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Mulla Sadra and the mind-body problem: A critical assessment of Sadra's approach to the dichotomy of soul and spirit

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5. Chapter five: considering issues of the soul and the spirit

5.1. Introduction

As we have already mentioned, the soul has been the subject of great controversy since the early emergence of civilization. Its existence is questioned, its relation with the body is put under investigation and numerous other related issues have been discussed. Many philosophers, scientists, psychologists and researchers have tried to find logical answers. In this chapter the aim is to introduce and analyse the important thoughts on this matter. This analysis begins with an introduction of the ideas of some of the ancient philosophers' whose works on the soul and the spirit we were able to find. The aim is to discuss some of the main philosophers who have expressed ideas on the soul and the spirit. At the same time efforts have been made to refer to some modern psychological ideas; some of these have been mentioned in an abridged form to familiarise the reader with the kinds of modern psychological views on the soul. However, the aim has not been to analyse, reject or prove any of these ideas. After this, attention has been paid to the ideas of Muslim philosophers.

As the Islamic texts place emphasis on the soul it is very important for Muslim philosophers to understand the soul and its various aspects in depth. Hence they have propounded many useful and precise arguments about it. Mulla Sadra's idea is of special importance because he was able to put forth some new fundamental ideas about the soul, which is considered as one of the substances,¹ according to his basis i.e. fundamentality of existence and trans-substantial motion.

In the three previous chapters, in order to understand the two important principles of Mulla Sadra, i.e. 'fundamentality of existence' and 'trans-substantial motion', we tried to explain them in brief. This was done to facilitate the understanding of the

¹ See: Chapter Three, ref No. 56, 61.

reality of the soul, which will be explained in this chapter. Sadra's view of the soul can be justified in relation to his trans-substantial motion.² Without a true understanding of this theory, or by rejecting it, we will be faced with many problems. This is because one of the main instances of trans-substantial motion in Sadrian thought is the creation and subsistence of the soul. By accepting trans-substantial motion of the soul many of the problems regarding its originatedness and subsistence will automatically be solved, since on this basis the bodily origination and spiritual subsistence of the soul can be justified and a coherent theory can be presented. However, as none of the philosophers before Sadra believed in trans-substantial motion and its basis, they were not able to present a complete theory about the soul. They could not find the link between the reality of the soul and the material body and its impressionability from the body on the one hand and its immateriality after death on the other, so some of them denied the immateriality of the soul and some of them rejected its subsistence after leaving the body and the third group accepted its reincarnation.³ According to Sadra, the reason why philosophers held diverse opinions was because they denied trans-substantial motion in the states of the soul and its origination, its subsistence, its immateriality and its belonging to the body.⁴

As was stated earlier, in order to understand Sadra's principles about the soul we first need to understand his other principles like fundamentality of existence and trans-substantial motion (which can be justified by fundamentality of existence).

After stating Sadra's idea and understanding his basis regarding the soul, we will consider whether, as this researcher believes, his philosophical psychology is faced with an important problem which is that he did not consider the soul and the spirit as two separate things.⁵ Sadra took the soul and the spirit as a single thing and he

² H. Malikshāhī, *Ḥarika wa istifāy-i aqṣām-i 'on*, ISBN 9-770-376-964-978, p. 303.

³ M.T. Miṣbāḥ-i yazdī, *sharḥ-i jild-i hashtom-i Asfar*, part 2, p. 280.

⁴ *Asfar*, vol. 8, p. 279.

⁵ By criticising Mulla Sadra's idea in particular the other philosophers' and psychologists' ideas have been criticised too. This is because all of them appear to have ignored some characteristics of the human being. This also criticises the current beliefs about the soul which do not look at the soul as

could not accept their separation according to his own basis, therefore he tried to justify and deny the reasons and evidences which were contrary to his idea.

The objective of this chapter is to highlight the fact that Sadra, like those before him, did not believe in a differentiation between soul and spirit and we intend to prove (or at least show) that the two are different. We will use some quotations from some philosophers and mystics in order to support this separation. After this reference will be made to some of Mulla Sadra's books which he wrote in the last years of his life. In these books he accepts that the spirit existed before the creation of the body and this can confirm the separation of the soul and the spirit which is in fact a denial of his own previous opinion on this matter, since he believed that the soul was bodily in its origination. However he does not state any acceptable reason for changing his mind. Perhaps he accepted this, which is opposite to his philosophical basis, under the influence of religious texts, but he does not have an answer for the contradiction that occurs in his basis due to this change in idea.⁶

However the aim of this chapter, after stating the idea about the soul, is to explain reasons and evidences which can support this separation, although we do not believe that the stated reasons are the certain reasons to prove this idea. It is enough for this research to pose questions for philosophers such as 'does the human being have any other perceptive part (spirit) in addition to the soul and the body? It is hoped that other researchers will be able to prove this issue with more intellectual and philosophical reasons. In the next chapter we will try to discuss some evidences which can support this separation and prove this, to some extent, from the religious point of view.

independent and a possessor of total perception, rather they have reduced its dignity to a simple thought.

⁶ Mulla Sadra usually gives full proof for all of his philosophical basics, but he does not do so with this.

5.2. The ideas of the classical Western philosophers regarding the soul

The question of the soul is not something that has arisen recently. In the history of Greek philosophy the most important philosophers whose thoughts were valued and who considered various issues like the soul's motion, immateriality, powers and the like were Plato and Aristotle. Their ideas were a starting point for later followers. There are some thoughts which are probably attributed to Socrates but we have only a few of them available.⁷ Pythagoras is also a philosopher from whose writings we have received some worthy thoughts on the soul. Nevertheless that does not mean that others had nothing to say about the soul. However we leave the explanation about their ideas for the next parts of this chapter when we will analyse them, but first we will express two different definitions of the soul by Plato and Aristotle.

5.2.1. Plato's idea about the soul

One of the most important students of Socrates was Plato, who gave two definitions for the soul. In the first he says: "The soul is the origin of body's life and motion."⁸ This means that while the soul is in the body, the body is alive and active. In fact life has several stages, the lowest of which is 'vegetative life' and the highest is 'human life'.

In his second definition he says: "the soul is a substance which is mover of body, but it is not like body."⁹ It is worth explaining here some of Plato's idea related to the soul. With regard to knowledge he says that knowledge has two conditions, first it must be true and adapted to its subject and second it must be about the real world, rather than nonentity (*'adam*) and what is in the state of fluxing (*sayrūra*).¹⁰

⁷ The majority of Socrates ideas were written by Plato and we have no direct writing from Socrates in hand.

⁸ The Series of Plato's works, translated by M.H. lotfī in Persian, Jomhourī publications, vol. 4, p. 2357, No 896.

⁹ Hasan zāda-i Āmulī, *'Uyūn-i masā'il-i nafs*, pp. 7, 10, 93, 279.

¹⁰ Plato, Theatetus. Flux is a word that Heraclitus used for the first time.

Plato's idea of wisdom (*hikma*) is as follows: When Plato used the term wisdom as opposed to ignorance the meaning is based on remembering (*istidhkār*) not learning. He believes that first we knew everything but then we forgot it and so learning is not a new thing, it is remembering a thing that we have forgotten. He says that there are three important points related to the soul:

1. He believes that wisdom as opposed to ignorance is connected to the intellectual part of the soul.
2. He believes that knowledge is remembrance; he said man existed before coming to this material world and what he is learning now is actually what he took and knew from that world, therefore knowledge learned in the material world is not something new which is added to us.
3. He introduces the soul as a thing that has parts and the main reason for his claim is that there is conflict within man. He asks why, if man has no parts, he is involved in confliction with him-self.¹¹

5.2.2. Aristotle's idea about the soul

Aristotle's *De Anima* is one considerably significant book about the soul. It involves many of the commentators of his works about the question of the soul. In this book Aristotle stated three definitions for the soul, each of which is more complete than the others. The first definition is for vegetable soul, the second for animal soul and finally the third which is the perfect definition for human soul. He explains it as follows: "Soul is the first entelechy for organic natural body."¹² This definition needs to be explained. Entelechy (*kamāl*) is opposite to deficiency (*naqṣ*), therefore

¹¹ The Series of Plato's works, vol. 4, p. 1177, No 603. See also: M. Malikian, *Tarikh-i falsafa-i gharb (the history of west philosophy)*, 4 Volume, vol. 1, p. 238.

