰, sci-fi or science in fiction¹¹, and science in poetry¹². As Copley holds, both art and science, in spite of their divergences, are brought about by creative process.¹³ In this

process, they have bilateral services to each other. Science may assist art with enriching artworks, as I explain later in philosophical fictions. Moreover, in some media, such as computer graphics, holography, and space art science have been applied for the creation of art.¹⁴ Art, on the other hand, can assist science with presenting scientific issues to the public as well as motivating their creativity. The NASA Art Program was founded to present NASA's cutting-edge research to the public in a way more accessible than complex scientific reports. And many scientific improvements inspired by sci-fi.

Categorizing in three main groups, a scientartist could be an artistically-inclined scientist, a science-minded artist or one involving both artistic and scientific activities¹⁵, albeit I cannot place distinct borders between these three approaches.¹⁶

Artistically-inclined scientists are the scientists who inclined to artists. For example, they protect artists or perform art programs, like James Webb, who directed the start-up of the NASA Art Program. He once put it “Important events can be interpreted by artists to provide unique insight into significant aspects of our history-making advances into space. An artistic record of this nation’s program of space exploration will have great value for future generations.”¹⁷ Science, in this approach, is front-and-center and artists are following it. The science-minded artist might be used to refer to artists inspired by scientific issues or those inspire scientists.

Joyce Yamade, describes inspiring by science, producing quasi-scientific artworks:

Science is the lens through which I understand the world, particularly paleontology and evolutionary biology... Often without conscious intent, my paintings reflect natural history and frequently contain oblique references to whatever I am reading.¹⁸

Sometimes, artists captivate and inspire scientists. Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* could be counted as a quasi-scientific artwork which fascinated American inventor Simon Lake, Known as the father of the modern submarine. In 1914, H.G. Wells published a novel, *The World Set Free*, imagining the emergence of artificial atomic energy by 1933, followed by a devastating world war and the eventual emergence of a peaceful global government. Physicist Leo Szilard was inspired to solve the problem of creating a nuclear chain reaction when read the novel.¹⁹ As I said, science includes, in this concept, all academic disciplines form humanities and social sciences to natural sciences.

Some artworks are equally involving both artistic and scientific aspects. As an example, *The Hellstrom Chronicle*, an American film released in 1971, commingling elements of documentary and science fiction to present a gripping satirical depiction of the Darwinian struggle for survival between humans and insects

In the field of metaphysics, some authors describe philosophical issues with stories. They are philosopher as well as artist. *Suhrawardī* do this way in his ten symbolic treatises: "A Tale of Occidental Exile", "On the Reality of Love", "The Red Intellect", "The Simurgh's Shrill Cry", "The Sound of Gabriel's Wing", "A Day with a Group of Sufis", "On the State of Childhood", "The Language of the Ants", "The Towers", "The Treatise of the Birds".²⁰

3. *Suhrawardī* as a Scientartist in Psychology

Scientart issues in *Suhrawardī*'s writings, especially psychology, include these five treatises: "Treatise on Towers", "A Tale of Occidental Exile", "The Simurgh's Shrill Cry", "The Red Intellect", "On the Reality of Love".

The allegories of ten senses are ten towers, ten graves, ten flyers, ten wardens, five chambers and five gates.

We lead off by “Treatise on Towers”²¹. The allegory of ten towers is seen in “The Risālat al-Abrāj”, “Treatise on Towers”, otherwise known as al-Kalimāt al-Dhawqīya.²² The first five towers refer to the five external senses or five traditionally recognized methods of perception: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste.

The second five towers refer to the five internal senses: the *sensus communis* or common sense²³ that intermingles the what it receives from the five sensory perceptions; the imagination that keeps these forms deposited; the imaginative power or active imagination that mingles and separates forms kept in the imagination; the estimative faculty that figures out the individual meanings (e.g., the sheep that apprehends the perceived wolf as something it should flee from); the memory or memorizing power that keeps the individual meanings.

The ten towers, for Reichert, undertake these activities:

The towers are ten in number with the five exterior towers representing the five senses, and the interior towers the five parts of the brain reputed to be the seat of our mental capacities. In *Suhrawardī*'s scheme, the first of the interior towers²⁴ corresponds to the sensorium²⁵, the second²⁶ to the representative imagination, the third²⁷ to the estimative capacity of the brain, the ninth²⁸ to the active imagination (in the *Ishrāqī* and Avicennian sense) and the tenth²⁹ to the function of memory.³⁰

The allegory of ten graves is used in “A Tale of Occidental Exile”, where *Suhrawardī* utters: “And I cast the sphere of spheres onto the heavens until the sun and moon and stars were crushed, then I was rescued from fourteen coffins and ten graves.”³¹

“The Simurgh’s ShriII Cry” includes the allegory of ten flyers: “Those who wish to tear down the spider’s web must expel nineteen pincers from themselves: of these, five are visible flyers and five are concealed.”³²

The allegory of ten wardens is amplified in “The Red Intellect”. Some dear friend wonders if the birds apprehend each others languages. ‘Yes they do,’ the wayfarer replies. ‘How do you know?’ the friend asks. ‘In the beginning,’ the wayfarer says, ‘When the Former wanted to bring me into actuality, He created me in the form of a falcon. In the realm where I was were other falcons, and we spoke together and understood each others words’. ‘How did you get to be the way you are now?’ the friend asks. The wayfarer replies that one day the hunters, Fate and Destiny, laid the trap of Fore-ordination and filled it with the grain of Will, and in this manner they caught him. Then they took him from the realm where their nest was into another realm, where they stitched their eyes shut, put four different bonds on him and appointed ten wardens to watch over him. Five of them faced him with their backs towards the outside, while the other five faced him kept him in the world of perplexity so that he forgot their nest, their realm and everything he had known.³³

Suhrawardī uses the last allegory of senses, five chambers and five gates, elaborating on details in “On the Reality of Love”. The wayfarer seeks, in their way, the inhabited quarter and reaches the city, catching sight of a three-storied pavilion. “The first story is fitted with two chambers. In the first is a divan placed over water, and on it reclines someone whose nature is inclined to humidity. He is extremely clever but his dominant trait is forgetfulness. He can solve any problem in a flash, but he never remembers anything.”³⁴ This first chamber alludes to *sensus communis*. The faculty of imagination is epitomized by the next chamber: “Next to him in the second chamber is a divan placed over fire, on which reclines someone whose nature is inclined to dryness. He is very nimble and quick but unclean. It takes him a long time to discover allusions, but once he understands he never forgets.”³⁵ Then the seeker goes to the second story. There are two chambers representing the estimative faculty and the imaginative power. The memorizing faculty exists in the third story, storing individual meanings and ideas:

When he reaches the third story he will see a delightful chamber ... He is absorbed in thought. The many things left to him in trust are piled around him, and he never betrays anyone's faith in him. Whatever profit is made from these things is entrusted to him so that they may be put to use again.³⁶

Thereafter *Suhrawardī* alludes to the five exterior senses, sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell by the five gates. "When [the seeker] leaves there he will be confronted with five gates."³⁷ At first, the faculty of seeing is depicted:

The first has two doorways, in each of which is an oblong, almond-shaped. Throne with two curtains, one black and the other white, hung before. There are many ropes fastened to the gate. On both of the thrones reclines someone who serves as a look-out.³⁸

The faculty of perceiving sounds:

Going to the second gate, he will find two doorways, beyond each of which is a corridor, long and twisted and talismanically sealed. At the end of each corridor is a round throne, and over the two reclines someone who is a master of news and information. He has messengers who are continually on the go seizing every sound that comes to be and delivering it to the master, who comprehends it.³⁹

The power of smelling is represented by the third gate having two doorways from each one the seeker will go through a long corridor until he emerges in a chamber in which there are two seats, on which someone sits. "He has a servant called Air who goes around the world every day and brings a bit of every good and foul thing he sees."⁴⁰

The fourth gate illustrates the power of tasting. “This one is wider than the other three. Inside is a pleasant spring surrounded by a wall of pearl. In the middle of the spring is a divan that moves and on it sits someone who is called the Taster.”⁴¹

The faculty of touching is the last gate.

Then he will come to the fifth gate, which surrounds the city. Everything that is in the city is within the scope of this gate, around about which a carpet is spread, and on the carpet sits someone so that the carpet is filled by him. He rules over eight different things and distinguishes among the eight. Not for one instant is he negligent in his labor. He is called the Distinguisher.⁴²

Depictions of the five traditional senses as allegory became a popular subject for seventeenth-century artists, especially among Flemish and Dutch Baroque painters. A typical example is Gérard de Lairese's *Allegory of the Five Senses*⁴³, in which each of the figures in the main group hints at a sense: sight is the reclining boy with a curved outwards mirror, sound is the boy holding the triangle in one hand and the bar in another hand, smell is alluded by the girl with flowers, taste is embodied by the woman looking at the potato, and feeling is illustrated by the woman bearing the bird.⁴⁴

4. Conclusion

We face three different types of connections between science and art, called sciart: artistically-inclined science, science-minded art and sciart with both artistic and scientific approaches. It's art that allows science to be held up against peoples' minds. And it is science that allows art to be held up against experimentation.

Sciart would be applied to *Suhrawardī*, the founder of School of Illumination. In his psychology, for example, ten interior and exterior senses are artistically symbolized by ten towers, ten graves, ten flyers, ten wardens, five chambers and five gates.

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Endnotes

¹ . *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

² . Maftouni, p. 5.

³ . Space Art and Astronomical Art Quotes from Artsnova Digital Art Gallery.

⁴ . <http://www.sciartcenter.org/un-natural-nature-virtual-exhibit.html> 5/12/2015

⁵ . as a natural science

⁶ . as a formal science

⁷ . a branch of social sciences

⁸ . as an applied science

⁹ . McCleese says: “Most people think of art as paintings hanging on museum walls. However, art includes literature, sculptures, paintings, murals, and probably whatever else artists want to present as art.”

(<http://coursesite.uhcl.edu/HSH/Whitec/LITR/5439utopia/models/finals/f2013/f13E2McCleese.htm> 6/12/2015)

¹⁰ . Grünzweig, pp. 61-132.

¹¹ . Grünzweig, pp. 133-154.

¹² . Grünzweig, pp. 155-182.

¹³ . Copely (1987, p. 213).

¹⁴ . Garfield, pp. 62-64.

¹⁵ .It is mentioned in *SciArt Center community*: “Whether you're a science-minded artist or an artistically-inclined scientist (or both!), for our SciArt membership you will be added to our exclusive mailing list, will have opportunities to participate in our events including exhibitions, be eligible for our featured member of the month, a feature in our bimonthly publication *SciArt in America*, eligible for our twice yearly grants and our soon-to-be-announced virtual residency program....”
(<http://www.sciartcenter.org>)

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¹⁹ .<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/ten-inventions-inspired-by-science-fiction-128080674/?no-ist> 24/12/2015

²⁰ . Suhrawardī, *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*.

²¹ . Suhrawardī, *Majmu' 'a-i Musannafa-t-i Shaykh-i Ishraq*, vol. 3, pp. 462-471.

²² . This treatise is controversial. Walbridge says of it: “Its authenticity has been questioned by some modern scholars. However, the manuscripts

seem to consistently attribute it to *Suhrawardī*, so I see no justification for questioning its authenticity. At any rate, *Musannifak* thought it was *Suhrawardī*'s." ("The Devotional and Occult Works of *Suhrawardī* the Illuminationist" p.96)

²³. "The common sense is the sense from which all those five derive, to which each of their impressions is announced, and in which they all are joined, and thus they are all, as it were, filling it up. For if there was nothing in us in which white and sound were joined, we would not know that this white object is that whose sound we have heard. For neither the eye nor the ear grasps the conjunction of whiteness and sound." (Algazel, bartholomew.stanford.edu/onsensesalgazel/intro.html)

²⁴. the sixth of all

²⁵. A sensorium (plural: sensoria) is the sum of an organism's perception, the "seat of sensation" where it experiences and interprets the environments within which it lives. (See: "Sensorium." *Oxford English Dictionary*.)

²⁶. the seventh of all

²⁷. the eighth of all

²⁸. the fourth interior sense

²⁹. the fifth interior sense

³⁰. Reichert, p. 108.

³¹. pp. 117-118

³². *Suhrawardī*, "The Simurgh's ShriII Cry", pp. 104-105

³³. *Suhrawardī*, "The Red Intellect", pp. 20-21

³⁴. *Suhrawardī*, "On the Reality of Love", p. 64.

³⁵. *Suhrawardī*, "On the Reality of Love", p. 64-65.

³⁶. *Suhrawardī*, "On the Reality of Love", p. 65

³⁷. *Suhrawardī*, "On the Reality of Love", p. 65.

³⁸. *Suhrawardī*, "On the Reality of Love", p. 65-66.

³⁹. *Suhrawardī*, "On the Reality of Love", p. 66.

⁴⁰. *Suhrawardī*, "On the Reality of Love", p. 66.

⁴¹. *Suhrawardī*, "On the Reality of Love", p. 66-67.

⁴². *Suhrawardī*, "On the Reality of Love", p. 67.

⁴³. 1668.

⁴⁴. In Hindu literature, the traditional five senses are enumerated as the five material faculties. They appear in allegorical representation as early as in the Katha Upanishad (roughly 6th century BC), as five horses

budging the chariot of the body, guided by the mind as chariot driver. In the time of William Shakespeare, the words "sense" and "wit" were synonyms, so the senses were known as the five outward wits, the traditional concept of five senses that is prevailing now. (Furness, p. 187; "wit", *The Merriam-Webster new book of word histories*, p. 508; Lewis, p. 147)

Theism and Darwinian Evolution: From Inconsistency to Consistency

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Ali Azizi²

Abstract

In this paper, we present four philosophical approaches and their prominent advocates toward the problem of relationship between Darwinian Evolution and theistic beliefs: (a) **Atheistic Inconsistency**: there is a deep conflict between Darwinian Evolution and Theism; among atheists, Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett represent the best in this branch. (b) **Theistic Inconsistency**: A deep conflict could also be seen among theists; M.H. Tabataba'i's Qur'anic exegesis is one of the most significant sources in this regard from Islamic side, correspondent to the same in other theistic religions. (c) **Reductionist Consistency**: Theism and Darwinian Evolution, or science and religion in general, are two different and noncompeting levels of explanations; John Haught advocates such reductionist consistency between science and religion. (d) **Theistic Consistency**: There is a concord between Theism and Darwinian Evolution; we have considered Alvin Plantinga and Morteza Motahari in this category. It has to be mentioned that the main aim of this paper is not to scrutinize the various attitudes in this regard; rather we will try to classify these approaches from a different aspect. Having mentioned the four above classes and a few of many representatives of each category as well as some important questions and remarks toward these

approaches, we have endeavored to show that the alleged consistency between theistic beliefs and Darwinian Evolution (by the principle of natural selection) fails. At the end of this paper an argument that presents the intrinsic inconsistency of Darwinian Evolution and theistic beliefs will be raised.

Keywords: *Darwinian Evolution, Darwinism, Theism, Consistency, Inconsistency, Atheism*

Introduction

Although there is a long history of inconsistency between theistic beliefs and scientific theories, the conflict has been intensified since the emergence of Darwinian Evolution and especially the so called Darwinism. Various responses have been leveled with respect to Darwinism among both theists and atheists, but there are some concerns in this regard. Are these responses emanating from the same source or do they have the same view on Darwinian Evolution or Darwinism? Do they share the same view on God and theistic beliefs? Are the advocates of concord able to deal with the inevitable philosophical consequences of the theory of evolution?

To address these ambiguities and the main question of Darwinian Evolution and its compatibility or incompatibility with the theistic beliefs, we have tried to categorize the responses to four classes of (1) Atheistic Inconsistency, (2) Theistic Inconsistency, (3) Reductionist Consistency, and (4) Theistic Consistency. We have also mentioned a few prominent representatives of each class and their brief views in these groups in order to analyze the possible reactions to the relationship between Theism and Darwinian Evolution.

Some terms need to be clarified before we proceed to the next section:

By Darwinian Evolution, we mean the biologic-scientific explanation that Charles Darwin (1809-1882) presents in his '*On the Origin of Species*' about the diversity of life on earth, which has been developed and interpreted by many other

biologists. Tree of life (the gradual evolution of biological life from common ancestors) and natural selection are two pivotal concepts of the theory (Waters, 2003, 18). Tree of life has two sub-principles: (1) mutation and (2) common ancestry. Mutation means that species can turn into other species. Common ancestries mean that all the species on earth have originated from the same few (or even one) ancestors (Darwin, 1859 [1964], 484).

Darwinism means the doctrine that extends the domain of evolution to all phenomena including religious, social and cultural things.

Among theistic beliefs, we focus on the belief in the existence of God and we analyze the inconsistency, and consistency between the belief in God and Darwinian Evolution. Our understanding of God has come from theistic religions, as an intelligent agent and the designer of the universe, to whom we attribute omniscience and omnipotence. To be brief, by God we mean an intelligent agent who acts and causes designedly and purposefully and he is omnipotent and omniscient.

1. Inconsistency

1.1. The Atheistic Inconsistency

Richard Dawkins (1941) and Daniel Dennett (1942) are two most significant atheists who believe in a deep conflict between evolution and Theism. In this section, we focus briefly on Dawkins's view as the most radical version of the conflict.

Dawkins has developed his scientific atheism³ and inconsistency in his various publications including *The Selfish Gene* (1976), *The Blind Watchmaker* (1986), and *The God Delusion* (2006). In his *The Blind Watchmaker*, he tries to demonstrate that Darwinian Evolution denies the existence of a superior and intelligent being. He believes in some sort of absolutisms and holism with respect to the realm of Darwinian explanation to the extent that all biologic, cultural and social matters lie within its domain (Dawkins, 1986, 65). Daniel Dennett also emphasizes on this absolutism concerning

Darwinism and considers it to be an alternative for and even a refutation of the belief in the existence of a supreme and intelligent being (Dennett, 2007).

Indeed Darwinian Evolution is a scientific-biologic explanation of organisms, by the mechanism and process of natural selection. But Darwinism is an extreme approach which reduces all phenomena to be explained exclusively by Darwinian Evolution.

According to what Dawkins has written about evolution and atheism, his argument can be delineated as follows:

1. Diversity and gradual evolution of creatures and species, intelligent or unintelligent, can be explained scientifically.
2. Evolutionary theory is a proper and adequate explanation for this diversity and gradual evolution.
3. There is no need for assuming a complex, supreme, and powerful being who is called God in order to explain the diversity of creatures and species and their causes⁴.

Dawkins believes that although it is hard to imagine the evolution of complex things from simple ones in a short duration of time, by extending this time over a much longer period, it becomes very reasonable and logical (Dawkins, 1986,7-8). By doing so, Dawkins claims that all the complex things, which seems to be created designedly and purposefully at first glance, turn out to be evolved from simple things over a very long period of time. These gradual changes are very small and simple so that we can consider them to be mere accidents. The natural accumulation of simple and small changes over a long time result in considerable and extensive changes. If so, then it is obvious that these big changes have not been resulted from designed and directed processes of superior Intelligence and in fact, nature is a blind watchmaker (Ibid, 21-25). Although natural selection is not a designed process, its operation over a long time seems to be ordered and designed, so it is a blind

watchmaker (Ibid). Natural selection, as Dawkins considers it, does not plan, nor does it predict (Ibid, 5).

“Natural selection, the blind, unconscious, automatic process which Darwin discovered, and which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparently purposeful form of all life has no purpose in mind. It has no mind and no mind's eye. It does not plan for the future. It has no vision, no foresight, and no sight at all. If it can be said to play the role of watchmaker in nature, it is the blind watchmaker” (Dawkins, 1986, 5).

Based on Darwinian Evolution, Dawkins claims that there is no complex living thing which has not been the result of evolution. And if one can show a counterexample, then this theory will be refuted, the falsifiable principle of science that refers to Darwin's statement that “If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed, which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down” (Darwin, 1859, 4).

Dawkins believes that even intelligence and intellectual capacity can be accounted for by accumulated natural selection and evolution. In his view, natural selection is so powerful to such extent that is able to produce intelligence and explains the diversity of all creatures, kinds and species. Although many commentators of Darwinism have a common attitude of such a generalization of Darwin's theory, there are some strong emphasis on such an extension in Darwin's own works and books such as *The Origin of Species* (1859) and more specifically the *Descent of Man* (1871).⁵

General Remarks

Although there are several questions and objections, which the advocates of this view have to deal with, we have mentioned a few and more general remarks here:

1. Based on this view, Darwinism can explain all matters including social, cultural, and religious ones, while these phenomena lie further beyond the scope of Darwinian biologic evolution. If this conclusion has been resulted from Darwinian biologic evolution and natural selection, then on the one side, it is analogical as Darwin concluded his natural selection in this way (by drawing an analogy between natural selection and artificial selection⁶), and on the other side, it is inductive and a matter of probability, that cannot be generalized and be extended to other areas than biology. Moreover, if this conclusion is a metaphysical principle or a philosophical-scientific assumption, then it is even a more complex assumption than assuming the existence of God (it violates the principle of simplicity).⁷

2. Some claim that the belief in the existence of an intelligent and Supreme Being does not contradict the scientific principle of Darwinian Evolution and even the principle of natural selection⁸. However, the categorical version of Darwinism necessarily contradicts the existence of a supreme intelligent being. Furthermore, belief in the existence of an intelligent being that perpetually causes and designs creatures is in conflict with the blind natural selection.

3. There are serious doubts and questions regarding natural selection itself. Darwin himself does not explain why natural selection has such characteristics nor do Darwinists. This enigmatic feature of natural selection has been acknowledged by Dawkins himself (Dawkins, 1986,200). Michael Behe (1952-) has also an argument for irreducible complexity which could not be explained by evolutionary mechanism and natural selection (Behe,1996).It has to be mentioned that there are several new approaches to Darwinian Evolution without natural selection, which cast shadow of doubt on atheistic absolutism with respect to Darwinian Evolution (Hosseini, 1390b, 37-38).

1.2. The Theistic Inconsistency

This group includes ones who believe in inconsistency between Darwinian Evolution and Theism by emphasizing on religious tenets and texts. They think that biological evolution proved by biologists contradicts the existence of Supreme Being and intelligent God. In this part, we will focus on M.H. Tabataba'i's⁹ (1903 – 1981) view as an advocate of the theistic version of conflict. This view is most common among religious theologians and religious literalists¹⁰ (especially Muslims, Christians, and Jews).

1.2.1. Natural Evolution

In Tabataba'i's view, the gradual evolution of nature is highlighted by Qur'an and can be regarded as a natural argument in favor of general guidance directed by God toward species' ultimate destinations and purposes. In his *Tafsir Al-Mizan*, Tabataba'i states: "Every kind of creature has a specific path to its ultimate goal seeking it intrinsically and not intentionally and such a disposition is attributed to God and is called divine general guidance. Thus, there necessarily couldn't be any deviance from such guidance for species. Qur'an says: *Who has created and fashioned, who has proportioned and guided*" (Tabataba'i, Vol. 16, 283).

This view indicates explicitly a deep conflict between Theism and Darwinian Evolution; due to the fact that attributing the evolution of species to the tree of life and natural selection challenges any ultimate goal, guidance, intelligence and design. In other words, the unconscious natural selection as a unique mechanism for diversity of species articulated and emphasized by Darwin and his evolutionist advocates contradicts obviously the conscious and teleological guidance and maintenance caused by the intelligent agency.

