

ANALYSIS OF MULLA SADRA'S METHOD IN COMPILING WORKS

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Abstract. Convexity and apparent contradiction in Mulla Sadra's works is one of the main issues that has provided a pretext for critics of Mulla Sadra's school. In the light of these protests, the present study aims to provide an interpretation of Sadra-to-Sadra and based on scientific and practical aspects of the late Akhund in order to conduct a method-driven analysis of Mulla Sadra's works. The result of this research leads us to the view that, Mulla Sadra, by studying various Islamic sciences and addressing them in the text of the transcendental wisdom and developing a method in Islamic philosophy, seeks to establish the school of transcendental wisdom and its "language" and utilizes a method which is named " " along with using words of Islamic sciences to verbal contribution and a detailed and systematic explanation of views, approaches and foundations of this school. Accordingly, the forms of controversy in Mulla Sadra's works will be answered and resolved.

Keyword : Mulla Sadra, serious, Transcendental Wisdom, Language, Educational course.

Introduction and Problem Statement:

Method and methodology are among the issues that one can consider them to be prior to the formation of sciences, schools and intellectual trends. In other words, there is a firm relationship between methodology and epistemology, on the one hand, and the techniques of work compilation, on the other hand, which is of vital role in reaching a correct understanding of intellectual systems. Methodology is other than method. Method represents the course which is traversed by the scientist through his scientific compartment while methodology stands for the knowledge of this course. This is why method is always an essential part of the intellectual movement and scientific effort of a scientist (Parsania, 2010: 69). Then, by methodology one refers to the study of one's approach and method in his researches as well as the analysis of the epistemic principles and the search for a research model (Qaramaleki, 2009: 21). A correct understanding of what is now known as the heritage of the perennial thought of Sadr al-Din Shirazi – the Foremost of Theosophers – i.e. Transcendent Theosophy is hinged upon the knowledge of the method and techniques used in this philosophical school. The lack of knowledge of the problem of method in this type of theosophy has given rise to some scientific and non-scientific misconceptions and objections.

The method of Mulla Sadra in his debates of the philosophical problems is influenced by such factors as the specific subject-matter of knowledge, goal of knowledge, ontology and epistemology that have been raised by Transcendent Theosophy (ibid.). This study of methods is directly related with the School's epistemological principles. As to the significance of problem of methodology, Methodology of Philosophy of Mulla Sadra raises a question concerning the way one should judge between the contradictory views of Sadra's Theosophy without discovering his philosophy's methodology and argues:

"Analysis of the issue of epistemic determination and authenticity of Sadra's philosophy is contingent upon an investigation of his research pattern. Discovery of the sides of epistemic geometry of Sadra's philosophy is hinged upon the solving of problem (s) of methodology of Mulla Sadra. These two issues share the same destiny" (Qaramaleki, 2009: 29).

Accordingly, in methodological investigations of Mulla Sadra two issues are notable:

A- Epistemic methodology of philosophical school of Transcendent Theosophy;

B- Mulla Sadra's method in compilation of works for teaching the theosophical beliefs of this school.

The current essay seeks to answer the following questions: whether Mulla Sadra intended to invent a method for teaching the doctrines through compilation of the works of Transcendent Theosophy? What methodological and linguistic effect has had this course of teaching on Transcendent Theosophy?

The study of these questions not only give rise to issues like the type of confrontation of Mulla Sadra with various schools, epistemological method of Mulla Sadra, semantics of theosophy in Sadra's thought rather it can offer an answer to the age-old objection of the plagiarism and contradiction in Sadra's Theosophy.

1- Principles of Didactic Course of Sadra's Theosophy:

The study of the didactic techniques and method in every school has two fundamental principles that consist of:

A- Epistemological method of the school that expresses the nature of issues, method and type of intervention in their solution;

B- Expression style in teaching the beliefs that is considered to be the language of the school.

The relation of these two principles is a bilateral and interactive relation but due to the priority of their explanation over the didactic course it has been assayed in the form of typological research.

A- Epistemic Methodology of Transcendent Theosophy

It is argued that Sadra's Transcendent Theosophy is an effort towards approximation and integrity of the separated Islamic sciences of theology, philosophy and mysticism, on the one hand, and of the textual diversion and interpretation of Quranic verses and Islamic traditions. Therefore, scientific and intellectual unity can be regarded as the essential goals of Sadra's Transcendent Theosophy. This methodical approach is indeed the completion of the method of integrity and approximation of the ideas of past master particularly as done by Ibn Abi Jumhur Ehsaei in his brilliant work entitled *Majla*.¹ Mulla Sadra has grounded this method on the philosophical principles of Primacy of Existence and Graded Unity. According to Muslim theologians, rational soul has two faculties one which allows it to know universal affairs while the other handles the intellectual actions. The faculty in rational soul which enables the latter to perceive the universals is theoretical reason and the faculty that provides the path for the realization of the action is practical reason. Accordingly, Mulla Sadra divides theosophy (i.e. theologically grounded philosophy) into two types of practical and theoretical theosophies (Shirazi, 2003: 199). Sadra believes that the perception of universals is the task of theoretical reason but the particular view that leads the universal perception to practice will be the task of the practical reason (ibid: 240). In Sadra's thought which is grounded in the idea of graded unity of existence the unanimity of the mentioned terms seems to be intelligible and despite the offered definitions concerning these two types of reasons Mulla Sadra does not accept the difference these two and believes that these two reasons are one and their separation is not correct (idem, vol. 4: 418).

