

## Proving Sadra's Ontological Configuration of God through the Theological Foundation in Nahj al-Balaghah

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### Abstract

This study is an attempt to find one of the main sources of Mulla Sadra's Intellectual-philosophical foundations. Mulla Sadra's ontology configuration, relying upon simplicity, unity of right of reality, existence influence, etc. corresponds to the statements of Imam Ali (PBUH) in the description of Allah , the Almighty, in Nahj al-Balaghah including such features as absoluteness, non-numerical unity, negating dualism of God and the disjunction from existences etc., in a way that the theology of Imam Ali (PBUH) may be regarded as one of the main elements of the configuration of Shiite intellect as well as the basis of Mulla Sadra's ontology. Therefore, the semantic and content structure of these two theological systems - theology of Imam Ali (PBUH) and Mulla Sadra's ontology - can be analyzed both in terms of attributes and characteristics and in terms of principles and founding features. As an example, one can refer to the Imam Ali's (PBUH) statement regarding some of the above principles in Nahj al-Balaghah two of which are shortly dealt with in the following:

#### • Unity of existence and nondisjunction of necessary being from the possibilities

Unity of existence mainly emphasizes on simple and absolute existence and there is no plurality in it. Imam Ali (PBUH) says in Nahj al-Balaghah: *مَعَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ لَا بِمُقَارَنَةٍ، وَغَيْرُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ لَا بِمَزَالَةٍ* "that there is none with whom He may keep company or whom He may miss in his absence" (Nahj al-Balaghah, 1986, sermon 1).

In his book entitled "Asfar", Mulla Sadra had made many remarks upon the non-separation of existence and its unity as the main pillar of the philosophy of transcendental wisdom in a way that in one his works says: *مَوْجُودَةٌ بِوُجُودٍ وَاحِدٍ بَأَنَّ يَكُونُ شَخْصٌ وَاحِدٌ ذَا دَرَجَاتٍ وَجُودِيَّةٍ بَعْضُهَا أَرْفَعُ وَأَشْرَفُ مِنْ* existence of every entity is unique and the degree of existence of some of them is higher and nobler than other entities without any distinction or disjunction between them (Mulla Sadra, 1984, 342/5).

Also in discussing the proof of the first cause and its non-separation from its effects that whatever they have is from the first cause, he says:

*«الوجود علّةٌ و معلولاً ... إلى كون العلّة منهنّما أمراً حقيقياً و المعلول جهةً من جهاته و رجعت عليه المسمى بالعلّة و تأثيره للمعلول إلى تطوره بطور و تحيته بحيثية لا انفصال شيء مابين عنه»*

Existence of cause and effect....between these two true matters, there exists cause and effect is an aspect of cause aspects and causality and its influence which is called cause refers to its

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alteration and different aspects of finding himself rather than this point that effect has no reality *other than* the reality of its originating cause and it is not separated from it. (ibid, 299/2) therefore:

Negating dualism of God and God nondisjunction from existents in theology of Imam Ali (PBUH)



Unity of Existence in Sadra's Viewpoint

• **Non-numerical unity of the reality of existence and God, the Almighty**

In Nahj al-Balaghah, it is repeatedly discussed about the divine essence which is of non-numerical unity and that He will not be described through numerical unity. Indeed, divine oneness is *not* of a kind to be regarded as a numerical unity otherwise He will be bound with restrictions.

«لا يشمل بحد و لا يحسب بعد»

He is not confined by limits (as deserving restriction is possible, not obligatory) nor counted by numbers (because it is true unity and the secondary will not be imagined for Him) (Nahj al-Balaghah, 1985, Sermon 228)

Also in another sermon, He says:

«الأحد لا يتأويل عدد»

He is One but not by the first in counting (true unity and unique and there cannot be imagined the second for Him) (Ibid, Sermon 152, Motahhari, 2011, 16, 398)

Sadra, in describing non-numerical unity of the reality of existence, states:

«أن ذاته تعالى صرف الوجود الذي لا أتم منه و الوجود أعرف الأشياء و أبسطها فلا معرف له و لا كاشف فلا جزء له خارجيا و إذ لا ماهية له فلا جنس له و لا فصل فلا حد له لتكوين الحد منهما غالبا و لبساطته و ما لا حد له فلا برهان عليه إذ الحد و البرهان يتشاركان في الحدود فذات الباري مما لا حد له و لا برهان عليه»

, that is, the essence of God is the sole essence that nothing is more perfect than it, and this essence is the most indivisible and the most well-known of all entities; and, therefore, there is no definition for it, and it has no external elements, and there is no quiddity for it, no genus and no difference can be ascribed to it. Thus, it has no limitations because any limitation often contains difference. Another reason for its having no limitations lies in its indivisibility and that for which there exists no limitations has not any arguments, as the arguments and limitations have boundaries in common (Mulla Sadra, 1981:42-43). Finally, it can be claimed that having no elements, limitations, and arguments have caused essence, with regard to its prevalence in all entities, to have a oneness other than numerical oneness.

From the above statements it can be concluded that:

Non-numerical oneness of God in the words of Imam Ali (PBUH) ⇔ the non-numerical oneness on the statements of Mulla Sadra

When examining deeply the remaining words of Imam Ali (PBUH), which are presently available and rethinking the philosophical principles of Mulla Sadra, the close relationship between these can be found. It can be obtained as the results of this hypothesis, as a general consequence, is that the Islamic philosophers' thoughts, especially those of Mulla Sadra, have their origins and roots in the statements of the Innocent. Perhaps one of the reasons of the sustainability and long life of the main principles of Mulla Sadra, in spite of the passage of several centuries after these principles have been stated, is the connection of these thoughts to and their origins from the words of God and the Innocent. Even though we may not believe in this connection, the basic similarities between these principles can be considered as a reason for the right course of Mulla Sadra's thoughts. It should be noted that every statement, save

that of the Innocent, has the possibility of being mistaken and fault, and those which are in our mind are general ones. This is a strong reason that the philosophy of Islam is not the same as the Greece or the Western philosophy. Finally, as a general and brief look, some of the similarities between the principles of Mulla Sadra's philosophy and the statements of Imam Ali (PBUH) have been mentioned:

- The essence of God is not definable  $\Leftrightarrow$  For essence; there is no definition, neither based on limitation nor by demonstration
- Absoluteness view on God  $\Leftrightarrow$  Absoluteness of essence
- The unity of manifestation of God  $\Leftrightarrow$  Eternal manifestation of essence is the reality of its secrecy
- The reality of the pluralism of the entities from the viewpoint of Nahj-o al-Balagha  $\Leftrightarrow$  The reality of the objective world and the creatures while having the unity of the essence
- The unequalled presence of God in all entities  $\Leftrightarrow$  The accidental occurrence of existence to quiddity

### Keywords

God, reality of existence, unity, systematic ambiguity, self-manifestation

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