1.2.2. Creation

Thorough his interpretation of verse 1 of Sura Al-Nisa', Tabataba'i interprets '*single soul*' as Adam and '*his mate*' as 'Eve' and points out that every human person is a descendent of Adam and Eve. He states:

“All human persons are of one reality and despite their diversity; they branched out from the same source. The verse *propagated so many men and women from them both*, can clearly indicate that. It also indicates that no one else (e.g. maiden or jinn) has contributed to human generation except Adam and Eve.”(Tabataba'i, Vol. 4, 216-217).

According to Qur'an, Adam and Eve were created from soil, and human beings were created from them. Therefore, human is an independent species which has not evolved from any other species (Tabataba'i, Vol.4, 227). Tabataba'i also challenges the interpretation that Adam in Qur'an means the entire human (Tabataba'i, Vol.4, 225). His interpretations consider religious texts to be literally meaningful and true to such extent that they refer to real things and real world. Therefore to him, any attempt to reduce the religious texts to the symbolic or metaphoric meaning is vague and fruitless. In such a view, we cannot separate the realm of science from that of religion. Thus, there is no concord between Darwinian Evolution (based on the tree of life and natural selection) and the divine creation of humans (branched out from Adam and Eve).

It is worth mentioning that Tabataba'i's insistence on the literal meaning of the man's creation in Qur'an is so crucial that his doubt on the validity of scientific aspect of Darwinian Evolution has to be seen in such context, though he has opened a window of the traits evolving from common ancestors in contrast to the evolution of species from a common root (Tabataba'i, Vol. 4, 228).

General Remarks

There are three points regarding Tabataba'i's religious theory:

1. Literal interpretation of religious scriptures and believing in religious realism with regard to sacred texts refuse any compatibility of the two realms of Darwinian Evolution and Theism, specifically the creation of man prevents any possible consistent approach. From this point of view, humans were created by divine selection and were not resulted from natural selection.

2. Retrospectively, Qur'an is not consistent with the evolution of other species, let alone humans. For it is the divine selection that has the crucial role in the multiplicity of species.

3. If we consider natural selection to be divine guidance, then there might be some sort of concord. However, in such case, religious texts could not be interpreted literally and should be regarded to be symbolic.

2. Consistency

2.1. Reductionist Consistency

By Reductionist Inconsistency, we classify those who believe that we can resolve the challenge between science and religion by making a clear distinction between the realm of science and that of religion. John F. Haught¹¹ (1942-) represents sufficiently such a doctrine. He thinks that Darwinism has been built up on materialism (as a metaphysical principle and not as a scientific methodology) during the history of evolutionary biology. As a result, the belief in the existence of an intelligent designer is intolerable in this context. He also criticizes the advocates of Theism and design argument for that they interpret evolutionary theory to be materialistic and naturalistic, as Darwinists do so. Therefore, both Darwinists and theists suppose evolutionary biology to be incompatible with Theism (Haught, 2009, 626).

Haught believes that although science is methodologically naturalistic, those who believe that evolutionary theory is neutral to philosophical materialism are wrong. For, they are not considering the distinction between the metaphysics of science and the methodology of science. In his view, there is no evidence that demonstrates that evolutionary theory necessarily results in metaphysical materialism or is based on such materialism (Ibid, 628).

Haught claims that there are two solutions by which a consistency between Darwinian Evolution and Theism might be possible. First is the distinction between the levels of explanations in science and religion. Both supporters of Darwinian Evolution and the theory of intelligent design should leave a level of explanation open for its rival (Ibid, 629).

He states that on the one side, intelligent design advocates would like to attribute the design and order in the nature to an intelligent designer and on the other side, evolutionary biologists prefer to remove any designer and to attribute such a design to the blind natural selection. Both groups are wrong. The alleged threat to intelligent design does not have anything to do with scientific data of evolutionary biology; neither is evolution a threat to Theism. Indeed the problem of evil, and not evolutionary theory, has always been a challenge to Theism (Ibid, 630).

As the second solution, Haught suggests the protagonists of intelligent design argument to take advantage of Darwinian Evolution in order to enrich religious concepts such as divine grace. Theism should leave science to explain the nature and the natural laws scientifically (not metaphysically). In the virtue of such scientific outcomes, religious concepts such as divine grace could become deeper. Thus, science and religion could be even complementary (Ibid, 631). It is clear that in both solutions, Haught

is trying to draw a line between the domain of science and of religion.

To find other evidences, Haught refers to Stephen Jay Gould¹²(1941 – 2002) with the same emphasis on the separation and distinction of these two realms upon which science covers the empirical world and deals with the questions such as what the reality is in the world, and why the world is acting like this, while the domain of religion includes the questions concerning moral values and spirituality. Consequently to this approach, the domain of science and religion do not overlap, each has its own methodology and conditions and other exclusive principles, and they should thus try to avoid entering the realms of each other (Ibid, 631).

General Remarks

Two points are worth mentioning here:

1. Although such a distinction either in language, methodology or in metaphysics can resolve theoretically- cannot solve- the tension discussed before, the activists of the two sides see the actual challenges clearly, however the only solution is to reduce the religious language to the metaphors and myths and to consider the language of science to be realistic, and that requires the meaninglessness of religious texts and language as far as the realism and the realm of external world are concerned. It is thus obvious that a great number of theists do not agree that the language of religion is to be limited to the religious meaning and not to the external world.
2. The unconscious natural selection as it has been stated repeatedly by Darwin and more clearly by Darwinists signifies the incompatibility of natural selection with any possible conscious selection, as if there were an intellect or a designer or a goal directed cause. Thus, the principle of natural selection either considered metaphysically or methodologically, is an alternative for

divine selection, divine action, divine intervention and divine creation.

2.2. Theistic Consistency

This approach has diverse contemporary proponents including Alvin Plantinga¹³(1932), William Dembskey¹⁴(1960), Michael Ruse¹⁵(1940), Robin Collins¹⁶, Peter van Inwagen¹⁷(1942), Michael Behe¹⁸(1952), and Islamic thinkers such as Morteza Motahari¹⁹(1919-1979), though each has an exclusive foundation or formation. In this section, we focus on Motahari and Plantinga.

Morteza Motahari rebuffs any conflict between Theism and evolutionary biology. He states that assuming the evolutionary theory to be true, (1) the creation of human being, according to Qur'an, can be interpreted as a gradual process consistent with the Darwinian theory, (2) Qur'an's verses concerning Adam and Eve can be interpreted to be symbolic, and (3) although the gradual evolution of human being might be in conflict with some religious text, it is not in any conflict with the belief in God and the doctrine of Theism (Motahari, Vol. 1, 513).

It is worth mentioning that Motahari's scientific analysis of Lamarck's theory and Darwin's theory lack the accuracy of the main place where the conflict really lies (Motahari, Vol.4, 215). Indeed the main conflict happens in the mechanism of natural selection and not the fact of gradual evolving of the creatures.

Motahari believes that two groups are mistaken; those who deny the evolutionary theory in support of Theism and creationism, and those who emphasize on the evolution in support of atheism and materialism. Both are explicitly or implicitly construing evolutionary theory as a materialistic and naturalistic theory against Theism (Ibid, 220).

Motahari concludes that the evolutionary theory does not entail or imply atheism, nor does the constancy of species entail Theism. He states:

“Darwin has emphasized on the principle of adaptation to the extent that some protested against him and regarded it as a metaphysical principle. It can be inferred from the principle of adaptation that there is a mysterious internal force within every creature, which adapts her unintentionally to the environment without any external force. It is a wonder of creation which indicates the intrinsically divine guidance” (Ibid, Vol.26, 550).

Moreover, Motahari believes that Darwinian Evolution presupposed metaphysical elements, without which, it is impossible to explain the gradual evolution of creatures. And that metaphysical element is what theists refer to as design, guidance, and the creation (Ibid, Vol.4, 222).

He also makes a distinction between the creation of human kind and the creation of Adam to such extent that there is no conflict between the creation of human kind according to both Qur’an and Darwinian Evolution (Ibid, Vol.4, 223).

Alvin Plantinga is also a proponent of concord. He believes that if we interpret the evolutionary theory in a naturalistic context, then it is very unlikely that human cognition produces warranted true beliefs. On the other hand, if we interpret Darwinian Evolution in a theistic context, then the likelihood of producing true beliefs via our cognitive system will significantly increase (Plantinga, 2002, 1-5). In his “*Where The Conflict Really Lies?*”, Plantinga is trying to demonstrate that Darwinian Evolution is in a superficial conflict but a deep concord with Theism, while there is a deep conflict between Naturalism and Darwinian Evolution insofar as Naturalism reduces the reliability of human cognition (Plantinga, 2011).

General remarks

Three comments should be added to this approach:

1. In order to defend consistency, Motahari accepts Darwinian Evolution and interprets the Qur'anic story of creation of Adam and Eve to be symbolic. Almost all the Islamic theologians and especially Qur'anic exegetical scholars are against such a symbolic interpretation of Qur'anic versus toward creationism.

2. Concord advocates claim that the evolutionary theory does not entail atheism, nor does constancy of species entail Theism, while Darwinian natural selection (as opposed to divine selection) entails that the world is not the best possible world, and the human has not any special position in the world. These consequences are in conflict with the idea that the world is designed and fine-tuned and the human is divinely selected.

3. Motahari and Plantinga have tried to show that modern science and in our discussion, the theory of evolution, despite remarkable progress, still needs metaphysical elements. Assuming this, why should we also suppose that Darwinian Evolution is in concord or in conflict with Theism? Their view proves nothing more than that science needs metaphysics.

3. Summary

Approaches	Representatives	Central Views	Remarks
Atheistic Inconsistency	Dawkins, Dennett	1) Extending Darwinian Evolution (D.E.) to all phenomena (Darwinism). 2) Irreconcilable Conflict between D.E. and the Theism. 3) Natural selection as an alternative to Divine Selection.	1) Is Darwinism a scientific principle or a metaphysical axiom? 2) How is the natural selection inferred? Analogy or Induction Or metaphysical presupposition?
Theistic Inconsistency	Tabataba'i	1) Intrinsic divine guidance as a moving force of mutations. 2) The creation of humans is exclusive and cannot be explained by D.E.	1) Is there any possible coherence between D.E. and the creation of human being according to Qur'an? 2) Could Such an intrinsic divine guidance be applied through D.E.? 3) Couldn't this approach collapse to a distinction between the levels of explanations?
Reductionist Consistency	Haught	1) Scientific Materialism is a methodological principle and not a metaphysical one. 2) The enrichment of Theism by biological evolutionism. 3) Darwinism proponents and	1) Isn't the Natural selection and Darwinism an obstacle to such a consistency? 2) Could we achieve such a consistency without interpreting religious text symbolically? 3) Is it possible to

		theists should understand and tolerate the separation.	make a valid distinction between D.E. and metaphysical materialism?
Theistic Consistency	Motahari	1) The creation of humans could be interpreted symbolically. 2) D.E. does not entail naturalism, nor does Theism entail the constancy. 3) Naturalism is in conflict with D.E., while there is no conflict between Theism and evolution.	1) Is there any room left to take religious texts literally? 2) Isn't natural selection in Darwinian context an alternative to Divine selection? 3) Is the fine-tuned world compatible with the unconscious natural selection?

4. Concluding Remarks

Considering all these comments and discussions, it is very unlikely to have a viable and meaningful coherence and reconciliation between Darwinian Evolution (based on natural selection which is not a designed, intended and goal-seeking process) and the existence of an intelligent and omnipotent God who has created and fine-tuned the world unless we take refuge to the reductionist approach. Similarly, atheistic version of conflict has to deal with the serious questions mentioned above which are not answered properly by the proponents of Darwinian Evolution. The only remaining theory is the theistic inconsistency. At the end of this paper we have tried to show the inseparable inconsistency between Darwinian Evolution and Theism in the form of following argument:

1. There is a God (God Exists, Theism)
2. It is not that God does not intervene in the biological process of evolution.

3. If God does intervene in the biological process of evolution, then the biological process of evolution is conscious.
4. The biological process of evolution is unconscious.(Theory of Natural Selection in Darwinian Evolution)
5. There is no God (God does not exist)

Premise 1 represents Theism and by Theism, we mean that there is a God, who is “Intelligent Agent”, and by Intelligent, we mean an omniscient and a goal-directing being, and by agent we mean an omnipotent being as a cause. Therefore, Theism encompasses four related characteristics of causality, omnipotence, omniscience and purposefulness. Given Theism in (1), (2) is true. For, if God does not intervene in the biological process of evolution it is either unintelligent or it is non-agent; both reduce the Theism into Deism²⁰. There is also an argument for (2) as follows:

- 2.1. God is either intervening in the biological process of multiplicity of species or not.
- 2.2. If God is not intervening in the biological process of multiplicity of species, then God is either the very nature (God is nature as such) or the laws of nature, or God has only created the nature or the laws of nature or the initial conditions of nature.
- 2.3. Therefore, God is intervening in the biological process of multiplicity of species.

If God is intervening in the biological process of multiplicity of species, then God is either intervening in the biological process of multiplicity of species spontaneously, or via the nature and natural laws.

As it is obvious the premise (2.2.) implies deism since although God has created the initial conditions of nature, He has left the nature alone for its natural selection to be creative and constructive unconsciously; the conclusion that is contradictory to the first premise. On the other side, the premise (2.4.) requires creationism because the ongoing process of biological evolution would not

depart from the teleological and goal directed design, guided by the intelligent agent.

Referring to the main argument premise (3) is the necessary result of (1) and (2). In other words if God is an intelligent agent and He intervenes in the process of natural species, then there is no constraint for his will to plan and act accordingly. Thus the whole process will be conscious and mindful. Premise (4) is a characteristic of natural selection according to the evolutionary biology, Darwinian Evolution and Darwinism, though there is no consensus among all other biologists.

However, it might seem that this premise could be rejected by distinguishing two levels of meanings of consciousness or unconsciousness. In fact one might say that premise (3) and (4) don't have the same meaning since the premise (3) is in metaphysical level while the premise (4) is in naturalistic realm of life²¹. The answer is so clear insofar as the premise (2) is transparent. God's intervention in the nature will cause the nature and natural selection to be conscious and therefore any attempt for such a separation will render the presumption of Theism to Deism which is contradictory to our first premise. In other words, we can isolate the nature from the intelligent agent, but if this intelligent designer intervenes in the nature causally, then nothing is left in nature to act unconsciously and blindly. Hence any theory of consistency as far as the separation and distinction of the two different levels of Evolution (natural process) and Theism (metaphysical axiom) are concerned breaks down, unless we remove the intervene of intelligent agent on the biological process. Here is the other version of the argument which revolves around such a response to the above objection.

1. If God were the cause of natural selection in the evolution of species, then the natural selection would be conscious and purposeful.
2. The natural selection is not conscious and purposeful.

3. God is not the cause of natural selection in the evolution of species.

Thus, given the right meaning and not the reductionist sense of the Theism, which necessitates the natural intervention, and the fact of unconscious biological selection of nature in evolutionary process, we could conclude that any attempt to reconcile the two would definitely fail.

This does not mean that the authors remain silent in this clear inconsistency, but rather to find other solutions with the strong caution not to reduce the agency of God, nor to alter the biological process of evolution. We will be attempting to present the theory of the Substantial Mutation of Nature, based on Mullu Sadra's²² Philosophy in the separate paper, but again the important aim of this paper was to show the intrinsic inconsistency of Theism and Darwinian Evolution not from naturalistic atheism, rather from the characteristics of God as an intelligent agent.

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Endnotes

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³ In an Introduction to Flew's *there is a god* translation to Farsi, Hosseini

has divided the contemporary atheism into two distinct, though relevant atheism, scientific and philosophical. Dawkin's is the former, while Flew's atheistic life can be considered as the latter. (Hosseini, 1390a)

⁴For the argument see Hosseini, 1390b, 7-45.

⁵ For instance see Darwin, *The Descent of Man* (1871), 459.

⁶ See Darwin, 1859, Chapters 1-4.

⁷ It is worth mentioning that all the above concerns have been responded by the protagonists of such an attitude. Besides, Darwin himself can be categorized as a darwinist. Darwin's *the descent of man* for instance is a libale ground to the extension of biological principles to other aspects including man's characteristic of religiosity and morallity.

⁸ See the defenders of Reductionist Consistency in this paper, 2.1.

⁹ Mohammad Hossein Tabataba'i (1903 – 1981) is one of the most prominent Iranian- Islamic philosophers and Qur'anic exegetist in contemporary world. His Qur'anic interpretation regarding the creation of the world and human kind is incompatible with the Darwinian Evolution.

¹⁰By religious literalist, we mean that Qur'an (and even other religious texts) is presupposed on the literal and realistic meanings unless the otherwise is proved by the explicit evidences.

¹¹John Haught is an American Roman Catholic theologian specializing in systematic theology. He has a special interest in reconciling between science and religion, specifically between evolutionary theory and religion.

¹² Stephen Jay Gould was an influential American evolutionary biologist and paleontologist. As a biologist, he opposed Creationism and suggested that science and religion be regarded as two distinct fields whose authorities do not overlap.

¹³Alvin Plantinga is an American analytic philosopher who is widely known for his work in philosophy of religion. He believes that the evolutionary theory without any philosophical or theological add-ons does not contradict divinely guided evolution.

¹⁴William Dembski is an American mathematician, philosopher and theologian. He has campaigned as a supporter of Intelligent Design and devised the concept of specified complexity, according to which, an intelligent cause is responsible for the complexity of life.

¹⁵Michael Ruse is a British philosopher of science and biology who has many works on the challenge between evolution and creation.

¹⁶Robin Collins is an American philosopher and has broad interests in the issues at the intersection of science and religion. He advocates teleological arguments for the existence of God.

¹⁷Peter van Inwagen is one of the American prominent figures in the contemporary metaphysics.

¹⁸Michael Behe is an American proponent of intelligent design. He argues that some living things are too complex to be explained by evolutionary mechanisms, however, they can be explained by intelligent design.

¹⁹Morteza Motahari was one of the influential Iranian-Islamic intellectuals. As a prolific author and lecturer, he tried to adjust Islamic tenets with the necessities of the modern life.

²⁰ According to Deism, God does not directly intervene in the natural world, but rather allows the laws of nature to govern the world.

²¹ For instance see Sober, E., 2010, "Evolution without Naturalism", in J. Kvanvig (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

²² Mulla Sadra (1571/2 – 1640) was a great and important figure among Iranian muslim philosophers who is widely-known for his *Transcendent Theosophy*. Mulla Sadra is regarded as the most important and influential philosopher in the Muslim world in the last four hundred years.

A comparative study on philosophy of Mulla Sadra and Upanishads

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Abstract

The primary goal this study is to compare and contrast the concept of of ultimate reality in the philosophical systems of Upanishads and Mulla Sadra. To be more specific, this project is an examination focused on the metaphysical theories propounded by them. The mystical and theosophical systems constructed by Upanishads and Mulla Sadra are often viewed as being representative of absolutism found within their respective traditions. The striking differences generally perceived between aspects of Hinduism and Islam have however somewhat prevented scholars to develop interest in the comparison of philosophies rooted in these two theological traditions. This study will be exploring the systems of these influential schools to ascertain if this approach is true.

Keywords: Mulla Sadra, Upanishads, Absolute, Brahman, Necessary existence.

1. Introduction

In comparing these two mystic systems we were able to identify a number of principles, concepts, and ideas that these two systems respectively dealt with in their respective historico-geographical contexts. This examination used an approach that relied on comparison to provide further clarifications to the two systems of philosophical thought. The study also sought to analyze various descriptive and prescriptive statements that characterized the two gnostic systems. Keeping in view the contextualist nature of this study it is important to notice that from beginning to end no effort has been made to be judgemental about the expounders' subjective mystical experiences. There was in fact no intention even to affirm or deny the cognitive validity of the subjective mystical experience as such. The focus was rather on demonstrating that while the gnostic principles are implicit in the system of Upanishads much of Sadra's philosophy too aimed at making these experiences the basis of formulating critical theories about the ultimate reality called by him as the Necessary Existence or simply as Existence. Upanishads consider the Vedas as being functional guides that derive value from the truths they convey. Mulla Sadra also situated himself firmly within orthodoxy. A good part of his intellectual endeavor was to defend and interpret the classical tenets of Islam in the light of his philosophical theories. He made a critical philosophy that melted peripatetic, illuminationist and gnostic ideas in one whole and brought it in consonance with the theology of Islam especially in its Shiite version. References to the Islamic cycle of prophesy, and the importance of Muhammad as the Prophetic Seal characterized his hermeneutic ventures. The Quran even served as the foundation for Mulla Sadra's rational speculation. Comparing Upanishads and Mulla Sadra also affords us the opportunity to make observations on ontological issues that mixed with religious mysticism and how certain esoteric ways of thinking functioning within their surrounding religious environments still generated fundamental similarities amidst the disagreements of detail. Comparison of them allows for useful insights into each of them

and may also provide a better understanding of the nature of mysticism and mystical ontology in general, as well as methodological issues faced in the scholarly study of these subjects.

One should in general recognize that the conceptual systems constructed by the two schools are not perfectly new creations derived from the core of their respective mystical traditions. Rather, they contain fundamental pre-existing principles, concepts, and teachings that are accepted across the cultures and the systematic philosophy constructed on their foundation has always shared themes and theses. Upanishads and Mulla Sadra are in that sense only two representative schools that partake in this universal thematic. Certain ideas in Upanishads and Mulla Sadra's body of work have however fundamental importance in their uniqueness which can be comprehended only from the perspective of their respective systems of thought. A few of these, in particular, will serve as our focal points.

2. Upanishads and Mulla Sadra: A Juxtaposition

2.1. Concept of ultimate reality as One, simple and Absolute

The first and the most significant point in this comparative enterprise is that in both systems the ultimate reality is described as One and indefinable. According to Mulla Sadra, we can define something which consists of genes and differentia but absolute is free from them. He is indefinable because definition causes limitation but ultimate reality is unlimited.

“The origin of being of all things that exist is pure truth of existence, untainted anything other than existence. Such a truth is not limited by any description, limitation, imperfection, essence and any generality, whether of genus, species, nor with any accident whether specific...” (Mulla Sadra, 1962, p. 220)

Ultimate reality or absolute is simple. The Brahman, too, is simple because it is described as existence that is unique and non-

composite. It is also simple because it is pure oneness. Absolute does not have essence, because essence needs qualification and attributes but absolute is devoid of qualification, attributes, limitation, imperfection and multiplicity. According to Upanishads: "In the beginning,' my dear, 'there was that only which is (to on), one only, without a second. Others say, in the beginning there was that only which is not (to me on), one only, without a second; and from that which is not, that which is was born. 'But how could it be thus, my dear?' the father continued. 'How could that which is, be born of that which is not? No, my dear, only that which is, was in the beginning, one only, without a second.'" (Max Muller, F. Chan. Up., 1965, 6. 2. 1-2)

Similarly Mulla Sadra says:

"The truth of existence, by the advantage of its being a simple affair, that does not have an essence and also not have a delimitter, is the essential itself, having a need toward become perfect, infinite in its power, And shortage and exclusion afflict the seconds in their capacity as seconds, and the First is the perfection without limits; in respect to that, it is not possible to imagine of anything more perfect than itself..." (Mulla Sadra, Vol. VI, 1981, p. 24)

The above explanation leads us to put these two systems in the category of absolutism. Now it is necessary for absolutism to show the dependence of the relative on the absolute in a manner that the absoluteness of the absolute is not affected in the least. The relative is related to absolute but the absolute is independent. In other words, the relative does not really come out of the relative, or the absolute is only epistemic and not ontological. The relative only appears to be there, though really it is not there. The relative is spoken of only because of the ignorance about the absolute. If so, it is necessary for every absolutism to have a view of ignorance which makes the appearance of the relative possible, otherwise the relative will remain an enigma.