In *Sharh al-Hidayah al-Athiriyah* he argues that what paves the ground for the perfection of theoretical and practical faculties is called theoretical and practical theosophies (philosophies) (idem, 1981: 6).² Theosophy in both senses by Muslim theologians had been in charge of human perfection and the latter consists of the transcendence of human spirit. Accordingly, a concept called "transcendent theosophy" was coined; insofar as the discussion of theosophy and transcendent theosophy was undertaken even by Avicenna. In the book tenth of *Al-Esharat va al-Tanbihat* Avicenna argues that this theosophy is only available to those who are persistent in science (Avicenna, 1982, vol. 2, p. 299). In his commentary of *Al-Esharat*, Khajeh Nasir al-Din Tusi compares the transcendent theosophy with peripatetic philosophy and argues that while the latter is purely rational and argumentative the former combines rational arguments and mystical musings (Tusi, vol. 2, p. 401).³

Accordingly, one may state that Mulla Sadra has used the term "transcendent theosophy" drawing upon the thought of his predecessors like Avicenna in order to pave the path for the articulation of the noble teachings of theosophy (that were also noted by Avicenna) within the philosophical system of transcendent theosophy. Then, following the pace of past theologians, he also defines theosophy as the knowledge of the essence of the Truth – first stage of existence – its attributes, actions and the quality of issuance of beings from it (Shirazi, 1999: 7).

Mulla Sadra considers theosophy to have its origin in a pure heart that is away from the worldly affairs and satanic temptation (Idem, 1999: 152). This notion of theosophy as compared to what was raised by the past philosophers is more perfect. Accordingly, Mulla Sadra believes that transcendent theosophy is a synthesis of noble revealed teachings, rational arguments and mystical intuitions. In *Al-Mabda va al-Ma'ad* he argues that perfection of theoretical faculty enables one to achieve these noble teachings (idem, 1975: 5).

Sadr al-Din Shirazi considers theosophy to be a divine mercy and sparks of the Absolute Existence (ibid, 8). He also contends that the followers of this theosophy are men of intellect who have succeeded to leave their bodies and expose themselves to the illuminations of light and vision (idem, 1975: 21). Before Sadra Sheikh Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi discusses the stages of theologians and mystical philosophers focusing on the issue of mystical reflection. In the introduction to *Hikmat al-Eshraq* Suhrawardi divides the theologians into several stages:

- 1- Divine theologian skilled in mystical reflection who lacks rational argument;
- 2- Discursive theologian who lacks mystical reflection;
- 3- Divine theologian who is well-versed both in mystical reflection and rational argument;

¹ For further details cf. Tahireh Kamalizadeh and Reza Kuhkan, 2016, Ibn Abi Jumhur, Institute of Illuminationist Shia Theology, Research Journal of Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Tehran University.

² Based on this issue of theoretical and practical reason Avicenna divides philosophy into theoretical and practical and believes that theoretical philosophy is the perfection of theoretical soul in order to reach the actualized reason; and this perfection becomes possible through conceptual and propositional sciences that lie outside our actions and states. Practical philosophy is also the perfection of theoretical faculty of soul through conceptual and propositional sciences in the light of affairs that have their origin in our actions (Avicenna, 1984: 330-331).

³ The title "transcendent theosophy" is also found in the works of Islamic mystics. For example, Qeysari believes that transcendent theosophy is a source of error for those who are not open to the truth (Qeysari, 2002: 15).

- 4- Divine theosopher who is skillful in mystical reflection but mediocre or weak in rational argument;
- 5- Theosopher who is skillful in rational argument but mediocre or weak in mystical reflection;
- 6- The man who seeks after mystical reflection and rational argument;
- 7- The man who seeks after mystical reflection;
- 8- The man who seeks rational discussion.

According to Suhrewardi, whenever a theosopher who is skillful both in mystical reflection and rational argument the presidency will be with him and he is the caliph of God on earth⁴ (Suhrewardi, 1971: 21).

Furthermore, Mulla Sadra believes that attention to the world of meanings and secrets and preoccupation with it and avoidance of whatever other than Truth are the initial requirements for taking advantage of transcendent theosophy (Shirazi, 1997: 4). Nevertheless, one should say that Mulla Sadra has considered the correlation between mystical intuition and imitation of Sharia as well as rational argument to be the requirement of the initiation of mystical wayfarer (idem, 1981, vol. 7: 152, 226; vol. 9: 242). Then, reason and rational propositions are introduced as confident means for realization of the judgments (idem, nd., vol. 1: 10). According to Sadra, real rational argument has no difference with mystical intuition (idem, vol. 2: 217).