¹² Aristotle, *Nafs-i arastū (De Anima)*, translated by Alimurād-i Davūdī, published by Tehran University, P. 5.

perfection means increasing, which is an existential thing, and deficiency, is deterioration (*kāstī*); as knowledge is perfection and ignorance is deficiency.¹³

5.2.2.1. The relation between the soul and the body according to Aristotle

Aristotle believed that the soul and the body are not two unrelated things; rather there is a whole which is made up of two parts, the soul and the body. Of course composition does not occur in the human being since the mixture of the body and the soul is one of matter (*mādda*) and form so that the body is matter of the soul and the soul is the form of the body; therefore they are not two unrelated things and the soul is just for this body. This means that the soul is the form of the body i.e. the soul is the function of the body; Aristotle said that it is a function of the body which manifests it. In order to clarify this point he offers some examples. In *De Anima* he says:

The function of a large axe is to cut, so we name the large axe matter and the cutting - its function - form¹⁴.

He also says:

What do we do with our eyes? We can see with [them]; then the eye is matter of vision and to see is form of it¹⁵.

He generalizes this speech to the whole body. He says that the soul is a collection of the body's actions. In other words the soul is just the same as the body in a mood of action and all kinds of sensation, tendency and meditation are derivative of body's action. So the soul is not able to exist without a body, just as we have no vision without eyes. Here he wonders of Plato:

How does Plato believe that the soul can be separated from the body?¹⁶

¹³ We will explain the meaning of the term entelechy later.

¹⁴ Aristotle, *Nafs-i arastū (De Anima)*, P. 79.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, P. 81.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, P. 82.

He also says:

Some thinkers are right to say the soul cannot exist without a body and also the soul is not the body itself, rather it is a thing of body i.e. it is body's function.¹⁷

Therefore every soul belongs to one body, contrary to Plato's idea that likens it to a prisoner who may be moved from one jail to another. According to Aristotle everything has two states; it has a state of potentiality and a state of actuality. On the strength of its potentiality is "matter" and relying on its actuality is "form" therefore he says:

Who can say wax and the trace created on it are two separate things, can claim the soul and body are two things."¹⁸

However he does not believe in dualism. He does not believe that the soul and body are two substances; rather they are inseparable elements of a unit of substance. Therefore he uses the explanation that in each human, the body and soul should be distinguished but not segregated. They can be distinguished since according to intellectual argument we can understand that they are two things, but they are not to be separated since if we accept that, then we must accept another two inseparable sequences that Aristotle himself accepted. These two inseparable sequences are as follows:

1. The first one is that the soul and body must be created at the same time i.e. when the body is created the soul must be created at that time and they must not have any priority in terms of time to each other. This idea is very similar to that of Mulla Sadra who believed that the soul is "bodily in its origination, (*jismānīyya al-ḥudūth*).¹⁹
2. The second inseparable sequence of Aristotle's idea is that this soul cannot exist without its body in the future. In this respect Aristotle did not accept

¹⁷ *Ibid*, P. 92.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, P.79.

¹⁹ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 8, p. 302.

immortality, which means that when we die it is the end. Later some philosophers, such as Ibn Sina, denied the second sequence since it was not compatible with their religious beliefs so they said that only the intellectual part of the soul can remain after death. However they could accept the first sequence, that is, they accepted that the soul and body must be created at the same time and in this respect they accepted Aristotle's idea.²⁰

We will detail other important subjects that Aristotle dealt with regarding the soul and analyze them in the next chapter.

5.2.3. Plotinus' idea about the soul

Plotinus believed that the soul is an immaterial reality which has come from another world and entered the body.²¹ However it is not so that body is the location of the soul which it has penetrated, since location surrounds the body and every part of the body has its special location, but the soul is not like a material body; in fact it surrounds the body rather than being surrounded by body. Body and soul are not like a whole and its component as the soul is not a part of body.²²

Plotinus believed that the soul has three components: vegetative soul, animal soul and rational soul. The vegetative and animal souls will be divided in the body and the rational soul which is superior over the two will surround all body parts.²³

²⁰ Malikiān, *Tārīkh-i falsafa-i gharb*, vol. 1, pp. 361-362.

²¹ Folūtīn, *Dawra-i āthār-i folūtīn* (The Series of Plotinus' works), translated by M.H. Lutfi, p. 467.

²² *Ibid*, p. 507.

²³ *Ibid*, pp. 505-508.

5.3. The soul-body relationship in contemporary philosophy and psychology

As far as history of philosophy shows there were periods of scepticism in history, one of which was the 17th century. Many scholars tried to remove the scepticisms at that time but they were not successful. Descartes (as one of the founders of modernism) tried to solve the problem with his methodical doubt (that there is a real external world) in this way because of the thought there is a thinker and he put this reality i.e. existence of a thought or a thinker as the basis of his method. His *Cogito ergo sum* is a well known theory in the history of philosophy.²⁴ After him another western philosopher Immanuel Kant tried to build a foundation for his philosophy which is based on being within the limitation of time and space (*Raum und Zeit*). Kant put existence as one of his mental categories that have no external reality. He said, the only way of our knowledge is to know something about phenomenon not noumenon.²⁵ Being unable to prove externality of existence caused the denial of externality of the exterior world, God and the soul. The consequences of this were:

1. The reduction of the soul as an external reality to a subjective issue, mind or the denial of the soul.
2. The lack of proving the soul and its separation from body.
3. A profound effect on the knowledge, particularly on contemporary psychology and philosophy.

²⁴ According to Descartes the soul is not material since its substance is thinking. The soul has no extension and no material features which a material body is made from. (Farhang-i Falsafi, vol. 1, p. 637.)

²⁵ This is why we tried to explain the principle of fundamentality of existence in Chapter Two. If the reality of the external world cannot be proven then the reality of the soul will be denied too and this is the main reason that Mulla Sadra bases all of his principles on the fundamentality of existence.

These results to some extent can be seen in some new philosophical and psychological ideas which were created in the following centuries and had no precedence. We do not attempt to explain or analyze the ideas in this regard because of limitation, rather we wish to show that the soul is not being assumed as an independent existent and in some cases the soul has been totally denied. Some of these ideas are as follows:

5.3.1. Freud's idea: Freud announced that instinct is the basis for man's psychological being.²⁶ The scientific system of psychoanalysis governs instinctive energies, their repression, defence mechanisms of repressed energies, nervous disorders caused by repression and ways of their treatment. He believes that all of the human's psychological needs are only justifiable by his instinct and nothing else can interfere with this mechanism.²⁷

5.3.2. Idea of Marxism:

In the view of Marxism, due to the influence of the philosophical perspective of materialism, an announcement was made that the bases of the top forms of conscious behaviour should be searched for in social relations between the individual and the external world. In other words, the material physiological situations and social and economical conditions, in relation to each other, cause the appearance of psychic phenomena. Mind and mental characteristics are counted at most as an epiphenomenon relative to the mentioned material conditions.²⁸

5.3.3. Behaviours' idea:

In the view of behaviourists, mind as an existence in man has been denied. The mental or psychological features are, in fact, behavioural and motional characteristics present in existents, or consequences which appear in behaviours.

²⁶ D. Yandelouich, and W. Barret, *Ego and Instinct*, (1971), New York, Vintage Books, P. 88.

²⁷ Z. Freud, *Beyond the pleasure principle*, In, Freud Great Books, Vol. 54, (1968), London Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc, P. 645.

²⁸ A.R. Luria, *The Making of Mind*, Edited by M. Cole, and S. Cole (1979), Massachusetts, Harvard University press, P. 43-44.