It is also necessary for every absolutism to accept two levels of knowledge and reality, the empirical and the ultimate (the vyavaharika and the paramarthika). This means that we accept the presence of physical world at practical level while denying its ultimate ontological value. There is yet another question worth consideration for every absolutism. Is it possible for man, purely on the basis of reason, to assert that there is such a thing as the absolute? Reason at its best may **only** speculate about the possibility. Even if the possibility is accepted, reason cannot positively affirm that the absolute is really there. Further, is it possible for reason to show the way of knowing the absolute experientially? Certainly not; reason is confined to concepts only. So how are we to be positively sure that the absolute is there, that it can be experienced and that it can be experienced in such and such manner? It is here that we see the incompetence of unaided reason and the necessity of taking help from intuition and scriptures. It is only scripture whose message is based on intuitive experience that can categorically affirm the absolute and can not only assure us of the possibility of knowing of the absolute but can also tell us the way the absolute can be experienced. Our readiness to depend on the scripture not only suggests the limits of reason but also of our earnestness to seek the absolute.

“All this is Brahman (n.) Let a man meditate on that (visible world) as beginning, ending, and breathing in it (the Brahman).” (Max Muller, F. Chan. Up., 1965, 3. 14. 1-3)

2.2. Roll of intellect

The two systems further agree that intellect alone is not able to realize absolute. It can realize absolute with the help of revelation and intuition. For Sadra, as for Upanishads, philosophy was a way of life or the light of life rather than mere speculation. Both, however gave priority to contemplation as against action. In fact we are told that Sadra used to experience ecstasy or Samadhi as it is called in India. Both believe that spiritual teaching is something

secret and sacred and is therefore to be imparted to the chosen few, i.e. those who had the necessary cathartic virtues. They put philosophy in the secondary position while giving primary importance to mystical realization.

The two systems, evidently while they come from two very diverse philosophical-theological backgrounds, have their meeting ground in mysticism and gnosticism. There is common endeavor to transcend the boundaries of rationality and ontological positivity. The intellect as a source of knowledge is replaced with intuition and the ultimate reality is seen to belong to a realm beyond and beyond. The ultimate reality is a contentless and attributeless absolute which however is imperfectly cognized as a being with the character of intelligence and bliss and which becomes later the basis for the emergence of the plural phenomenal world including the human world of soul and spirit.

2.3. Theory of emanation

Corresponding to Brahman of Upanishads and Advaitism we have in Sadra the conception of necessary existence, the ultimate reality from which proceeds the Nous First Intelligence that in its turn gives rise to world soul and souls. Vedas similarly speak of Hiranyagarbha and Purusha as intermediary beings between the Brahman and the multiplex world. (Dasgupta, S, Vol. 1, 1957, p. 19)

“He, the creator and supporter of the gods, Rudra, the great seer, the lord of all, he who formerly gave birth to Hiranyagarbha, may he endow us with good thoughts.” (Max Muller, F. Svet. Up, 1965, III. 4)

Creation for Sadra is a kind of radiation or emanation while for the Upanishads it is rather in the nature of manifestation or inherence as Ramanuja later said. The one alone being real, the world of multiplicity and change is unreal, matter being a principle of non-

being or darkness. Man too is essentially one with One but the realization of this unity comes only at the end of one's spiritual journey. This unity with the One is of the nature of identity; in other words, man has only to discover his real nature to find that he is one with Brahman. This discovery is not merely intellectual; it is a kind of awakening, it is intuitive. Not only moral virtues but also cathartic virtue, especially freedom from desire for enjoyment and the practice of dialectic that is necessary for intuitive wisdom or illumination. Most of the features of absolutism as pointed out above are shared by Sadra. The necessary existence is infinite and unchangeable. As transcendent it is beyond thought but as the ground of everything it is also immanent. And though transcendent, it is intuitively knowable as it is one with our real self. The world of plurality and change, though dependent on the One, is not unreal. It is same for Ramanuja though for Shankara 'Brahman is real, the world is false, and Brahman and the self are one and not different'. It is not mere monism as there is definite denial of change and plurality. (Sharma, C. 1952, pp. 365-366)

It is sometimes said that the world of plurality being an emanation from the One cannot be false and if it is false it cannot be called emanation. There is no doubt that there is some difficulty regarding the idea of emanation, but it seems that the very significance of the idea of emanation is two-fold. Firstly, it does not mean any change in the One, and secondly, it does not affect the absoluteness of the necessary existence. If so, the phenomenal world is not necessarily to be false. Emanation is neither transformation of the One nor absolute creation but kind of radiation or overflow which least affects the source. The necessary existence only lends reality to or allows itself to be the ground of appearance. The world is a real manifestation for Mulla Sadra but for the Upanishads the position is not unambiguously so. Although the system of Mulla Sadra is quite close to Upanishads and Advaitism on many onto-cosmological issues yet some differences are there. Mulla Sadra no doubt regards the world as appearance and also talks of the fall of man as a result of ignorance of his real self, but he does not elaborate any theory of

ignorance of his real self as is done in Advaitism. There seems to be no doubt that Sadra does not regard ignorance as mere absence of knowledge and takes it to be the source of evil. Ignorance is neither fully positive nor negative but is different from both. Advaitism makes it clear that ignorance is not positive because it is negated but it is also not wholly negative as it gives rise to appearance. Being different from both being and non-being (like sky flower) it is really indescribable in terms of the real and the unreal. So we come to the conclusion that these two systems share most of the essential features of absolutism, though Advaitism does so more. There seems to be a kind of incompleteness in philosophy of Sadra. Our comparison does not intend categorically to suggest that Sadra was influenced by Upanishads directly or indirectly as Neoplatonism affected Sadra more. The former possibility is however not completely given the substantial similarities between the two systems of thought.

The word Brahman cannot be translated exactly. It has been suggested that Brahman is that which expands, because the term Brh means 'to expand'. This would however be a wrong translation, because the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita refuse to accept Brahman as an activity itself. These texts are unanimous in accepting the fourfold nature of Brahman : 1) Avyaya Brahman (the eternal infinite ground of all); 2) Aksara Brahman (the indestructible One, absolute cause); 3) Atmaksara Brahman (the supreme self, endowed with the potentiality of creation, preservation and destruction, and hence a creator, not yet differentiated in subject and object); 4) Visvasrit Brahman (cosmic form, the pluralistic world of galaxies, super galaxies and individualities as an irradiation of just one spark of the supreme self). (Shayegan, D.Vol. 2, 2011, pp. 808-809)

It is noteworthy that Avyaya Brahman is not even One or a unity. In this sense, the necessary existence of Mulla Sadra may be similar or closer to Avyaya, though not exactly same with it. The Avyaya is also called Parapara (beyond the beyond).

2.4. Levels of truth

Now if we go back over these four aspects of reality and compare them with the Mulla Sadra's four stages of descent, we find the two schemes not essentially very different from each other. In Sadra the four levels of reality are as follows:

1. One reality that is called necessary existence, and that is absolute, undifferentiated, formless source;
2. Nous, the divines names, principle of creation;
3. World-soul, the agent of creation;
4. The sense-world where we find a remarkable similarity of structure and intensity of being.

According to Upanishads, similarly, the following are the different levels of being:

1. Absolute, undifferentiated source of all.
 2. Purusha, the creative principle, unity of divine ideals;
 3. World-soul or unity of beings creating the world from within itself;
 4. Sense world and the individual soul immersed in its externality;
- (Baine Harris, R. 1982, pp.53-56)

2.5. God and his attributes

Upanishads describe Brahman to be of two kinds: Para and Apara that refer to a higher and a lower Brahman. The former is a-cosmic, quality-less, indeterminate, and indescribable (Nisrapanacha, Nirguna, Nirvishesha and Anirvachaniya). The lower Brahman, on the other hand, is cosmic, all comprehensive and full of all good qualities (Saprapanacha, Saguna and Savishesha). The first is the Absolute being and the second is what may be called the Ishvara or the theistic God.

The absolute Brahman, moreover, is the real existence while the Ishvara is either conceived as an imagined being or a descent from the higher Brahman. This is as Maitrayana says:

“There are two forms of Brahman, the material (effect) and the immaterial (cause). The material is false, the immaterial is true. That which is true is Brahman, that which is Brahman is light, and that which is light is the Sun. and this Sun become the Self of that Om. He divided himself threefold, for Om consists of three letters, a+u+m. Through them all this is contained in him as warp and woof. For thus it is said: ‘O Satyakama, the syllable Om is the high and the low Brahman’.” (Max Muller, Maitrayana Up., 1965, 6. 3-6)

Again it says in another place:

“There are two forms of Brahman, the material and the immaterial, the mortal and the immortal, the solid and the fluid, sat (being) and tya (that), (i.e. sat-tya, true). Everything except air and sky is material, is mortal, is solid, is definite. The essence of that which is material, which is mortal, which is solid, which is definite is the sun that shines, for he is the essence of sat (the definite). But air and sky are immaterial, are immortal, are fluid, are indefinite. The essence of that which is immaterial, which is immortal, which is fluid, which is indefinite is the person in the disk of the sun, for he is the essence of tyad (the indefinite). So far with regard to the Devas.” (Max Muller, F. Brh Up. 1965, II. 1-3)

Just as when clay is known everything made out of clay becomes known, for it is only name and form, similarly when Brahman, the cause, is known, everything, being a mere effect, becomes known, for the effects are only names and forms, the reality is Brahman alone. The acosmic Brahman is the transcendental absolute, the Turiya or the fourth, the Amatra or the measureless, the Anirvachaniya or the indescribable. The absolute can be best described only in a negative way, though it is not itself negated by it.

“For when there is as it were duality, then one sees the other, one smells the other, one tastes the other, one salutes the

other, one hears the other, one perceives the other, one touches the other, one knows the other; but when the Self only is all this, how should he see another, how should he smell another, how should he taste another, how should he salute another, how should he hear another, how should he touch another, how should he know another? How should he know Him by whom he knows all this? That Self is to be described by No, no! He is incomprehensible, for he cannot be comprehended; he is imperishable, for he cannot perish; he is unattached, for he does not attach himself; unfettered, he does not suffer, he does not fail. How, O beloved, should he know the Knower? Thus, O Maitreyi, thou hast been instructed. Thus far goes immortality.' Having said so, Yagnavalkya went away (into the forest)." (Ibid, IV.5.15)

This Nirguna Brahman appears as Atman in small realm and it appears as Brahman in great realm. Saguna Brahman is Jiva in small realm and it is Ishvara in great realm. All of this may be compared to Mulla Sadra's idea of immanent (tashbih) and transcendent aspects (tanzih) of God. Mulla Sadra, like Ibn Arabi, accepted both Tashbih and Tanzih but he also believes that, it is not possible for both Tashbih and Tanzih to be gathered together because coincidentia oppositorum is contradiction. So he accepted that Tashbih and Tanzih exist in a parallel way. He says that Tashbih comes with quality and Tanzih comes with correspondence. When attributes of creatures are ascribed to creator then Tashbih is possible. In the state of transcendence as all beings are different in intensity i.e. from weakness to highest level of being that is necessary existence, Tanzih is realized. Mulla Sadra thus like Ramanuja believes both personal and impersonal God to be real but Shankara thinks only impersonal God as truth. (Sharma, 1952, pp. 365-366)

In the realm of transcendent Mulla Sadra believes:

"It is nothing but real existence, the stuff of which all existents are made. It is called the self-unfolding existence (al-wujud al-munbasit) and, in a sense, behaves vis-à-vis all

existents as matter behaves vis-à-vis all material objects except that while matter is pure potentiality, it is pure actuality.” (Fazlur Rahman, 1957, p. 85)

2.6. Unity of existence

Upanishads and Mulla Sadra together grapple with the notion of unity of existence. Sadra believes two types of unity: gradational unity and individual unity of existence.

In the formulation of gradational unity, existence is known as one reality that has its presence in various degrees: from lowest level of pure matter to highest level of necessary existence. The world of multiplicity is made by the intensity of existence. Mulla Sadra thus accepts both unity and multiplicity as real. He believes that the presence of existence in God and man are same; the difference is only in intensity not in substance. (Ubudiyyat, Vol. 1, 2013, p. 158) Sadra compares existence with light and says existence is like light that is reflected from sun as its origin or source. The more the light gets far from the origin, it becomes weaker. The existence similarly that is stronger would be closer to Allah. In individual unity, Mulla Sadra accepts the mystic idea of Ibn Arabi. He says that there is nothing real except existence. According to his theory existence is one that is the being of the transcendent God. There is nothing in the realm of existents except existence which is nothing other than the sacred divine essence. All the creatures in the objective realm are the manifestations and shadows existence and existent are therefore essentially unitary and this lead us to the point that only unity is real.

“Allah led me to a bright argument that existence is only one individual truth that there is nothing except him and whatever other than him are emanation and manifestation of its attributes and comapassion.” (Asfar, Vol. 2, 1981, p. 292)

“By the mind alone it is to be perceived, there is in it no diversity. He who perceives therein any diversity, goes from death to death.” (Max Muller, F. Brh Up, 1965, 4. 4. 19)

In this theory Mulla Sadra also discussed causation to prove unity of existence. The effect is nothing but manifestation and emanation of the cause; so the real existence is the existence of the cause; and the existence of the effect is only a ray radiated by it. However, the unity of existence in this version means that the essential real existence is specific to the sacred Divine Essence, and all contingent beings, beginning from first emanation the primordial matter, are only manifestations and rays of that Unitary Real Existent. So, according to this theory, the absolute multiplicity is not denied; rather, it is annihilated in the Real Existence, and attributed to His manifestations and appearances.

It is clear that by transferring the multiplicity from existence to manifestation, the commencement is also transferred from existence to the manifestation. Accordingly, the nearer the manifestations are to the Real Existence, i.e., the sacred Divine Essence, the more intensive and powerful they are; and the farther they are from the Real Existent, the weaker they are. The intensity and weakness of these appearances however do not cause any alteration in the unity, purity and simple-ness of the Real Essence. A thing by itself does not have any real existence. In the final section of his discussion of causality Mulla Sadra in fact insists that, Existence is one reality which is the very Truth, and the contingent quiddities do not have any real existence. Rather, their being existents are by the light of existence; and their intelligibility is acquired from a way among the ways of the manifestation of existence and a kind among the kinds of its appearance. What is seen in all manifestations, quiddities, aspects and determinations is but the reality of existence; that is, it is the existence of God that is the Truth while the creation has the differences of His manifestations, the plurality of His aspects, and the multiplicity of His modes. Upanishads, similarly, try to explain

the plurality of world as Brahman's own act of going out but yet remaining within like a spider weaving a web from within itself.

Here Mulla Sadra, like Upanishads, accepted the pure unity of existence that captures the entire universe, the multiplicity being seen in dependence state. But the significant point here is that Mulla Sadra tries to justify multiplicity with the help of unity and says that both of them are in real state with one vital difference that the reality of unity is independent while the reality of multiplicity is in dependency. In other words, multiplicity is not able to exist without the presence of unity. Upanishads, on the other hand, seek to remove multiplicity by calling it Maya or cosmic illusion and achieve pure unity by making the Brahman identical with Atman. Brahman is known through Atman. This whole world is Brahman and this self within me is Brahman, too. Both of them then accept there is one unity in the world that is hidden by veil that is called Maya in Upanishads and quiddity or essence in philosophy of Mulla Sadra. We could see in Chandogya Upanishad:

“All this is Brahman. Let a man meditate on that (visible world) as beginning, ending, and breathing in it (the Brahman). He is myself within the heart, smaller than a corn of rice, smaller than a corn of barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than a canary seed or the kernel of a canary seed. He also is myself within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds. He from whom all works all desires, all sweet odours and tastes proceed, who embraces all this, who never speaks and who is never surprised, he, myself within the heart, is that Brahman. When I shall have departed from hence, I shall obtain him (that Self). He who has this faith has no doubt.” (Max Muller, F. 1965, III. 14.1. 4)

Atman and Brahman are two aspects of one reality. The Upanishads thus teach the intimate unity of the self of man and Brahman. The wise see God abiding in their self.

“He is the one ruler of many who (seem to act, but really do) not act; he makes the one seed manifold. The wise who perceive him within their self, to them belongs eternal happiness, not to others.” (Max Muller, F. Svet. Up, 1965, VI. 12)

Upanishads like Mulla Sadra believe the unity of known and knower. Upanishads say *that the knower of Brahman becomes merged with Brahman.*

“He who knows the Supreme Brahman verily becomes Brahman.” (Max Muller, F. Mundaka Up, 1965, III. 2. 9)

“Those who know It (Brahman) become immortal.” (Max Muller, F. Katha Up, 1965, II. 2)

According to Sadra also, God or necessary existence knows of his essence and since he is the necessary existence whose essence is identical with his being, knowledge in God implies a unity between the subject who knows, the object that is known and the act of knowing. (Mulla Sadra, Vol. 1, 1981, p. 277)

Further, according to Upanishads, the individual self sees its true reality as the source of all. (Max Muller, F. Kaivalya Up. 1965, 20-23) It is the task of individual self to become the universal self, and this is not attainable through the Vedas, intellectual knowledge, discipline or brain power (Max Muller, F. Subala Up. 1965, IX. 15), but only through the union. Every individual self has the power to break the veil of separateness and achieve unity, become the Absolute self. Liberation, Moksa, is different from the life in paradise, Svarga, which is still a part of the manifest, is still an individual existence in time. Liberation is not a departure to another ‘world’, nor an expectation of a future state, but the experience of timeless, placeless presence of Brahman. This union is the transformation of the soul, the absorption in the divine, seeing one’s self in all beings and all beings in one self. (Max Muller, F. Isa Up. 1965, 6) One who realizes this is released from sorrow, as all

sorrow results from duality (Ibid. 7). The self loses itself, casting off all name and form to enter into the unmanifest. (Max Muller, F, Mundaka Up. 1965, III. 2. 8) Such is release from the cycle of birth and death, the wheel of time and change, the achieving of the state of Kaivalya, aloneness. All of this of course corresponds to Mulla Sadra's flight of the alone to the alone. In its initial condition, sometimes the soul is depicted as wandering about, thinking itself different from Brahman, looking on multiplicity as its sole reality. Upanishads says:

“Having well ascertained the object of the knowledge of the Vedanta, and having purified their nature by the Yoga of renunciation, all anchorites, enjoying the highest immortality, become free at the time of the great end (death) in the worlds of Brahma.” (Max Muller, F, Svet. Up. 1965, I. 6)

This is quite similar to Mulla Sadra's image of the soul wandering through the sense world and achievement of soul to ideal level by the substance in motion.

“Man is constituted of an intellect, a soul and a body. Thus, all the possibilities of cosmic existence are contained in a synthetic manner in his being. It is through his unitive and ontologically synthetic being that the ascent of the lower level of being, namely matter, can ascend to the higher levels of being: soul and spirit to return to God. In Mulla Sadra's perspective, it is by the process of transubstantial motion that the human soul can achieve separation and complete independence (tajrid) from matter. Through the being of man, material creation which is the lowest development or the most limited and weakest determination of Being can ascend or return (ma'ad) to its origin. Man is the crowning achievement of material creation and his being marks the beginning as well as the end of the process of ascent or return to Being.” (Zailan, M. 2013, p. 99)

In Upanishads union with Brahman cures the soul of its ignorance, or the individuality seen in itself as independent of its ground; it brings about Vidya, or awareness of Brahman. This avidya-vidya

scheme is somewhat comparable to Mulla Sadra's fall-return imagery. In Upanishads sorrow is seen as the helplessness resulting from being lost in the objective world; salvation involves getting beyond object-thinking to the realm of pure being. (Max Muller, F. Svet. Up. 1965, IV. 7)

2.7. Causality

We could also compare the idea of causality in the philosophies of Mulla Sadra and Shankara who is the most famous commentator of Upanishads. Both of them used the theory of causation to prove unity of existence. Both of them deny causality where the relation between the ultimate being and the being of world is concerned. According to Shankara the relation of causation cannot be real because cause and effect are one. There is no difference between cause and effect because effect doesn't have something more than cause. According to Radhakrishnan:

“Samkara adopts the theory that cause and effect are not different. He reduces the transitions from causes to effects, which underlie the entire dynamic evolution of reality to a static relation of sequence characteristic of certain types of logical and theoretic connection.” (Radhakrishnan, Vol. 2, 2008, p. 494)

It is like jug that is not more than the clay that is its cause. The effect is the manifestation of cause in disguise. Mulla Sadra also believes that effect is not different from cause in so far as it keeps the existence within itself. Effect is the quiddity which is a psychological event having no reality of its own. It is one and same reality one side of which is real (cause) and another side unreal (effect). The relation, between the two also, therefore, cannot be recognized as real relation.

For Mulla Sadra nothing can come into existence without the cause. He says that all contingent existences need a cause. The levels of phenomena are contingent upon the first act that comes from God.

“God’s act of creation, which is among His attributes, is, therefore, eternal and the world as a whole is also eternal. The individual contents of the world-the hawadith- are temporal but also have an eternal cause-God’s primordial act.” (Fazlur Rahman, 1975, pp. 62)

It is like the concept of Brahman in Shankara’s philosophy who encompasses all other causes. Shankara believes that the ultimate reality that is known as Brahman is the only cause. Any other causes in the realm of objective reality are reducible to Brahman because ontologically Brahman or absolute is identical with all things. In the phenomenal realm Brahman encompasses all causation.

“The effect is this manifold world consisting of ether and so on; the cause is the highest Brahman. Of the effect it is understood that in reality it is non-different from the cause, i.e., has no existence apart from the cause.” (Prabhu Dutt Shastri, 1911, p. 100)

Here Shankara gave some example of silver bowl. Brahman as the ultimate reality is the cause of silver bowl because silver bowl is one of Brahman’s aspects. The Brahman thus encompasses the material cause as well. Therefore Shankara accepts Brahman as the only cause. According to Mulla Sadra also what are the known as natural, temporal causes cannot be as real causes. They are only preparatory conditions cannot give being to effect that arises from necessary existence.

“Indeed, true cause is only that which not only gives existence to its effect but also continuity, so that it becomes inconceivable that an effect should last without its cause. The effect, therefore, has its being only in the cause, not outside of it, since the cause must be “present with (ma)” the effect throughout the latter’s existence.” (Fazlur Rahman, 1975, p. 75)

Shankara accepted causation on two levels: absolute reality and the reality of phenomena.