Overall, it is evident that a thought takes form based on the ideas of predecessors and the basis of every thought is certainly the scientific treasure of the past masters. This is also the case with transcendent theosophy. The most significant sources of transcendent theosophy consist of:

- 1- Peripatetic philosophy, particularly the ideas of Avicenna;
- 2- Islamic theology;
- 3- Illuminationism (Suhrewardi's Philosophy of Light);
- 4- The thoughts of mystics particularly the mystical theories of Ibn Arabi;
- 5- Revealed principles of Islam and Shia prophetic traditions (cf. Nasr, 2004: 408).

Accordingly, some contemporary scholars of transcendent theosophy have offered a set of theories concerning the epistemological bases of this school referring to the ideas of the proponents and opponents of Sadra as follows:

- 1- Transcendent theosophy as an eclectic philosophy (an unsystematic mixture of the ideas of other thinkers and repetition of their approaches);
- 2- Transcendent peripatetic illuminationist theosophy (a combination of Peripateticism, Illuminationism and Iranian and Islamic Neo-Platonism);
- 3- Mulla Sadra's theosophy as a mystical philosophy (an epistemic identity based on mystical thoughts of Ibn Arabi with a philosophical styles);
- 4- Transcendent theosophy as a theologico-philosophical school (theologically groundedness of Mulla Sadra's theosophy);
- 5- Transcendent theosophy as a theosophy with a variety of tools of data collection (various approaches to data collection and using different tools for approximation to truth);
- 6- Transcendent theosophy as an interdisciplinary approach (theory raising in confrontation with problems and research in the works of other scholars and presentation of criticism as regards the contradictory views);
- 7- Transcendent theosophy as an initiation from philosophical stance to revealed stance (early Mulla Sadra a rational philosopher and intuitive mystic and later Mulla Sadra a Quranic teacher inspired by revealed teachings of the Prophet and Imams);
- 8- Transcendent theosophy enjoyed of a super language (Mulla Sadra's philosophy is neither an eclectic system nor an evolution of the past ideas rather a super language) (Faramarz Qaramaleki, 2009: 22).

These theories and ideas are in turn a distinct approach to the scientific method of Mulla Sadra and despite their merits they provide a partial picture of transcendent theosophy.

It seems that contrary to what was expressed through the above eight alternative analyses we should not consider transcendent theosophy to be an eclectic, synthetic or interdisciplinary philosophy; rather Sadra seeks to introduce the problems of various Islamic sciences like theology, philosophy, mysticism and even Quranic exegesis into theosophy because this comparison of problems not only is a long and effective stride towards the unity of original intellectual streams within Islamic world it is also a source of incorrect notions of this theosophy.

On the other hand, by dealing with intuitive themes and taking full advantage of the Islamic (Shia) doctrines in rational philosophy he has succeeded to develop Islamic philosophy from a methodic point of view and to breathe the spirit of Illuminationism and prophetic revelation into theosophy. However, it is evident that Mulla Sadra has considered the reason and rational propositions to be a trustable path that leads us to the judgments. This is why the method of transcendent theosophy is known to be a synthesis, of course not eclectic in nature, of Quran,

⁴ For further details see *Theosophical Principles of Art and Aesthetics according to Sheikh Shabuddin Suhrewardi*, Teherah Kmalizadeh.

mysticism and ratiocination, taking advantage of the strengths and avoidance of the weaknesses (Quran, rational proof and mysticism are interconnected).

Sadra believes that the basis of acceptance of prophetic tradition, mystical intuition and rational argument is reason and if reason loses its dependability the tradition and intuition will lose their credibility too (Shirazi, 2003, vol. 1: 28). Thus, this is the reason why many have prized him for inventing a unique method (Motahari, 1996: 505). On the other hand, some critics have suggested that any synthesis of philosophy, mysticism and Quran, due to the difference of their principles, problems, tools and goals, would lead to incorrect results (Yathrebi, 2010: 24).

The proponents of synthesis-centered interpretation of Sadra's ideas argue that the founder of transcendent theosophy aimed to provide the path for understanding of the pillars of Islamic worldview and put an end to the historical differences of mystics, theosophers and religious scholars through such a systematic synthesis (Qaramaleki, 2001: 241).

