

## Essence of reasonable human and its traits in Mulla Sadra's viewpoint

*Ftemeh Rikhtegarzadeh*

*Master of Comparative Theology, Shahid Beheshti University, Iran.*

### ABSTRACT

*Sadra believes that soul has an existence before body and souls exists as a collective rational unit, like any effect exists in relation to its cause, and after the condition is better, their cause makes them eternal. Therefore, he considers soul to be the physicality of occurrence and spirituality of survival<sup>1</sup>. In his perspective, the soul only needs the body to achieve perfection and acquire great traits. At the beginning of occurrence, the soul embarks upon the journey to perfection and gradually, its existential intensity is enhanced. At this time, the body is being weakened, to an extent that it no longer belongs to matter and turns into reason. Soul has different stages, in terms of essential motion and existential intensification. The lowest stage is the vegetative soul and the highest level, i.e. the human, or the pure soul. Each of these stages also have sub-levels and the highest level is the rational or reasonable human. The only power that distinguishes human from animal is the power of reason. This power is divided into two different categories, the intellectual and the practical power. Intellectual power is the origin of reception and is activated by the higher power and accepts the truth. This power has four different levels. Bel-Mostafad reason is the highest level of reason with potential perceptions. At this stage, a union is formed between the human soul and the active reasoning which emanate from the images of the soul and here, the highest stage of soul is called the reasonable human.*

*Keywords: human, reason, Mulla Sadra, Philosophy*

### Introduction

The attention that Mulla Sadra has paid to nurturing reason and prudence is apparent from the opening paragraph of Asfar's preface. He defines Hikmat or wisdom as human's transformation, i.e. motion, change or becoming. Wisdom is transformation and becoming. Rational evolution and development includes intellectual reason and practical reason. When human is similar to the world of reason, he is also similar to the worlds of existence and objectivity. Human does not have a determined and closed nature and is constantly going through changes and moving on from one stage to another, to an extent that he becomes similar to the world of reason and objectivity. "And man, due to being human, is constantly progressing, from one origin to another, and does not stay in one stage"(Sadr al-Din Shirazi, 1999).

In defining philosophy, Sadra states "perfection of the human soul, similar to the world of reason and objectivity" which means that perfection of the soul depends on the achievement of reasonable human. To nurture these reasons, human powers and potentials must be turned into actualities and each of these powers form a stage of the human which finally leads to the formation of a complete rational human from all

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<sup>1</sup> Jesmaniyeh al-Hodous va Rouhaniyeh al-Bagha

aspects. In addition, in Sadra's definition, the soul is only complete when rational human is achieved. In other words, it seems like there is a certain condition for becoming a complete and perfect human and that is becoming a rational human; which means that first humans need to become the rational human and then they would be able to achieve perfection.

On the one hand, the main issue here is the effect of how the rational human is achieved. In this respect, different stages of reasoning have been examined, because we need to know how the human soul uses its power of reasoning and how this power can make it possible to achieve rational human. After all of this, the nature of reasonable human has been investigated. The issue that occupies one's mind is the Sadra's definition of the reasonable human and its attributes from his point of view. On the other hand, if we did not know the purpose of Sadra for his philosophy and how to fulfill it, it would be impossible to do so. To address this problem and solve them, we have examined the works of Sadra in a precise way. In Masha'er and Asfar, Sadra has presented notions that have inspired the reasonable human term and its nature which have been reviewed in the present study.

### **Research method**

The library-analytical research method has been used in this study and philosophical books and works of Sadr-al-Mutallehin have been considered to be the foundation of the research.

### **Truth of the soul**

To have a picture of reasonable human in mind and to define it and how to achieve it, at first the truth of the soul and its attributes need to be examined, because unless the truth of soul and its attributes are examined, the notion of reasonable human and the quality of its achievement remains meaningless. As it is the soul that can reach the stage of rationality, the soul and its abilities have to be identified; otherwise, it would be impossible to talk about its stages.