He, like Mulla Sadra, spoke about one kind of material cause that is the original material cause and that lasts forever. The second kind of material cause the effect of original material cause that can be regained even if the object undergoes vast changes (called Parinama). Shankara also discussed two kinds of material change, which he tries to distinguish without an ontological distinction. It means that in his ontological system only Brahman ultimately remains, the difference in phenomena being rendered unreal and illusory. It also means there is no real distinction between the cause and effect. The difference between them is only notional or in name, in reality they being no different from each other.

Shankara again says that the cause does not merely precede the caused but produces its effect. Unless the cause persists in the caused, the latter cannot be perceived. Clay continues in the vessel and the threads in the cloth. This is also the position of Mulla Sadra who said that existence is present in all existent objects. Existence and existents are at one level two different things which can be experienced independently of each other like horse and cow. The distinction between the effect before its manifestation and afterwards is a relative one. The cause and the caused represent two aspects of one and same thing and are really of one nature. It must be said that we could not find two different things that would be of same nature, while their forms are altered by manifestation and dissolution. Shankara however refers us to the example of cloth, saying that so long as the cloth is rolled up, we are not able to know whether it is a cloth or something else, and even if it is known to be so its length and breadth are unknown. Moreover, when it is rolled up different clothes are not experienced differently. Similarly, the cause and the caused are not different. According to him one substance cannot forfeit its nature and become another substance by appearing under a different form. All change is change of and in something. A mere succession of disconnected contents held

together by no common nature is no change at all. All that occurs are a change of form. For example; we could see the continuity of the substance of milk in the curds, of the seed in the tree. The similarity between Shankara and Sadra is that both of them used the theory of causation to prove unity of existence. According to Shankara the relation of causation cannot be real because cause and effect are one. There is no difference between cause and effect because effect doesn't have something more than cause. The effect is only the manifestation of cause. As Radhakrishnan says:

Samkara adopts the theory that cause and effect are not different. He reduces the transitions from causes to effects, which underlie the entire dynamic evolution of reality to a static relation of sequence characteristic of certain types of logical and theoretic connection. (Radhakrishnan, Vol. 2, 2008, p. 494)

Mulla Sadra, too, believes that effect is dependent on cause. Effect is just the quiddity that is a psychological event and it is not real. So the relation in which one side of it is real (Cause) and another side is unreal (Effect) cannot be recognized as real relation. The relation of causation is therefore not real.

“The principle of causality expresses the need of the caused for a cause the caused cannot exist without a cause.”
(Ayatollayi, A. R. 2005, p. 71)

In conclusion it can be seen that both the two systems try to show first cause as ultimate reality and try to prove unity of existence with the help of their respective theories of causality. Shankara and Mulla Sadra both accept only cause as real.

2.8. Creation and theory of Maya

The theory of Mulla Sadra about creation is based on his theory of motion in substance. All things are in the state of becoming because

they tend to pass their imperfection and achieve to perfection that is the goal of creation. Moreover according to Mulla Sadra the speed of the movement causes it to be imperceptible to man. The process of motion happens in both substance and existents. The motions in the things however need motion in substance. It means that motion in things do not occur unless there is motion in their substance. Then movement in substance is the cause of accident's movement. Mulla Sadra believes that while the realm of matter is in the process of motion the realm of spirit that is different from matter is unchanging. The forms in the realm of spirit are stable and there is no change in them but they are changing things exist in the realm of becoming are dependent upon the immutable archetypes that is beyond the change. Here the immutable archetypes are same as the knowledge of ultimate reality or God. The creation is a link between the changing world of the particulars and its creator who is above and beyond change. Mulla Sadra believes that God is both the cause of universe and the goal of creation. He accepts the two processes involved in manifestation; the descent of existence in a gradual process of lower and lower gradation and the ascent of existence from the least perfect to the most perfect. (Mulla Sadra, Vol. V III, 1981, p. 84) These two processes however complement each other and take the form of circle. The descending arc is showed by one side of the circle and the ascending arc by the corresponding intensification. The end point of the descending arc is the beginning point of the ascending arc. Man plays a significant part in both states of ascent and descent of existence in the cosmic being.

“Like the Sufis, Mulla Sadra views the two processes involved in creation: the descent of Being in successive stages of intensity or perfection and ascent of being in cosmic existence are often represented by one side of the circle and the ascending arc by the corresponding side. The terminal point of the descending arc is the beginning point of the ascending arc. In the two processes of descent and ascent of being in cosmic existence, man plays a central role. This is due to the fact of his creation as the qualitative synthesis of the various levels of cosmic reality.” (Moris, Z. 2003, p. 99)

This view is almost identical with Upanishads where the circular conception of origination and destruction of the universe in Brahman is categorically maintained. At the end all creation is absorbed in Brahman but this absorption also turns into a point of fresh beginning and of emergence of the world.

“The world is sometimes spoken of in its twofold aspect, the organic and the inorganic. All organic things, whether plants, animals or men, have souls. Brahman desiring to be many created fire (tejas) water (ap) and earth (ksiti). Then the self-existent Brahman entered into these three, and it is by their combination that all other bodies are formed...” (Dasgupta, S. Vol. I, 1957, p. 51)

We could see also in Upanishads:

“As the spider sends forth and draws in its thread, as plants grow on the earth, as from every man hairs spring forth on the head and the body, thus does everything arise here from the Indestructible. The Brahman swells by means of brooding (penance); hence is produced matter (food); from matter breath, mind, the true, the worlds (seven), and from the works (performed by men in the worlds), the immortal (the eternal effects, rewards, and punishments of works).” (Max Muller, F. 1965, Munduka Up. I-I-7)

According to Upanishads and Mulla Sadra creation is defined as manifestation of ultimate reality that is called Brahman or necessary existence. Here we realize that the cause of creation in Upanishads is the creative process of Maya (an idea endorsed by Shankara but not by Ramanuja) but in Mulla Sadra it is real and due to love.

“That from which the maker (mayin) sends forth all this--the sacred verses, the offerings, the sacrifices, the panaceas, the past, the future, and all. Know then Prakriti (nature) is Maya (art), and the great Lord the Mayin (maker); the whole world is filled with what are his members. If a man has discerned

him, who being one only, rules over every germ (cause), in whom all this comes together and comes asunder again, who is the lord, the bestower of blessing, the adorable god, then he passes for ever into that peace. He, the creator and supporter of the gods, Rudra, the great seer, the lord of all, who saw, Hiranyagarbha being born, may he endow us with good thoughts. He who is the sovereign of the gods, he in whom all the worlds rest, he who rules over all two-footed and four-footed beings, to that god let us sacrifice an oblation. He who has known him who is more subtle than subtle, in the midst of chaos, creating all things, having many forms, alone enveloping everything, the happy one (Siva), passes into peace forever.” (Max Muller, F.Svet. Up. 1965, 4. 9 -14)

Creation in the philosophy of Upanishads means the process of becoming but in the school of Mulla Sadra, it is both being and becoming. It means that it is the stableness that is in substantial motion. Mulla Sadra like Ramanuja recognizes creation as real process but Shankara has the opposite view.

Conclusion

Last chapter is dedicated to a direct comparison and analysis of the philosophical systems espoused by Upanishads and Mulla Sadra. A number of similarities are discerned and the metaphysical implications of these points are highlighted. Identification of the concept of Absolute as of primary importance to both systems is at the centre of whole discussion. The Brahman of Upanishads and the Existence of Mulla Sadra are both absolute, inconceivable by intellect and indescribable through language. And both systems in their respective ways identify it with true and expanded nature of human self. The journey of self-expansion is a mystical journey that requires enlightenment and realization. Further, in both of them this Absolute or One is hidden by veil. Upanishads however accept phenomena as Maya or cosmic illusion in opposition of Mulla Sadra who considers phenomena as a downward and upward

intermingling of Being into non-being in an evolutionary/involutionary circle. It is further seen that in both systems only cause is recognized as real and they both used the principle of causation to prove the unity of existence. For the Upanishads and the later Vedanta Brahman alone exists, the world being either a pure illusion (Shankara) or having its locus in Brahman (Ramanuja). For Sadra, on the other hand, the world comes into existence as a result of Existence's descent into non-existence. The world in itself is therefore non-being but it exists by virtue of its receiving Existence into itself. This position is more akin to Ramanuja than Shankara. Sadra, however, comes close to Shankara in his belief that the quiddity or phenomena work as veil upon ultimate reality, i.e. the Absolute. But there is some difference here in that the philosophy of Mulla Sadra is based on the multiplicity in unity and unity in multiplicity but the philosophy of Upanishads is focused only on pure unity. But according to some interpretations Upanishads also do not completely reject multiplicity. There is thus scope for seeing compatibility between Sadra and Upanishads. Another difference is that Upanishads accept only impersonal God or Nirguna Brahman as real but Mulla Sadra accepts the reality of both personal and impersonal God. Moreover, while Upanishads accepted the theory of transmigration of soul Mulla Sadra rejects it.

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Endnotes

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Comparative study of self-awareness in Suhrawardi's and Avicenna's philosophy

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Abstract

*Suhrawardī's concept of self-awareness is on the basis of the concept of presential knowledge (‘ilm al-Ḥuḍūrī) while there is no such a concept in Avicenna's philosophy. Some scholars have argued that Avicenna in his last works, i.e. al-Mubāḥathāt and al-Ta‘līqāt has alluded to an early form of presential knowledge where he talks about the issue of self-awareness. So, if this case, then there is a great resemblance between **Suhrawardī's** concept of self-awareness and that of Avicenna. I argue that there is a radical difference between Suhrawardī's concept of self-awareness and that of Avicenna because there is no concept of presential knowledge in **Avicenna's philosophy even in its early form**. Therefore, **Suhrawardī's** concept of self-awareness presupposes a concept of self which has an ontological implication while Avicenna's concept of self-awareness lacks it. In order to discuss the ontological implication of the concept of self, we need to look to Aristotle's and Descartes' philosophies.*

Keywords: Self-awareness, Presential Knowledge, 'Thinking of Thinking,' Avicenna, **Suhrawardī**

Introduction

Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī's (d.1191) concept of self-awareness is based on the concept of presential knowledge (*'ilm al-Ḥuḍūrī*) which was derived for the first time by *him* from the mystical tradition. In regards to the issue of self-awareness, *Suhrawardī* has criticized the peripatetic concept of self-awareness. He asserts that his view is totally different from the Peripatetics' view. However, some scholars have argued that if we consider Avicenna's (d.1037) last works we can find an early form of the concept of presential knowledge in his philosophy, so, contrary to *Suhrawardī's* *assertion, there is a significant similarity between these two concepts of self-awareness. This is the view against which I shall argue by focusing on the concept of 'thinking of thinking' in Aristotle's and Descartes' philosophies.*

A number of writers have addressed this issue. Jari Kaukua and Deborah L. Black have written on Avicenna's concept of self-awareness (Kaukua 2007; Black 2008). Kobayashi and Marcotte have both written on the relationship between *Suhrawardī's* and Avicenna's concepts of self-awareness. Kobayashi and Marcotte have compared these two concepts, and while the greater part of Kobayahsi's article is devoted to Avicenna's view about self-awareness, Marcotte has written specifically on *Suhrawardī's* contribution on this topic (Kobayashi 1990; Marcotte 2004). Both of them have come to the conclusion that there is a fundamental similarity between these two concepts of self-awareness. In addition, Mehdi Aminrazavi has stated that *Suhrawardī's* concept of knowledge is Avicennan (Aminrazavi 2003). These three scholars have stated that we can find the concept of presential knowledge — in its early form — in Avicenna's concept of self-awareness. Therefore, according to these scholars, there is no radical difference between *Suhrawardī's* and Avicenna's concepts of self-awareness.

In this article, in opposition to this accepted view, I will argue that there is a radical difference between Suhrawardī's and Avicenna's concepts of self-awareness. I will show that Suhrawardī's concept of self-awareness presupposes a concept of human self that has an ontological implication while that of Avicenna lacks such an implication because Avicenna's concept of self-awareness presupposes a concept of self, the nature of which is 'thinking of thinking'. I use the expression 'ontological implication' to denote an implication which can be derived from a concept of human self — without needing to add anything beyond the concept itself — which says the human self exists. Any concept of self which leads us to conclude that the self is an existent entity has ontological implication.

This article is organized as follows; first, I will discuss **Suhrawardī's** concept of self-awareness and that of Avicenna. I shall discuss Avicenna's concept of self-awareness based on the hypothetical example of the Flying Person and the other passages in his last works, namely, *al-Mubāḥathāt (Discussions)* and *al-Ta'liqāt (Notes)*. Then I will argue that there is a radical difference between **Suhrawardī's** and Avicenna's concepts of self-awareness. Instead of describing their arguments and statements which have been covered by other authors, I will illustrate the nature of the knowledge through which, according to their views, a human soul is aware of itself. Clarifying the nature of this knowledge leads us to the fundamental difference between **Suhrawardī's** and Avicenna's concepts of self-awareness. This difference is based on the difference between their concepts of self which lie at the core of their theories of self-awareness. In order to clarify this difference, we need to look to Aristotle's and Descartes' philosophies. As shall be shown, Avicenna's concept of self-awareness reflects Aristotle's concept of the intellect, the thinking of which is 'thinking of thinking', and Descartes' *cogito*. What I intend to demonstrate is that at the core of **Suhrawardī's** concept of self-awareness is a concept of self that has an ontological implication while that of Avicenna lacks any ontological implication. This is because, at the

core of *Suhrawardī*'s concept of self-awareness is the concept of presential knowledge while, contrary to the accepted view, there is no such kind of knowledge in Avicenna's concept of self-awareness. My argument is based on considering the development of the concept of 'thinking of thinking' in Aristotle's and Descartes' philosophies since Avicenna's concept of self-awareness presupposes a concept of self, the nature of which is 'thinking of thinking'. Finally, I will deal with the passages of *al-Mubāḥathāt* and *al-Ta'liqāt* which have been employed by other scholars in order to show that Avicenna alludes to an early form of presential knowledge. Those scholars, on the basis of this attitude, have argued that there is no radical difference between *Suhrawardī*'s and Avicenna's concepts of self-awareness. I will argue that in these passages Avicenna still preserves his Peripatetic idea and we cannot interpret those passages as statements alluding to the concept of presential knowledge.

Before entering the discussion it should be pointed out that there is a significant difference between Aristotle's Peripatetic philosophy and Avicenna's peripatetic philosophy. The Peripatetic philosophy of Muslim Peripatetic philosophers is *a fusion of* Aristotle's philosophy and Neo-Platonism because, as shall be shown, an apocryphal book *The Theology of Aristotle* — *which has been written by Plotinus, not by Aristotle* — *had a great influence on Muslim peripatetic philosophers. Thus, when Suhrawardī talks about the Peripatetic philosophy he talks about a kind of Peripatetic philosophy which is not totally Aristotelian.*

Suhrawardī's Concept of Self-Awareness

Suhrawardī's concept of self-awareness is based on the concept of presential knowledge. He used this mystical concept and drew some philosophical consequences from it. Proposing the concept of presential knowledge, he attempted to find justifiable philosophical solutions for some philosophically obscure problems such as Divine knowledge of itself and Divine knowledge of the world. Drawing

philosophical consequences from the concept of presential knowledge, **Suhrawardī was able to** propose a theory to explain the Divine knowledge of itself and find a solution to the complicated problem of the Divine Knowledge of the world, specifically knowledge of the particulars. In regards to the Divine knowledge of the particulars, **Suhrawardī** notes that the Necessary Existence (*wajib al-wujūd*) knows the particular objects by means of a presential illuminationistic knowledge (*wa ya 'lam al-ashy'a bi-l'ilm il- ishrāqi al-Ḥuḍūrī*) (Suhrawardī 2001-2009,1: 487). Also he has employed the concept of presential knowledge in order to discuss the awareness of a human soul of itself.

The term 'presential knowledge' has primarily been used to explain — in Islamic Mysticism — how things can be known through a mystical intuition. In knowledge through intuition (*shuhūd*) things are knowable for a mystical person through the presence of the essences of things so that no mediator is required for apprehending the things. On the basis of such an understanding of this concept from the mystical literature, **Suhrawardī** has employed the concept of presential knowledge to allude to a kind of knowledge which is acquired by means of the presence of the known thing to our minds in such a way that acquiring this knowledge does not rest on there being any mediator (Yathribī 2003, 139-152). One could argue then, that there is a similarity between the philosophical use of the concept of presential knowledge and the mystical use of it. In both cases the concept denotes a kind of knowledge of an essence which has been acquired not by means of any mediator, but by means of the presence of the essence itself. However, there is a difference between the two. The concept of presential knowledge in philosophical literature is not about mystical intuition, rather; it is about how minds (such as Divine mind and Human minds) acquire knowledge of some particular entities — knowledge of self in the case of self-awareness in Human minds and knowledge of self and the particulars in the case of Divine knowledge of itself and its knowledge of the particulars. Hence, concerning the philosophical use of the concept of presential knowledge, the concept does not

allude to a mystical process. In this case the presential knowledge is a philosophical concept to explain how the mind can be aware of some particular entities. So, regarding human self-awareness, it offers an explanation as to the relation between the mental system of each human being with its self. The essence of self is present for each human mind without requiring any mediator. This is the concept by means of which *Suhrawardī* tried to solve the philosophical problem of human self-awareness. As will be shown at the end of this article, *Suhrawardī derived this concept from the mystical tradition, so he received a mystical concept and drew a philosophical consequence from it.*

In some parts of his works *Suhrawardī* has written about human self-awareness. His central theme is that awareness of self could not be acquired by means of any mediator. It could be acquired only by the presence of the self for itself. In the *Hayākil-i Nūr (The Temples of Light)* and in the *Alwāh-i 'Imādiyya (Tablets Dedicated to 'Imad al-Dyn)*, *Suhrawardī* has argued that the soul's awareness of itself is different from the knowing of human body parts, namely, the objects of which we are aware by means of acquired knowledge (Suhrawardī 2001-2009, 3:85; Suhrawardī 2001-2009, 3:129; Marcotte 2004, 4-5). But the key argument for the presential nature of self-awareness can be found in his main work, i.e. *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq (The Philosophy of Illumination)*. In this book he argues that self-awareness for human beings is possible only on the basis of the presence of self for itself.

In the first article in the second part of *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* he states that human self-awareness is not acquired by means of any mediator, so we can conclude that it is not a kind of acquired knowledge (*'ilm al-Ḥuṣūlī*). The special term for selfhood in this book is I-ness (*anā'īyyah*). Employing this concept he demonstrates that the soul of every human being can be aware of itself without requiring any mediated element. He argues that you are aware of your own self without requiring any mediated elements such as image (*mithāl*), form (*ṣūrah*), a notion of the self's essence (*dhāt*) or

an attribute (*ṣifah*) of that essence (Suhrawardī 2001-2009, 2:111-7; Marcotte 2004, 10-16).

Avicenna's Concept of Self has no Ontological Implication

As some scholars have shown, Avicenna's contribution to the issue of self-awareness could be found in his hypothetical example of the Flying Person and also in some passages of his *al-Mubāḥathāt* and *al-Ta'līqāt* (Marmura 1986; Muehlethaler 2009, 181; Kaukua 2007, 76). Self-awareness in Avicenna's philosophy is an unceasing continuous stream of soul awareness of its essence (*al-shu'ūr bi-al-dhāt*) or its existence (*al-shu'ūr bi-wujūdi-hā*) (Avicenna 1992, §550,185). This could not be acquired from anything other than the soul itself (*al-shu'ūr bi-l-dhāt dhātūn li-lnafsi la-yuktasab min khārij*) (Avicenna 1990, 160). It is essential to human soul, and it cannot be stopped even in sleep. It is direct, unconditioned (*wa shu'ūrunā shu'ūrun 'al-al itlāq 'anā lā bisharti fihi biwajhin*) and continual (*wa innahā dāimat al-shu'ūr lā fi waq dūa waqt*) awareness (Avicenna 1990, 160). It is the fundamental awareness which is indispensable for any other kind of soul awareness. I will deal with the other kinds of soul awareness at the end of this paper.¹

Despite the fact that Avicenna's primary aim of proposing the hypothetical example of the Flying Person was to demonstrate the independence of human soul from its body or its incorporeality, many scholars have inferred that we can find Avicenna's concept of self-awareness in his discussion of the hypothetical example. In some parts of his works Avicenna writes about the Flying Person. For example, in the end of the first chapter of the first article of *The Book of Healing* (*al-Shifā*), and in the third part (*namat*) of *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt* (*Remarks and Admonitions*) he has illustrated his hypothetical example. His discussion in *The Book of Healing* is more concise than the version written in *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt*. In *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt*, Avicenna presents his view at length. In *al-Shifā* he does not clarify his view on the nature of knowledge by means of which a human soul could be aware of

itself, but we can find his discussion of this important issue in *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt*. Therefore, in this paper I will discuss the version written in *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt* where Avicenna aims to demonstrate the existence of a human soul, its immateriality and substantiality. Firstly, he asks us to contemplate on our own selves. He states that by means of such contemplation we will find that whenever we have knowledge of something we cannot be neglectful of our selves. (*bi ḥaythu tafatṭun li-l-ashay'fiṭnatan saḥiḥah hal taghḥalu 'an wujūd dhātik,?wa lā tathbut nafsik?*) (Avicenna 2004, 1:159). This means that when you have knowledge of something in the world, you know that you are the one who has that knowledge, namely, you perceive that you are perceiving, so you are aware of your own self. Here Avicenna denotes derivative self-awareness, which basically is an Aristotelian concept, but immediately after stating this, he proceeds to outline his main view of self-awareness which specifically belongs to him. (I will return to the difference between his view of self-awareness and that of Aristotle shortly). Avicenna notes that even the sleeper in his sleep or the drunk in the state of his drunkenness cannot be neglectful of himself. By means of this statement Avicenna aims to denote the unconscious feature of self-awareness. He moves on to propose his hypothetical example which could be summarized as follows:

A) First, he describes the hypothetical situation :

If you imagine your essence to have been at its first creation safe in intellect and configuration (*al-hay'ah*), and it is presupposed that it has a special position and configuration such that it does not see its parts and it does not touch its limbs, but it is falling in temperate air and its limbs are separated from each other such that they never meet and they never touch each other, you will find at this position that your essence is unaware of everything except affirmation of its individual existence. (*illā 'an thubūti innyyati hā*) (Avicenna 2004, 1:159).