Some contemporary scholars contend that the method of Sadra's philosophy and his innovations serve as a basis for the interdisciplinary approach in theological studies. Accordingly, Sadra has done neither eclecticism nor synthesis; rather contrary to his ancient predecessors, he has eradicated the methodological exclusivism. Interdisciplinary approach reveals the strengths and weakness of every other approach and makes the scope of intuition and reason clear. This method is based on a graded notion of truth and accordingly, each approach can uncover a certain degree of truth. Sadra considers truth to be of graded nature and thus he contends that human knowledge is of various degrees through which certain grades of truth are uncovered. This method leads to the integration of rational, mystical, theological and hermeneutical approaches. In fact, adoption of different approaches is a type of methodological pluralism that is based on the graded-ness of truth and distinguishes transcendent theosophy from the common philosophies. The philosophy in its ordinary form adopts an exclusivist approach (pure ratiocination) that allows it to experience the surface of truth while transcendent theosophy delves into the depths of truth (ibid).

It is also noteworthy that in Sadra's method theory and practice come together in transcendent theosophy. Then, Sadra is of the belief that strengthening of practical reason, perfection of soul through worshipping and purification, avoidance of sins, purification of soul from vices, strengthening of the basis of knowledge and preparation of spirit and a subtle inner entity for acceptance of the lights of the Lord are the basis of understanding of realities. Theoretical and practical theosophies, which are distinguished and separated from each other in Farabi following Greek philosophers, in Sadra's transcendent theosophy come together through the mediation of mystical initiation and get revealed in the form of Quadruple Travels.

Thus, the most important objections to the above-mentioned alternative theories of Sadra's methodology can be outlined as follows: impossibility of eclecticism, synthesis, combination, correlation or interdisciplinary approach due to the fundamental difference of the principles of transcendent theosophy as compared to the thoughts of past masters, paradox in the methods of sciences despite the methodic development of transcendent theosophy, simultaneous attention of transcendent theosophy to theoretical and practical philosophies and lack of attention to this issue in various branches of Islamic and philosophical schools, their paradoxical stance as compared to Sadra's claim of innovations of this theosophy, differences of the definition of transcendent theosophy as conceived by Sadr al-Mutalihin with the proposed interpretations, possibility of difference in results in the event of the difference in tools or methods of sciences and the difference with the serious criticisms leveled by Mulla Sadra against the foundations, tools, methods, and thematic rules of various branches of Islamic sciences and schools of philosophical thinking.

Thus, the approach taken by Professor Mahdi Haeri Yazdi (among the previously discussed eight approaches) according to which transcendent theosophy is indeed a super language seems to be more consistent with Mulla Sadra's method in invention of transcendent theosophy. Using the theories of analytic philosophy, Haeri suggests that transcendent theosophy enjoys two thematic and super languages (Haeri Yazdi, 2005: 161). This super language is a metalanguage that defines the semantic concepts of thematic language. For example, Haeri Yazdi contends that primacy of existence is a metalanguage or super language of transcendent theosophy (ibid: 162) whose shadow has spread over the translation and understanding of the words used in the thematic language of this theosophy. Although weak signs of this theory can be found in some phrases of Mulla Sadra there are still objections to this theory including impossibility or lack of transparency of the inclusion of meta-languages among the thematic principles of transcendent theosophy, emergence of hermeneutical misunderstandings in interpretation of concepts of transcendent philosophy, trusting the addressee of super language with the understanding of thematic language despite clear discussions of Sadr al-Mutalihin in most of thematic principles and their criticism based on the rules of transcendent theosophy, lack of reason for the compilation of numerous and voluminous works despite the possibility of formulation of the super language and referring the reader to the works of past thinkers and lack of sufficient evidences of Mulla Sadra's words that would endorse this method.

Accordingly, it seems that none of the aforementioned theories can provide a comprehensive and exclusive explanation of Mulla Sadra's method in transcendent theosophy, on the one hand, nor they can address the critiques of plagiarism and contradiction in the works of Sadra, on the other. The "constructed language of transcendent theosophy" in this essay is an analysis that aims not only at taking full advantage of the previous scientific efforts rather it also seeks to provide an answer for understanding the didactic course of Sadra that would be free from the above objections.

B: Expression Style or Constructed Language of Transcendent Theosophy

Social construction is the issue that was raised first by Berger and Luckmann in 1966. Social constructivists believe that every society creates social constructions through its actions and language is one of these constructions (Khoshk Janu Dabaghi, 2017). Construction refers to making something (Dehkhoda Encyclopedia). Thus conceived, "constructed language" in this context stands for a special language constructed for an intellectual school and includes a particular set of terms that build its basis, systematic action and identity. Some examples of constructed languages in philosophy have been offered by Descartes and Russell (Modaressi, 2012: 124).

The implicative relation of a word with its meaning is a mentally posited and contractual relation (Mohaqeq Damad, 2006: 21). The chief principle of this implicative relation lies in the fact that this implication is the result of forge and allocation and in such a case the position is called "determining" and sometimes this implication is due to the allocation of the word to the meaning as a result of numerous application in the event of which the position is called "determined" (Mozaffar, 2003: 25). Therefore, language in its general sense can be considered a constructed entity.