Watson (1924) for example believes that thinking is man's speaking to himself, while speaking is a collection of muscle movements which appear in speaking organs. Skinner denies the mind (soul) as a determinate existence too. He regards the psychological and mental characteristics as observable behaviours which are formed in relation to environmental stimulations and reinforcements. Therefore, according to pragmatic thinking conditions, the mind is considered a factor of behaviour.²⁹

5.3.4. Gestalt's idea: Gestalt psychologists who paid special attention to mental capabilities explained these capabilities with a physical description. Kuhler (1920) believes that Gestalt psychology is never contrary to materialism; rather it is in harmony with materialism and with that kind of parallelism of mind.³⁰

5.3.5. Some epistemologists' idea: In recent decades some epistemologists believed that the mind has a material existence like the soul. Piaget says that if we believe in structuralism (as he himself believed), then we cannot regard the reality of the individual being related to an internal and immaterial soul (or to an individual subject). He believes that the mind is an internal structure which similarly exists in a stage of psychological development in various individuals. Such a structure can also exist as artificial intelligence in a machine.³¹

From the brief review we have given of the major perspectives in contemporary psychology it is clear that many psychologists have denied the soul as an immaterial existence. They have been faced with the difficulty that by assuming body and soul they were faced with a dual existence which brings two sources for man's actions. From one side man's actions can be linked to bodily sources and from another side to sensual origins such as desire and the soul's will.³²

²⁹ J.B. Watson, *Behaviourism*, (1924), People's Institute Publishing Company Inc, Ch. 10.

³⁰ K.R. Popper and J.C. Eccles, *The Self and Its Brain*, (1986) London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

³¹ J. Piaget, *Structuralism*, (1968) New York, Basic Books, P. 138.

³² In fact there are evidences to prove dualism, but in this writing we are trying to prove we must look for this dualism from a new aspect and that is the reality that man is made of three parts: a body that is pure material and has no realization, the soul that is, according to Aristotle and Mulla

This problem has been removed to some extent in Mulla Sadra's philosophical theory, since he believes that the soul in its origination is bodily and in full contact with the material body, but with the influence of its trans-substantial motion it can get out of this state. We will investigate this point more fully below.

5.4. Islamic philosophers' ideas about the soul

Muslim philosophers have put forth many valuable theories about the soul; this shows that the soul was very important for them. Their plan was not to deny the soul, but to prove it with many powerful philosophical reasons. They intended to identify the soul as much as possible; this can be seen throughout their philosophical history.³³

In this section we attempt to explain some Islamic philosophical definitions regarding the soul which can show us what they have understood about it, and then explain briefly general ideas regarding soul and after that the idea of Mulla Sadra will be explained in more detail:

5.4.1. Some Muslim philosophers' definitions of the soul

5.4.1.1. Ibn Sina's definition

The origin of actions which are not monotonous and not non-voluntary is so called the soul.³⁴

Sadra, bodily in its origination - the soul which is influenced by the body but the body itself has no consciousness and finally the spirit. In the next chapter we will try to prove this tripartite existent with many evidences as the main aim of this writing, but for now the important thing is that conflict can exist between two intelligent things and the body without a soul is not such a thing i.e. the body has no consciousness. There is no difference between man's body and soil or stone. However we will explain this later in more detail.

³³ According to some traditions recognizing the soul is equal to knowing God, so these traditions were a great motive for some Islamic philosophers to carry out research on soul-related issues.

³⁴ Ibn Sina, *Shifā, kitab-i nafs*, investigated by Hasan Zādi Āmulī, first edition, Markazi Nashr, (Qum, 1375), p. 13.

This means the soul is an active power that has two characteristics; the first is that its action is not monotonous and the second is that it is not non-voluntary.

5.4.1.2. Tabātabā'i's definition

The soul is essentially a non-material substance which has belonged to matter in regard to its action.³⁵

This definition mentions several points: According to the definition the soul is a substance not an accident. So it is not removed when its proposition is removed.

- 1- The soul is defined as a substance which is immaterial in its essence but dependent on its actions.
- 2- This substance is an immaterial substance and the definition only relates to the human soul and maybe to the animal soul since nobody has claimed that the vegetable soul is immaterial. Peripatetic philosophers believe that even the animal soul is material.
- 3- The meaning of "belonging to matter in regard to its action" is, to sum up, not absolute since the soul does not need matter in some actions like feeling, imagination, illusion and intellection.³⁶

5.4.1.3. Mulla Sadra's definition

Mulla Sadra in his book *al-Shawahid al-rubūbiyya* gives the following definition of the soul:

The human soul is the first entelechy (*kamāl-i awwal*) for a natural organic body (*jism-i tabī'i-ī ālī*) that possesses life, as it can realize the universal issues (*umūr-i kulīyya*) and do mental actions (*'af'āl-i fikrīyya*).³⁷

³⁵ Tabātabā'i, *Bidāya al-hikma*, pp. 66, 73.

³⁶ G.R. Fayyādī, *'Ilm al-nafs-i falsafī*, an article published by Imam Khomeini Institute for Education and Research, p. 5.

³⁷ Sadra, *Al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya, mashhad-i 3, ishraq-i. 8*, p. 292. See also: Sadra, *Asfar*, Vol. 8, p. 215.

Another definition which he gives in *Asfar* is:

The soul is first Entelechy for natural body, but not for all natural bodies since the soul is not entelechy for fire or land, rather in the natural world it is first Entelechy for natural body that can make second entelechy s via some tools which help it to do life actions, like feeling and volitional motion³⁸.

In this definition the following words need to be explained:

The first entelechy is a philosophical term which has two different meanings.

1. The reality of a thing, for example the vegetative soul that is the form (*sūra*) of vegetable, is the first entelechy for the vegetable and the animal soul is the first entelechy for the animal. In short whatever has belonged to the base existence of a thing so called the first entelechy and those things which come at a later stage are secondary entelechies. They are effects and subordinates of the action specific form (*sūrat-i fi'liyya-i no'īyya*) for example the first entelechy of fruit is the shape and form which is constituent of the fruit and secondary entelechies for fruit are the effects and results of the fruit.³⁹
2. Motion: Philosophers have defined motion as follows: "motion is the first entelechy of a potential thing in regard to its potentiality".⁴⁰

When using the term first entelechy to define the soul the first meaning is intended.

After stating the definitions a brief explanation of general ideas regarding the soul may be useful.

³⁸ Sadra, *Asfar*, Vol. 8, p. 17.

³⁹ S. J. Sajjādī, *Farhang-i Ma'ārif-i islamī*, vol. 3, p. 1609.

⁴⁰ This definition of motion has been stated by Aristotle and has also been accepted by many Muslim philosophers.

5.4.2. The general ideas about the soul

Many ideas exist but some are more important than others because the other ideas have been influenced by them and they are as follows:

5.4.2.1. Peripatetic and Ibn Sina's idea

The soul essentially is immaterial, but in respect with its actions it is material.⁴¹

This group all believed that the soul is spiritual in its origination and survival (*ruhānīyya al-ḥudūth wal-baqā*). The soul is essentially immaterial, but in respect to its actions it is material. It is immaterial at the time it is first created; it has a sense of realization and is created with the body, at the same time.

5.4.2.2. Supporters of the notion of metempsychosis (*tanāsukhiyya*)

The soul is spiritual in its origination, bodily in its subsistence (*ruhānīyya al-ḥudūth jismānīyya al-baqā*).⁴²

This idea states that the soul is spiritual in its origination, but in its subsistence becomes corporeal. This happens in some cases where souls which when first created are spiritual, because they become involved with vegetative and animal attributes, do not become bodily, but are extremely dependent on natural bodies and their prerequisites.

5.4.2.3. Mulla Sadra and many Gnostics' idea

The soul is bodily in its origination, spiritual in its subsistence⁴³ (*jismānīyya al-ḥudūth ruhānīyya al-baqā*).

In this idea the soul has a special motion; that is trans-substantial motion. As previously noted, in trans-substantial motion there is only one existence in which

⁴¹ Sajjādī, *Farhang-i Ma'ārif-i Islāmī*, vol. 5, p. 115.

⁴² Sadra, *Sharh-i ishārāt*, vol. 5, p. 115.

⁴³ Sadra, *Al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya*, p. 309. See also: Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 8, p. 302; Sabziwārī, *Sharh-i manzūma*, vol. 5, p. 115.

both its matter and its form change, like 'covering over covering' (*labs-i ba'd al-labs*) and covering over the previous covering.

