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MULLA SADRA'S NOTION OF EXISTENCE: A COMPARATIVE REVIEW

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Abstract: This paper analyses Mulla Sadra's conception of 'existence' along with a comparison of Ibn-i-Sina and Suharwardi's ideas concerning existence. Mulla Sadra's view of the 'primacy of existence' possesses the tenor of Sufism that establishes transcendental unity of existence and the view of 'systematic ambiguity' or 'gradation of existence' upholds the intellection of the multiplicity. Ibn-i-Sina and Suharwardi's views provided basis for Sadra's grand synthesis so that he managed to introduce an innovative fresh angle to look upon perennial religious and philosophical issues. No word or term has yet been created to denote inseparable relation of epistemology and ontology but only Sadra's thought is entitled, most likely, to uphold such unification. His conception of existence consubstantiates the diverse structure and nature of things into unified reality of Being by keeping elementary discrimination and individuality of things into consideration through the idea of essence. Although Sadra's cogitative view may not be called final word but so far his intellectual intuition for the recognition of Ultimate Truth through concept of existence is concerned, his philosophical doctrines may very well be considered the cause of the revival of philosophy in Iran.

Key Words: Mulla Sadra, Suharwardi, Ibn-i-Sina, Existence, Essence, systematic ambiguity, substantial movement.

Introduction

Sadr ad Din Muhammad Shirazi is famously known as Mulla Sadra (1571-72 to 1640), the Iranian Shi'a scholar, earned reputation as a Sage (Hakeem) in history of Muslim philosophy. Mulla Sadra's hometown was *Shiraz* (Southern Iran) but he moved with his father first to *Qazvin* in 1591 and then to *Isfahan* in 1597 where he played vital role in intellectual discourse during the revitalization of philosophy under the Safavid Shah Abbas (1588-1629). Sadra was taught, in *Isfahan*, by the two teachers Mir Muhammad Baqir Damad Astarabadi and Shaykh Baha' al-Din 'Amili known as Shaykh Baha'i (d.1620-21).¹ Philosophy, when Sadra appeared, was Peripatetic-neo-Platonic tradition of Ibn-i-Sina and his followers. Ibn-i-Sina reconciled rational philosophy with Islamic theology and granted supremacy to existence which later on was criticized by Suharwardi who laid the foundation of his doctrine of the supremacy of essence over existence in his Philosophy of Illumination (*Hikmat-ul-Ishraq*). Sadra took the overview of the doctrines of his predecessors at the mature era of his intellectual journey and consequently changed path and turned to the view of the supremacy of existence. Therefore, Sadra named his philosophy *Hikmat-i-Muta'aliya* that is obvious by the title of his great work *al-Hikmatal-Muta'aliyafi'l-Asfaral-Arba'a al-'Aqliya* (The Sublime Wisdom in Four Journeys of Reason).²

Sadra in some earlier works like *Traha al Kaunain* had supported pantheistic views that is why Shi'a Ulemas persecuted him and he had to abandon the place rather than facing criticism and found a secluded place where he used to contemplate along with intense religious exercises thus he grasped intuitively what he learned earlier through rational labor and finally wrote *Asfar al-Arba'a* (mentioned earlier).³ He made grand synthesis of the rational, theological and Sufi traditions and proved to be the great proponent of intellectual intuition i.e. experiential certainty of rational propositions. Due to this peculiar trait Sadra never compromised his philosophical tendency while interpreting religious doctrines, rather tried best to reconcile philosophers' intellectual labor and Sufis' direct experience concerning Ultimate Truth.

Mulla Sadra is one of the central intellectual figures who, in sixteenth and seventeenth century, caused the revival of philosophy in Iran and synthesized the mainstream thoughts of Peripatetic (*Mashsha'i*), Illuminationist (*Ishraqi*), Gnostic ('*Irfan*) and Shi'ite theology (*Kalam*) with his Transcendental Wisdom (*al-hikma al-Muta'aliya*).⁴ For Sadra, Pure reality of Being is the only and ultimate source of all existents either they are physical objects, conceptual forms or abstract mental existences.