According to rational judgments and the philosophy of the existence of language and words, when the social ego⁵ emerges it is required to have a particular language composed of chosen words. These language and words can be one of the languages shared by individuals or a chosen language other than the language and words of every members of the society. In other words, in every social ego and as a result of it in every school besides the specific goal of its formation there is a distinct feature called language that constitute "linguistic ego". Some scholars have referred to this linguistic ego as linguistic society or speech community that cannot be an expression of unity of language in the society (Modarresi, Zare, 2011).

The problem of language and words and their influence is of such an importance that the emergence of social linguistics heralds a new type of linguistic studies concerning language. The scope of language and knowledge of its reality has even surpassed the field of linguists and been considered by contemporary philosophers, specifically in the west, as a philosophical theme.

Since in the didactic course of every philosophical school creation of an epistemic network of learners is evident, then transcendent theosophy in its didactic course has led to the formation of an epistemic and philosophical network. In every human network as a social construction we need a constructed language. This language is used as means of intra-network connection. Due to the scope of the doctrines of transcendent theosophy and the epistemic network of the scholars of Islamic sciences, thus, we need to choose a special language for sharing this school's philosophical consequences. This language cannot be anything outside the following three alternatives:

- 1- Selection of a language and words from current languages in one or several members of the epistemic and philosophical community;
- 2- Selection of a language or words outside the current languages among the individual members of the epistemic and philosophical network;
- 3- Creation of a constructed language within the epistemic and philosophical network based on the application of the language.

It seems that the two former alternatives cannot address the need of Mulla Sadra in the epistemic and philosophical network of transcendent theosophy and his didactic course. Accordingly, we need a constructed language that would have distinct conditions and features as compared to the ordinary languages some of which have been outlined as follows:

- 1- Being based on an essential language that is understandable in philosophical thinking: this requirement aims at using the existing linguistic potencies. In other words, it seems that this language needs certain words to be adopted for facilitation of expression instead of construction of new linguistic letters and grammar. This language has been used by transcendent theosophy as the language of discursive philosophy and for this reason the literature of Sadra's philosophy is of utmost proximity with peripatetic philosophy.
- 2- Invention of specific words in relation to new concepts or issues: based on the needs of constructed language we need some words to be invented and this invention is conditioned by the course of time (evolutionary course of philosophy).

⁵ Social ego is a concept that clearly distinguishes between the society and the totality of the individuals (Tavasoli, 2001: 281 cf. Jenkins, 2002: 8).

- 3- Playing the role of a mediatory language: mediatory language is a language that is used by two groups that do not share an introductory language (Chirikbav, 2008, 31). Besides borrowing, one of the aspects of transaction of linguistic communities is related to the interference of language and mediatory words. The most common process that is seen in the course of interactions of two languages is the transaction of vocabulary elements. When the speakers of various languages come in close touch with each other under certain conditions they need to use a particular tool for communication (Modarresi, 2012: 52-54). This tool can be the constructed language that is considered to be a type of mediatory language.

Based on these introductory remarks, one should say that Mulla Sadra the founder of the epistemic and philosophical network of transcendent theosophy has established specific language and words which on the one hand are based on the official language of Islamic philosophy (discursive and rational) and on the other hand, play the role of mediatory language within this network through invention of new concepts based on the ordinary words. In this regard, Mulla Sadra states:

A book which contains the science of mystical reflection and intuitive truths have been revealed through didactic expressions and the heavenly secrets are expressed via expressions which are accessible to the ordinary minds and difficult and complicated meanings are presented in the form of words that are familiar to the laity (Shirazi, 1981, vol. 1, 9).

Therefore, firstly many words in transcendent theosophy are homonyms with the current philosophical terms in past traditions which can be understood based on the textual evidences; secondly, formation of this constructed language leads to the creation of the epistemic and philosophical network of transcendent theosophy; because due to the existence of universal meanings in the basic language (Islamic philosophy) and also forms of homonyms in some words the reader follows the scholar of various Islamic sciences; thirdly, this constructed language plays the role of a mediatory language and convinces the scholars of Sadra's philosophy to interpret his stance in terms of eclectic, synthetic, comparative or interdisciplinary notions; while, the constructed language in this role, i.e. mediation, helps the reader to understand transcendent theosophy. For example, despite fundamental and super-structural criticisms of Mulla Sadra of the theory of providential agency in peripatetic philosophy, he redefines this concept based on the theory of divine knowledge and christens his chosen view as providential agency though this is just a matter of homonymy. There are several other examples of such strategy in the works of Sadra.

Therefore, Mulla Sadra enumerates the problems of various Islamic sciences and addresses them using a unique mediatory constructed language. Then, despite this Unitarian approach one should not consider transcendent theosophy to be an eclectic vision. In the opening of *Al-Mashaer* transcendent theosophy is distinguished from theological disputes, pure imitation, mere discursive theosophy and sufi delusions (Shirazi, 1983: 5).

It is noteworthy that shared words in the constructed language should not be deemed to be in line with the fact in many cases Sadra has sought to show that his theories are the continuation of the ideas of past masters through direct reference to early or contemporary theosophers as this unity of meanings and its continuation in the course of Islamic philosophy is itself among the values of this intellectual current; but in some texts the absence of the name of the author has caused some to charge Mulla Sadra with plagiarism.⁶

Generally speaking, one can state that Mulla Sadra has pursued three goals via delineation of the ideas of Islamic scholars, using common terms with various branches of Islamic sciences and philosophical schools and the rich achievements of his predecessors:

- 1- Refutation of incorrect views and utter distinction and separation of true ideas from the baseless hallucinations;
- 2- Solving the superficial conflicts and approximation of real oppositions of various fields of Islamic sciences;
- 3- Association with scientific community and elites and using mediatory language in order to convince the Muslim scholars to follow the transcendent theosophy.

On the one hand, with the formation of the constructed language of Sadra's theosophy the path was paved for the beginning of the didactic course of this theosophy and on the other hand, though the theory of constructed language in methodic analysis of transcendent theosophy is not faced with the questions that challenge other alternative theories it should still be asked how the identification, definition and enumeration of the concepts of this theosophy, which according to the theory of constructed language of Sadra's philosophy, are homonymous with the concepts used in the language of other philosophical currents in Islamic world, will be handled? It seems that Sadr al-Mutalihin in his practical and theoretical philosophies will answer this question with further details.

Now after the explanation of the fundamental principles of the didactic method of Mulla Sadra it is the time to undertake the study of the didactic course of transcendent theosophy.

⁶ It should be mentioned that providing references in researches is a modern approach while in the past due to the general state of knowledge no detailed reference was given. Thus, this objection has its root in the lack of sufficient knowledge of the scientific conditions of the era.

2- "Evolutionary Didactic Course" and Methodology of Mulla Sadra in Compilation and Presentation of Philosophical Ideas and Principles

As we mentioned earlier, besides the importance of explanation of epistemological method of Sadra's theosophy what is intended in this research is the study of the method of compilation of the works of Mulla Sadra. For the knowledge of this method can assist the scholars of the transcendent theosophy in correct understanding of the ideas of Sadra and his method. In his introduction (introductory remarks) to *Asfar* – in line with the traditional path of the past masters of philosophy – he analytically explains his own method of preparation of the required ground in the reader in order to present him with the new theory:

You need to know that sometimes I prefer not to satisfy myself with the presentation of what is true by me and instead elaborate on the ideas of the traditional philosophers and discuss their mistakes. Then I continue to cast light on the issue as far as I can amid the critical discussions of their errors. This is done to sharpen the minds for understanding the subtle points that prepare them for approaching the difficult problems of theosophy (Shirazi, 1981, vol. 1: 10-11).

He again lay emphasis on the importance of this method and explains it in the following words:

And we have also adopted this method in most of our specific goals and thus first discuss the ideas of traditional scholars and then proceed to depart them lest the readers not to lose their touch with the truth from the very outset rather they would find more sympathy with our stance and their ears and hear are prepared for the new ideas (idem, vol. 1: 85).

This method has been called by the commentators and masters of transcendent theosophy "didactic method or course of Mulla Sadra" (Hassanzadeh Amoli, 2001, vol. 2" 294-295; Javadi Amoli, 1996, vol. 1: 262-266 and 477-479 and 521; vol. 2: 225; vol. 2: 251, 546; vol. 4: 404-406; vol. 5: 560-566; 1990, vol. 1: 424; vol. 2: 171; 1993: 722-724). In other words, Sadra al-Mutalihin observes the intellectual measures of the past philosophers in dealing with the laity as he mentions in *Asfar*. To put it otherwise, he starts to speak with the people as one of them and after delineation of a number of premises he continues with some secrets (Javadi Amoli, vol. 1: 521). In his introduction to *Asfar* he also alludes to the didactic aspect of this method:

A book which contains the science of mystical reflection and intuitive truths have been revealed through didactic expressions and the heavenly secrets are expressed via expressions which are accessible to the ordinary minds and difficult and complicated meanings are presented in the form of words that are familiar to the laity (Shirazi, 1981, vol. 1, 9).

But the results of the current essay show that it is more consistent with the philosophical system of Sadra to speak of "didactic evolutionary course". If evolution represents a transformation from one type to another and from a station to another and from one stage to another (Javadi Amoli, 2011: 69), in the same way that the philosophers have defined the philosophy as "man's evolution into a rational world similar to the objective world..." the goal of theosophy and philosophy is human evolution and ascension to rational world.

Sadra believes that his theoretical reflections are in line with this evolution and suggests that the perfection of theoretical faculty is achieved via acquisition of true sciences and certain teachings by which man embarks upon the path of perfection and mysticism (Shirazi, 1975: 5).