There are some things which need to be explained regarding this kind of motion:

- 1- It is not like removal (*khal'*) and covering (*labs*) as it was in the generation and annihilation in which peripatetics believed which required having several existences, but in this kind of motion the soul has one existence that has intensity in its substance.
- 2- The soul, according to trans-substantial motion, would be changed from corporeal soul to spiritual soul. In other words, because of fundamentality and gradation of existence, there is one continuous existence that gradually finds intensity in its existence, but our mind can abstract something from each stage of this existence of united intensity and since it is only one existence which finds intensity and there is no more than one existence there is no problem of succession of time-instants (*tatālī-i ānāt*) and motion in real meaning will flow. Both of these two points have been explained in the previous chapters.
- 3- According to Ibn Sina's idea the soul's substance is not changing, only the long term dispositions (*malakāt*) are changing, but in Mulla Sadra's idea the soul's substance would be changed and the long term dispositions would follow their substance.
- 4- The universe is continuously renewing and God continuously gives effusion of existence to the world, so the universe is completely needy.

More explanation about the soul according to Mulla Sadra:

As previously stated Plato and many of the ancient philosophers believed that the soul is a reality which is immaterial and independent of matter. The soul exists before its body, they said, and then after the creation and preparation of the body the soul is joined with the body. The soul and the body will be together as long as the body is able to accompany it, and then after the body's weakness and death

the soul will turn to the other place. According to this idea the soul is like the navigator of a ship.

Aristotle and his followers believed that the soul is like a material substance that is the form (*sūra*) and first entelechy of body. The body for the soul is also a physical body. It is a tool which grants the soul actuality in its powers.⁴⁴ He has compared the body to wax (*mūm*) with the soul as an effect on wax. In Aristotle's definition the soul can only be understood with the body's function and action since the body, by virtue of its potentiality to accept the soul, can obtain its quiddity and subsistence from the soul. In other words the body can obtain its first entelechy from the soul and can be a tool for the soul's action, that is, the soul grants the body its life, actuality and form and practicality is connected with it. All of the body's actions in reality are the soul's actions. Without the soul the body is not able to be alive and human. Afterwards this idea was completed by Ibn Sina and Iranian philosophers and reached the highest degree.

In short, Plato assumes spiritual and anterior existence of the soul prior to the creation of the body. Aristotle knew it as a physical and contingent accident by the origination of the body. Ibn Sina and his followers believed that the soul is spiritual in its origination and created with the origination of the body. However, in regard to this, Mulla Sadra has an innovation. He has proved that although man's soul ultimately and according to specific evolution must be immaterial, when it is first created it is corporeal and comes into existence through the body. According to this principle the soul is not an immobile substance but a substance which is movable in its essence like time since it has trans-substantial motion like all material issues.

As previously stated Mulla Sadra accepted Aristotle's definition of the soul which says the soul is the first entelechy for the body to make it able and actual in its abilities and powers; "first Entelechy for natural body" or "first Entelechy for natural body with respect to its potential actions". He believes that the soul is inorganic at

⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Nafs-i Arastū (De Anima)*, Chapter 2, section 1.

first then moves from that stage and finds the foetal state which is at the level of the vegetative soul and then it reaches the animal soul and then in the period of its real maturity reaches the stage of human soul that is "rational soul" (*nafs-i nātiqa*). This is not the final stage it can reach in this world; rather through specific edification the soul is able to reach one of the highest levels, that is the 'sacred soul' or 'actualized intellect' which is a very difficult level to reach.⁴⁵

Indeed these stages are all on one path that goes from potentiality to actuality. Every stage is a potential step for the next one. As it travels it gradually increases in degrees of intensity and goes from weakness to strength; however all of these stages follow a single path (*sayr*) called "human life" and "line of gradual perfection" which is accomplished based on the gradation of being and trans-substantial motion.

It is important to know that reaching each stage does not mean eliminating the previous one; rather each higher level is comprehensive and inclusive of the previous lower levels. The rule is that every stronger existence – based on the gradation of existence - contains all previous lower stages.

Therefore, contrary to other philosophers, Mulla Sadra does not believe that the human soul is fixed and has only one level of existence which is motionless and unchangeable, rather it possesses a kind of growing and motion in its essence which every day is more perfect than the previous day⁴⁶.

Mulla Sadra, like other Muslim philosophers, believed that the soul is immaterial (*mujarrad*), but he differs from what the other schools of thought say in that from

⁴⁵ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 7, pp.118-119.

⁴⁶ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 8, p. 346.

However this statement will be criticized as something which is immaterial cannot have motion and as Mulla Sadra himself has stated several times growing and motion are characteristics of the material world. These are ambiguities in Mulla Sadra's philosophy which have to be solved. Later we will explain that all of these are due to Mulla Sadra's ignorance of the separation of the soul, which is created with the body, and the spirit, which is an immaterial issue and has come from another world.

his point of view immateriality of the soul is gradual and arises from its evolutionary journey (*sayr-i takāmulī*) by trans-substantial motion. Trans-substantial motion in body culminates in growing old and death; however motion in the soul is a movement toward rationality and the soul day after day becoming more powerful and more energetic. The separated soul will finally change to "actual intellect",⁴⁷ after separation from the body and being without need of it and then will be alive in a place which is better than this material world.⁴⁸

Here the question arises that is if the soul and body are two things which are separate from each other then unity or oneness of them is not correct. On the other hand, if they are united then we must not assume the soul to be independent of the body particularly as an opposite of the body in immateriality, since how can it be possible for a single thing to be both immaterial and material; that would be contradictory. In other words, if the soul is produced from matter - and we know that every material thing will be nothing in the future - then why is the soul assumed to be immaterial and why is it believed that it has no mortality? And how can a material body be assumed to be a bearer of "ontological possibility" of an immaterial substance which is opposite of the body.

Although, as with hyle (*hayūlā*) and form (*sūra*), peripatetic philosophers believe that the soul and body are two separate substances which both need each other, the problem still remains that there must be a similarity between the two in being material and immaterial. In the peripatetic idea the problem cannot be resolved since, in spite of the fact that both the hyle and the form are material issues so in this regard there is no problem, peripatetics believed that the soul is a mixture of the two and so cannot be immaterial.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 9, pp. 141-142.

⁴⁸ Sadra, *Arshīyya*, p. 235.

⁴⁹ Ibn Sina, *Shifa, kitāb-i Nafs*, pp. 55-70.

However, Mulla Sadra believed that he could resolve the problem⁵⁰. Relying on the principle of trans-substantial motion of matter he was able to show that even a material thing that possesses the capacity to be immaterial might, with the help of trans-substantial motion, gradually be able to find a form of immateriality. He says there is no incompatibility between the soul being corporeal and having the ability to be spiritual (by obtaining intellectual degrees). It is possible that even when it is corporeal we do not call it the soul; however it is not possible to deny that the human self and its intellectual growth are independent from the body's growing⁵¹.

In fact Mulla Sadra himself called the soul's transitions the soul's degrees.⁵² In this journey as far as man can be far away from material stages (inanimate, vegetative and animal) then it can be nearer to the human and intellectual degrees and his intellectual powers can be stronger. This is one of the reasons Mulla Sadra gives for why the soul can remain independent and can remain after the death of the body; rather it will be released by going far from the animal powers, similar to a pigeon having been freed from a cage.⁵³

The important point is that Muslim philosophers tried to prove the immateriality of the soul.⁵⁴ We will refer to some of them and will explain the problems with which they were faced. One of the arguments that they have put forward is that in addition to particulars (*juz'īyyāt*), man can have an understanding of abstract and universal concepts (*al-mafāhīm al-kulīyya*), analyse them and find some rules for them. All abstract and universal issues are immaterial issues – since the

⁵⁰ As we can understand from the verses and traditions the human soul continues to move even in the other world and motion is basically in opposition to immateriality. We will consider the issue of immateriality in more detail.

⁵¹ This is why all who have corporeal growth cannot possess spiritual perfections and will be on the border between human and animal.

⁵² Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 8, p. 378.

⁵³ *Ibid*, vol. 8, p. 294.