Pure Being is Necessary Being i.e. in religious term called God, that needs nothing but itself to exist and its reality is unmixed and simple. By 'simple' means Pure Being or Existence cannot be defined, described or conceived because it is beyond any relation, limitation and imperfection. In Sadra's thought, thus, we can say that view of 'existence' is the core concept that encompasses his entire system of thought which stands as a distinguished view in the history of Islamic Intellectual tradition.⁵

Concept of existence has taken multiple forms ever since Ibn-i-Sina conferred priority to this view with the inclusion of essence as an essential feature of the notion of pure existence. Both existence and essence are real for Ibn-i-Sina with the division of necessary and contingent existence. Necessary Being or Pure Existence is not devoid of essence, as we find opposite notion in Sadra's thought, but essence cannot be separated from existence according to Ibn-i-Sina's metaphysics. Only Necessary Being is self-dependent and contingent beings derive their existences from Pure Being and essences are additional to contingent beings and quite separable.⁶ But existence is the prime reality in Ibn-i-Sina's thought that started ontological and epistemological debate so that afterwards Suharwardi and Mulla Sadra contributed to the subject and took the metaphysics of existence to the heights that no one touched ever before.

Ibn-i-Sina's Concept of Existence

Abū-'Alī al-Ḥusayn ibn-'Abdallāh [Avicenna] (ca. 970–1037) widely known as Ibn-i-Sina and before Suharwardi that was him who took Neo-Platonic stance for the importance of the 'primacy of existence' for the elaboration of ontological status of things while investigating their esoteric nature which may be considered the hallmark of Ibn-i-Sina's metaphysics. Everything in universe shares existence or we can say that a thing is real only if it exists. Avicenna's conception of existence cannot be supposed as 'genre' that is commonly shared by all existents rather every existent's reality possesses two distinctive characteristics.

At first, reality of things concerns the existence and essence. Secondly, the aspects of necessity, possibility and impossibility belong to the essential nature of things.⁷ Idea of a thing involves some discriminating features i.e. form, shape and color due to which a thing is distinct from other things and these features constitute the essence of a thing. Mind can distinguish these features from the things' existence in exterior world. At this point Avicenna is clear about the idea that essence of a thing is independent from existence because one could think of essence without existence.

Mind can easily isolate essence from existence, according to Avicenna essence and existence of a thing are identical and both don't exist as separate components, thus, mind bifurcates them into two. We will see later that this notion has also been cherished with more addition in his treatment of existence and essence of things. Avicenna's conception of existence and essence declares both of them identical as if we get mixture of sugar and water and there is no place in the mixture which could be called as only sugar or only water rather both are added in a unified form but it is our mental activity that discriminates. Essence of a thing is basic for the individual characteristics of a thing and could be known as the limitation of an object on ontological level but existence of a thing is the prime reality without which a thing cannot exist.

Avicenna's notion of existence and essence possesses a linkage with its other aspect of the division of Being as impossible, possible and necessary. Because a thing's ontological status consists on the nature of its essence and its capacity to be actualized. This notion of the division of Being is Avicenna's original conception, which afterwards Muslim philosophers frequently adopted. If some object's essence is conceptualized by human mind which could not accept existence e.g. if one would consider that an object shaped triangular circle exists and its essence cannot be actualized, then it may be concluded that existence of such kind of object is impossible and involves contradiction.

If the essence of a thing possesses neither contradiction nor impossibility then it could be actualized with the possibility of having existence. Created things are the best example of the possible beings that their contingency grants them the status of having existence or non-existence. If something's essence would only accept existence and any conception of non-existence would make it contradictory or impossible then essence and existence are identical and inseparable. Such a being is necessary because its existence cannot have reason for subsistence other than It-self. *Necessary Being* cannot be two because in this case one has to derive its being from the other. Such a *Necessary Being* cannot be both contingent and necessary in any respect.⁸ Essence of contingent being must have reason for 'its' being that ultimately needs active cause external to it. *Necessary Being* cannot have a cause external to It rather its cause is not other than It-self. Consequently, contingent being's perfection depends upon more perfect being. *Necessary Being* cannot resemble anything else in the universe because essences of things are quite other than their existences but *Necessary Being's* essence is inseparable from its existence.