B) On the basis of this hypothetical situation, it is accepted that we are aware of our selves. But, for Avicenna, the question is “what is

the thing by means of which we can be aware of our own selves?" (*bi mādhā tadruk haynaidhin, wa qablahū wa ba'dahū dhātik?*) (Avicenna 2004, 1:161). In the next passages Avicenna discusses all possible alternatives which could be used to acquire this kind of knowledge. He rejects all alternatives except the knowledge acquired by intellect. According to Avicenna, the possible alternatives are as follows:

1) Through the senses :(*mashā'irik*)

Avicenna argues that that kind of knowledge cannot be acquired through the senses. Self-awareness is not a sensory form (*ṣūrah mahsūṣah*). In the third chapter of this part Avicenna rejects the idea that the senses might provide awareness of the self because in the first presupposition of the hypothetical example the operation of our sense organs was stopped. (*aghfalnā al-ḥawās 'an af'ālihā*) (Avicenna 2004, 1:162). Therefore what is apprehended at the moment is not one of our body parts such as heart or brain; also it could not be our body as a whole (*wa lā mudrakak jumlatun min haythu huwa jumlah*). He writes: "What you apprehend does not in any way (*bi wajhin min al-wujūh*) belong to what you apprehend through the senses or through what resembles the senses of which we shall [yet] speak." (Avicenna 2004, 1:162); Kaukua 2004, 92-3) The awareness of self, also, could not be acquired by imaginal forms (*sūrah khyālyah*) because imaginal forms, in Peripatetic philosophy, are acquired through the abstraction of the sensory forms. Avicenna notes : "When an object being seen there is a sensible object, then it will be imaginal at the time the object is absent when its form is inward, like whenever a person ,e.g. Zayd, whom you saw is absent when you imagine him[you have a imaginal form of him]." (Avicenna 2004, 1: 174)

2) Through Internal Faculties (*quwwatun ghayri mashā'irik*)

a) With mediator (*biwasit*); By this kind of category he denotes all internal faculties except intellect — since an intellect can acquire

knowledge without any mediator — e.g. Faculty of Reminiscence (*quwwah dhākirah*), Imaginal Faculty (*quwwah mutakhayilah*), Estimative Faculty(*quwwah wahmyah*), etc.

This possible alternative is also not acceptable because based on the hypothetical situation, there can be no mediator. Avicenna states: “I do not suppose that you need to have a mediator at the moment because there is no mediator. The only [possible alternative] which remains is that you apprehend your essence without requiring any faculty or mediator.” (Avicenna 2004, 1: 161)

b) Without mediator(*bighayri wasit*), i.e. intellect (‘*aql*)
After rejecting the above possible alternatives, obviously, the only remaining alternative is stating that the Flying Person could be aware of itself by means of intellect. I will deal with this alternative shortly.

3) Through its action: Avicenna considers that a critique might be raised against his argument in the future. Therefore, he tries to reply to this objection in advance. He writes: “Perhaps you would say: I do affirm my essence by means of my action (*min fi ‘lī*).” (Avicenna 2004, 1: 164)

He notes that in order to affirm your essence by means of your action, you need to have an action or a movement in your limbs, but based on the presupposition you have no movement in your body and in its limbs you, so cannot act. In addition, he replies to this critique in another way. He states that there are two possible alternatives: first, the action is a general action and it does not belong to you (*fāilan mutlaqan lā khāṣan*), second, this is your own action (*f‘ilan laka*). In the first alternative, you affirm that there is a general actor (*fā ‘il*), but you cannot affirm that your own essence is the actor. In regards to the second alternative, there is another problem; you must have considered your own essence before considering your own action. You cannot affirm your essence by means of your action, because your essence is a part of the concept

of your action (*bal dhātika juz 'un min mafhūm fi 'alika*), so it has already been affirmed, and your action cannot affirm your essence (*fa dhātika muthbattatan lā bihi*) (Avicenna 2004, 1: 164). Hence, Avicenna rejects that self-awareness is a by-product of the awareness of others, that is, it is not derivative or reflexive.

Thus, according to Avicenna, we are aware of our selves only by means of our intellects without requiring any mediator or any other instrument. In addition to the Flying Person, there is a passage in his *al-Ta'liqāt* in which he explicitly states that we are aware of our selves through our intellects. (*qad sh 'arnā bidhawatinā fahuwa min fi 'l al- 'aql*) (Avicenna 1990, 161).

According to Avicenna, in order to acquire the knowledge of the world and objects, our intellects must have intelligible forms (*sūrah ma 'qūlah*). Now, concerning human self-awareness, we encounter the question 'Are we aware of our selves by means of intelligible forms?' If the reply is no, then what is the nature of this kind of knowledge? As Avicenna points out the awareness of self is not an outcome of an impression of self. In *al-Ta'liqāt* he writes: "The awareness of the human soul of itself is primal (*awwalūn lahā*) for it and it is not acquired (*fa lā yaḥṣulu lahā*) by means of acquisition (*kasb*)." (Avicenna 1990, 79). In this passage he apparently is suggesting self-awareness is not acquired through intelligible forms (Black 2008, 69). In regards to this point in Avicenna's philosophy, McGinnis states that intellectual perception in the issue of self-awareness is different from the intellectual perception of anything else. He writes:

When one perceives oneself intellectually, however, there is literally a type of intellectual perception that is different in kind from the intellectual perception of anything else. That is because in self-awareness the soul conceptualizes itself, and in so doing makes itself the act of the intellect, an intellect, and an object of the intellect. (McGinnis 2010, 141)

In this part of *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt*, Avicenna does not specifically discuss the nature of this kind of knowledge. In order to understand Avicenna's view of the nature of this kind of knowledge we need to consider his theory of Divine knowledge of itself. That is because the manner by which we are aware of our selves is the same as the manner by which God has knowledge of itself. So, I suggest we look to Avicenna's theory of Divine Knowledge. His theory of Divine knowledge is about two kinds of knowledge: first 'Divine knowledge of the world', second, 'Divine knowledge of itself'. Based on Avicenna's theory of Divine knowledge of itself we can find a way to shed some light on the problem at hand. These two kinds of awareness of the essence (*dhāt*) — human self-awareness and the God's awareness of itself — are the same, because in both of these kinds of awareness there are pure intellects which are aware of themselves. In regards to both of them, Avicenna does not mention any kind of form (*ṣūrah*), i.e. intelligible form. Although these two kinds of knowledge are acquired by means of intellect, they are not acquired by means of intelligible forms. In order to clarify the nature of knowledge by means of which a human is aware of itself in Avicenna's philosophy, I suggest we concentrate on the theory of Divine knowledge of itself.

In a number of his works Avicenna writes about the Divine knowledge of itself; In the fifteenth chapter of the seventh part (*namat*) of *al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt* he states: "As has been determined, it is necessary that the Necessary Existent contemplates its essence in a self-initiated manner." (Avicenna 2004, 1:388)

Also, in the sixth chapter of the eighth article of the Metaphysical part of *al-Shifā*, he notes that God at once is intellect, intellectual apprehender and intelligible (*fa dhātihi 'aqlun wa 'aqilun wa m'aqūlun*). It means that God is aware of itself (Avicenna 1970, 1:357). In all of those passages, he discusses an intellect which at the same time is thinking and is being thought. Hence, there is a great resemblance between self-awareness in human beings and

Divine knowledge of itself in his philosophy, since with respect to both of them he talks about a pure intellect which is aware of itself. I suggest we focus on the philosophical development of this concept — a pure intellect which is aware of itself — to clarify the nature of knowledge by means of which a human being is aware of its self. In order to acquire a sound understanding about Avicenna's view of an intellect which thinks itself, considering the theory of God in Aristotle's philosophy could be a good means since the theory of Divine knowledge of itself in Avicenna's philosophy is Aristotelian. According to Aristotle's theology, the Prime Mover, God, is an intellect which thinks of itself. In the ninth chapter of the book *Λ* of *Metaphysics* Aristotle notes: "Since the supreme intellect is the best thing in the world, it must think itself; its thinking is a thinking of thinking." (Aristotle 1956, 1074b35-1075a) This is because the supreme intellect is free of matter. Aristotle writes:

Therefore, since the object of thought and thought itself do not differ in the case of immaterial things, the divine intellect and its object will be the same; i.e. the divine act of thinking will be one with the object of its thought. (Aristotle 1956, 1075a1-5)

Both Aristotle and Avicenna — and other Peripatetic philosophers — were thinking that the immateriality of an intellect is sufficient to make it aware of itself (Al-Fārābī 1995, 35-6). As I will show, this is the point against which *Suhrawardī* has stated his main critique against the peripatetic concept of self-awareness. For Avicenna, in regards to the issue of self-awareness, the human self is thinking of itself without any mediator. Because of its immateriality it is aware of itself in the same way as God is aware of itself. Hence, the self is thinking of itself, while its thinking is 'thinking of thinking'. Therefore the nature of self is 'thinking of thinking'. This is the concept of self which is at the core of Avicenna's concept of self-awareness. Human self is a thing whose thinking is 'thinking of thinking' (itself). To be aware of itself is to think of itself, that is, to think of 'thinking of thinking'. Hence, the peripatetic self is 'thinking of thinking, and the self is aware of itself by means of the

act of thinking. The similarity between Avicenna's concept of self-awareness and Aristotle's concept of the Divine knowledge of itself could be better understood if we note at this point that Avicenna's theory of psychology has some differences with that of Aristotle (Shīrwānī 1997, 27-33).

First, in regards to the concept of self-awareness, Avicenna was not influenced by Aristotle's *De Anima*. Aristotle's concept of self-awareness is completely different to that of Avicenna. Aristotle's concept of self-awareness has been dubbed as derivative or reflexive self-awareness. According to Aristotle, whenever I know an object, in my knowledge there is an awareness of my own self which emerges because of the knowing the object. On the other hand, when I perceive an object I perceive that I am perceiving, that is, this is my own self which is perceiving at the moment. In Avicenna's philosophy, in contrast to Aristotle, self-awareness is independent of our awareness of the other objects. In Aristotle's philosophy a human soul can only be aware of itself through the awareness of an object, whereas based on Avicenna's view, self-awareness is not derivative (Black 2007, 63). Avicenna writes: "My apprehension (*idrākī*) of my essence (*dhātī*) is something which subsists in me. It is not acquired for me from consideration (*i'tibārī*) of other thing." (Avicenna 1990, 161) As Deborah L. Black states, we cannot find Avicenna's concept of self-awareness in Aristotle's philosophy. She writes: "It seems obvious that such a view [Avicenna's view] is entirely at odds with the Aristotelian thesis that the human soul can only have knowledge of itself concomitant with its awareness of an object." (Black 2007, 66) This is because, although Avicenna in his remarks on the soul was influenced by the philosophy of Aristotle, he has chosen a different view in regards to the issue of self-awareness.

Second, in Aristotle's psychology, soul is the form of its body and it cannot be abstracted from the body because soul is not independent of its body and it is not an abstract thing, whereas Avicenna maintains that a human soul is an abstract thing and it is

independent from its body. In Aristotle's psychology the soul of a human being could not be taken as its 'I', while the soul and its body together must be taken as the 'I'. But in Avicenna's psychology the soul of a human being could be taken as its 'I' (Black 2007, 66). In order to show that soul is independent of its body, Avicenna borrowed the concept of 'thinking of thinking' from Aristotle's theology. McGinnis and Black highlight the point that Avicenna's concept of self-awareness is related to the concept of 'thinking of thinking'. McGinnis writes:

In conceptualizing oneself as an immaterial substance one is engaged in the intellect's proper act, namely, intellectual perception. Also, inasmuch as one is actively and presently intellecting, the intellect is at the level of the acquired intellect, namely, the intellect's perfect state. Finally, since the intellect has itself as its object, the intellect is thinking about itself thinking. (McGinnis 2010, 141)

Black concludes

Avicenna's claim that self-awareness is indistinguishable from the very existence of the human soul follows quite naturally on the assumption that the fundamental attribute of the separate intellects — that of being always actually engaged in a thinking of thinking — must also be manifested in human intellects if they are to be intellect at all. (Black 2007, 82)

The Flying Person then is an anti-Aristotelian concept, because in *De Anima* Aristotle states that the soul never thinks without imaginal form (Aristotle 1907, III, 431A17). And it might be for this reason that Thomas Aquinas who was influenced by Avicenna did not address the Flying Person in his works at all, because he knew that Avicenna's Flying Person was not Aristotelian (Brown 2001). Avicenna derived his concept of self-awareness from another source. The other source might be the apocryphal famous book — *The Theology of Aristotle* — which was being studied by Muslim philosophers as an Aristotle's work. For this reason, for Avicenna

and other Muslim peripatetic philosophers, Aristotelian philosophy is a fusion between Aristotle's philosophy and Neo-Platonism. It has been argued that this book was responsible for such a fusion. This book which has greatly influenced all peripatetic Muslim philosophers was translated by Ibn na'imah Himsi and it was called *Uhtūlūjīyā* in Islamic world. Valentin **Rosé in 1883 demonstrated** that this book is a collection of excerpts from Plotinus' (d.270 AD) *Enneads*. We can find a passage in the first chapter (*miymar*) of this book in which the author gives a description (not an argumentation) on the nature of soul which is very similar to Avicenna's concept of the Flying Person. The author writes:

Perhaps sometimes I was alone with my own self, and I detached my body from my own self and I put it aside. I became like a substance abstracted from the body and matter, at this situation I was in my essence and by returning to it (be aware of it) [I found out that] it is detached from the all objects. [At the moment] I was knower, known and knowledge [at the same time]. (Ibnna'imah Himsi 2010, 35)

In order to clarify the nature of self conceptualized in the Flying person I suggest considering the philosophical development of the concept of 'thinking of thinking'. Considering its development can reveal a very important aspect of this concept, i.e. the ontological aspect of it. The concept of an intellect whose thinking is a thinking of thinking (itself) is equivalent to the concept of *ego cogito cogitatum* (a thing whose thinking is thinking of itself which is thinking) which is at the core of Descartes' famous theorem *cogito sum*. Some scholars have shown that there is a historical connection between Avicenna's Flying Person and Descartes' *cogito*, while the other reject this idea.² Whether there is an historical connection between the two or not, some in this area believe that there is a certain philosophically resemblance between Avicenna's concept of the Flying Person and Descartes' *cogito*. (Hasse 2000, 80; Brown 2001, 17). At the core of Descartes' *cogito* is immediate self-awareness like Avicenna's Flying Person. Druat writes: "This self [*cogito*] is defined as a thing that thinks, since the thinking process

gives rise to its apprehension. Thinking reveals itself to itself as thinking.” (Druart 1988, 31) Descartes’ *cogito* is a pure thinking thing which is independent from any kind of body for being aware of itself (Descartes 2003, 71-9). Druat has shown that Descartes defines the self as a thinking thing but this is the fact which implicitly is in the Flying Person (Druart 1988, 35). Clarifying the development of *cogito* in the history of philosophy can help us to understand the content of the Flying Person. By means of this survey we can find the exact content of this concept.

The concept of transcendental apperception in Immanuel Kant’s philosophy is the development of Descartes’ Idea on *cogito* (Gaygill 1995, 82). In fact, at the core of the concept of a thing whose thinking is thinking of thinking by Aristotle, the Flying Person by Avicenna, *cogito* by Descartes, the transcendental apperception by Kant, there is a shared idea which was described by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. He argued that, generally speaking, it is true that ‘I think’ (*cogito*) should always accompany every concept, intuition or thought in the human mind. But this ‘I’ is not empirical. It is transcendental, that is, it is only the necessary transcendental condition for thoughts, judgments, sentence and concepts in the human mind (Kant 1998, B131). Therefore, *cogito* is merely a transcendental condition and we cannot ascribe to it any existence. Kant writes: “I cannot say ‘Everything that thinks exists’; for then the property of thinking would make all beings possessing it into necessary beings. Hence my existence also cannot be regarded as inferred from the proposition ‘I think’ [*cogito*] as Descartes held.” (Kant 1998, B422).

Thus, the concept of the thing whose thinking is ‘thinking of thinking’ which is aware of itself by means of this thinking — as Kant showed — does not have any ontological implication. ***In fact, the concept of self-awareness in Avicenna’s thought presupposes an intellect which thinks of itself.*** This peripatetic concept of a pure immaterial thing (intellect) whose thinking is ‘thinking of thinking’ is significantly different from the concept of self-awareness in

Suhrawardī's philosophy. **Suhrawardī's** concept of self-awareness presupposes a concept of self which has an ontological implication.

To sum up;

- 1) Avicenna's concept of self-awareness is equivalent to his concept of Divine knowledge of itself which in turn is equivalent to Aristotle's concept of an intellect, the thinking of which is 'thinking of thinking'.
- 2) The concept of the thing whose thinking is 'thinking of thinking' is at the core of Descartes' *cogito*. Hence, Avicenna's concept of self has a great resemblance to Descartes' *cogito*
- 3) The apotheosis of the notion of *ego cogito cogitatum* can be found in the concept of transcendental ego in Kant's philosophy. Kant showed that 'I think' (*cogito*) or transcendental ego is merely a condition and we cannot ascribe to it any existence.
- 4) Hence, the concept of self-awareness in Avicenna's philosophy
- 5) presupposes a concept of self which has no ontological implication.

Suhrawardī's Concept of Self has an ontological implication

In order to know Suhrawardī's exact view of self-awareness and to understand how his concept of self is radically different from that of Avicenna we should consider his concept of self-awareness in *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*. The special term for selfhood in this book is I-ness . Employing this term he demonstrates that the soul of every human being can be aware of itself without requiring any mediated element such as image ,form , a notion of self's essence or an attribute of that essence (Suhrawardī 2001-2009, 2:111-7). Suhrawardī states that every human being can be aware of itself through the I-ness, that is, every individual human being perceives its essence itself.

Considering the exact content of the concept of I-ness can lead us to Suhrawardī's exact idea of self-awareness and his concept of self. At the core of this concept is presential knowledge. What is the nature of presential knowledge in Suhrawardī's philosophy? Suhrawardī states that the nature of presential knowledge is Light. He also notes that the nature of the human soul is pure light (*Isfah-bad Light*) (Suhrawardī 2001-2009, 2: 216). If I-ness is light, then what is the nature of light in Suhrawardī's philosophy? He notes that light is manifested by itself (*zāhir fi-nafsi-hi*) and makes the other things evident (*muzhir li-ghayrih*). Suhrawardī writes: "If you wish to have a rule regarding light, let it be that light is that which is evident in its own reality and by essence makes another evident." (*falyakun inn al-nūr huwa al-zāhir fi ḥaqīqat nafsi-hi al-muzhir li-ghayrih bidhāti-hi*) (Suhrawardī 2001-2009, 2:113; Suhrawardī 1999, 81)

In addition, his ontological doctrine is based on the concept of light whereby the light has priority over existence (*wujūd*), and the concept of existence is 'merely mental considerations' (*i'tibārī*) with no corresponding reality (2001-2009, 2: 64-73). In the concept of light there is no priority of thinking over being. I-ness is not a thinking thing, but it is a thing in virtue of which everything can come to exist. This is because light is a manifestation (*zuhūr*), and it can make apparent everything. The nature of light is not 'thinking of thinking' and this is the fundamental difference with Avicenna's concept of self-awareness. I-ness — light — has a priority over any knowledge and any thought. By means of my I-ness in the world I can think and conceptualize objects.³ It is my concrete reality which has priority over the thinking thing. Contrary to the accepted view, selfhood is not a pure intellect in Suhrawardī's philosophy, but it is a presence. I am not 'thinking of thinking', but, I-ness. The start point of Suhrawardī is presence. It is not knowledge or a thinking thing. If I state that the nature of my own self is 'thinking of

thinking' I have to prove its existence as Descartes did. *Cogito sum* — 'thinking of thinking' — implies the priority of thinking over existence, while I-ness is a real concrete thing whose existence does not need to be proved. Therefore, Suhrawardī's concept of self has an ontological implication.

Before ending this part of the article one important point should be mentioned. It is obvious that in Avicenna's philosophy — like that of Descartes — you can find an ontological basis for human self. Both Avicenna and Descartes have supposed that they have shown that human self is a real existent entity. All I have shown so far is that the apotheosis of their concepts of self in Kant's philosophy leads us to conclude that their concepts of human self as thinking of thinking does not evidently imply that this entity — self — is a real existent thing. It is also obvious that Suhrawardī could not be aware of the result of Kant's discussion about *cogito*. Suhrawardī — by grounding his concept of self-awareness on the concept of presential knowledge — chose a non-peripatetic way to discuss the issue of human self-awareness. The consequence of choosing this way was clarified when the consequence of peripatetic concept of self was shown as in Kant's discussion of *cogito*; I think does not imply that I exist, so Avicenna's concept of self has no ontological implication. This consequence cannot be derived from Suhrawardī's concept of self since he did not start from the same point as Avicenna; he did not take the ultimate nature of human self as a thinking thing, rather; he took it as presence. For this reason his concept of self has ontological implication whereas that of Avicenna lacks it. This is the fundamental difference between Suhrawardī's concept of self-awareness and that of Avicenna.

Re-reading the Passages of *al-Ta'liqāt* and *al-Mubāḥathāt*

We need now to consider some passages of Avicenna's al-Ta'liqāt and al-Mubāḥathāt which, based on the accepted view, have a central role outlining how his latest concept of self-awareness —

like Suhrawardī — is based on the concept of presential knowledge. I shall examine these passages in order to argue that Avicenna does not allude to presential knowledge and that my reading of the nature of his concept of self-awareness and his concept of self are coherent.

In some passages, Avicenna has stated that there is no split between subject and object in the case of self-awareness. Some scholars have argued that, when he states that no split exists between subject and object he denotes a concept of presential knowledge (Kobayahsi 1990, 66; Marcotte 2004, 5). There is a passage in *al-Ta'liqāt* which expresses this idea clearly. Avicenna writes: “If I perceive my own self, you should know that truly I am the perceived; the perceiver (subject) and the perceived (object) are the same.” (Avicenna 1990, 79) Avicenna — by talking about the unity between the perceiver (subject) and the perceived (object) — does not propose a concept of presential knowledge, but — based on what I have already mentioned — he denotes a thinking thing which thinks of itself. He writes in a truly peripatetic manner. In order to understand his view, one can compare the above passage with a passage from *De Anima* by Aristotle. Aristotle writes: “For where the objects are immaterial that which thinks and that which is thought are identical.” (Aristotle 1907, 430a; Black 2008, 63) Avicenna’s view of sameness of subject and object is completely similar to that of Aristotle. He — by sameness of the subject and the object — does not allude to presential knowledge. If Avicenna — in that passage — denotes a concept of presential knowledge one would have to accept that, Aristotle by the above passage also alludes to a concept of presential knowledge, as well.

The other passage which has been used to indicate that Avicenna has denoted the concept of presential knowledge can be found in his *al-Mubāḥathāt*. In that book, he notes that our intellect does not always rationalize its essence but our soul has an unceasing awareness of itself (*wa laysa ‘aqlunā ya ‘qulu dhātihi dāiman bal nafsunā daimatan al-shuūr biwujūdhā*) (Avicenna 1992, §550,

185). In this passage, Avicenna makes a distinction between two kinds of awareness; the first one — ‘rationalizing the essence by intellect’ — is discontinuous and the second one — ‘awareness of itself’ (*al-shuūr biwujūdiha*) — is continuous. It has been stated that by ‘awareness of itself’ Avicenna amounts to the presence of essence for itself and this could be seen to be a concept of presential knowledge while by the former term — ‘rationalizing the essence by intellect’ — he amounts to the ability of rational soul for reflecting upon its own essence (Marcotte 2004, 2). I would argue that this is not a sound interpretation of this passage. By this distinction, as I will show, Avicenna does not allude to presential knowledge. In fact, in this passage, Avicenna denotes the difference between self-awareness and the awareness of self-awareness (*shu‘ūr bi-al-shu‘ūr*) (Avicenna 1992, §550, 185; Avicenna 1990, 82). By means of the term ‘awareness of self-awareness’, he denotes our conscious attention to our self-awareness.⁴ It is very important to distinguish self-awareness from our conscious attention to the self-awareness. Sometimes we might lose conscious attention to our self-awareness, but self-awareness itself is unceasing. As shown, in Avicenna’s philosophy any human being has continuous self-awareness. We cannot take the ‘rationalizing the essence by intellect’ as a kind of self-awareness, because this is not continuous. If we take both ‘rationalizing the essence by intellect’ and ‘awareness of itself’ as self-awareness, then they must be continuous, but one of them is not continuous, and it cannot be taken as self-awareness. So, for Avicenna, there are not two kinds of self-awareness. Therefore, we cannot state that in this passage, Avicenna proposes another kind of self-awareness which could be interpreted as presential knowledge. There are two concepts here: Avicenna’s concept of self-awareness, and the concept of awareness of self-awareness. This is the conscious awareness of our selves which might be lost whenever we lack conscious awareness to our own selves. For example, during sleep or general anaesthesia we have not conscious attention to our selves. However, it should be noted that, as Avicenna states, the self-awareness (*al-shuūr biwujūdihā*) cannot be stopped even in sleep or anaesthesia. Self-

awareness, for Avicenna, is essential to the soul, and it is direct and unconditioned. In fact, as long as a soul exists the soul's awareness of itself cannot be stopped. Hence the ability of rational soul for reflecting upon its own essence can be interpreted as the awareness of self-awareness which is not continual and is based on the self-awareness. Considering what Avicenna says about this issue in *al-Ta'liqāt* is useful. He states that the awareness of self-awareness is in potentiality (*bi al-quwwah*), that is, sometimes it occurs and sometimes not (Avicenna 1990, 82). It corresponds to his statements about the ability of a rational soul for reflecting upon its own essence (*wa laysa 'aqlunā ya 'qulu dhātihi dāiman*).