⁵⁴ Henry Corbin believes that '*mujarrad*' (abstract) in the terminology of Islamic philosophy is the same as the Greek '*khoristos*' and an equivalent to 'transcendent' rather than to 'immaterial' or 'incorporeal'.

characteristics of matter and material have previously been taken away from them - and the level of every immaterial thing is higher than the material one and therefore they do not need matter. The result is that they must have a specific container and realm to carry them which is independent and immaterial,⁵⁵ otherwise they will become material.

All Muslim Philosophers call the independent realm that the universal concepts (*al-mafāhīm al-kulīyya*) (universal and abstractive man perceptions) are from, "mind". It is actually separate from the corporeal tools and cells of the brain (cortex).⁵⁶ Some people who have experienced near-death situations have seen some non-material realities. True dreams and other such examples are super-natural and meta-psychological events which are not compatible with material issues.

5.4.3. The Relation between the Soul and the Body

The relationship between man's soul and body is a well-known philosophical difficulty. This problem has always existed for scholars who believed in dualism as a feature of the human being.

The philosopher's view of the relation between the soul and body is fully connected to his view of how the soul was originated. According to different Muslim philosophers like Ibn Sina and Suhriwardi, the soul in its first origination as spiritual and immaterial, the relation between the soul and body has been given different names such as: "occupation" (*ishtighāl*), "contrived dependence" (*ta'lloq-i tadbīrī*) and "entelechy dependence" (*ta'lloq-i istikmālī*) all of which present a similar

⁵⁵ The independence of immaterial issues from matter is not inconsistent with the fact that a material body prepares the requirements of immaterial issues. For example a part of the brain and nervous system can be tools for the soul to carry its will or to transfer reactions to the soul. As another example the switch and electronic tools are not electronic themselves, rather they can - and have to be - in the employment of electronics and connections to the other parts and appearing with glory of its benefits.

⁵⁶ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 8, chapter 6, p. 260.

meaning.⁵⁷ Such names were chosen by philosophers to describe the soul, because it is spiritual and immaterial and cannot penetrate or impress itself on a bodily matter, rather the soul to reach its worthy entelechy will bring about change in the condition of the body and then in a specific manner it will belong to the body.

Necessary to such a notion is the acknowledgment of two things: the first is that the mixture of an immaterial issue and a material one would create a perfect existent called the human being. With respect to the permissibility predicate of the sentence "human is a rational animal" and necessary to the unity of the parts of the predicative sentence, they must be united. The second is to acknowledge the actual immaterial substance which in its essence is pure of matter, is separate from the body and assumes annexation to a body for accidental entelechy at the lowest level of its essence.

However, according to Mulla Sadra's point of view both of the above two inevitable results are absurd since it is impossible for the soul as a substance which is essentially immaterial and pure from matter, and therefore intelligent in its essence, (*'āqil al-dhāt*) with an intelligible existence (*ma'qūl al-wujūd*), to be annexed to a body, since such a substance has no relation to a particular thing, and its attribution is equal to all bodies and to all material realities. It is impossible for an immaterial issue to have an ineffectual existence through a lack of human and animal powers and through not reaching the actual intellect (*'aqli fa'āl*), still less to be united with a material body relying on necessitation of the unity of matter and form. This would mean believing that man's soul in relation to the beginning of his existence is like forms and corporeal matters and can rise higher than matter and reach an immaterial point, after travelling through the stages and attaining external faculties and reaching a level of feeling, imagination and intellection.

⁵⁷ For an explanation of the ideas about the relation between the soul and body see: Motaharī, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, vol. 13, pp. 277-278.

It is impossible to be making a corporeal type like human from a corporeal matter and an intellectual form (*surat-i 'aqli*), unless through the intermediation of transmutations and entelechies which have to occur into this matter.⁵⁸

Based on the picture of Sadrian philosophy from the special manner of the soul's existence, origination, alterations and entelechies by trans-substantial motion, man consists of soul and body and despite being different in degree, they exist in one unit of existence as if they are a single thing which possesses two aspects. One aspect is changeable and mortal, like the derivative, and other is stable and will remain like the basis.

As the soul grows up in its existence, body will be more delicate and more limpid and its connection with the soul will become more intensive. Then the unity of the two will be more powerful so that it can reach the degree of intellectual existence which means being a single entity with no distinction.⁵⁹

The relationship between the soul and body is essential, that is the soul essentially belongs to matter and body, because the reality of the soul is dependent (*ta'aloqi*) not accidental (*'araḍī*), added to body⁶⁰ – contrary to whatever other philosophers have said - of course the manner of this belonging is variable on the journey of the soul's entelechy⁶¹.

In other words, the soul and the body are not two different and independent substances, rather one existential reality which is called body in one sense and soul in the other. The body is the descending level of this reality and the soul is the perfect level of it. Mulla Sadra says:

The soul is completion of this substance and the whole of that.⁶²

⁵⁸ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 3, p 358.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, Vol. 9, pp. 112-113.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, vol. 8, p. 12.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, vol. 8, p. 380.

⁶² *Ibid*, Vol. 8, p. 292.

Due to Mulla Sadra's philosophical psychology many subjects have found logical solutions and many problems have been solved by intellectual reasoning. He wrote more than one thousand valuable pages about the soul which are mostly in *Asfar*, volumes 8 and 9, *al-Shwāhid al-rubūbiyya*, *'Arshīyya* and *sih 'Aṣl*. Some subjects which have found acceptable explanations are: The problem of mental existence, the problem of vision (*ibṣār*), the problem of unity of intelligence and intelligibility and their unity with the actual intellect (*'aql-i fa'āl*), the problem of resurrection, the intermediate realm (*barzakh*) and bodily resurrection, the problem of whether the soul has multiplicity or not, the powers of the soul and the like. However we will not go into detail here.

5.4.4. Mulla Sadra's problem regarding the differentiation between the soul and the spirit

Sadra's system regarding the soul with all of its strengths and abilities has faced some problems which seem not to have been resolved yet. One of the main problems is the inability to separate the soul (*nafs*) from the spirit (*rūh*) which in the view of this research has created many problems for the majority of philosophers in general and Mulla Sadra in particular. In fact the presence of some problems in admitting the separation of the soul from the spirit was the cause of philosophers denying that the soul and the spirit are two separate entities. In some particular phases when they were faced with difficulty they tried to justify their idea which was not compatible with the separation. However we will try to consider Mulla Sadra's idea on this matter.

According to the *ḥadīth*:⁶³ "Allah created the spirits before bodies..."⁶⁴ the creation of spirits comes before the creation of bodies, but from a philosophical point of

⁶³ There are many *ḥadīths* that says the creation of spirits is before creation of bodies and we will point out some of them in the next chapter.

⁶⁴ Among them are some *ḥadīths* including: "I was already Prophet, when Adam was still water and clay"; "The relation between the believer's spirit and God is stronger than the relation between beams of light and the Sun" and "no one will ascend to the Heaven, unless he/she has descended from it".

view, the belief in the heavenly spirit which existed before the body opposes Mulla Sadra's theory and his belief in the corporeal origination of the soul. This is the main problem which Mulla Sadra as a believer faced. If the soul is the same as the spirit, and we consider the spirit to be a separate entity, which despite its perfection has descended from Heaven to Earth and entered the body, then it makes no sense to consider it as originating from the body, which came into being with trans-substantial motion of matter and, with this same permanent essential motion, will attain the culmination of the separation. Upon death it will depart from the body and be freed.

With regard to the differences in the definition of spirit and soul, to believe simultaneously in both may lead one to contradiction. Mulla Sadra noted such compromise and compatibility and while trying to maintain the "corporeal origination" of the soul, he attempted also to justify the spirit as existing prior to its body.