Avicenna's other division that is applied to all beings is the distinction of substance and accident. Whether essences of things are substance or accident, is the distinction, which expresses the actual status of things' essences i.e. either, their essences depend upon something else for subsistence or not. Whiteness of a paper is accident because it cannot subsist without paper and paper's being is independent that is supposed to be substance in this instance. Avicenna has proposed three kinds of divisions for substance. 'Intellect' is the substance, which is absolutely detached from materiality. 'Soul' is another substance that is devoid of materiality but it can act only if attached to body. 'Body' is the third kind of substance that has properties of divisibility, length and width. It could be judged easily that Avicenna's account of existence and essence is fundamentally epistemo-ontological account, which necessarily involves human mind for the comprehension of the essential nature of things. Avicenna's theology also possesses similar notion as his theory of creation upholds identity for God's knowledge and His act of creation.⁹ Although such a view of the similitude of intellection and creation poses many issues for the interpretation of some religious doctrines but its philosophical significance cannot be undermined.

Suharwardi's Concept of Essence

Shihab al-Din al-Suharwardi (1154–1191), the founder of Illuminationist (*ishraqi*) philosophical tradition, reversed the whole concept and declared essence to be the prime reality and existence as the general idea that exists only in the mind. Things exist due to their essence and existence is a general idea due to which concrete instances of external objects or abstract mental concepts could be called 'they exist' but in reality existence cannot exist. As whiteness is a general concept due to which things are called white but white-ness of a thing is not identical to that abstract whiteness which is considered as general concept because in concrete things white-ness is supposed to be an instance that can vary from thing to thing. All the degrees of white-ness are included in the general idea of whiteness, which could exist only in mind not in the real world. Therefore, existence cannot exist as whiteness cannot exist in reality. If existence was the concrete reality then it would have been attributed as instance of the general concept of another or prior existence, thus, this prior existence had to exist by another existence and all this suggests infinite regress.¹⁰

Suharwardi developed his doctrine against Peripatetic and Aristotelian views because he rejected primacy of existence as Aristotle and Avicenna mostly held, and promoted the principle view of essence only because every existent thing cannot possess complete attribution of the variant

forms of the existence as we find such notion in the general idea of existence. Multiplicity of objects is only due to the essential reality of things which existence cannot hold. Suharwardi also proposed the concept of Pure Light for divine essence, which afterwards Sadra acquired and fashioned in his peculiar way to prove the principle reality of existence.¹¹

In Suharwardi's ontology everything's reality is connected with the polarized view of light and darkness. From Pure light to pure darkness there are degrees of intensity that unveils the reality of incorporeal and corporeal existents. Divine Essence or Pure light is self-subsistent, more intense and illuminated but the lower grade of this light is dependent for its existence upon more intense light. In the same manner darkness depends upon something else for subsistence. Multiplicity of objects exists being graded by intensity and ratio of light and darkness. Pure light is God and no general idea of pure essence could be conceived because it is self-subsistent and self-luminous. But angels, essences of things, soul are also subsistent by themselves and could be called incorporeal light. But luminous heavenly bodies e.g. stars and fire are not subsistent by themselves they seek for something else for subsistence. Darkness of material things or physical objects is self-subsistent but darkness of sensations i.e. tastes, smell and color depend upon other than themselves for subsistence.

Suharwardi has also proposed a different kind of division for beings and this division suggests the discrimination of things by the degrees of awareness.¹² This view of Suharwardi rightly echoes in Mulla Sadra when his epistemology and ontology take inseparable form to illustrate the polarized view of 'Pure Existence and primary matter' where division of being is considered by the intensity.

Light is also identical to knowledge in Suharwardi's ontology and things are discriminated by the degrees of awareness and obliviousness. Pure light is self-aware by It-self and the lower beings of less intensity i.e. angels, human soul and archetypes are aware of themselves due to the being of higher order. On the other hand material objects are oblivious and subsist by themselves but things of higher order are oblivious too but their obliviousness depends upon other than themselves.