Some scholars notes that in a part of *al-Ta'liqāt*, Avicenna uses the term of presence (*ḥuḍūr*). He writes: "The self (*dhāt*) is present (*ḥāḍirah*) to its self in any state and there is no oblivion (*dhuhūl*) of its self." (Avicenna 1990,148) Those scholars have argued that this passage could be used to suggest that Avicenna's concept of self-awareness is on the basis of concept of presence. However, Avicenna's concept of presence in this passage differs from Suhrawardī's concept of presence, because in another line of that passage Avicenna explains clearly what he means by this concept of presence. He writes: "The existence (*wujūd*) of it (the self) is none other than its apprehension (*idrāk*) of its self." (Avicenna 1990, 148) This phrase explicitly alludes to the nature of the self as 'thinking of thinking.'

Conclusion

Suhrawardī *has* criticized the peripatetic notion of self-awareness in the *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq*. He writes that his view is totally different from peripatetic notion. He states: "Were the fact that a thing is free from prime matter and barriers sufficient to make it aware of itself, as the opinion of the Peripatetics, then that prime matter whose existence they assert would also be aware of itself." (Suhrawardī 2001-2009, 2:115; Suhrawardī 1999, 82) The peripatetic philosophers believe that the immateriality of the intellect is

sufficient to make it aware of itself. By proposing this counterexample Suhrawardī shows that the peripatetic attitude cannot explain the issue of self-awareness. In fact, based on his view, an entity cannot be aware of itself merely because it is a thinking thing (intellect) which is free from matter. The problem of self-awareness requires the other solution, i.e. the concept of presential knowledge.

Finally, in the third chapter (*mawrid*) of *al-Talwīḥāt* (*Intimations*), **Suhrawardī** mentions that he has derived the concept of presential knowledge (*al-‘ilm al-ḥuḍūrī al-ittiṣali al-shuhūdi*) not from his antecedent peripatetic philosophers, but from the mystics like, Abū yazīd al-Bastāmī, and Sahl ibn‘Abd Allah al-Tastarī (Suhrawardī 2001-2009, 2:74).

Thus, Suhrawardī’s concept of self-awareness is radically different from Avicenna’s one, because at the core of Suhrawardī’s concept of self-awareness is presential knowledge which could not be found in Avicenna’s works. In fact, by introducing the concept of presential knowledge Suhrawardī made a paradigmatic shift in the stream of Islamic philosophy and caused the dominance of a mystical view over the Greek-peripatetic view which finally found its apotheosis in Mullā Sadrā’s philosophy.

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Endnotes

¹ Deborah L. Black and Jari Kaukua have named it as primitive self-awareness, Haruo Kobayashi has named it as Self-consciousness (capital letter S), and Mehdi Aminrazavi has dubbed it as “consciousness in itself”. Muehlethaler has named it as self-awareness, but she thinks that using this term for Avicenna’s philosophy is problematic. She writes: “This term self-awareness customarily used to render is problematic, because it can be understood in terms of the modern concept of the consciousness...Such an understanding runs contrary to Avicenna’s usage. He uses the term to denote the awareness of the self of itself. This self-awareness pertains to the self insofar as it is an immaterial substance.” See Muehlethaler, “Ibn Kammūna (d.683/1284) On The Argument of The Flying Man In Avicenna’s *Ishārāt* and Al-Suhrawardī’s *Talwīḥāt*,” footnote 6, 181.

In contrast to Muehlethaler, I think using of the term self-awareness to denote Avicenna’s concept of self’s awareness of itself is proper as there is a philosophical resemblance between Avicenna’s theory of Flying person and Descartes’ *cogito* on the basis of which the modern concept of consciousness has emerged.

² Hasse has shown that at least six medieval philosophers were influenced by Avicenna’s Flying Person. See Dag Nikolaus Hasse, *Avicenna’s De anima in the Latin west*, (London- Turin: The Warburg Institute- Nino

Aragno Editore, 2000), 81.

³This interpretation of the selfhood and Presential knowledge could be supported by Ghulām-Hussayn Dīnāni's view of selfhood in Suhrawardī's philosophy. See *Kitāb-e Māh-e Falsafeh* 2, no.10 (2009), 113-115.

⁴ Haruo Kobayashi has called it as self-consciousness (small letter s), Mehdi Aminrazavi has named it as "consciousness through consciousness". Jari Kaukoa has dubbed it as "reflexive self-awareness"; see Kaukoa, *Avicenna on Subjectivity: A Philosophical Study*, 118.

An Introduction on Mulla Sadra's Interpretation of Platonic Ideas

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Abstract

The theory of Platonic Ideas has an extensive role in the history of Islamic philosophy. Mulla Sadra,(1571-1640) as a Muslim and Iranian philosopher and the owner of Islamic Transcendent Wisdom by using mystical and Illuminative approaches, and some verses of the Quran gives more acceptable and complete interpretation of it. He, first, criticizes some interpretations of Platonic Ideas in previous Islamic philosopher's viewpoints, like Farabi, Ibn Sina, Suhrawardi and Mir Damad, and then tries to demonstrate and explain its virtues by utilizing of four ontological, epistemological, mystical and religious approaches. From ontological approach, is indicated that is needed to subtle things to guarantee the unity, fixity and end of trans-substantial motion in the material existents. Mulla Sadra, from epistemological aspect, argues that in intellectual perception, human's soul observes ideal and abstracted samples of corporeal things which are very Platonic Ideas. He, in mystical one, considers Platonic Ideas as Divine Attributes and Archetypes, finally in religious approach relies on some verses of the Quran in which the origin of the corporeal things are taken into in the abstracted and heavenly universe. Mulla Sadra, in all these approaches, like Plato, considers some relations between Ideas and corporeal

existence. Some examples of ontological relations, such as causality, and epistemological ones like imitation and enjoyment by material things of ideas are very important. Mulla Sadra's struggle to give more accurate explanation of Platonic Ideas is led to taking into the World of Analogies or Forms which is an intermediate between corporeal and intellectual universe.

In this paper, with considering some basic aspects of Platonic Ideas, is tried to study the way of Mulla Sadra's interpretation of it, the measure of Platonic effects on Mulla Sadra, and some philosophical, religious and practical results of Mulla Sadra's interpretation of Ideas.

Keywords: Plato, Mulla Sadra, Ideas, Participation, Imitation, Immateriality, Universality, Constancy

1. Introduction

Before analyzing aspects and virtues of Mulla Sadra's interpretation of platonic Ideas, at first, it should be necessary to review about how was the relations between Greek and Islamic philosophy, in order to clarify the quality and quantity of effects of Greek philosophy on Islamic one. In fact, fulfilling this helps us for understanding that how was Mulla Sadra under influence of Platonic thought, in particular regarding his theory of Ideas. In this case, there are different points of view among Muslim and western thinkers. Some of western thinkers consider Islamic philosophy as the continuation of Greek philosophy, and deny any kind of innovation and creativity by Muslim philosophers, and believe that Islamic philosophy was ended due to death of Ibn Rushd. Some of them have moderate views and by emphasizing on Greek elements in Islamic philosophy, consider it as authentic philosophy and pay more attention to the role of Muslim philosophers in innovating new philosophical theories and schools. In this case, some factors like historical extension of Plato's thought in the Middle East through Alexandrian, Jewish and Christian philosophers, and their contacts with Islamic nations, and closeness of Plato's illuminative and spiritual thought and Islamic teachings was caused to speak of a

kind of Islamic Platonism among Muslim philosophers which was started from the time of Al-Kindi and Farabi and continued by Suhrawardi, Mulla Sadra and some contemporary philosophers. In reality, among Greek philosophers, not only Plato is as the greatest in effectiveness but is the most important in extension of Greek philosophy in Muslim world in any aspect. Studying of philosophical systems of some Muslim philosophers like Al-Kindi, Farabi, Ibn Sina, Akhvanussafa, Khajeh Nasiruddin Tusi, Suhrawardi, Qutbeddin Shirazi, Mirdamad and Mulla Sadra indicate some aspects of Plato's effects on Muslim philosophers which necessitates rethinking how have Muslim philosophers encountered with Plato's philosophical thought. In this case, there are some questions, like: 1. Do Muslim philosophers follow Plato's philosophy? 2. How and what elements of Plato's philosophy have played role in forming Islamic philosophy? 3. How can be defined the authenticity of Islamic philosophy in regard to Plato's philosophy?

Detailed answers of such questions can't be provided by this research. Due to prominent place of Mulla Sadra in Islamic philosophy as founder of Islamic Transcendent Wisdom, however, it is tried to search replies of mentioned questions by considering totality of his philosophical system. In this case, by rethinking Mulla Sadra's theory of Ideas, is tried to answer these questions: 1. How does Mulla Sadra interpret Platonic Ideas? 2. How does Mulla Sadra's interpretation of Ideas depend on Plato's interpretation, and how is it initiatively? 3. How does Mulla Sadra follow Platonic principles in explaining theory of Ideas? 4. What are similarities and differences between Mulla Sadra and Plato in interpreting theory of Ideas? 5. How does Mulla Sadra accept Plato's Ideas, while Mulla Sadra believes in some Aristotelian philosophical theories? Does Mulla Sadra believe in all epistemological and ontological obligations of Plato's theory of Ideas, or Mulla Sadra while accepting Plato's theory of Ideas, by deviation of some its principles, tries to introduce a new explanation?

For answering some of these questions, by having short debates on Plato's thought related to theory of Ideas, we are going to analyze this theory in Mulla Sadra's thought and works. Fulfilling this, first, we study some foundations, principles and aspects of Mulla Sadra's philosophy which was called as Islamic Transcendent Wisdom, and review his explanation of Ideas theory in four epistemological, ontological, theological and mystical approaches.

2. Aspects of Mulla Sadra's Philosophical Thought

Sadrudin Muhammad Shirazi (1572-1640), known as Mulla Sadra, is one of the greatest Muslim and Iranian philosophers for four recent centuries who succeed to establish the Islamic philosophical school of Transcendent Wisdom. The significant of his philosophical school is almost not known for European thinkers. He by using of philosophical sources, like Peripatetic wisdom, Illuminative wisdom, Islamic mysticism, Islamic theology, the Qur'an and Islamic narrations, and Greek wisdom, founded a new form of philosophical thought in the Islamic world, in particular in Iran which formally and structurally was different from previous schools. This philosophical school by having new abilities, could/can answer most of fundamental philosophical questions of the history of Islamic philosophy, and has succeed to open new horizons for Islamic and contemporary philosophical thought. We can consider some foundations and principles of Mulla Sadra's philosophy which have more roles and important in interpretation of Platonic Ideas. Some of the foundations and principles are as follow: Principality of Existence, Unity and Gradation of Reality of Existence, Trans-Substantial Motion, the Rule of Simple Realty Covers all Perfections of Things, Unity in Plurality and Plurality in Unity. Among mentioned cases, their most significant one is principle of principality of existence, since it constructs the base of whole philosophical system of Mulla Sadra and constitutes all of his philosophical elements. According to principality of existence whatever constitutes the external and objective reality is existence, and it is alone existence that all realities are originated from it, and

Quiddity or essence only is beside existence as creditable conception which has no authenticity for itself. Sadrian principality of existence means that creation, causality, effectiveness and every effect in the world is in the reality of existence, and that every kind of motion, becoming and changing happens in existence, and there is no reality except existence (Mulla Sadra, 1996, P 7-8). Centrality of reality of existence, in Mulla Sadra's philosophy, is led to second principle that is called Gradation of Reality of Existence. This principle explains that the authentic reality of existence has plural levels and stages of intensity and weakness, and perfection and defect. It means all existents have different stages of ontological perfections, so that, some of them have less and some have more perfections. Consequently, the whole system of existents are consisted of hierarchical order of existents included of all beings at the same all of them participate in the reality of existence but their different participation caused that they are placed in different places in the global system, and everyone has its special place according to its proportional ontological perfections (Mulla Sadra, 1996, P 13-14; 1997, P 35-40; 2002, P 129-130). Such interpretation of Mulla Sadra's gradual reality of existence has some more common relations by supposing Plato's Ideas. From this Sadrian principle, also, is concluded the stages and universes of the whole system of existence, that is, the whole system of being has several universes but they are aside and apart from each other, but are in length of each other and have together causal relations. The importance of making causal relations among plural universes, in Mulla Sadra's philosophy, is possibility to make real link between corporeal and intellectual universes and to remove their gaps. Therefore, the whole system of being was not constructed of separated universes but it is constituted of universes that towards each other have several gradual stages, and in effect, are one universe that has different and graded participations of the reality of existence, and such different participation caused them to divide into plural universes (Mulla Sadra, 1984, P 331). Another basic principle of Mulla Sadra's philosophy is the principle of Unity in Plurality, and Plurality in Unity. This principle says that all plurality of the whole

system of being and all apparently plural phenomena, in effect, due to participation of gradual reality of existence have unity, since the origin of all pluralities is the unique reality of existence, at the same time due to existents gradual participation of the reality of existence, it can be possible to pay attention to causal gradation, and by considering their accidental differences, can speak of accidental plurality (Mulla Sadra, 1981, Vol. 9, P 110). The significant of this principle is to explain how it is possible to link unity of Ideas with plurality of corporeal things.

The rule of simple reality encompasses all perfections and indicates that the simple and pure reality of existence has all perfections of other existents in the high level, that is, the simple reality of existence, without being like other existents, has their perfections absolutely. The function of this rule is in explaining of relation among Ideas, and between Platonic One or Absolute Good with corporeal things and Ideas world. Finally, the principle of Trans-substantial Motion, in Mulla Sadra's philosophy, helps him to argue that the totality of the corporeal world in continual flux and mobility and motion from materiality to immateriality which demonstrates the principle of evolutionary process in the reality of existence. The importance of this principle is in demonstrating Platonic Ideas as efficiency and final cause of trans-substantial motion in material beings which was introduced by Mulla Sadra for the first time.

Most of Mulla Sadra's principles that was introduced indicate innovative and authenticity of his philosophy so that links with his interpretation of Platonic Ideas, namely, Mulla Sadra by using of mentioned principles by emphasizing on the believing in Platonic Ideas, has succeeded to give a new explanation of their nature and functions, and relations with corporeal things which is different from Plato's explanation, and to open a new horizon to Platonic Ideas for philosophical thought.

3. Virtues of Platonic Ideas

For better understanding virtues of Platonic Ideas, and that how was Mulla Sadra's interpretation, it is necessary to answer these questions: 1. What were the backgrounds and causes of Platonic Ideas appearance? 2. What are Plato's Ideas roles and functions?

In order to answer the first question, it should be to refer to the history of Greek philosophy before Plato and Socrates in which Heraclitus had emphasized on constant flux and motion in the world and its existents, and denied any kind of fixity. On the other hand, Parmenides had unified existence with fixity, and considered flux and becoming as illusion. So, indicating the reality of fixity or becoming or making a kind of harmony or reconciliation between them, was of the most concerns of Plato and Socrates (Plato, 1971, *Cratylus*, 402a & J. Barrens, 1979, Vol.12, Chap 5-6). They, also, was encountered with a group of Sophists who by confirming realistic function of sense perception in all humans and considering human as the main epistemic criterion, had caused to extend epistemological relativism. In fact, the age of Plato and Socrates was the age of extending epistemic and moral doubts that these two philosophers had tried to remove such crises by introducing new philosophical theories. Consequently, Plato's significant epistemological concern was demonstrating rightfulness of intellectual perception, and finding some universal criterions for the real knowledge, and showing invalidity of sense perception and rejecting any kind of relativism. So, removing epistemological problems was one of the most significant reasons for introducing theory of Ideas that in this case Socrates by giving universal and stable definitions was as the starter of this philosophical movement. It is necessary to, the mentioned notes, be added Plato's efforts for finding universal and stable rules regarding morality, politics and aesthetics. Since, epistemic relativism of sophists, also, challenged such realms and denied any possibility of getting moral, political and aesthetic universal criterions. Therefore, Plato had needed to universal and stable criterions not only for humans perceptions but for moral, political and aesthetic affaires, in order to speak of them

as global and infallible rules (Plato, 1971: Pheado, 78). So, Platonic theory of Ideas was as a moral, epistemological and ontological effort for establishing stable foundation in the whole of human's life.

Plato, in order to produce suitable solutions for mentioned problems, first emphasized on possibility of acquiring the certain knowledge, that is, it is attainable, and that such knowledge can't be sense perception, since it shows only the phenomenon and appearances of things and is subjected to changing. So, it is only intellectual knowledge that both has stability and universality and shows the reality and origin of things which are Ideas (Plato, 1971, Theatetus, 152). In the other word, it must the objects of certain knowledge be universal, objective, stable and immaterial affairs that is called as Ideas by Plato. Such Ideas in Platonic view have epistemological, ontological, political, moral and aesthetic virtues. The most important epistemological virtue of Ideas is that they are objective referent and the origin of universals and conceptions that we comprehend, that is, universal and conceptions which exist in our minds have the objective origin and referent in Ideas world and can be understood only by intellectual perception or intuition. These Ideas are rational and abstracted things and in the contrary to material things are not subjected to any kind of changing and annihilation, while corporeal things and their sense perception are subjected to changing and becoming. So, for Plato from epistemological approach, believing in Ideas is led to demonstrating the real knowledge and its certain object, namely Ideas, and that such knowledge is suitable to be named as certain and real knowledge (Copleston, 1993, Vol.1, P 175-180).

Ontological virtue of Platonic Ideas is in regard to corporeal and material universe, that is, since Ideas are the origin and referent of corporeal things, Plato considers two kinds of relations, included of imitation and participation, between Ideas and corporeal things, that is, particular things are Ideas' pictures and imitates, and Ideas are their origin and high sample. Here, relations between material

things and Ideas can be ontological participation and epistemological imitation, namely, Ideas are formal and paradigmatic causes which Demiurge builds material things according to them, and that participation of material things by Ideas indicates causal role which is played by Ideas (Copleston, 1993, Vol.1, P 181-183). In the other word, participation means that every natural thing participates of its Idea and form, and due to that participation is similar to its Idea, for example, a brave existence participate of bravery Idea, and a beautiful being of beauty Idea, and a just being of justice Idea (See: Plato, 1971, Parmenides, 132). Similarity or imitation means that Ideas are some patterns that corporeal things are made according to them. In this case, Plato has two different explanations: in the first one, says Ideas are as premade samples and patterns which material things are build according to them; and in second one, says Ideas as very origins and truths that natural things are as their shadows and pictures, meanwhile there are some causal relations between Ideas and natural things, in which Ideas as origins and causes are stable and unchangeable realities, and natural things are as their effects and shadows. He says beauty of everything is effect of the Idea of beauty (Plato, 1971, Parmenides, 100-101).

Moral, political and aesthetic aspects of Ideas are related to affaires that we concern in everyday life. Concepts like justice, beauty, goodness and love are of concepts that according to Plato have their proper Ideas. Hence, we have universal and stable knowledge of them. In fact, in Plato's thought, existence of some beautiful and good things that have some plural virtues, and the possibility to think about beauty, justice, love and goodness itself without their reference to external things is indicated to their origin which is called Ideas. In the Symposium, Socrates' explanation of Ideas is that from beautiful forms a man ascends to the contemplation of the beauty that is in souls, and thence to science, that he may look upon the loveliness of wisdom, and turn towards the "wide ocean of beauty" and the "lovely and majestic forms which it contains," until he reaches the contemplation of a Beauty that is "eternal,

unproduced, indestructible; neither subject to increase nor decay; not partly beautiful and partly ugly,... but it is eternally self-subsistent and monoacidic with itself. All other things are beautiful through a participation of it, with this condition, that although they are subject to production and decay, it never becomes more or less, or endures any change." This is the divine and pure, the monoacidic beautiful itself (Plato. 1971, Symposium, 209-210).

Plato, also, believes in causal relation and participation between Ideas world which is led to speak of the Idea of One or Good that is the cause of other Ideas (Copleston, 1993, Vol. 1, P 175-178). Plato's different words indicates that he considered Ideas separated from the Idea of One, since he maintains that Demiurge as the Maker God of the universe made this world according to patterns of Ideas, although there are some words of Plato considers Ideas as God's thoughts and within Him (Plato, 1971, Philbus, 22). By paying attention to this fact that Plato takes into account the Idea of One as the origin of the whole system of being, it seems Ideas and Demiurge as the Maker God are not existents out of One and Good, but are within His as His knowledge (Plato, 1971, Thimaus, 29-39). In addition, Plato has psychological approach to Ideas, that is, his belief in eternity of the soul and that it had knowledge of intellectual realities in the previous world, is led to consider a kind of relation between soul and Ideas. In fact, in Plato's thought, rational part of soul which is eternal thing has related to rational realities of Ideas world and participated of them, while soul's unifying with body as its falling to the material universe is led to temporally ignoring previous realities which can be revived by rational struggling. Plato calls this virtue of soul as Remembrance (Plato, 1971, Timaeus, 69-70; Republic, 444).

So, most of Plato's explanations about virtues and functions of Ideas world, in sum, is indicated that he by demonstrating existence of Idea wants to remove epistemological problem of relativism and to find a universal criterion for rational and certain knowledge, and also, tries to give rational explanation for relation between corporeal

and Ideas world, and introduce universal rules for moral, aesthetic and political affairs in order to avoid of relativism of understanding and practical misuses of Sophists.

Plato's explanation of Ideas and the causes of their projecting have not have unique responses in the Islamic world. Some of Peripatetic philosophers, like Ibn Sina, have denied it, and some Illuminationists, like Suhrawardi and followers of Transcendent Wisdom, such as Mulla Sadra, have accepted and tried to give some new explanations and functions for them which is not the same as Plato.