Sadra has utilized two initiatives in relation with the truth of the soul. The first one is that he believes in essential motion which has been negated and rejected by the philosophers before him. The second one was that he doubted the objective truth of existence. Philosophers before him believed that the doubts were applicable to the essential origin in the notion of existence not in its objective truth.

In Sadra's viewpoint, essence is intensified in the notion of substantiality, and he says "Javaz Eshtedad Johar fi al-Johariyeh"<sup>2</sup> which refers to the soul in relation with essentiality, and since the essence is intensified, then the perfection of the soul is dependent on its essential intensification. In such a way that the human is at first a power and has physical and bodily occurrences and moves towards active reason and abstraction through essential intensification and essential movement until he reaches absolute abstraction and active reasoning. On the other hand, Sadra believes in the physicality of occurrence and spirituality of survival; meaning that the human soul has a special existence because of which it reaches perfection and the essential evolutions occur in this special existence. In other words, evolutions occur in the essence of the soul and they lead to active reasoning; "Tasir Hineza Aqlan Fa'alan"<sup>3</sup>.

Since the existence of the soul belongs to material and it has not yet reached the actuality of the distinct reason, it is a substantial material which can be added to any material. The materiality of the soul based on how close to or far away it is to its rational origin. This degree of closeness to the rational origin is created through the existential perfection or defection, intensity and weakness<sup>4</sup>.

Based on our interpretation of the previous studies, it can be stated that the natural journey of the human begins from his first motions, and the essence of his life is based in motion and growth. This natural journey is for its body to grow and human is not in control of it. Humans cannot grow whenever they want, however they want, whether they want to or not, whether they are aware of it or not. Human goes through this journey of growth. The embryo is formed because of this natural journey and motion and is turned into a complete

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<sup>2</sup> Sadr al-Din Shirazi, Asfar, vol. 8, p. 11

<sup>3</sup> Sadr al-Din Shirazi, Asfar, vol. 8, p. 329

<sup>4</sup> Mohammad Taqi, Mesbah Yazdi, Sharh Asfar, vol. 8, part one, p. 72

human unless there are some obstacles on the way. There is a certain time and a limit to the physical growth and natural evolution of the human which is a journey that leads to his physical perfection.

### **Powers of the human soul**

These powers are divided into two categories: the pleaser and the pleased. All the powers of the animal soul are pleasing the soul and intellectual and practical reason are pleasing the power.

In addition to outward and inward senses which were stated in the previous chapters, Mulla Sadra believes that the human soul has various powers which are essential and do not depend on the relationship between the body and the soul and include: the inner eye, inner ear, inner nose, inner taste and inner touch. Human naturally needs these divine and inner senses. Mulla Sadra states: "it is important to know that the soul has spiritual and divine ears, eyes, taste, touch, memory, hands and feet in its essence. Therefore, the soul has an inner eye which looks at is God and an ear that hears the godly verses, the words of angels, the songs of heavenly birds and prayers of the creatures and has a nose that senses the heavenly and godly breezes and scents and has a taste to eat the heavenly fruits and has a sense of touch to feel the heaven and these powers are the inner and godly properties that are specially for those in Heaven; if there is no barrier and no veil for them. However, outer senses and their evidences are corrupt and perishable matters which are rooted in the punishments of the Hereafter and lead man to the fire of Hell"<sup>5</sup>.

### **Reasoning**

Sadra expresses that reasoning is the essential union between the reasoner and the reasoned. Objects are divided into two categories; one the material objects which are substances in its existence and are present in a certain situation and state. These states are naturally an actual reasoned matter based on their existence and they are not sensible, unless on earth. The other one is their abstract form which is not limited to a place or state which is called the actual reasoned matter and/or is a defected abstraction which is imaginary and/or is an actual sensible matter.