In his *Ta'liqa 'alā sharh-i hikma al-ishraq* (Glosses upon the Commentary upon the "Theosophy of the Orient of Light" of Suhrawardī) concerning the independent spirit, he states: By the spirit of man and its precedence over the body, is meant the cause of its existence that precedes it. He says:

And as regards the soul, those who believe in agreement between the demonstration and intuition have known the soul as follows: "there are many stations and degrees for the soul, though it is, at the same time, essentially simple. Also they believe that the soul, because of its perfect causeness, pre-existed the body; and in fact, this cause is of a special character, according to which the soul's command on the body depends on a special preparedness and certain other conditions. And also it is certain that the soul is created and, at the same time, will exist eternally after the death of body. And this is so, only because its [soul's] cause exists eternally. Therefore, when you attain the knowledge of certainty of the fact that the cause of the soul pre-exists the body, and when you find the connotations of the causeness and causedness, then you will know that the soul pre-exists the body. And the existence of the cause of that soul is certain

for the people of demonstration. But the perfection of the causeness is not certain.⁶⁵

The intention is that the soul is being created itself before the creation of the body which Sadra does not accept. So it is not acceptable to say that because the cause of the soul existed before the creation of the soul then it can be said that the soul existed before the creation of the body. In fact, such justification is a kind of denial of the existence of the soul before the body.

However, the main target of this research as mentioned in the introduction is to find evidences and reasons to support the idea that the soul and the spirit are two independent issues and contrary to the claims of many scholars, man is made of three parts, body, soul and spirit. This researcher believes that by accepting this separation many of the problems will find logical reasons and solutions. Now we will attempt to explain some of the problems with which philosophers were faced and about which there has been controversy which I believe was caused by not considering this separation.

5.5. The issues about which philosophers have differing opinions

Propounding the ideas which philosophers disagreed upon has led us to understand the fountainhead of these diversities therefore it is important for our research. However these diversities are deep-rooted and we want to point out some of them.

5.5.1. The soul's immateriality or materiality

The problem of whether the soul is immaterial and motionless or material and movable is a well known discrepancy between philosophers. They have stated many reasons on this topic for their ideas and criticized the reasons against. First of all we will explain the ideas about it and then will set forth some reasons for and against these ideas. It is worth mentioning that the purpose of stating the

⁶⁵ Qutb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *Sharh-i hikma al-ishrāq* (Commentary upon "the Theosophy of the Orient of Light" of Suhrawardī), p. 441.

arguments is to know the different sorts of reasoning, not to support one and reject the others. At the end of this section we will analyse the subject.

5.5.1.1. Some philosophers' ideas about the soul and its immateriality⁶⁶

In this part the aim is only to express the ideas of these philosophers about immateriality or materiality of the soul and nothing more.

5.5.1.1.1. Plato's idea: Plato believed that the soul is immaterial and comes from the other world and is put into the body. The relation between the soul and the body is like the relation between the prisoner and prison. Aristotle says:

The first person who said the soul is immaterial was Plato.⁶⁷

Plato was the first philosopher to believe that the human being is a dual existence. He states that man has two parts: the first is an immaterial part called the soul and second is a corporeal one called the body. He explains that the immaterial soul exists in a different world to the material world before the creation of the body.⁶⁸ The soul needs a tool to come to this world and that is the body. In more precise words Plato does not believe that the human being has a soul rather he says the human being is the same as the soul; i.e. every human is only one soul. In other words this is the soul that makes the reality of the human. Plato explicitly states the dualism of body and soul; however his view cannot justify the relation between them.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ For more details about the ideas and their reasons see: G.R. Fayyādī, A. Sa'īdī, *Ma'rifat-i Falsafī* (A quarterly Journal of Philosophical Inquiry. Year 6, No. 2, pp. 2-18.

⁶⁷ Aristotle, *Nafs-i arastū* (De Anima), introduction.

⁶⁸ Motahari, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, Vol. 13, p. 277.

⁶⁹ Motahari, *Majmū'a-i āthār*, Vol. 13, p. 31.

5.5.1.1.2. Islamic Peripatetic philosophers' idea like Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Bahmanyār

The soul has no motion and it is immaterial in its essence and its actions.⁷⁰

The soul has no movement at all; rather the body has motion and after the body becomes perfect the soul will be created. They argued that the soul is immaterial so it has no motion but the body is material and has power (*qowa*) and motion.

5.5.1.1.3. The summary of Mulla Sadra's idea is as follows

The soul has motion while it is in this world since it is material in its essence even though in some degrees; however, it has no motion after leaving the body.⁷¹

He also says:

The soul has motion while it is in this world, contrary to when the soul becomes an actual intellect (*aql-i bil-fi'l*) and completely comes out of the aptitude.⁷²

The soul has three kinds of being in Mulla Sadra's view:

1. The material human soul: this kind of soul as compared with the intellectual and ideal soul (*nafs-i mithālī*) is potential, like foetus mode before it begins to move.
2. The ideal human soul (*nafs-i insānīy-i mithālī*): this kind of soul as compared with the intellectual soul is potential. It is an animal mode.
3. The intellectual ideal human soul: as long as the soul lives in this world it is actually material and in this respect it has motion but after leaving the body it has no motion.

This notion has stated two things. The first one is that the soul moves by trans-substantial motion and, following the soul's substance, motion occurs to its

⁷⁰ For more details about peripatetic's idea and they arguments regarding the soul see: Ibn Sina, *Shifa, kitab-i nafs*, pp. 288-300.

⁷¹ Sadra, *Asfar*, Vol. 9, P. 2.

⁷² *Ibid*, vol. 3, p. 242.

accidents. The first reason for this idea in short is consciousness (man can understand that there is changing in his inner being and can feel his own changing). The second reason is the same as the reasons for the unity of intelligible and intelligent; that is since it is proved that knowledge is the same as the knower then by obtaining knowledge the substance of the knower's soul will gradually change.

The second thing which this notion has stated is that after leaving body the soul has no motion; since the soul in this mode is not material it will become immaterial and this is why the soul has no motion afterwards, that is, immateriality is the reason for it lacking motion.

5.5.1.1.3. Tabātabā'i's idea

He says: "The soul is movable, given the fact that it is immaterial in its essence and material in its actions." In the book *Nihāya al-ḥikma* he explains his idea as follows:

Having motion is acceptable for the soul since it is not fully immaterial. The soul is a substance which essentially is immaterial, but which in respect of its actions belongs to matter. If the soul was similar to immaterial intelligence then it would not be able to move. Therefore since it relies on its actions it belongs to matter and has trans-substantial motion while it exists in this material world. However, because it is pure immaterial in its essence and actions, it has no motion after leaving the body. In fact matter in the book of *Shifā* is the mediator of subsistence's motion in the soul. The soul's substance will change and the substance of ignorant becomes substance of knower.⁷³

This idea also has two claims: the first one is that although the soul is immaterial in its essence, it is material in its actions. The reasons for the first claim are firstly conscience (*al-wijdān*), which every human finds within him, and secondly the reasons for the unity of intellect, intelligible and intelligent, (*ittihād 'aql wal-'āqil wal-ma'qūl*) as was explained about the previous idea which was from Sadra. The

⁷³ Tabātabā'i, *Nihāya al-ḥikma*, Chapter 11, section 12, p. 261.

It is worth mentioning that the Qur'an and traditions clearly say that man's soul will have motion after life but the intellect and philosophy are unable to prove this, rather they insist on denying it.

second claim is that after leaving this world change is impossible for the soul since it becomes immaterial and motion is impossible for an immaterial issue.⁷⁴

The explanation of the above ideas was to show that there is diversity of opinion between philosophers and there are of course more ideas on this with more diversity.