All this discrimination, although, shows a hierarchical order of Being but suggest no evolutionary setup responsible for things to enhance their quality of being and reality. This is the point where Mulla Sadra proposed the dynamic view of the substantial movement for the universal change

and evolution. Such a universal motion prevails throughout existence so that this dynamic ontological view of Sadra stands as most appealing metaphysical conception for succeeding philosophers. In modern era Iqbal has adopted this dynamic ontological view of the creation and movement of the universe. Iqbal's conception of 'rationally directed creative life' possesses the notion of universal creative flux that can only be comprehended by the intuition of appreciative self that life is not directed towards any specific goal rather it has the character of continuous creation on the face of open possibilities.¹³ Conscious experience reveals life to be a centralized ego and Ultimate reality to be spiritual that persists in pure duration, moving forward with ever renewing goals and life of an individual and the world process suggests reality to be an organic whole that is purposeless and creative in nature.

Mulla Sadra's Epistemo-Ontological View of Existence

Although Mulla Sadra's philosophical account is filled with the basic tenets of Islamic intellectual tradition but Sadra's insight impregnated richness, with a new vision and fresh interpretation, to the very thought current that reached his era.¹⁴ It is Sadra's genius that made remarkable contribution to the concept of existence in history of Muslim philosophy and applied that doctrine to cosmology and epistemology in general and to eschatology and psychology in particular. Importance of the concept of existence (Wujud) in Mulla Sadra's thought could be seen from his illustration in the book '*Kitab Al-Mashair*':

The problem of wujud is the foundation of philosophical principles, the ground of metaphysical questions, and the axis around which rotates the millstone of the science of unity, the science of eschatology and the science of the resurrection of souls and bodies and many other things... Whoever is ignorant of the knowledge of wujud, his ignorance runs through the most important of all subjects and the greatest among them, and he will become mindless of it and the secrets of Divine knowledge and its inner meanings will become lost to him as well as the science of Divine Names and Qualities and prophecy and the science of the soul and its connections [with the whole of cosmology] and its return to the Origin of its origins and its final end [eschatology]. Therefore, we saw to it that we begin with it [the question of wujud].¹⁵

This paragraph by Mulla Sadra is so profound and shows his maturity of thought that seems to justify the basic religious/Islamic doctrines philosophically. Sadra's works are divided into three categories. First type

is commentaries on scripture and second type is polemic writings and third type is philosophical technical works.¹⁶ Even Sadra philosophically discusses religious doctrines while commenting on scripture. His philosophical attitude encircles his entire writings so that he stands outside the domain of orthodoxy.

Concept of Existence has been approached by Sadra from two different angles, at first, 'intellectual approach' makes possible the comprehension of Being because it is related to man's knowledge of the esoteric nature of the universe. Secondly, 'experiential approach' provides the same knowledge through living experience or man's psychological dimension. Actual experience of the transcendental reality of Being (*Marifa*) is the elemental wisdom that unites these two approaches. It is the *Marifa* that unfolds the hidden unification of human heart (*Qalb*) with the reality of all 'Being'. Pure Existence or *Al-Wujud* denotes the structure of reality that Sadra explores through *Marifa* which refers to the same knowledge gained by intellection.

Sadra's concept of existence could be understood as a contrary view of Suharwardi's thesis. Sadra took existence to be incomprehensible by the mind because mind cannot grasp the external reality, as it exists externally outside mental region. In other words external reality cannot exactly enter into human mind. Whatever mind gets is just the conceptual form that is matchless to the external world. Suppose we see a tree in front of our eyes. Our perception of the tree seems not quite different but in literal sense it cannot even be called a duplicate of the reality of the tree. The tree we see depends upon the capacity of our physical senses. Whatever conceptual form we develop of the tree may have external cause but its reality is quite different from the actual tree. By this example we can better understand that existence of the tree is that aspect of reality due to which a tree is what it is. But mind's perception of a tree is a different mode of existence that cannot resemble tree's actual existential reality. Consequently we can say that a tree's reality is incomprehensible by the mind. But mind's perceptual form is not superfluous rather it has a reality of different kind because it has cause in the external realm. In Sadra's terminology a tree's existence is the esoteric nature that belongs to the Ultimate Reality and the perception of a tree is the essence, which unfolds specific features that differentiate a thing from others but exists as a dissimilar mode of existence.