Based on the definition and division above and based on the fact that philosophers believe that actual reasoned states have an existential soul and also whatever is perceived with senses has an existential soul, if we were to assume that the actual reasoned exists without the existence of the reasoner, as if they are not one and the same and have separate identities, and the relationship between them is like that of knowledge and body which is the frame in which knowledge exists; it must be said that the existence of each of them without the other would lack validity. However, this is not the case for the actual reasoned, because the actual reasoned does not have another existence but the essentially reasoned one and it does not need another matter or to be reasonable to be true; unless it has a reasoner. And if the reasoned and the reasoner were separate from one another, it would be necessary to state that the reasoned would exist without the reasoner and its existence would not be rational or reasonable; while the reasoned state of anything that is separate from matter is actual reasoned, whether a reasoner has reasoned about it or not.

To put it more simply, there are two kinds of abstract reasonable matters. One of them are those that are abstract because of their nature and their creation such as reason and soul. The other kind are those that are separated from matter and abstract on their own. Both types are actual reasoned matter, whether there is an outer reasoner to reason them or not. The sensibility and rationality of an object is not like its mobility, because the mobility of a body will be interrupted as soon as the stimuli no longer exist because the body is just a body without any motion, because a body does not move on its own for what it is. In contrast, the actual reasoned, based on its "existence" is an actual reasoned and this existence only depends on the reasoned and its rationality whether a reasoner has reasoned it or not<sup>6</sup>. To state the stages of reasoning, we need to study the truth of knowledge in Sadra's viewpoint, as these stages of reasoning become meaningful on the basis of the truth of knowledge.

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<sup>5</sup> Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Asfar Arba'a*, vol. 9, p. 339

<sup>6</sup> Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Sadr al-Mutallahin*, *Asfar* vol. 3, p. 142

### **What is the reasonable human?**

Based on what Sadra has said in *Asrar al-Ayat*, he seems to believe that the soul has a special existential perception with certain rules and impacts at each of these stages. Of course, the multiplicity of these levels does not mean that they are completely different and separated from one another, but it means that there is a causal relationship between them, because the true difference between cause and effect is in perfection and defection; meaning that the cause is a stronger degree of the effect's existence and the effect is the weaker degree of the causes' existence. Thus, at the beginning stages and before belonging to eternity, souls are existentially a collective rational or reasonable existence. This claim is based on a philosophical principle that indicates that each caused effect exists at the stage of its cause. However, the soul is something that forms the essence of the body and depends on a special tendency in the substantial matter of the body and it is only in these condition that the body is completely ready to accept the soul and the soul enters the natural world and acquires a bodily existence. The second stage occurs naturally and in the natural world, meaning that the human soul descends to the world of abstraction and enters the world of nature in its descendancy and then again ascends to the world of reason by acquiring attributes on the journey to perfection and goes even beyond the active reasoning and forms a union with the highest levels of reason. At the third stage, the human soul gains existence. This theory of Sadra is based upon philosophical principles of doubt in existence and intensified motion of the essence towards perfection and the union that is formed between the beginning and the end point, which was explained in the previous chapters. The difference between the first and the third stage is that in the first stage, the soul has a collective and general existence but in the third stage, the multiplicity of the perfected human soul is preserved<sup>7</sup>.

According to Mulla Sadra, sufficient attention has not been paid to this important and explicit truth which is because of people's neglect. He states that the inner existence of the human (i.e. his nature, essence and truth) is transforming at any given moment, but most people are not able to perceive and understand this transformation or they neglect it unless God helps them gain perspective and removes the veil of neglect from their eyes, as it has been mentioned in the following verse of Quran "but they are in the clothes of a new creation"<sup>8,9</sup>. Because soul, based on its senses of belonging, has a rational and a natural aspect which are two aspects that are quite different from one another, one is associated with survival and the other revival and being renewed. Any human that goes into their conscience would know that his current identity is different from his past and future identities and he would also understand that this difference is not just due to the difference that come with time, but it is also because of the difference in different stages and aspects of a single essence. This is similar to the different degrees of the actions of the almighty God which have been referred to in the following verses: "Kol Yomen Hova Fi Sha'n"<sup>10</sup> and "Sanfaragha Lakom Ayyahossaqalan"<sup>11</sup>. The holy Quran has different verses that re indicative of the essential and existential changes, evolutions and transformations of the human, including: "Ya Ayyohal Ensano Enaka Kadaho Ela Rabboka Kadhan Felmalaqiyeh"<sup>12</sup>, "va Yanqalebo Ela Ahle Masrouan"<sup>13</sup>, "Ana Ela Rabbana Monqaleboun"<sup>14</sup> and "Arjaee ela Rabboka"<sup>15</sup>.