5.5.1.2. Arguments about the immateriality of the soul

Having stated some of these ideas, we will now go on to explain some reasons that philosophers have stated for their ideas and why they criticised the ideas opposing them. It is worth mentioning that we are not supporting any of these ideas; rather we are trying to show there is some dispute between philosophers' opinions and at the end of this section we will try to get closer to the source of this discrepancy. There are several arguments to prove the immateriality of the soul, some of which are as follows:

Ibn Sina has propounded eight reasons in the book of *Shifā* to prove that the soul is immaterial. An outline of the sixth reason (the flying man) is as follows:

If man does understanding and reasoning via some corporeal tools then his actions must be completed by these tools only, therefore he would not be able to understand himself, his essence and the essence of his tools and that he understands at the moment. Whereas there is no tool between the soul and its essence and also between the soul and its tool which it realizes by. Also there is no intermediate between the soul's direct understanding of its tool. The soul

⁷⁴ It seems that Tabātabā'ī in the book, *Mihr-i Tābān* changed his idea and stated that the soul has motion in the intermediate world, he says: "... and again that very soul after being separated of the matter and death moves via motion in its substance and goes to be more perfect. After passing isthmus it will be in the form of resurrectional immateriality and will wear a resurrectional dress and the verse of 'Again, on the Day of judgment, will ye be raised up' (Qur'an, 23: 16) will be certain. All of those will happen by motion in substance. The time when man became pure matter the motion was in matter, and then since it became the rational soul, its trans-substantial motion occurs in the rational soul." (S.M.H Husainī-i Tehrānī, *Mihr-i Tābān*, (a mystical dialog with Tabātabā'ī), Bāqir al-'ulūm publications, p. 154).

understands its essence and its tool which it can realize by and also the soul can realize that it is realizing itself. Therefore the soul can understand itself essentially.⁷⁵

He also explains a simple guide in the book of *al-Tanbīhāt wal-ishārāt* which in short is: If a healthy man is situated in a position with no contact with any material with his eyes closed, his fingers open from each other, his hands and his legs being open without touching his body, in completely calm weather with no draft to allow him to feel his body and a temperature equal to his body's temperature in a state of suspense without relying on anything as if he was just born, in this state he will only be aware of himself, rather than others. From this guide two things can be concluded, firstly existence of the soul and secondly the soul being immaterial.⁷⁶

Mulla Sadra has collected eleven reasons from other philosophers in *Asfār*, Volume Eight, which have been stated to prove the immateriality of the soul. The first reason is given below:

First: the soul perceives the universals [i.e. universal ideas] and universal natures from the aspect of their generality and universality. It is not possible for a universal *qua* universal, i.e., a general nature, to inhere in a body, or to be imprinted in a side whether divisible [such as the plane and line], or indivisible [such as a point]. The reason why [the intellectual universal form] cannot inhere in an indivisible side [such as a point] is because a point prevents from being a substratum for an intellectual form, for either it should have distinction from the thing which is its end, or it should not. If it is not then it is impossible to have an intelligible form in it without the substratum which is its side. Since the point is an essential side for it. So it is possible that a side of [an intellectual] thing inheres in it as an inhering thing in that measure [i.e., dimension]. In which case just as the inhering thing would be measurable by that measure by the accident, likewise the

⁷⁵ Ibn Sina, *Shifā*, article 5, chapter 2, pp. 296-297.

⁷⁶ Ibn Sina, *Tanbīhāt wal Ishārāt*, vol. 2, *Namati* 3, section 1, p. 292. See also: Ibn Sina, *Shifā*, *kitāb-i Nafs*, article 5, section 7, p. 347; Hassan zādiḥ Āmulī, *Durūs-i m'rifat-i nafs*, dars-i 22, p. 75; Sadra, *Asfār*, vol. 8, p. 44; Hassan zādiḥ Āmulī, *Hizār wa yik nokta* (a thousand and one points), point 823; Hassan zādiḥ Āmulī, *'Uūn-i masā'il-i nafs*, p. 109.

limit of its side would be by the limit of the substratum by the accident. Unless it is distinct from that measure in existence, but that is impossible otherwise that point would be divisible, as explained at its [appropriate] place.”⁷⁷

The second reason concerning the impossibility of the division of intellectual form and then proving the immateriality of the soul for all humans is al-Rāzī’s reason which Mulla Sadra has expressed in *Asfar*, he says:

Each thing has a reality by which it is. That reality inevitably is one, and is not subject to division at all. If it were receptive to division then it would entail that it subsists despite the division. Ten *qua* ten [for instance] does not remain so when divided, and five is not a part of ten, for it is one of the numerical species. Rather it is a part of the multiple units, and the ten being one reality has no part. If ten is divided [into two], and two five are obtained then they are two parts of ten as being multiple and not as being a single [unit]. The multiplicity in them is in relation to being number, and not in relation to itself. Ten from people is multiplicity for one from people, and it has unity for itself and has one form not subject to division. Since this is established, so we say: if the knowledge connected to these quiddities [or essences] disengaged [from matter] inheres in a substratum subject to division. Then by the division of substratum its division would [also] entail. And by its division there would be the division of its form. But the object of knowledge is indivisible, or what is derived it is not subject to division. So [the above assumption] is a contradiction.⁷⁸

After explaining the above reasons Mulla Sadra says that these two reasons have been expressed in our philosophers’ books by this demonstration. According to their attitudes it is one of the strongest demonstrations indicating the immateriality

⁷⁷ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 8, Chapter 6, p. 260. See also: L. P. Peerwani, *Spiritual Psychology*, translation of *Asfar*, vols. 8, 9, ICAS Press, the first edition first published in (2008, London), pp. 228-229.

⁷⁸ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 8, pp. 264. See also: Peerwani, *Spiritual psychology*, p. 232.

For more details and reasons about immateriality of the soul see: Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 8, pp. 270, 280, 284, 288, 293, 295, 296, 298, 299, 302; Ibn Sina, *Tanbīhāt wal-ishārāt*, vol. 3, *namat-i* 7, section 2, 3; Bahā’ī, *kashkūl*, vol. 2, p. 334; Sadra, *Matālib al-‘ālīya*, vol. 7, p. 94; Hasan Zād i-Āmulī, *‘Uūn-i masā’il-i nafs, ‘oūni*: 21, 22, 23, 24, pp. 373-403.

of the soul – the perceiver of universal meanings -, and these relate to all human souls.

The reasons for the immateriality of the soul are ten times as many as we have explained as a sample. We will explain some reasons which oppose the immateriality of the soul which have been stated to prove that the soul is mobile.

5.5.1.3. The reasons to prove the materiality of the soul (i.e. the soul is moving)

One of the most important arguments for the motion of the soul is that of Mulla Sadra. Relying on fundamentality of existence and trans-substantial motion Mulla Sadra tries to impute motion to the entire material world and also to the human soul. The soul reaches an intelligible stage from the stage of animality due to its trans-substantial motion. He explains the soul's motion as follows:

So we say – and from God is the succour - that their saying: 'the soul is in movement because it is the first mover' is a sound view which has been demonstrated. From that [view] it does not entail that the soul is one of the bodies. As for its movements by itself [or by its essence] according to the intensity, its explanation [by us] has been established by the demonstration. It has already been mentioned clearly and in allusion that it has continuous substantial developments and [continuous] essential metamorphosis from the level of sensation to the level of intellection. At times it unites with the [external] sense [organ], and that is at the beginning of its creation and generation; [at times] it advances and reaches the level of imagination, then it unites with the faculty of imagination if it reaches a station when the intelligible forms are present before it and it witnesses [them], then it becomes an immaterial intellect, purified in its essence from the bodies and corporealities.⁷⁹

In *Asfar* volume eight he also says:

In truth, the human soul is corporeal in existence and disposal, and spiritual in subsistence and intellection. Hence, its disposal in the body is corporeal, whereas

⁷⁹ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 8, p. 244-245. See also: Peerwani, *Spiritual Psychology*, p. 214-215.

its intellection of its essence and of the essence of its maker is spiritual. As for the immaterial intellects, they are both spiritual in essence and in act; the natures are both corporeal in essence and in act. So each of those [two] substance has a known station, which is not the case with human soul. That is why we judge its development at different levels. Because its disposal in the body is not like the disposal of the immaterial intellect in the body, for by its essence it is the direct agent of inducing particular movement and particular perceptions in the way of passivity and seeking for perfection, and not in the manner of emanating and originating [I.e., creating].⁸⁰

Diversity of opinion on this subject is more than we have put forward and the argument is still continuing. However, as mentioned previously, peripatetic philosophers believed the soul has no motion, Mulla Sadra believed the soul has motion in this world but has no motion in the afterlife. Tabātabā'ī believed that the soul is essentially immaterial and it is material in its actions, and its motion in respect with its actions is only in this world. Some other philosophers believed that the soul in this world and the hereafter has motion but it is immaterial.⁸¹

It seems that the root of believing in immateriality of the soul is a verse that says that the human spirit is from the world of "Divine Command"⁸² and this is a world created with the Divine Word "Be" and it instantaneously came to existence, so gradual movement has no meaning for such an existence. Therefore it must be an immaterial issue. With respect to this point philosophers could not ignore the

⁸⁰ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 8, p. 348. See also: Peerwani, *Spiritual Psychology*, p. 298-299.