Accordingly, Sadra's method is not merely a didactic course through which the philosopher intends to convey the discursive or intuitive ideas because in this case due to the homonymous terms shared by transcendent theosophy and other philosophical schools it will be difficult to understand Sadra's intention; rather if we take an evolutionary approach as regards teaching one can say that this method is an evolution from scholar to theosopher and a type of movement that leads to the perfection of soul (connection with Active Intellect). This is what Sadra intends to pursue in compilation of his works based on the primordial method of transcendence of soul in practical theosophy.

According to Sadra, human epistemic growth will lead to his evolutionary initiation. Sadr al-Mutalihin considers knowledge to be of graded nature like existence and an effective factor in human perfection. In other words, it is a unique entity whose difference has its roots in perfection and deficiency, intensity and weakness. Therefore, there is no doubt that knowledge is something with which man reaches perfection (idem, 1990: 52). Of course, only true knowledge can be effective on human perfection (idem, vol. 2: 162).

Through knowledge and contemplation form changes into meaning and the sensible transforms into the intelligible; by the same token, the potential becomes actualized and human existence turns to another existence – other than the initial worldly existence (idem, 1990, vol. 2: 22). Sadra believes that the telos and final cause of the creatures are rational beings (ibid, 100) and its ultimate end is union with Active Intellect (like the union of the intellector and the intellected) (idem, 1981a: 116-117).

According to transcendent theosophy, man moves in the course which leads him to perfection and in view of the co-extensionality of knowledge and existence this epistemic evolutionary course is a wayfaring through the

worlds of existence. Attention to the degrees of worlds and spheres of existence as the result of which the stations of soul are revealed is among the affairs that have been noted by Mulla Sadra in numerous points.

Theosophers divide the world of creation into three general levels that consist of:

- 1- Material world (natural world or the sphere of complex entities);
- 2- World of ideas;
- 3- Rational world;

And the rational world is the highest and nobler level of the worlds of existence; but it has some degrees that have been taken into account by Muslim theosophers in the course of human perfection. According to this theory, soul/reason traverses the following quadruple levels:⁷

- 1- Potential Reason: in this level human soul is pure potentiality and void of all virtues (idem, 1981, vol. 7: 260) and since it can receive the perceptual forms it has been compared with primary hyle (idem, vol. 2: 21-22).
- 2- Habitual Reason: when the self-evident truths are acquired by a man the first perfection is created for the rational faculty and it is called habitual reason (cf. idem, 1981b: 205). Habit in this context refers to the state of having something instead of lacking it (Sabzewari, 1981: 670).
- 3- Actualized Reason: this is the level of reason where the theoretical knowledge is acquired based on the self-evident truths; and the soul can observe whatever it wants without further sophistication (Shirazi, 1981b: 205-206). In this level, reason can actually perceive and the actual intelligible entities are united with the intellector (Kamalizadeh, 2012: 152).
- 4- Applied Reason: this is identical with actualized reason when it is connected with the Active Intellect and since it uses the kingdom of heavens it is called applied reason (Shirazi, 1981b: 206).

Throughout these levels of the perfection of soul a sacred entity is involved that is the Active Intellect (ibid, 1981, vol. 9: 145). According to Sadra, Active Intellect is a mediation through which the potential reason becomes habitual like the light makes the colors visible. Besides this reason, it makes also the potential reason which is in the level of potentiality actual⁸ (idem, 1983c: 116-117).

Sadra elaborates on the way in which the soul evolves through Active Intellect:

Then whenever the soul is enlightened by this sacred light (Active Intellect) its imaginative perceptions become illuminated and thus the soul turns to actualized reason and the imaginations become actual intelligibles... In this moment man turns to a rational entity because his existential limitations are nullified due to the termination of the attachments" (Shirazi, 1981, vol. 9: 144).

The soul through its evolutionary course undergoes through certain stages the noblest of which is the connection to Active Intellect; in this stage, according to Sadra, it is no longer a soul rather it has turned already to a reason. Thus, in transcendent theosophy, soul and reason are the two sides of the truth. Hajj Mulla Hadi Sabzewari in his annotations of *Al-Shawahid al-Rububiyah* considers this connection to be a perfection based union and transformation (Sabzewari, 1981: 614). According to Mulla Sadra, theosophy is in charge of this rational-epistemic growth in the evolutionary course of perfection. Then, in compilation of the works concerning transcendent theosophy, on the one hand, he pays full attention to practical philosophy, and on the other hand, repeatedly delineates the forms and stages of every theory, and passes through superficial sciences to the mystical sciences; likewise he starts with the self-evident truths and continues with sophisticated critical discussions of the ideas of past masters and reveals the difference between the traditional philosophical terms and the terminology used in transcendent theosophy; he has even compiled the works based on the practical stages of mystical initiation. It is very likely that he has chosen the title "Four Travels" based on this evolutionary didactic course of initiation.