By taking inspiration from the verses of the Bayyeneh Surah, Sadra states that undoubtedly, the soul of the best creatures and people, in its existential truth, is not at the same level of the worst human beings and those who claim that the soul of the best creations of God, such as the holy Prophet, is the same as that of Aboujahl in terms of its truth and the difference between them is only dependent on their lives and does not depend on their truth and essence, is quite invaluable. The soul of the holy Prophet is without a doubt more complete, better, more perfect and more intense in terms of its complete identity and its essence is stronger

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<sup>7</sup> Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Asrar al-Ayat*, pp. 20-30

<sup>8</sup> bal ham fi labasa men khalqe jadid

<sup>9</sup> Quran, 15

<sup>10</sup> Rahman, 29

<sup>11</sup> Same, 31

<sup>12</sup> Ensheqaq, 6

<sup>13</sup> Same, 9

<sup>14</sup> Eraf, 125

<sup>15</sup> Fajr, 25

than any other soul. He also states that in response to the one who claims that soul of the holy Prophet is just the same as that of other humans, God says “Faqalou Abashar Yahdounana Fakafarouva va Talova”<sup>16</sup> and also “Faqalou Abasharan Menna Vahedan Natabaoho”<sup>17</sup> and also when he says “Gol Ennama Bashar Maslakom”<sup>18</sup> in terms of the material world.

According to Sadra, “human” is a single and unique truth with two levels whose essence and nature are constantly changing and evolving and this transformation or motion can take the soul from a natural stage to an exemplary (purgatory) abstraction to a rational or reasonable abstraction and finally to a higher level of abstraction, i.e. a divine degree, with no limits. With an interpretation based on mystical ontology, Sadra states a comprehensive and general principle that creatures have four stages or levels; namely, natural, sensible, rational and divine. Human has senses because of which he does not need different powers. His senses are distributed in nature and require different strengths. The strength of the eye is not the same as that of the ear and the sense of taste is not the same as the sense of smell. But the difference between the senses is mostly related to their matter and material beings. For example, the sense of touch is the first power of animals and there is no animal that lacks it ... but the sensible side of the human has various aspects and it is because of these aspects that all of the senses work in coordination with one another. Therefore, if human entered his rational existence and actual reasoning, he would turn into the rational human which is the third stage of being a human. Nonetheless, there are only a few humans that reach this stage.

Here, Sadra focuses on the fact that the evolutionary changes and movements of the human beings on their journey to perfection is in the arc of ascendance. Since the existential levels of the arc of ascendance is similar to those of the arc of descendance, to prove his own theory, he refers to the statements of Aristotle. Aristotle expresses that in the descending journey, we have the first human, the rational human, the sensible human and then the natural human. And it is the human that remains in the physical world of descendance and since all of the inferior attributes and strengths are intensified in the rational stage, therefore all of the sensible powers of the natural human are the descending stages of the rationality of humans in the supreme world and the eternal and limitless knowledge of the almighty God.

### **The relationship between reasonable human and other stages**

Sadra believes that because of his soul, human has some attributes that other creatures lack, such as:

1. The power of speech which makes it possible for humans to speak and communicate.
2. The feeling of surprise which is a passive affair followed by laughter.
3. Suffering which is a passive affair followed by crying.
4. Shyness which is a passive affair.
5. Fear and hope.
6. Perception of rational meanings and notions.

