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The Necessity, Impossibility or Possibility of Substantial Motion from the Viewpoint of Ibn Sina and Mulla Sadra

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Abstract

The category of motion is one of the most important philosophical and scientific issues has been studied in philosophical ontology since Aristotle until now. Ibn Sina has also discussed movement and has proved movement in some accidental categories. But he refused to accept substantial movement. Mulla Sadra also accepts the motion in all categories, and while responding to the problems about substantial movement, for the first time in the history of philosophy, he proved the motion in essence by applying his ontological foundations. This article answers the question of how necessity and impossibility can be met in one proposition. Why does Ibn Sina believe in impossibility of substantial movement while it is necessary for Mulla Sadra? By qualitative content analysis of both views, we have come to the conclusion that given the philosophical foundations and ontological presuppositions,

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there is an acknowledgment of the theory of substantial movement in the views of philosophers before Mulla Sadra, in particular IbnSina. But due to the intertwining of the discussion of transformation in quiddity with the movement in the existence or ambiguity in quality of substantial movement, there is a dualism between Ibn Sina's and Mulla Sadra's views. But given these two approaches and whether essential forms can safeguard the unity of the matter or not, we came to the conclusion that in Ibn Sina's view, substantial movement is possible, and it is not impossible.

Keywords: Necessity, Impossibility, Possibility, Motion, Substance, Ibn Sina, Mulla Sadra.

Problem statement

Since it is not possible to have the quality of impossibility and necessity in a one single proposition, it does not make sense to recognize substantial motion both simultaneously impossible and necessary. So, the main issue here is to answer the question of how in a proposition necessity and impossibility are logically met? and the sub-question is whether motion in substance is due to the mode of existence or of quiddity? Whether the motion is categorical or intelligible? and according to Ibn Sina, impossibility of substantial movement is from the mode of existence or of quiddity?

Method

in a qualitative content analysis method we try to show that for both philosophers, substantial movement is possible in general possibility; namely it is necessary in terms of existence and impossible in terms of the quiddity.

Findings and results

Mulla Sadra and the possibility of substantial movement:

In most of his philosophical writings, Mulla Sadra specified substantial movement, claiming that by careful study of Qur'anic verses and thinking in the traditions of the Imams as well as in the works of the ancient philosophers, including Plotinus and Zenon, as well as Islamic mystics like Ibn Arabi, has come to the truth and believes that he has achieved the proofs for this kind of movement. "As a result, all material objects and bodies, whether constellations or elements, their souls or bodies, are moving in their essence and existence" (MullaSadra,2009:p64).

Ibn Sina and the possibility of substantial movement:

Ibn Sina has to go through two major stages in his thinking in order to come to the theory of the substantial motion: he must first remove the motion from the domain of the quiddity by stating the rejection of gradation in quiddity; and in the second step it must take into account the principality of the being and the existential gradation, and accept the fact that in all sorts of motion, existence is the preserver of identity and unity of moving. But since Ibn Sina does not have a serious concern with the question of the principality of being, this step has not been thoroughly debated and this has led to doubts in the interpretation of his thoughts in the process of substantial motion (Ibn Sina; *Isharat va Tanbihat*, v3, n.d, p31).

In some of his written works, Avicenna has emphasized implicitly or even explicitly the realization of the process of gradation in soul essence and non-complete abstraction of it; for example:

1- In his view, the concept of revelation has both inner and outer components: the outer component is the active intellect, or angel of revelation, which imparts divine wisdom to the Prophet (Ibn Sina, 1984, pp 116-17). On this basis, it can be said that for Avicenna, human souls must be perfected in their essence in order to find the dignity of receiving the prophecy and receiving revelation in the light of this gradation. The unity of the soul and its relation with various physical and unitary powers, imply that the soul by unity with its powers is engaged with the abstract functions of body and materiality. Therefore, adopting this approach by Ibn Sina in relation to the soul and its various faculties would be due to non-complete abstraction and the possibility of gradual completeness of soul.

2- Ibn Sina also emphasizes the substantial gradation of the soul in term of epistemology. He believes that as much as the soul and its faculties are developed, recording of knowledge will be more accurate. He states that the soul can reduce the extent of the imagination's interference in its intuitive perceptions by gaining promotion from the sensory and imaginative realities and obtain clear and distinct perceptions. Accordingly, Ibn Sina considers the attainment of clear and unambiguous perceptions as a result of gradual perfection of soul essence (Ibn Sina; *Isharat va Tanbihat* , v3, n.d, pp 351-4).

Conclusion;

1. A precise examination of Ibn Sina's ideas reveals that although, due to lack of analysis and lack of clarity in the theory of principality of the existence, he did not achieve to the theory of substantial motion and thus denied it, but in some positions he expresses the view that requires acceptance of motion in essence, namely, he acknowledged the role of motion and time in the gradual

existence of the beings ,as well as Mulla Sadra's existential viewpoint about substantial movement.

2. Ibn Sina accepts the perfection of the soul through the perfection of its accidents, but in some positions he explains the substantial intensity which is inconsistent with the theory of the stability of the soul, and this contradiction is eliminated by the acceptance of the substantial movement. Because the unity of subject is necessary for the intensity.

3. Finally, by reinterpreting Ibn Sina's philosophy about the issue of the substantial motion and the essential intensification of the soul and also by refining his two ontological approaches about the principality of being or quiddity, from the ontological perspective, it can be said that from Avicenna's perspective , substantial motion is possible, and this possibility can be recognized as an root for believing in necessity of substantial motion in Mulla Sadra's school.

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