



A Revision of the Theory of Spiritualization of Man's Body According to Mulla Sadra as a Solution for the Issues Related to the Hereafter

Masud Esmaily*

Received: 17/09/2018 | Accepted: 09/03/2019

Abstract



One of the views Mulla Sadra holds is that apart from the evolution of the soul, the body also has an intensifying journey ahead and can intensify from material level to the level of essential sufficiency and achieve a state known as spiritualization in which, although it remains in the material level, it becomes so subtle and takes on spiritual characteristics to the extent that it is as suitable as the soul to be present in the Hereafter. Accordingly, in the same way the soul initially only has a real albeit dependent constitution with the body and ultimately is one with it and in fact, becomes corporeal while preserving its spiritual identity; the body too can ultimately become spiritual and become one with the soul while preserving its corporeal identity. This theory (the spiritualization of man's body in the Hereafter) has been adopted from the mystics' views regarding the spiritualization of perfect human beings, which has been analyzed in his article and Mulla Sadra's view has been explained based on that. According to this theory, better and alternative explanations and solutions can be offered for a part of philosophical concepts and theories like material and immaterial, corporeal resurrection, the dependence of the soul on the body and the relation between the two etc.

Keywords

the relation between the body and soul, corporeality of the soul, spiritualization of the body, corporeal resurrection.

* Assistant Professor, Department of Religions and Mysticism, Faculty of Theology and Religions Studies, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran | masud.esmaaily@gmail.com



Introduction

Mulla Sadra believes that at the onset of its creation, the soul is a faculty of the body and its existence is not separate from that of the body. And on the other hand, it also needs a sublime managing faculty in order to actualize its potential. The centre point for the study of the relation between body and soul in Sadrian philosophy revolves around three points: “coming into existence of the soul”, “the essence of the worldly and afterlife body” and the “fate of the temporal body”; Mulla Sadra’s views are recognized as “corporeal creation of the soul” in case of the first, “imaginality (i.e. having characteristics of the imaginal world) of the afterlife body” in case of the second and “annihilation of the material body” regarding the third. The aim of this article is a revision of the fate of the temporal body in the Hereafter based on the first two points which, as a result of research, concludes in a different foundation than the one aforementioned known as the spiritualization of the body.

The Theory of the Spiritualization of the Temporal Body in the Hereafter According to Mulla Sadra

In Mulla Sadra’s initial view regarding corporeal resurrection, i.e. the corporeality of the imaginal body, the focus is on the faculty of imagination which can create an imaginal body similar to the physical body with its productive faculty and can also provide the sameness of these two bodies because it is the last survivor of the temporal body. In this process, two realities, the “observer” (faculty of imagination) and the “observed” (the body created by this observer) exist and the observed is an imaginal existent in consequence to the observer. However, besides this abovementioned view which is from the aspect of the observer, one can also have a primordial view of the observed itself and consider it to have the potential of evolution till the realm of the Hereafter; i.e. that the body, while preserving its essential characteristics and without leaving the material world, is present in the imaginal realm and has the capacity to be present in the Hereafter; if this description can be proven, not only will the soul preserve its unity and objectivity in the transfer from the material world to the Hereafter, but the natural and temporal body will also be eternal with its individuality.

Sadrian philosophy has a two-layered narration of this issue; in the initial level, the issue is addressed through the existential evolution of the observer; however, in a higher step, the evolution of the observed is addressed. Relying on the words of Ibn Arabi, Mulla Sadra explains that the attachment of the body and soul is a lower level of the relation between them which is manifest in the world and the reality is that the souls that have a body in the world, become corporeal in the Hereafter and the bodies that have souls in the world, become spiritual in the Hereafter; however, in the world, souls are dependent on bodies and do not become embodied and bodies too are dependent on souls and are not spiritual. In reality, this view has been adopted from the words of the mystics,

particularly Ibn Arabi and his followers regarding the manifestation of a mystical state in man known as "spiritualization" (tarawhun).