4. The Place of Platonic Ideas in Mulla Sadra's Philosophy

Mulla Sadra's confronting to Plato's Ideas has significance for this respect that opens new horizons for understanding their nature and functions. Mulla Sadra, due to surrounding to viewpoints of former Greek and Muslim philosophers, pays attention to them for accepting or rejecting their points of views about Ideas. Meanwhile, Mulla Sadra's approaching to accepting Ideas and their functions is not the same as Plato, since two principles of Principality of existence and Gradual Unity of existence make possible for him to give new and more efficacy interpretation of Ideas. In fact platonic theory of ideas is originally acceptable for Mulla Sadra and he demonstrates their existence and functions in different ways, but his principality of existence and gradation of stages of existence allow him to introduce ontological explanation of Platonic Ideas.

4.1. Definitions of Platonic Ideas in Mulla Sadra's Thought

Mulla Sadra, in his works such as *Asfar Arba'a*, *Shavahedul Rubobiyah* and *Mafatihulghayb* introduces some and similar definitions of Ideas like Plato. In his thought, for every kind of corporeal things, there is a kind of rational existence which is immaterial and perfect and the origin of material things, and that corporeal things are as effects, manifestations and works of that

rational Idea, and this idea because of its absolute perfections does not need to space and matter (Mulla Sadra, 1996, P 248; 1981, Vol. 2, 54-57). Mulla Sadra by giving such definition of Platonic Ideas provides backgrounds of defending them by phrases like this: it is a fact that Plato's thought and former prominent sages' doctrines about existence of Ideas as origins of corporeal things is right and there is no acceptable objections against them. We have demonstrated and actualized doctrines of Plato and his prominent masters so that there are no complains that can reject them (Mulla Sadra, 1981, Vol. 1, P 307). Such word of Mulla Sadra and his definition of Platonic Ideas is indicated his believing in and trying to philosophical arguing them.

4.2. Criticizing Former Muslim Philosophers' Thought

Mulla Sadra's positive tendency to Platonic Ideas stood him to criticize unreal understandings of Ideas. In this case, he, first by citing Plato's motive of introducing Ideas, explains viewpoints of previous Muslim philosophers, and then criticizes their misunderstanding or defective comprehending. His viewpoints are explained more detail in some of his books like *Asfar Arba'a*, *Shavahedul Rubobiyah*, *Mafatihulghayb*, *Asrarul Ayat* and *Tafsirul Quranul Karim*. Mulla Sadra maintains that Plato following of Socrates has said that there are for any kind of corporeal things a kind of incorporeal and rational form or Idea in the divine world which are called as Divine Ideas and are no perishable (Mulla Sadra, 1996, P 238; 1981, Vol.2, P 47). He, then, by rejecting Farabi and Ibn Sina's viewpoints, pays attention to Suhrawardi's explanation and says that according to his point of view Platonic Ideas as Latitudinal Intellects are very intellectual lights that is no causal relation among them, but all of them are besides each other and have the same ontological stages, and also are placed in the last level of intellectual universe so that all corporeal and heavenly things are originated from them (Mulla Sadra, 1996, P 241; 1981, Vol. 2, P 48-48). Mulla Sadra rejects Ibn Sina's view point about Platonic Ideas since Ibn Sina considers them as abstracted nature or

Quiddity or natural universal, and also does not accept Farabi's explanation, because he maintains Ideas are as divine knowledge. Mulla Sadra argues that their viewpoints are the result of their misunderstanding of Ideas (Mulla Sadra, 1981, Vol. 2, P 48-49; 1996, P 240-241). Ibn Sina's reason for rejecting Platonic Ideas is that it is impossible to accept that a unit nature and quiddity has some material and some immaterial separated referents (Ibn Sina, 1997, p 319-320). In his view, Platonic Ideas are very natural universal or in Aristotle's words universal conceptions that their concrete and external being are in particular and external things.

Mulla Sadra confirms Suhravardi's acceptance of Platonic Ideas, since Suhravardi pays attention to ontological functions of Ideas. He considers a chain of Latitudinal Intellects that are in the same ontological level and under Longitudinal intellects and Lights which are called as Masters of Species. In Suhravardi's thought they are intellectual and simple existents that are the origins of earthy beings, and manage and preserve corporeal things (Suhravardi, 1993, Vol. 1, P 68; Vol. 2, P 92). Mulla Sadra argues that Suhravardi's explanation of the place and functions of Ideas is defect, since although he introduced a kind of good explanation of ideas place and their relations to each other, it is not clear how is the relations of corporeal things with ideas as their origins, and that by considering Suhravari's believing in principality of quiddity and impossibility of gradation in it, how is it possible to justify unity of a thing and its idea, meantime gradation in Latitudinal Intellects is only compatible with principality of existence not quiddity (Mulla Sadra, 1996, P 243). He, then, by other philosophers' explanations of Ideas, like Mir Damad and Mohaqeq Davani, tries to argue existence of Ideas and their functions through applying different ontological, epistemological, religious and mystical approaches.

4.3. Ontological Approach to Ideas

In ontological approach, Mulla Sadra demonstrates both the existence of Ideas and their relations and functions as abstracted and

rational universe to corporeal world. Here, his method for proving existence of Ideas is to use theory of Trans-Substantial Motion in the material world which its innovator is himself. According to this theory the reality of trans-substantial motion in the nature which is in continually flux and mobility in all substances of material things, needs to a cause that must be immaterial, stable and unchangeable existence which produces motion in the essence of nature and preserves it. This being is called Platonic Ideas by Mulla Sadra. In fact the reality of the natural world is constituted of two substances, including of rational and material ones that there are a kind of ontological and spiritual relation between them. Hence, the essence and acts of the corporeal things are originated from rational Ideas while Ideas are abstracted and without material qualities (Mulla Sadra, 1996, P 244-245).

The significance of this argument is to demonstrating existence of Platonic Ideas through referring to trans-substantial motion, namely, acceptance of the principle of trans-substantial motion is led to accepting some abstracted and rational causes as Ideas which they both bestows trans-substantial motion to the nature and have a kind of ontological unity with it that shows their similarity. This fact by paying attention to Mulla Sadra's believing in principality of existence and ontological gradation, makes possible for him, in contrary to Plato, to remove the gap between corporeal and rational universes. In fact, Mulla Sadra does not accept division of real universe into corporeal and rational separated universes, but according to his principality and gradation of reality of existence, considers corporeal and rational universes as two different stages of unit reality, and argues that their differences are in measure of their intensity and participation of reality of existence. So, Ideas world are not only the real cause of material world but also the relation between them is as real causality between cause and effect in which the effect has no reality and independence except needing to its cause (Mulla Sadra, 1981, Vol. 2, P 127-129). Therefore, corporeal things are really in need of rational existents, and there is no independency for, and real separation between them in order to

make a kind of imitation for them. Such viewpoint, does not accept Platonic theory of creation through Ideas, since in Mulla Sadra's conception the creation is from non-existence not previous matter that Demiurge can shape them according to Ideas samples.

In short, Mulla Sadra, like Plato, is encountered to the problem of making a kind of rational relation between stable and changeable things, while Plato by supposing Ideas world, separates these two worlds but Mulla Sadra considers them as two different stages of one and unit reality of existence which has different perfectional levels. Consequently in Mulla Sadra's ontological explanation the relation between corporeal and Ideas worlds is like the relation of two different stages of unit reality which have different degrees, and the identity of corporeal world is being as effect of Ideas world not being as separated and independent one, namely, corporeal world is a weaker stage of Ideas world. In Plato's ontological system, also, corporeal world is introduced as the world seems has no reality and is like a shadow, but in Mulla Sadra's theory, corporeal world has reality but its reality is lower level of the reality of Ideas world, since both two worlds are placed in gradual chain of existence.

4.3.1. Applying of the Rule of Pre-eminent Possibility

Mulla Sadra uses the rule of Pre-eminent Possibility for ontological demonstrating and explanation of Ideas. This rule was firstly used by Suhrawardi for arguing the existence of Ideas. The rule of Pre-eminent explains that whenever the lower contingent is brought about, it is necessary that the eminent contingent, which its stage is higher than the former, is brought about in advance. It is possible to say, by utilizing of this rule, that for whatever kind of corporeal existents, there, according to them, are rational existents in the Ideas world, so that the later ones are more eminent than the former (Mulla Sadra, 1996, P 259). Mulla Sadra by using of such rule, which has some similarities to his theory of gradual stages of existence, tries to arrange all corporeal and rational existents based on their lower or higher positions, according to this, Platonic Ideas

are placed in the high level and universe because of their ontological noble stage, and causal relation to material things. Hence, he, for example, recognizes three kinds of human including of corporeal, mental and rational human. The first human is very material and sensible human with his/her perishable corporeal faculties and organs. The mental one is a human having some corporeal and incorporeal virtues, while third one, rational human, is the real Idea of corporeal and mental human, and the origin of all his/her perfections. In Mulla Sadra's viewpoint, rational human has some sensual faculties like corporeal and mental human but in the high level (Mulla Sadra, 1981, Vol. 7, P 244).

By considering of ontological nobility of Ideas towards corporeal things, Mulla Sadra don't accept Ideas as formal causes and samples of corporeal things that they are made according to that high forms, but believes that Ideas are as superior existents that share in necessitation of existence of all corporeal things. He says that we shouldn't think that applying of the term Ideas to rational forms, that the aim of Platonic sages who believed in Ideas, was to consider them as formal causes or samples for lower things. In fact, Mulla Sadra contrary to Plato, does not consider Ideas as formal causes, but based on his ontological principles and the rule of Pre-eminent contingency, maintains that corporeal things are the lower stages of Ideas and rational existents, and that they are as map and perfect paradigm, ontological cause, manager and origin of material existents (Mulla Sadra, 1996, P 251-252).

In the other word, Mulla Sadra makes a kind of real causal relation between corporeal and Ideas world, and maintains that corporeal things are as manifestation of Ideas, and Ideas as their essences. He believes in such relation between all things in the corporeal and Ideas world, and concerning the earth says that this sensible and circular earth with its length and width is as a picture and sample for that rational earth which exists in Ideas world so that its level is lower that Platonic Ideas. He, also, thinks that there is a kind of similarity between structural system of Ideas and corporeal world,

that is, whatever beauty, perfection or faculty that can be found in material world, it is a weakness picture and shadow of that of Ideas world. So, the relation among Ideas is similar to natural things to each other, and that, all virtues of natural world are as shadows and pictures of rational and Ideas world (Mulla Sadra, 1996, P 252-250).

In addition, Mulla Sadra tries to explain the relation of Ideas to its individuals. In his view there are four ontological and necessitated worlds which have causal and linear relation to each other. They are consisted of divinely, rationally, Imaginary and natural stages and worlds, so that, every stage and world toward its higher one is as effect, and to its lower one is as cause, and each higher stage is as reality and origin of the lower one. Base on this, in Mulla Sadra's view, Platonic Ideas are placed in the rational world, hence they are as the reality and origin of Imaginary and natural universes (Mulla Sadra, 1984, P 447). Mulla Sadra, also, maintains to quidditive and essential unity between Ideas and their individuals, that is, Ideas and their natural individuals have the same species in essence. Therefore, all things of one natural species have only one Idea, and there is no difference between that Idea and its natural species except that Idea because of its abstraction does not need to matter but natural individuals, because of their defects need to matter (Mulla Sadra, 1984, P 224).

In short, Mulla Sadra's tendency to ontological principality and gradual unity makes possible to consider the whole system of being in its totality in which corporeal and Ideas world are only two different stages of such ontological system that their various ontological perfections is led to their different places, nobility, causality and principality so far as recognizing universal virtues of material world can help human to access to recognition of rational world and Ideas.

4.4. Epistemological Approach to Ideas

Mulla Sadra's epistemological approach to Platonic Ideas also demonstrates their existence and clarifies their epistemological functions. In this case, he argues existence of Ideas through reviewing of the nature of perception. He maintains that we have several conceptions concerning to existents, for example, we witness to external and mental human that the latter has universality. Hence, there are some universal conceptions, like human and tree, that does not exist in external world, then it must be they have real referent and origination, since human's soul is only not the originator of such concepts, and that because of Mulla Sadra's realism they can't be without referent. Therefore, these universal concepts have real and origin that is called Platonic Ideas, and human's soul is able to observe and reflect on them. In Mulla Sadra's words, all forms from everything which is pictured on human's soul indeed is a kind of sensual quality that helps soul in order to be able and prepare to observe and examine rational and universal realities which is called Ideas, and that this acquired sensual conception represents and indicates existence of Ideas (Mulla Sadra, 1996, P 246-247). In fact, Mulla Sadra wants to show that universal concepts that are perceived by rational perceptions are not made by mere imaginary faculty, but their concrete referent enables human's soul to form concepts like them.

The significance of this demonstration is its similarity to Plato's discursive method for existence of Ideas, that is, both Plato and Mulla Sadra proof existence of Ideas by using of universal concepts and indicating their referent, and that real knowledge is applied to such concepts because of their universality and stability. So, the goal of knowledge is to getting to rational recognizing of Ideal and spiritual realities. Mulla Sadra and Plato's different, however, is in that Plato believes in remembering of those realities that human's soul ignored after its creation and unifying with the body, namely, for Plato the process of knowledge is to remember Ideas that soul had forgotten and that soul is old and had known such Ideas in its

previous existence, but Mulla Sadra by rejecting previous knowledge of soul to Ideas, and confirming Aristotelian theory of perception, based on that human perception is started from sense perception, and travels imaginary and rational stages, maintains that soul's trans-substantial motion is led its spiritual evolution and decreasing of its material virtues and increasing abstracted ones which this enables soul to create universal conceptions according to realities of Ideas. So, for Mulla Sadra, knowledge is established in this world by soul substantial motion not by remembering preexistence ideas (Mulla Sadra, 1999, Vol.8, P 330-338).

So, in both Plato and Mulla Sadra's viewpoints, the final goal of knowledge is getting to universal concepts that their referent are Platonic Ideas, namely both the philosophers concern to universal, stable, global and rational knowledge which the origin of such knowledge is Ideas world. Based on this, Plato considers the process of knowledge as trying to remembering forgotten Ideas, but Mulla Sadra, because of his belief to corporeal creation of the soul, maintains that the process of knowledge is soul's trans-substantial motion from sense perception to rational and intuitive one, and from materiality to abstraction, in order to enable to observe spiritual realities like Ideas, meanwhile both they confirm on practice, pedagogy and purification of soul for traveling to Ideas.

4-5. Religious Approach to Platonic Ideas

Mulla Sadra tries to find some confirmations for Platonic Ideas from religious and theological point of views. In fact, Mulla Sadra's religious approach to Ideas is led him to interpret some verses of the Holy Quran. In this case, it can be found some notes in some of his works like: *Asfarul Arba'a*, *Mafatihul Ghayb* and *Asrarul Ayat*. The main point of religious approach is to explain the fact that some religious texts, such as the Quran indicate that there are some rational existents that govern the corporeal world by permission of God (Mulla Sadra, 1984, P 455). We can, for example, see some verses of the Quran that Mulla Sadra links them with Ideas. In this

case, he says the verse: "when i have shaped him and ran my created soul in him" (Quran, 15:29), considers the soul as Idea and lord of the species of human which eminently has the whole reality and virtues of human (Mulla Sadra, 1999, Vol.9, P 329). And concerning the verse: "that which you have is transitory, but that which is with Allah endures"(Quran, 16:96), he says God's purpose of "what is with Allah endures", is very Platonic Ideas and lord of the species which remain in divine knowledge since His knowledge is stable and unchangeable (Mulla Sadra, 1980, P 64). He, also, regarding the verse: "he taught Adam (father of humans) the names" (Quran, 2:31), believes that the real meaning of Names in this verse is very Platonic divine Ideas which God taught to Adam so that he can has the reality of all kinds and species of all natures (Mulla Sadra, 1980, Vol.2, P 363). He, also, by paying attention to some prophetic narrations, maintains that rational and spiritual realities are were declined and descended from their original place in order to be understandable by our human's reason. The Prophet of Islam, for example, narrates that there are seventeen thousands lights and darkness for God that if they are clarified portrays of divine lights will burn the whole system of being (Mulla Sadra, 1985, Vol. 2, P 111). In short, in Mulla Sadra's viewpoint, Islamic religious texts, also, confirm that realities of being are in gradual and plural stages, and that we as humans, at first, are encountered with its primary levels in this world.

4.6. Mystical Approach to Ideas

Mystical approach to Platonic Ideas is under influence of viewpoints of some Muslim mystics about the Immutable Archetypes (A'ayane Sabeteh). In fact, some similarities between Islamic mystical explanations of the Immutable Archetypes and Platonic Ideas is caused Mulla Sadra makes such relation. He, in this case, says that divine abstracted forms which are nearby God don't aware of their essences, and nobody knows them but God. The reason for this, for Plato and Stoic sages is that such divine forms have no intention to their lightness essences, and are annihilated to

God due to their servitude to God, and remained due to divine remaining meanwhile their actualization are attached to God's existence (Mulla Sadra, 1984, P 436). In fact, Mulla Sadra, so far as Platonic Ideas are like rational and pure realities, tries to argue that Ideas are the same as divine forms which have functions like mystical Archetypes.

Hence, Mulla Sadra by believing in that Platonic Ideas are very divine forms of God's essence, says that Platonic Ideas are very divine attributes and sciences that are subjected to His existence while divine exaltation is due to His essence not divine Ideas. Therefore, these divine Ideas are not independent and separated beings apart from God, but their reality and existence are nothing without God (Mulla Sadra, 1980, Vol.5, P 216). Mulla Sadra, in his book *Mafatihul Ghayb*, confirms this virtues of divine Ideas by saying that they are not a part of the world and besides God, but they are eternal divine words and sciences which are not finished, as God says if the sea is become the pen for writing all my words, it is ended before ending of My words (Mulla Sadra, 1998, Vol.1, P 1). These words of Mulla Sadra meantime confirming Farabi's viewpoints concerning considering Platonic Ideas as divine forms, indicates the ambiguity that is in both Plato and Mulla Sadra's point of views regarding the place of Ideas. Since if Ideas are considered as divine forms of God and like mystical Archetypes, it means that Ideas like God have necessary by essence and out of contingency realm, but if they are considered out of God's essence and knowledge, they will be part of possible by essence beings and creatures which can have their own world, and as formal or agent causes of corporeal things play roles. In the other word, Mulla Sadra, meanwhile believes in Platonic Ideas as lightness, pure and independent and abstracted existents, but has no clear viewpoint concerning that they are contingent beings or necessary by essence. In fact, he confirms both mentioned viewpoints, from one hand, he says since Ideas are contingent beings and out of God's essence, then they are God's creatures and his effects, and God is their cause, from the other hand, he maintains that Platonic Ideas are not

separated from God but their existence are attached to are sustained through him (Mulla Sadra, 1980, Vol.5, P 216; 1984, P 436). Hence, it can be possible to consider Ideas as divine forms or divine knowledge (Mulla Sadra, 1981, vol. 5, P 205). In sum, it seems that he maintains to Platonic Ideas out of divine world and essence and a part of contingent world (Mulla Sadra, 1981, Vol. 2, P 46; Vol. 5, P 191; 1984, P 424). In addition, in mystical approach, Mulla Sadra emphasizes on purification of the soul for understanding the reality of Platonic Ideas. He believes that the only way to reach to divine Ideas is direct intuition, and their only direct intuition is purification of material vices. Since, divine Ideas are very simple and pure realities that can be observed by internal purifying (Mulla Sadra, 1981, Vol. 2, P 62-77). He believes that in order to understand that the world has plural stages it is necessary to comprehend divine mysteries, since by this is possible to know that all perfections and faculties which are in the world are as shadows and samples of real and rational world. Based on this, Mulla Sadra says why don't you think that the effects of divine lights have been manifested in the world and descended from rational and spiritual stages and cleared in the form of particulars, and due to composition to corporeal darkness have been weakened? But you see, how they have astonished wise people and sages (Mulla Sadra, 1981, Vol. 2, P 78). In fact, Mulla Sadra's words is meant that comprehending of rational realities is possible for human having some corporeal virtues so far as these realities were descended from Ideas world in order that human can understand them. In the other word, God has installed a kind of similarity and symmetry between corporeal and rational beings in order to be understandable rational and spiritual realities by human (Mulla Sadra, 1981, Vol. 2, P 81).

5. Conclusion

It is clear that Mulla Sadra was influenced by Plato in his theory of Ideas and the whole system of Platonic thought. This fact links mostly their mystical and intuitive approaches, so far as in some cases, Mulla Sadra calls Plato as Divine Sage. So, the Platonic

Theory of Ideas is accepted by Mulla Sadra, but there are some differences between them in foundations of accepting this theory, its proofs and functions. In fact Mulla Sadra inherited long philosophical and mystical tradition of Islamic and Greek philosophy, including Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Ibn Sina, Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi, and in particular the Quranic teachings. In this case, mystical teachings of the Quran and thoughts of Ibn Arabi play more roles. Mulla Sadra, also, is the founder of philosophical school of Islamic Transcendent Wisdom which has some fundamental principles like principality of existence, gradual unity of existence, trans-substantial motion, corporeal creation and spiritual survival of the soul, abstraction of the soul and corporeal resurrection that these principles make possible for him to comparatively give an innovative interpretation of Platonic Ideas different from the previous philosophers. In this case, it can be possible to mention some samples like using of Aristotelian epistemology, namely considering knowledge as a fact to be established not remembered, and accepting of peripatetic point of view concerning evolutionary traveling of intellect from Potential Intellect to Acquired Intellect which links to Active Intellect, believing in corporeal creation of soul, demonstrating trans-substantial motion in all material existents for getting abstraction, considering gradual and causal relations among all ontological stages helps Mulla Sadra to understand and interpret Platonic Ideas with new approach. In this case, utilizing of trans-substantial motion, believing in three ontological stages of existents and three perceptions marks Mulla Sadra's special approach to Ideas. Principality of existence and gradual unity of different levels of existents is caused Mulla Sadra, by wedding essential relation between corporeal and Ideas world, removes Platonic gap between them, and arrange certain value, credibility and function for each of them. He, also, through establishing causal relation in length between corporeal and Ideas world, succeeds to indicate that corporeal world is really very needing to and a lower stage of rational and Ideas world.

At the same time, there are some similarities between Plato and Mulla Sadra. Both they concern to rational and intuitive perception that its reference are rational realities or Ideas, and also consider human epistemic, moral and mystical traveling towards the world of spiritual realities, which can be very Platonic Ideas.

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Endnotes

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Discovering kitchen(Ash-khaneh) Stone beam of Shaikh Safi al-in Ardabili's shrine in New results from excavations archaeological

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Abstract

The Khānegāh and Shrine Ensemble of Shaikh Safi al-din in Ardabil, north-west of Iran, inscribed on the list of world heritage in the year 2011 under identification number 64, this ensemble is located at 38° 14'52/5" northern latitude, 48° 17'27/5" longitude, and altitude of 1365 above sea level in the center of city of Ardabil.

The ensemble of Shaikh Safi al-din is a well-developed prototype of a constitution of social, religious, charitable, cultural, and educational function. With its range of versatile spaces, it has met the physical and spiritual needs of its residents and pilgrims; regarding so, it includes places to meet all the needs in fields of education and training, livelihood and healthcare. Relying on the Diagram of De

Morgan, it is proved that there are more than 67 spaces and courtyards attached to the Khānegāh, all of which have had a significant role in the training and educational philosophy of Safavi Tariqat (spiritual way). After decade of Safavid damaged buildings.

Dr. F. Sarre, German researcher, studied one of the earliest researches of architecture history and archaeology of Ardabil shrine in 1897. Some researchers such as Mr. E. Dibāj (1948), Mr. A. A. Sarfaraz,(1974), Dr. Weaver(1974), Dr. A. H. Morton(1974) and Mr. S. M Mousawi (1995-6), studied fine researches about shrine history and its architecture during recent decades. Archaeological works of cultural heritage and tourism organization of Islamic republic of Iran head by H. Yousefi, in A D 2006 Century were Complementary for early studies. These studies cleared so many unsolved historical questions.

Keywords: Ardabil, Shaikh Safi al-din Shrine, Excavations Archaeological, Architectures findings, kitchen.

Introduction

Ardabil province is located in north-west of Iran. Ardabil city is one of the ancient cities of Iran. Archaeology testimonies and historical sources are denoted on significance of Ardabil in prehistory to Islamic period, justification is the famous of Ardabil painted ceramic and repetition its names in Shāh nāmeḥ (epic of kings) of Ferdousi(a famous poet of Iran). the city was capital of Azerbaijan under the Ommayyads era (Steven, 1962: 146) and in 4th century A.D Azerbaijan (Le Strengé, 1998: 181). Ardabil ruined in A.D 1219 (Yaquḥ hamavi, 1965: 175-176) to 1221(Shabarow, 2001: 52-53) by Mongol attacks, but the city rapidly improved under the Safavid dynasty in 14 to 17 centuries A.D. Because of Ardabil is counted home of Safavid State.

The Khānegāh and Shrine Ensemble of Shaikh Safi al-din in Ardabil is one of the most important and the greatest Khānegāhs set up in the world islam. This Khānegāh has been built in A.D 1300-1301 by Shaikh Safi al-din in Ardabil (Ibn bazaz Ardabili, 1998: 249). The Khānegāh and Shrine Ensemble of Shaikh Safi al-din in Ardabil, inscribed on the list of world heritage in the year 2011 under identification number 64, this ensemble is located at the first archeological study performed in eastern side of Chini Khāna and new Chilla Khāna A.D 1975 by Mr. A. A. Sarfaraz. The excellent evidences were obtained from recent researches. These studies result in recognition of cemetery named Shahid-gāh and architecture of Sadr al-din Musa's Chilla Khāna. He made a trench in eastern part of Chini Khāna that resulted in discovery of Chāldiran martyr's graves and some items including saddles and bridles of horses, thrusting and cutting weapons inside the graves. Martyrs corps had wrapped in a layer of cattle or camel furred skin. He didn't find any architectural or settlement elements in lower levels of excavation. Real date of these graves and discovered ceramic pieces was estimated to 8th to 7th AH centuries by Dr. A. H. Morton"(Morton, 1975: 44).

Mr. Sarfaraz discovered several grave traces in his researches in western and southern sides of internal space of new Chilla Khāna that was made during Shaikh Sadr al-din epoch(fig. 1).

The oldest ceramic pieces obtained from this part belong 8th and 9th AH / AD 15th and 14th Centuries. Mr. S. M. Mousawi performed the second season of studies and researches, two decades after Mr. Sarfaraz works. These new season of studies lasted five research seasons. These five seasons were performed on western side of shrine.

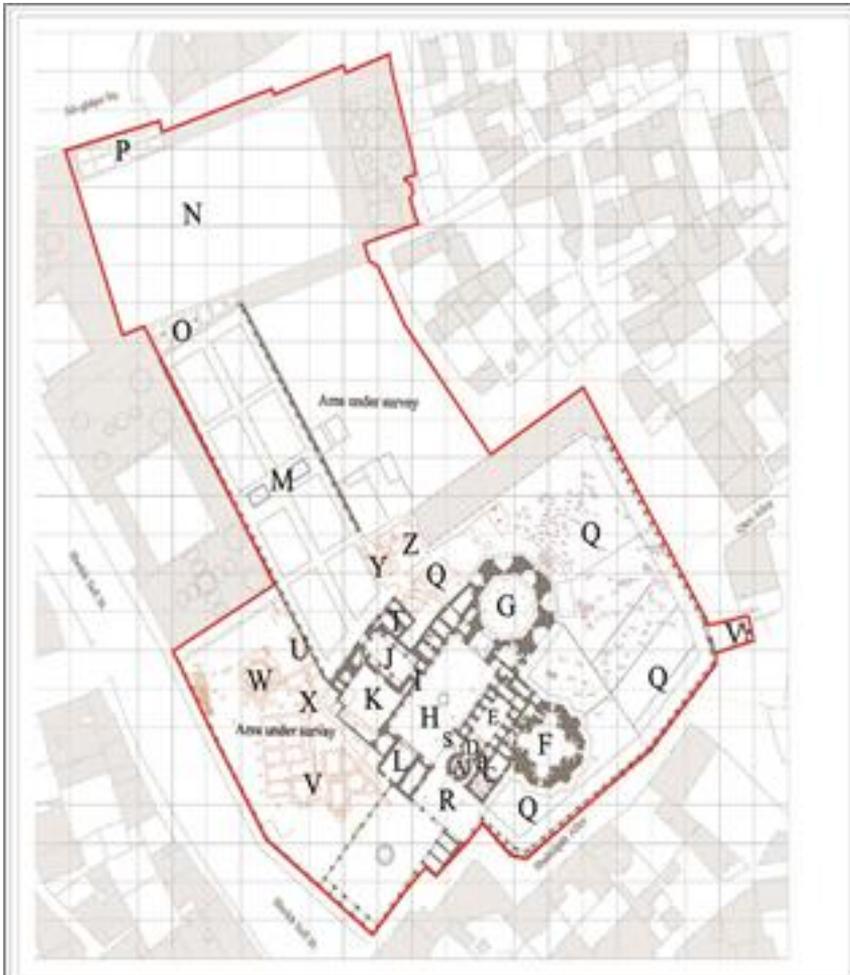


Fig. 1. The Key plan of SKSEA (Research

SKSEA	A. Sheikh Safiyeh (Central Mosque)	K. New Chah Khana	T. Southern Courtyard of Garden Courtyard
	B. Wall (wall) / Tomb	L. Dar al-Hadith (Dar al-Motawalli)	E. Northern Courtyard of Spring Like Kachar
	C. Mahiy al-din industrial Tomb (Sassanid site)	M. The Garden Court (Area)	V. Beyond Sheikh Shabir al-Khazafi House Bonyad Sabzevari
	D. Shabir (stone)	N. Meydan (Square)	W. List of Shaban Khana
	E. Dar al-Hadith (Qasbi Khana)	O. Second gate	X. Discarded remains of Spring Like Kachar at AD 1993
	F. Chah Khana (Chahgah)	P. The Main gate (Dar-hak)	Y. Discarded remains of stone wall at AD 2006
	G. Jannat-vari	Q. Shabir (remains of stone)	Z. Discarded remains of wall-4000 in AD 2006
	H. Tomb of Sadeq (Area)	R. Neighbor (adjacent) Courtyard	
	I. Wall (stone) gate (only Gateway)		

Some old wall remains from different historical periods appeared when southwestern part of big yard of Shaikh Safi al-din Ardabili's shrine complex in Ardabil was destroyed. This destruction was for dampness reduction, reconstruction and repair of shrine. More studies revealed that northern wall of new Chilla Khāna consist four periods of history. New Chilla Khāna splits older Chilla Khāna from big yard. The oldest period of this wall is same as New Chilla Khāna and more probably is one of the oldest architectural elements of this ensemble(8th and 9th AH cent. / AD 14th and 15th century.

Another wall was made over the old wall that consist turquoise and lapis lazuli tiles. Its curved shape represents that it has been part of an arcade. "It could be concluded the main entrance way or portal to complex. Shah Abbas the second made a portal way from north by Āli Qāpu portal. The new discovered portal likely was made before two another ways. The main portal of Shaikh Safi al-din Ardabili shrine was gained this arcade.

Later studies indicated that this wall had been extended to western side. Some elements of this wall were cut and destroyed for reshape it in latest years of Qajar dynasty. Excavations of western side of destroyed wall revealed that Shaikh Safi al-din Ardabili complex was bigger and wider than today's situation. People captured some parts of grounds around the complex for making houses and shops later in Qajar era. A study in 1374/1995 in western side of complex proved these changes.

Many of glazed and simple ceramic pieces of 10th to 13th century AH. Could be found on surface soil grounds and buildings floor during research in vestibule. Most of these pieces were made in Safavid period. Some tallow –burners were found during excavation that likely were for making lightness for inside building. Some pieces of and white– bluish porcelain of Safavid period including big bowls and dishes also were found in this place(fig. 2). Many items and glass pieces also were collected that were belonged to small and big bowls and pitchers. A big broken ceramic for storage

was discovered inside in the trench (Locus 215) placed in central space of vestibule."(Mousawi, 1380: 47-48)

Report of excavation west and north of Jannat sara

The plan of first season of research in historical place of Ardabil shrine started from 2006 following the finding of structures remains of 8th – 11th A.H Centuries. These periods were golden times for shrine. These remains were discovered during repair of right wall of golden sheikh garden in yard. This wall extends to main gate the study was focused on historical place of Sheikh Safi shrine for access to main parts of plan and architecture in north and west of Jannat Sara. This summary of report and works conducted by writers of report could be a new opening for introduction of one of the oldest buildings of shrine and describes its extension.



Fig. 2. Green part of western site excavated by Mousawi (Research base SKSEA)

Some of shrine buildings anyway have been destroyed and disappeared. Archaeological researches can help to drawing the complex plan completely and its extension in the past times. Since the relation between north and west of Jannat sara mosque is significant and it contains a major part of shrine, it may play an important role in make a definite chronicle and archaeology of Ardabil shrine(fig 3).

Exploration in A D 2006 reveals architectural remains revealed

The most significant architectural and cultural elements were discovered in right hand of garden's yard in first season of excavation in 2006 or places in west and north of the biggest and tallest building of complex named Jannat-Sara. This part originally is a wide area that Pooran dokht school (or safaviye school) was made over it(fig. 3).

The main limitation of researched area contains 10 square trenches that each of them is 10×10 m and this area is located in a big place of shrine but the most important architectural elements of this search season are specific for B7, B8, C5, C6, C8, C7 trenches.



Fig. 3. Key plan of parts of the remains of ensemble kitchen and bath

B. 8

37 structures were identified in B. 8 workshop. In the basis of historical documents, these structures were eliminated from main body of shrine after Safavid period extinction. The shrine was limited to a small area in Pahlavi period and was made several houses and school over these ruins (figs 4).

The discovered structures in B. 8 trench contain two piers, wall found, macadamized floor, remains of two ovens, wells and sewage, clay water canals, pool, bench, a wall decorated with tiles and brick-made floor. We can say that structures of B. 8 trench are parts of a significant building of complex that its excavation because of limitations in progression or trench has not been completed. Foundation of these structures is made of cut stones. Walls are made of bricks and lime mortar. Internal surfaces were covered by lime decorated with tiles. Cultural items found in B. 8 trench including ceramics, tiles and coins



Figs 4. The basin of historical bath and Excavated Tilework during reconstruction of eastern wall of garden (photo: Yousefi)

The most of found cultural items in B. 8 trench were ceramic pieces and tiles. 70% of found ceramic pieces are glazed and rests of them are simple items. The glazed ceramics consist multicolored surface

paintings, mono colored or white-blue. The tiles found in B8 include seven-colored, reticulated and comfits. Most of these tiles are hexagonal and golden, bluish, black, green and multicolored with trefoil palmate figures.

Coin is the third type of cultural items found here. 5 coins were discovered that are made of copper or copper alloy. Because of severe oxidation most of these coins are not identifiable but we can easily suggest that these coins belong to Safavid period or pre-Safavid era.

B7

This trench is located in east of B8 trench and western part of Pur sina school. Research in this area was started after removal of walls and mosaics of corridor's and classes floors (fig 5). Approximately 21 structure sand elements were found that most of them were architectural structure these structures are include pier, gipsy floors, kandu or Tapoo (hive), remains of three ovens, brick-made floor, wall kitchen, clay water canal and stony mortar. The most significant of these findings is a thick pier (pillar) (2×2m) that was made of cut stone, brick and gipsy mortar(figs. 5, 6, 7).

Height of this pier was 85 cm and was inserted drainage canals inside it. This is a remarkable architectural work. These canals crossed each other in center of structure and it worked as vent and decanter. It seems that southern side of this structure was external part. Because there are no traces of drain in this part, it's believed that there may be some other piers under the school and it may be proved after more researches.

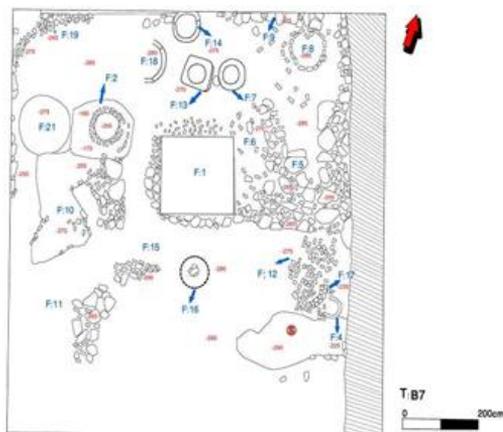


Fig. 5. Remains of historical Āsh Khānā (kitchen) structure



Figs. 6, 7. excavated stony mortars and peir from Āsh Khānā

Cultural items found in B7 trench More than 80% of discovered ceramic items were glazed in B7 trench. Some measuring cups also were found here. Most of stony items in first season of research were weights with different scales such as: 250, 200, 150, 125, 100,

50 and 25 g that are made of volcanic stones, alluvial, lime and brick (fig 8).



Fig. 8. Stone and brick weights with scales and measuring cup

Results

Shaikh Safi al-din Shrine in Ardabil is recognized as one of the most important and equipped holy shrine in Iran. There are services for pilgrims who come here. This situation was from 8th A.H to later in Safavid period. Many of political, cultural and commercial people who had come from Germany, France and Britain to Iran have written reports of this shrine. These reports are so reliable for confirm the reconstruction of destroyed buildings. The reports of Tavernier, Jenkinson and so on, are between the almost significant of them. The third factor for better detection and our knowledge about Ardabil shrine and its historical changes is field works and programmed works in archaeological research places.

The third factor is the important way for confirmation of early reports of structures. We try match the field works findings with historical facts and analyze them to get the best results. Since there are fine works about architecture and archaeology of shrine

performed by Dr. F. Sarre in 1935, but their works are not complete and still there are many unknown items about shrine.

One of the most precious items found in this research in shrine was stone placed in arcade of Shaikh Safi al-dins kitchen. The framed item was discovered in garden yard on the sewage well in A. 8 square during research for ruined wall. It seems that it was transferred from its main place to another place for covering the well after Safavid era. This stone is made of andesite. There is inscription worked on this stone that written Arabic and *thulth script*. This writing is 8th verse of human sureh describes feeding poor people and orphans and captives. One of the significant features of this item is date written in the end of inscription as 1001 A.H. this inscription describes that we feed the poor people and orphans for sake of God and nothing more (fig 9).

On the basis of reliable historical resources, Shah Abbas the great, paid special attention to Shiite holy cities especially Ardabil that was his grandfather's home town. Historical evidences have recorded many of his trips to Ardabil. He obliged himself to visit Ardabil once during years. Especially when Iran was in fighting with Ottoman Empire in Azerbaijan and Armenia and Georgia. He was praying in his grandfather shrine with cry and confesses and he requested from him overcome to his enemies.

"Monajem Yazdi describes in his book that shah Abbas had a travel to Ardabil for first time in 6th year of his empire in 1001 A.H. and prayed the sheikh-safi shrine. Sheykh Bahaii was company with him in this trip. Sarih al-milk also describes about kitchen and bath of complex"(Monajem yazdi, 1361: 150). Abdi Beyg mentions kitchen as *Āsh-khāna* and *Matbakh*: *matbakh* is a building equipped with rice and wheat pots and there are other chambers and *Ayyāq-khāna* in northern side.

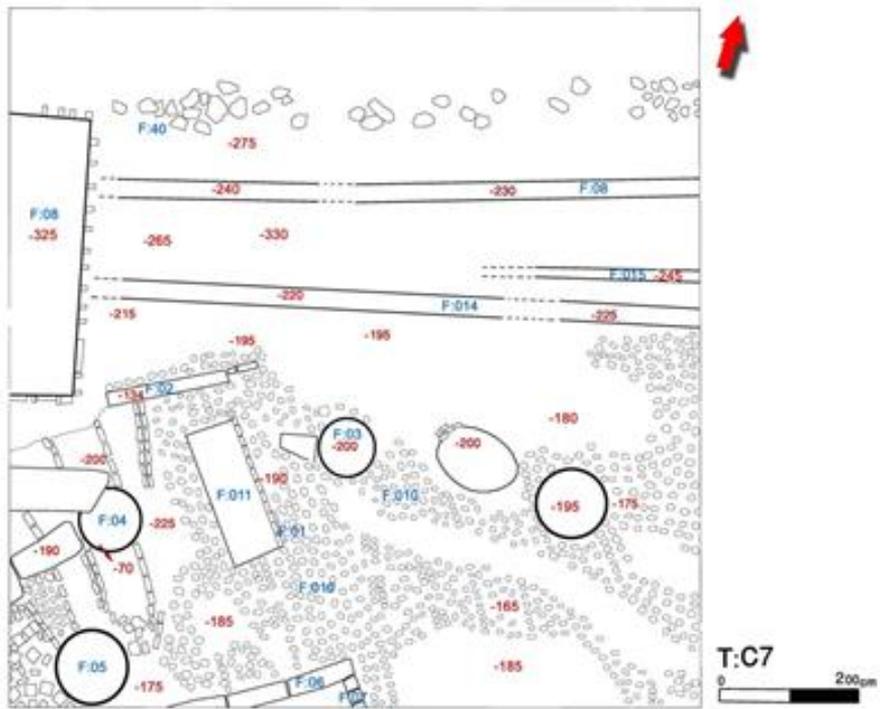


Fig. 9. kitchen(Ash-khana) Stone beam stone of sheikh safi al-din's kitchen

Sarih al-milk also describes about bath and kitchens that they located on western side of Shahidgah. This place contains a way from yard to Jannat sara and kitchen and ended to Shahidgah. This way quit to old yard of Chilla Khāna. The bath was placed in eastern corner of yard, Havij khāna and houses .Jannat Sara was separated from yard in one side. Thus kitchen was somewhere behind the bath."(Abdi Beig Shirazi, 1551: 20-22)

Many of travelers from Europe such Tavernier who visited the complex in 11th A.H. describe kitchen and its location that food was dispense from where in front of kitchen in the end left side of the second yard. The yard has been reported by Tavernier. This report is completely matched with Sarih al-milk description – Bathes and wheat and rice stores were located in second yard that a water canals run through it(figs. 10, 11).

200 Yousefi, Neyestani, Hezhebr Nouberi, Mousavi kohpar



There was a coated silver small door in the end of left side of described yard. This door was placed in front of kitchen that royal charities were dispensed to poor people daily. Tavernier also tells in his documentary report about this kitchen and its organized works. "There are 25 to 30 big stoves in the walls. A big pot is placed on each of stoves that is baked rice and meat and then is dispensed between poor people or gave to workers and mosque service man.

There was a supervisor for food dispensing. He was sitting on silver seat and super vise to process of daily works and he takes care of mixing the rice with water for baking and chopping meat and pour to pots. All the activities were performed economically and on time in this royal house"(Tavernier, 1336: 76 3).

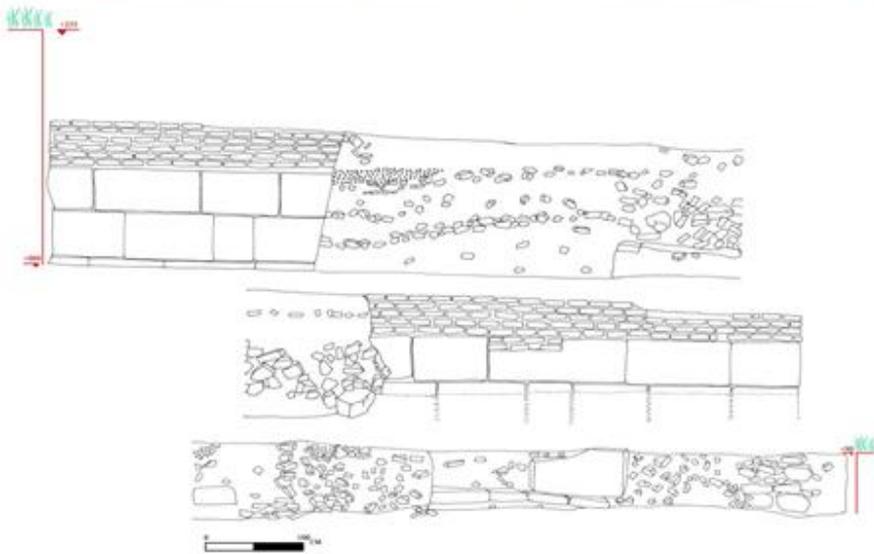
Cornelius, another European traveler who was visited Ardabil in 1115 A.H. he writes about shrine kitchen: stoves and place on walls. Stove or Dig-khāna described by Sarih al-milk also tells of two wells in kitchen and kitchen. Wall (figs 12, 13) is tall"(Morton, 1974: 53).

Pieter Della valle, the Italian traveler, describes the pots for rice baking was placed on 35 big stoves and there is a public bath in one of the side of place. There is a small door in front of kitchen in the left end side of yard. Many charities are dispensed from here every day."(Della valle, 1348: 72).

We can prove this fact that some parts of found structures in north and west side of Jannat sara have relations to health and bakery, by matching these findings in B7, B8 trenches with historical resources, plan, and discovered cultural items.

Conventionally, the official and general khanegāh were equipped with kitchen, bath, Sharabt khāna and other spaces food was provided for resident Sufis and traveler and clothing and dues also were rendered to them. Although training of murids (diciples) had been concealed during Safavid time, but feeding the poor people in

Ardabil shrine was a routine work there and was followed daily"(Abdal zahidi: 1964: 111).. Kitchen and bath place were necessary locations in official khaneghs. Making the baths specific for Sufis and Ārefs (mystic) is a great performance of khanegah. These baths were free for Sufis and Mashāyèkh(elders). Murids (diciples) made warm this place. One of the khanegah services was working in stove of bath. Thus it's clear that Chilla Khāna of sheikh –Safi al-din in 8th A.H. century was equipped with bath, kitchen and other facilities. The buildings of Ardabil shrine were greatly improved and extended by Safavid empires especially shah Abbas the great. The discovered space during the first season of research in B7 workshop in historical place of shrine were baths, likely door of bath in eastern part of kitchen (28th structure) internal clay canals (17th structure)



Figs. 12, 13. Remains of kitchen wall with shahid gah

The other structures include: small pool (28th structure) well (22nd structure) part of hot chamber that decorated with tiles (12th structure), three spaces from tamer-khāna (25-37-34th structure), water canal, heating system and water conduction system with clay canals and discharge system for water these elements are unique and exclusive.

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