Due to his interests and tendencies in facing different matters and affairs, human has four reactions which are as follows:

1. Affairs that are associated with reason and not passion such as illnesses, poverty and worldly sufferings.
2. Affairs that are associated with passion and not with reason such as sins.
3. Affairs that satisfy passion and reason such as knowledge.
4. Affairs that neither satisfy reason nor passion such as lack of knowledge.<sup>19</sup>

Human is two-dimensional and is a mixture of good and evil. Human nature is composed of positive and negative attributes. There are angelic and demonic tendencies in the nature of human and human is not good like the angels or bad like the evil, but a mixture of the two. The good side of the human is associated with his spirit and soul and the evil side is associated with his nature and passion. The human soul has equal

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<sup>16</sup> Taqabon, 6

<sup>17</sup> Qamar

<sup>18</sup> Faslat, 55

<sup>19</sup> Sadal al-Mutalahin, Asrar al-Ayat, pp. 2-10

capacity to accept good and evil and none of them is more able in penetrating the human soul and when one of them penetrates the soul more, it is because of the degree to which the human avoids or follows his passions<sup>20</sup>.

In Sadra's perspective, the human has been put in the middle of the two worlds and the two forces of reason and passion. He can satisfy his needs that are associated with passion by following his animalistic tendencies and the joys that follow them or acquire a rational perception and understanding by using his power of reason. If human chooses reason over passion, he would reach the highest levels, would be equal to angels and if he chooses passion over reason, he would be at the same level as the evil (Sadr al-Din Shirazi, 1975).

### **The human soul**

One of the issues that has been discussed by Sadra in relation with physical resurrection, affirmation, punishment, reckoning and the degree and extent of distortion is the human soul and its reasonable and rational existence. Mirdamad, who has been Sadra's master, has also discussed this issue and has confirmed his theories. To summarize, the elements that form a human being is the natural sensible human who has animalistic features. There is a purgatory full of senses, powers and elements of the world in each human and its life is not like the life of the body which is earthly, but it goes beyond the earthly life and it's an essential life.

According to Sadra, all humans have the first level of intellectual reason. What is meant by this statement is that reason is a part of the human soul associated with its nature and essence when the soul is emptied from all of its collective and comprehensive tendencies. Also, all humans have the second level of intellectual reason, in which senses that have been potential reasoned matters so far and were preserved in the imagination of the human reach the surface. These matters include all of the primitive reasoned matters which all humans understand through reasoning and produce as a form of speech. The soul has lacked this power before, and it has just been a potential power which has now been turned into actuality at a new level. In fact, reason moves beyond potentiality towards actuality at this stage. The third stage is the actual reason. At this stage, in addition to the acquirement of senses and powers, humans gain intellectual theories and ideas as well. Of course, at this stage, human must pay attention to theories to preserve these acquiring notions in his mind, as it is not possible without thinking.

### **Conclusion**

Sadra believes that soul has an existence before body and souls exists as a collective rational unique existence, meaning that any effect exists in relation to its cause, and after the condition is better, their cause makes them eternal. Therefore, he considers soul to be the physicality of occurrence and spirituality of survival. In his perspective, the soul only needs the body to achieve perfection and acquire great traits. Sadra has utilized two initiatives in relation with the truth of the soul. The first one is that he believes in essential motion which has been negated and rejected by the philosophers before him. The second one was that he doubted the objective truth of existence. Philosophers before him believed that the doubts were applicable to the essential origin in the notion of existence not in its objective truth. Since the existence of the soul belongs to material and it has not yet reached the actuality of the distinct reason, it is a substantial material which can be added to any material. The materiality of the soul based on how close to or far away it is to its rational origin. This degree of closeness to the rational origin is created through the existential perfection or defection, intensity and weakness. At the beginning of occurrence, the soul embarks upon the journey to perfection and gradually, its existential intensity is enhanced.

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<sup>20</sup> Sadr al-Din Shirazi, *Asrar al-Ayat*, pp. 123-125

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