Mulla Sadra has designed this initiation with the aim of realization of the telos of wisdom, i.e. "evolving into a rational world" and also expansion of philosophical initiation to the life style of the philosopher. It seems that the training of the mystical theosophers after Sadra requires the application of this didactic method; thus didactic method is not designed for the ignorant rather it is specially for the true seekers of mystical reflection who are described in the introduction of *Asfar* as follows:

I have authored this book for my religious brothers and my fellows in the path of intuition and certainty because no one would be benefitted from it but those who are well-versed in the words of theosophers (Shirazi, 1981, vol. 1: 10).

For example, this initiation can be found in the discussions of the theory of unity of existence. Sadra has discussed this problem in the first volume of *Asfar* in the form of the debate of gradational unity of existence and its

⁷ For further details see Kamalizadeh, Tahereh, 2014, Meanings and Applications of Reason in Farabi's *Treatise on Reason*, Journal of Qabasat.

⁸ For further details see Kamalizadeh, Tahereh, 2017, Active Intellect in Illuminationism and Shia Philosophy, Journal of Philosophical Investigations.

foundations and accordingly some have interpreted it as a philosophical reading of unity of existence. After delineation of his own philosophical principles he has addressed the mystically minded reader in various chapters of his book and in the second volume of this book he discusses the problem of personal unity of existence and reveals the mystical aspect of the debate. He discusses this issue as part of the general discussion of cause and effect but he promises to rationalize it in near future. It seems that the type of phrases used by Mulla Sadra in this critical discussion of the views attributed to the mystics as well as his attention to such issues as the creation of existence, primacy of existence, union of the Knower and the Known, divine agency and effervescence are indeed practical examples of the evolutionary initiation that is intended in transcendent theosophy. In a part of the book entitled "On the revelation of the ultimate telos and a greater end than the previous issues and discussions" he guides the reader towards his own chosen view based on the theory of divine agency. Some have separated these stages from each other; then Mulla Sadra has been accused of being stuck in paradoxical arguments while the repetition of these stages in the early and later works is itself a sign of their purposefulness.

As a result, contrary to the critics and opponents who charge Mulla Sadra with plagiarism and paradoxical claims, firstly he has invented a constructed language in order to compile his own works and ideas via creation of a noble epistemic and theosophical system and this language has turned to a mediatory language taking advantage of the potencies of the terms of Islamic sciences. Secondly, due to this constructed language superficial paradoxical claims in the works of Mulla Sadra in most cases are methodical considerations that are required for the didactic evolutionary course and perfection which is the ultimate telos of Islamic theosophy. In this method Mulla Sadra is obliged to express and refer to various intellectual approaches in order to convince the reader to follow the transcendent theosophy regardless of his own intellectual trend. In this course, he had adopted various approaches as regards various branches of Islamic sciences. In his confrontation with the theologians, he is more interested in dealing with the issues of theological science due to the fundamental difference between Islamic theosophy and theology. It is indeed through comparison of the issues of Islamic-Shia theology and transcendent theosophy their association becomes revealed. But due to the fundamental consistency of the discursive philosophy and transcendent theosophy Sadr al-Mutalihin has sought to discuss the issues in view of the rational philosophy and via application of the common language and terminology. For example, one can refer to the issue of divine agency as to which Sadra has a distinguished stance as compared to the ideas of traditional philosophers but he still uses the conventional term of "providential agency".

Moreover, the constructed language of transcendent theosophy as compared to Islamic mysticism, besides attention to the problems and homonymous use of the terms of theoretical mysticism has proceeded to develop a method with which he would be able to rationalize mystical doctrines. Then, this initiation requires total sympathy with him and needs full review of the ideas of Sadra and avoidance of selective reading of the works. If this sympathy is associated with the comprehensive study of the works the path will be paved for the revelation of ultimate truth as conceived by him. Learning and understanding of Sadra's transcendent theosophy is conditional upon the understanding of this didactic course as well as its first requirement, i.e. constructed language.

Conclusion. The results of this study show that Mulla Sadra has devised a didactic course for teaching his own theosophical beliefs within the framework of transcendent theosophy based on a specific epistemological method. By enumeration of the issues of various Islamic sciences and methodic development of them he has coined a "constructed language" for transcendent theosophy that changes into a mediatory language by taking advantage of the potency of words of Islamic sciences.

On the other hand, these two principles have caused the didactic initiation of Mulla Sadra to find an independent form and since Sadra like Avicenna believed that the ultimate end of theosophy is evolution of objective world into rational world, he has implemented this didactic course and initiation in the compilation of his own works in order to set the scene for the theosophical evolution of those who are interested in transcendent theosophy. To this end, he uses the conventional language in order to convince the reader that his chosen view is worth consideration. The method which has been used by Sadra in the compilation of the works leads the reader to the path of evolution and in this method Mulla Sadra is obliged to express his own ideas based on various intellectual trends in order to convince the reader with any intellectual approach to turn to transcendent theosophy. Based on this method many objections of the critics against Sadra's transcendent theosophy like plagiarism, paradox and contradiction are tackled.

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