Sadra, Kant and Iqbal

Sadra's view bears resemblance with 'nomenon' of Kant, which cannot be grasped by the perceiving mind but all we can know is just the phenomena. Similar treatment of the view could be seen in Iqbal's thought that unified nature of Ultimate Reality does not possess dual aspects but human mind perceives that reality in a different way.¹⁷ Mind perceives structures of things because its limited faculties don't have capacity to grasp nature of things. Kant's 'nomenon', Iqbal's 'nature of things' and Sadra's 'existence' present equal ontological status but Iqbal's view of the organic unity of human conscious experience manages to penetrate the unseen realm that 'nomenon' and 'existence' represent. Mulla Sadra's notion of intellectual intuition serves equally for the role of cognition of the reality of existence but his treatment is quite different as he successfully manipulates experiential quality of cognition into the intellectual form of comprehension in order to avoid mere rational discourse that takes away the true spirit of knowing and leaves behind nothing but ambiguous descriptions unconcerned to reality.

Sadra on Essence

Sadra's view of the 'primacy of existence' renders essence as mental abstraction having no reality of its own whereas existence has its reality in exterior world. Essence and existence possess identical status in exterior world which means that essence cannot be considered without existence and existence cannot be thought without essence because a thing's 'individuality' subsists due to its specific features and 'existential reality' without which that thing could not be called 'a thing'. Both individuality and existential reality are separated by the mind that mistakenly considers essence to be the prime reality.

Things are real due to their existence and multiplicity of objects shows no diversity of existences rather existence is only one. Existence of God and existence of a thing are same but difference occurs due to intensity which takes Sadra's metaphysics of existence to another view 'gradation of existence' or systematic ambiguity.¹⁸ At this point one could ask if there is only one existence then how we can explain the multiplicity of objects. Levels of existence unfold the mystery that possesses the intensity of perfection, potency and precedence and succession.

Sadra's Notion of Systematic Ambiguity

In other words, Sadra's thought establishes that existence manifests itself with the intensity of degrees in which God has the highest level of existence and other incorporeal beings have less intensity and beings

constituted by primary matter possess lowest level of existence. Intensity of existence is also graded by the division of their priority and posteriority e.g. intensity of substance is more than accidents, intensity of incorporeal beings is also more than corporeal beings, likewise intensity of causes are more than effects. This differentiation of intensity is, thus, presented to mind, which recognizes things due to the difference of essence as different modes of existence. All these levels of existence and the intensity is, somehow, propelled by the intrinsic motion or 'substantive movement' that keeps all creation moving towards more intensity by universal evolution.

Aristotelian conception of 'change in accident while movement where substance remains unchanged' has also been rejected by Sadra as it is known that substantial movement causes universal motion and existence is the sole reality but that reality also changes the substances while moving towards the more intense level of existence and this is the only reason that existence is considered ambiguous. This revolutionary view of Sadra is the remarkable attempt that tends to justify all the related concepts, which were developed by Muslim theologians and philosophers in order to present intrinsic nature of the circle of existence.

Traditional debate upon the principality of 'existence' and 'essence' has been conducted by philosophers, theologians and Sufis, which promoted several accounts of the primacy of either existence or essence. Firstly, existence and essence are both considered real (*asi'l*) which means that Ultimate Reality is composed of two realities. Secondly, existence is real whereas essence is mentally posited (*i'tibari*). Thirdly, essence is real and existence is mentally posited reality.

Toshihiko Izutsu has proposed analysis of these three notions of traditional Islamic philosophy. The notion that both existence and essence are real cannot be possible because reality could possess dual aspects but not dual independent components. Moreover, such a notion has not been entertained by any prominent philosopher but the other two notions have been zealously cherished. Suharwadi held primacy of essence over existence and his view considerably supported that notion. Mir Damad and Mulla Sadra in their initial career also kept on supporting this view but afterwards Sadra turned to the primacy of existence. Sadra and Sabzwari held the principality of existence, which sustained in the history of Muslim philosophy as the notable contribution of Sadra. Existence is the principle that unites the multiplicity of objects caused by essence into a single notion of existence. Primacy of essence cannot unite the transcendental

unity of Being because essence differentiates things with distinguished features of particular objects, thus, essence cannot be the principle reality. It is only existence that grants unity to all multiplicity.¹⁹

In Sadra's view corporeal beings are less intense than incorporeal because in-corporeality possesses less essence, and on the highest level, existence is pure and without essence. Knowledge also belongs to the incorporeal level of existence because comprehensive status of knowledge has no part that remains absent from the other part as material bodies are thought to hold such characteristics. Knowledge of the self in which subject and object of knowledge are same may be called 'presence' that possesses higher level of existence. Material things are objective because they are perceived by minds producing impressions according to the capacity of sense organs, thus, knowledge of an objective thing is subjective having the essence identical to the external object but its existence (mental form) has more intensity than the objective thing (material form).