Regarding the spiritualization of the body according to Mulla Sadra, one must say that based on the Reality and Diluted Reality Predication which Mulla Sadra believes in regarding realities like the soul and body, the body and soul are not dual and separate realities; rather, there is a unified constitution and necessary connection between the two. On the other hand, based on substantial motion theory, if the soul has the capacity to elevate to a higher level in its substance, the body too can actualize the spirituality of its substance while preserving its materiality and without completely transferring from the material to the imaginal world. This means that the body, like the soul, has an intensive motion during which it does not leave the material world; rather, it achieves higher levels and when it does so, it will attain the capacity to be present in the Hereafter like the soul albeit with a material rank. It seems that the real unity between the body and soul remains forever and it is clear that in this becoming, some of the characteristics of the body undergo changes; however, it must be noted that these changes do not cause the body to depart from the material level and enter into the imaginal level. Regarding how this softening takes place, Mulla Sadra explains that the body has a first and second nature like the soul and in the same way that the soul attain elevation from the its primary virtues which form its first nature, the body can also elevate from its first nature which is the need for a separate agent and limitation in time and space, and become spiritual. Here, those who can traverse this path in their worldly life will be accompanied by their subtilized body in the Hereafter and these are those who will enter Paradise; however, those who have not attained this secondary nature of the body in their life, the punishments of the Hereafter will soften their material forms. Mulla Sadra considers the unsubtized temporal body as an attributive compound and the subtilized body of the Hereafter as a result of annexative relation of spiritual essences. Even though Mulla Sadra considers the body to be spiritualized, he considers it to be a power of the soul like the mystics and believes that the illumination of a soul that is connected to the higher levels spiritualizes its apparent material existence too.

The characteristics that stem from the spiritualization of the body, according to Mulla Sadra are as follows: essential self-sufficiency and independence from a separate agent; elevation from gradual becoming and perishing; control over time and space.

Main References

- Fanari, M. (1374 AP). *Misbah al-Uns bayn al-Ma'qul wa al-Mash-hud*. Tehran: Mowla.
- Ibn Arabi, M.D. (1367 AP). *Majmu'a-i Rasa'il-i Ibn Arabi* (a collection of the works

- of Ibn Arabi). Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi.
- Ibn Arabi, M.D. (n.d.). *Al-Futuh al-Makkiyyah*. Beirut: Dar Sadir.
 - Jandi, M.D. (1362 AP). *Nafhat al-Ruh wa Tuhfat al-Futuh*. Najib Mail Harwi (ed). Tehran: Mowla.
 - Qownavi, S.D. (1371 AP). *Al-Fukook*. Muhammad Khwajuy (ed). Tehran: Mowla.
 - Shirazi, S. M. (Mulla Sadra). (1360 AP). *Asrar al-Aayat. Muhammad Khwajuy (Ed.)*. Tehran: Anjuman-i Hekmat va Falsafe-i Iran.
 - Shirazi, S. M. (Mulla Sadra). (1354 AP). *Mabda' wa al-Ma'ad*. Tehran: Hikmat wa Falsafe.
 - Shirazi, S. M. (Mulla Sadra). (1382 AP). *Al-Shawahid al-Rububiyyah fi Manahij al-Sulukiyyah*. Mustafa Muhaqqeq Damad (ed). Tehran: Bunyad-i Hikmat-i Islami-i Sadra.
 - Shirazi, S. M. (Mulla Sadra). (1387 AP). *Rasa'il-i Falsafi* (philosophical treatises). Seyed Jalal al-Din Ashtiyani (Ed.). Qom: Qom Seminary.
 - Shirazi, S. M. (Mulla Sadra). (1981). *Al-Hikmat al-Muta'aliyah fi al-Asfar al-'Aqliyyat al-Arba'* (The Transcendent Theosophy in the Four Journeys of the Intellect). Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi.