

A Study of the Relationship between Mulla Sadra's " Extra-Intellectual Order" and Kierkegaard's "Sphere of Religion"

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Abstract

Is there a domain beyond the illogical intellect whose statements are antirational? This question has always called gnosticism to encounter rationalism. Thus, gnostics, gnosticologists, and religionologists in both Christian west and Islamic east have always paid attention to intellect and the extraintellectual order, and to the possible relationship between them. Mulla Sadra believed that neither the statements of the intellect are invalid in the extraintellectual order, nor the statements of the latter in the former. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, in his notion of human life stages, has labeled them as esthetic, ethical, and religious. In his view, the religious domain is extra-rational and extra-ethical. In an analytic process, Mulla Sadra has classified the implications and applications of the word "intellect". In his view, intellect is present in overall human domains and no order of humanity is void of the power of reason. Additionally, in epistemological terms, intellect cannot be in conflict with other components when opining within the domain of its own and its cognitive findings; and does not proscribe its ulterior. In other words, errors emerge in the stage of intellect's decreeing, not in the stage of senses' and intuition's reporting. Now the intellect itself is able to recognize its limits, admit ignorance, and lead the humanity to the boundaries of extra-rational matters. In Mulla Sadra's view, the epistemological and cognitive domain of extraintellectual order and the complexity of knowledge within this domain are not accessible to the intellect, being otherwise (e.g., through heart or revelation) achievable by humans. In Kierkegaard's view, intellect as human capacity of thought is annexative; and experiences and attitudes acquired in relation to the existence have formed human intellect; and the boundary sought by the intellect is, in a sense, the very purpose or objective of the intellect. With his partiality toward faith, Kierkegaard is known to be a harsh critic of rationalism. He wants to remind his readers of limitations of human reason. Placing faith in the center of Christian thinking, he believed that intellect has no role in religious creed; and that the object of faith has to be paradoxical. Without submission to the paradoxical, the necessary passion and the

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ground for decision would not be provided. Submitting to the paradoxical, a passionate human being displays his/her extreme passion and commitment to the object of his/her faith, which is a paradox, and paradoxical as much as the paradox itself. In Kierkegaard's view, the void arising from the inconsistency of two discrete, and at the same time, subsequent issues (ethical and religious life) is filled by an existential issue, namely despair. Such a despair, he argues, is an existential process swallowing the entire individual existence and is the result of paradoxes and substantial impasses that an individual faces within the extant conditions of his/her own life, becoming the turning point where a human being is detached from morality and adjoins religion. Such a despair is deliberate and chosen. Humans cannot be desperate without experiencing despair. When resolving it correctly, an individual would go beyond it righteously. In Islamic view, however, faith is not an anti-rational category. In Mulla Sadra's view, faith is inclusive of instinctive knowledge and intuitive knowledge. Faith has various grades, one being intuitive. Another grade is the knowledge of God through argumentative comparison. Although faith is a matter of heart/instinct, the heartfelt/instinctive faith is not exclusive to exploratory knowledge; and knowledge of God through reasoning and arguments could be considered heartfelt/intuitive faith. He tries to reconcile intellect and religion; or in other words, gnosticism and argumentation. In his specific semantic analytic method, Mulla Sadra links elements seemingly not directly related to the concept of faith to it, even calling them equivalents. He restructures other concepts such as light, science, wisdom, and intellect into a new superior framework, renarrating the theological concept of faith using Koranic, gnostic, and philosophical literature. That's why he tries to make an aperture between intellect and heart when reaching the topic of extraintellectual order. Kierkegaard, on the other hand, raises the issue of paradox when reaching the third stage of life or the sphere of religion in his methodological model. He concludes that the sphere of religion, and entry to the stage of faith is based on existence and has no relevance to the conceptual existence and the concept of existence, but some sort of unity is realized between it and the authentic exterior existence; and even, one has to say, faith is the same as the existence; and what he refers to as "extra-religion" is an extraintellectual order. In his view, the process of faith requires detention of intellect, which, of course, does not imply the omission and negation of intellect. Mulla Sadra, however, with his interpretation of extra intellectual order, accepts the fact that its statements are not accessible to the intellect and the latter is incapable of fathoming then does not imply that if a human being reaches an understanding of extra intellectual order using other means than rationality, logics, and conceptual, influential methods, the intellect will be deaf and blind toward such an understanding. He believes that the statements of the extra intellectual order are not within the intellect's domain of comprehension but in another domain are known as heartfelt /instinctive knowledge. In fact, he denies the alienation of heart and mind because in his view, psyche has a transcendental essence and a collective unity. Therefore, he does not consider heart and mind as mutually exclusive; and that intellect does not deem impossible the heart's intuitions. His interpretations of extra intellectual order are based on his specific view of intellect and Islamic anthropology. However, when Kierkegaard considers the sphere of religion as irrational, he provides a specific conception of humanity contradicting that of Mulla Sadra because he portrays human beings as completely separate and aliens to one another as an archipelago. In fact, he closes all windows between intellect and heart when stating that in the extra intellectual order, the plunge is relevant, not rationalization. Hence the separation between Mulla Sadra's and Kierkegaard's thoughts. They both accept that intellect is not a complete source of knowledge for fathoming the truth. Faced with the paradox in the sphere of religion, Kierkegaard prescribed the detention of intellect. Mulla Sadra's, on the other hand, considers coordinated

and consistent the perceptual realms and knowledge domains in both areas of intellect and the extra intellectual order beyond it. Kierkegaard is a life thinker who has considered the sphere of religion to beyond beyond ethics, intellect, and esthetics in his categorization of life stages. In both their views, the sphere of religion and extra intellectual order have a mysterious and allegorical identity; an allegory which is not a poetic, literary lingo, but a specific way of thinking and a specific method for achieving knowledge. This paper tries to examine the similarities and dissimilarities of those two ways of living, namely, the sphere of religion and the extra intellectual order in the views of the two great thinkers who have developed them.

Keywords:Beyond Intellect; Intellect; Paradox

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