Knowledge, Knower and the Known

Mind may separate the existence of external object and its essence but subjective thing or knowledge of a thing holds both essence and existence into an inseparable form. We can say that in Sadra's metaphysics of existence, knowledge is a mode of existence that is necessarily concerned with the subject of knowledge (knower), and the object of knowledge (known). Knowledge of a thing once grasped by the mind acquires another mode of existence, although its existence is more intense but necessarily concerned with knower. Consequently, the knower and the known are considered identical in Mulla Sadra's metaphysics. Sadra's epistemology is, therefore, joined with ontology that develops a unifying approach for the determination of Ultimate Reality. This notion has been appreciated by Iqbal in such words:

No great thinker, however, appeared in Persia until the 17th Century, when the acute Mulla Sadra of Shiraz upheld his philosophical system with all the vigor of his powerful logic. With Mulla Sadra Reality is all things, yet is none of them and true knowledge consists in the identity of the subject and the object. De Gobineau thinks that the philosophy of Sadra is a mere revival of Avicennaism. He, however, ignores the fact that Mulla Sadra's doctrine of the identity of subject and object constitutes the final step which the Persian intellect took towards complete monism.²⁰

Human knowledge has a being of lower kind than God's knowledge because human soul is the active agent that creates forms of knowledge but due to low intensity it is incapable of producing effect in external world as God's knowledge does. Essences of things (ayan-i-thabita) are called God's knowledge, which has external effect and due to this effect things are created and annihilated in the real world. Mental form that soul creates is immaterial and its essence is inseparable from its existence but essences of external objects are quite separable, however, the mental form or immaterial mode of existence of a tree and existence of real tree are different but their essence is identical.

Because of this identity of essence mind can possess the knowledge of the multiplicity of objects and in spite of such multiplicity knower and the known are identical because knowledge is soul's creation and soul is also simple although of lower grade than the simplicity of Pure Being or God. Knower can also extract the essence of the known object both by being a knower of that thing and being the known object of mental form. At this point we can say that knowledge of an object is identical to its actual existence, however, it is 'knowledge by presence' e.g. self-knowing. But in case of external objects knower cannot have knowledge identical to the objects actual existences; therefore, it is called 'knowledge by acquisition'.

We can infer that knowledge by 'presence' has priority in Sadra's thought, over 'acquisition' due to its subtlety. Intellectual intuition that Sadra suggests is the highest experiential understanding of existence, which reasoning and generalizations cannot grasp. Deep plunge of intellectual intuition manages to have direct experience of Ultimate Truth. Obviously then this notion of 'existence' was rejected by Suharwardi but in modern era Kant treated the conception of Being or Existence in a different manner. For Kant 'Being' is just a connective sort of idea that merely affirms the existence of a thing otherwise it does not add anything real with the actual thing or with the idea of something.

Conclusion

According to Kant, although 'Being' seems to be real property but it is not a real attribute of a thing, had it (existence) been real attribute then mere concept of a thing would also be real.²¹The idea of 100 dollars does not necessitate its existence therefore the idea of a perfect being (God) is also devoid of existence because existence is not a real attribute. The idea of a triangle necessarily includes the constitution of three angles but erroneously the idea of necessary existence has been attached to the concept of *Necessary Being (God)*. Concept of God analytically contains a

priori other related conceptions (Omnipotence, Omniscience) along with 'existence'. If we think about a 'red pen' then both ideas 'redness and pen-ness' are constituted with the possibility of actual existence in outside world but the mere idea (red pen) in the mind does not necessarily point towards its existence.

Other way to understand this notion is that what could be left behind if we eliminate all attributes of a thing except existence, certainly there is left 'nothing'. Therefore, existence is not a real property but an odd conception outside the domain of knowledge. Kant maintains:

Our consciousness of all existence (whether immediately through perception, or mediately through inferences which connect something with perception) belongs exclusively to the unity of experience; any [alleged] existence outside this field, while not indeed such as we can declare to be absolutely impossible, is of the nature of an assumption which we can never be in a position to justify.²²

Kant does not seem in the position to acknowledge the medieval use of existence because it cannot be justified for its being outside the domain of human experience. Notion of existence is analytic that possesses logical possibility contained in the abstract ideas but real possibility of the existence of a thing belongs to the human capacity and unity of experience. Consequently, idea of the existence of a thing synthetically posits a thing's state of being consist of real predicates. But the existence of 'Pure Being' or Necessary Being is *a priori* analytic idea that possesses characteristic of logical predication and self-contradiction. Kant conclusively remarks, "...if we attempt to think existence through the pure category alone, we cannot specify a single mark distinguishing it from mere possibility."²³

We can better understand how, for Kant, notion of existence is rationally unjustified. Iqbal vehemently rejects this notion²⁴ and we have also seen that Mulla Sadra opposed mere rational labor of cognizing Ultimate Truth. Sadra's intellectual intuition efficiently avoids self-contradiction of analytic *a priori* notion as of Kant's objection through rejection of comprehensibility of existence by reason alone. For Sadra, ever-changing and ever-evolving reality is inflicted with continuous substantial change that renders existence to be ever-unfolding itself in a single whole that is directly conceivable intuitively. Perception of change as multiplicity and individual identities of things causes essences to be formed by human mind without having their distinct ontological realm. Ultimate Reality has

no duality but it is a single organic whole saturated with the existential status of the 'observer' and the 'observed'. Therefore Sadra's Hikma (Wisdom) unifies epistemology and ontology and integrates rational labor with direct experience in order to see things as they really are.

End Notes

- ¹*The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Online*, s.v. "Mulla Sadra," by Sajjad Rizvi, Summer 2009 Edition, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mulla-sadra/>
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- ³Fazlur Rehman, *Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*, 03.
- ⁴Syed Ali Nadeem Rizavi, "Philosophy of Mulla Sadra and its Influence on India." In *Religion in Indian History*, ed. Irfan Habib New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2010, 177.
- ⁵*Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy Online*, s.v. "Mulla Sadra," by Sayeh Meisami, ISSN 2161-0002, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/sadra/>.
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- ⁷Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*. NY: Caravan Books, 1976, 25.
- ⁸A J Arberry, *Avicenna on Theology*. London: Butler & Tanner, 1951, 27.
- ⁹Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*, 29.
- ¹⁰Fazlur Rehman, *Philosophy of Mulla Sadra*, 27.
- ¹¹Hossein Nasr, *Sadr al-Din Shirazi and his Transcendent Theosophy*. Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1978, 78.
- ¹²Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*, 70.
- ¹³Muhammad Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. London: Oxford University Press, 1934, 57.
- ¹⁴Nasr, *Sadr al-Din Shirazi and his Transcendent Theosophy*, 79-80.
- ¹⁵Mulla Sadra, *The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations. Kitab al-Mashair*, trans. Hussain Nasr USA: Brigham Young University Press, 2014, 03.
- ¹⁶Mulla Sadra, *The Wisdom of The Throne. Hikmat al-Arshia*, trans. James W Morris New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981, 51.
- ¹⁷Muhammad Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 02.
- ¹⁸Hossein Nasr, "Mulla Sadra: His Teachings," in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, eds. Hussain Nasr and Oliver Leaman London: Routledge, 1996, 1146.
- ¹⁹Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence*. Tokyo: Keio University, 1971, 100-104.
- ²⁰Muhammad Iqbal, *Development of Metaphysics in Persia*. London: Luzac and Company, 1908, 134.
- ²¹Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith London: Macmillan and Co., 1929, 504.
- ²²Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman, 506.

²³ Ibid.,506.

²⁴“The quest after a nameless nothing, as disclosed in Neo-Platonic mysticism - be it Christian or Muslim - cannot satisfy the modern mind which, with its habits of concrete thinking, demands a concrete living experience of God.” Muhammad Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 86.

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