For more detail and reasons about the soul motion see: Tabātabā'ī, *Nihāya al-hikmat*, Chapter 8, section 11, p. 181; Chapter 12, section 19, p. 314; Sadra, *Sharh-i hikmat-i ishrāq*, p. 497; S.A.H. Rafī'ī-y-i Qazwīnī, *Risāla-i 'āqil bi-ma'qūl*, Edited with critical notes and commentary by H. Hasan Zāda-i Āmulī, Scientific and Cultural Publications Centre, (1983, Tehran), pp. 29, 30, 53, 55.

Hasan Zāda-i Āmulī, *Gashtī dar ma'rifat-i nafs*, p. 314.

⁸¹ G.R. Fayyāḍī, *'Ilm al-nafs-i falsafī*, p. 36. Fayyāḍī has claimed that there are many verses and traditions which confirm that the soul has motion in the hereafter in this treatise.

⁸² "They ask thee concerning the Spirit. Say: The Spirit is of the command of my Lord: of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you." (Qur'an, 17: 85)

immateriality of the soul. So many Islamic philosophers have tried to find a way to explain this so that it is more complete.

However we are faced with two groups which have powerful reasons against each other. On one hand; there is Mulla Sadra and many of his followers' who believe the soul is bodily in its origination (*jismāniyya al-ḥudūth*) which can be proved via some powerful arguments. On the other hand; there is some religious evidence which suggests that the spirit is immaterial, the subject that many Islamic philosophers are influenced by and for which they have tried to present intellectual reasons. The Holy Quran clearly states that God breathes the immaterial spirit into man and this is a subject which a Muslim philosopher is unable to ignore.⁸³

A number of questions arise from this; the first relates to Mulla Sadra's idea and it is 'how can the spirit possess motion after it is breathed into the body (as mentioned the spirit is from the world of Divine Command so it is fully immaterial). The second question is how can something that is essentially immaterial be material in its actions? (as many of Mulla Sadra's followers are saying). These questions still lack a convincing answer.

However, in regard to the distinction between the soul and spirit the dispute can be completely resolved since according to this idea immateriality is specific to the spirit, which in this world is an immaterial issue, and that part of man which has motion is the soul. The soul is a solid at first and then it can reach the stage of vegetative soul via its trans-substantial motion and then animal soul, then human soul and then immateriality of the soul. Furthermore, as religious traditions insist, the soul also has motion in the afterlife since not all people are able to reach the immateriality level in this world. This is another problem that Mulla Sadra is faced with since he says the soul has no motion in the Hereafter. However it is important

⁸³ Although in philosophical argument it is false to use theological evidences like some evidence from the Holy Qur'an, in the place of collection, a philosopher has permission to use some evidence to support his idea from anywhere. However, in the station of judgement the only permission is to use the intellect and intellectual reasons.

that the problem of motion or immateriality of the soul can be solved relying on this distinction.

5.5.2. Origination or pre-eternity of the soul

As with the question of immateriality or materiality of the soul we again see a diversity of opinions on the origination or pre-eternity of the soul. In this part we begin by presenting some opinions about it and then give some reasons which philosophers have expressed to support their idea for and against it. Finally we will consider the ideas and suggest a possible solution to the dispute or at least bring the opinions closer to each other. On the subject of 'origination or pre-eternity of the soul' there are seven main ideas which Sabziwārī explains as follows:⁸⁴

5.5.2.1. The idea of the people who exaggerate things (*ghulāt*):

the soul is pre-eternal by virtue of essence and time. Thus the soul is the same as divinity.

Pre-eternal by time means something which has infinite lifetime and pre-eternal by essence means something which its existence is not precedent by essential non-existence. Mulla Sadra stated this idea in *Asfar* and tried to justify it as follows:

As for the saying of the one who says: "it is God", by that he means [its] annihilation in the divine Unity about which the great Sufis have narrated. It does not mean what the Pharaonians and the heretics claim, for He is most exalted than what the heretics say.⁸⁵

5.5.2.2. Believers in metempsychosis's idea (*Tanāsukhiyya*):

"The soul is created by essence and pre-eternal by time and being pre-eternal by time is through a latitudinal order (*silsila-i 'araḍīyya*) in the material world".

⁸⁴ Sabziwārī, *Ta'liqa bar Asfar*, vol. 8, p. 330.

⁸⁵ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 8, p. 255. See also: Peerwani, *Spiritual Psychology*, p. 223.

The existents being in latitude to each other means they are not cause and effect, even if some are more powerful than others.

5.5.2.3. Nazzām al-dīn Herawī's idea:

The soul is created by essence (*al-ḥādith bil-dhāt*) and pre-eternal by time (*al-qadīm bil-zamān*) and being pre-eternal by time is through a longitudinal hierarchy –i.e. in the world of imagination (*'ālam-i mithāl*) - and its previous existence has also been the soul therefore the soul is pre-eternal by itself and belonged to imaginal bodies.⁸⁶

The soul has been in a world which has causal priority over this world. The soul had an imaginal body before entering this world, but it belongs to a material body in this world.

5.5.2.4. Plato's idea: "The soul is created by essence and is pre-eternal by time and being pre-eternal by time is through a longitudinal hierarchy – i.e. in the world of imagination and intellect (*'ālam-i mithāl wa 'aql*) -. The previous existence of the soul was intellectual and did not belong to a body."⁸⁷

The soul was an angel then was appropriated by a body.

These four ideas above suggest that the soul is pre-eternal by time and that the soul has an infinite lifetime.

5.5.2.5. Some of the philosophers and theologians' idea: The soul is created before the creation of the body.

5.5.2.6. The majority of philosophers and theologians before Mulla Sadra, like Ibn Sina: "The soul is created by time (*al-ḥādith bil-*

⁸⁶ Although Sabziwārī has not given the name of the owner of this idea this idea is from Herawī see: M. Nazzām al-dīn Herawī, *Al-Anwārīyya* (translation and description of *hikmat-i ishrāq*), p. 120.

⁸⁷ As Mulla Sadra stated and Sabziwārī believed this is Plato's idea.

zamān) and at the same time with the creation of completed bodies.”

5.5.2.7. Mulla Sadra’s idea: “The soul is created by time at the same time that perfect bodies are created, since the vegetal soul is tempered to body and is the form of body. Therefore origination of the foetus body is for the soul that is the form of body.”⁸⁸

Origination of a perfect body can be possible via origination of the soul which means no body will be originated if no soul belongs to it. For more details Mulla Sadra says: The soul is a material existent and a part of a material body. The other part of the material body is body. Corporeal organs are the matter of the body and the body’s form is the vegetative soul which is a material issue and has the potential to become a rational soul (*nafs-i nātiqa*).

Mulla Sadra believes that a germ, grume (*‘alaqa*) and lump of flesh are similar to soil. They only have a mineral form, they don’t have the vegetative soul and that is why Mulla Sadra has added the word ‘perfect’ in his definition. Mulla Sadra says:

... it has a mineral form, it does not possess a vegetative soul but it will find a vegetative soul when it becomes a foetus.⁸⁹

By carefully considering these ideas it will be clear that the first four ideas state that the soul (*nafs*) existed before the creation of the body. Many reasons and evidences have been stated by philosophers to support that idea the soul existed before body and some of them are as follows:

Mulla Sadra stated many reasons which claim the soul (*nafs*) existed before the body in *Asfar*. However he tried to justify them to make them compatible with his

⁸⁸ Sadra, *Asfar*, the first pendant of Sabziwārī, vol. 8, p.330.

⁸⁹ Sadra, *Mafātih al-ghayb*, p. 578.

idea which is that the soul did not exist before the body.⁹⁰ Some of what he explained is as follows:

Remember the story of the human soul's fall from the sacred world to this world, the location of corporeal nature which is like the cradle and the homeland and the mother of the animal soul. This has been stated in the prophets' words and the great sages and holy men's allusions.⁹¹

He also in this regard says:

Now, in the sayings of the ancient sages there are subtle allusions and noble symbols concerning the fall of the soul from that world, and then its ascent [to it], and the narratives which guide towards that. Some of them are: the narrative of Salāmān and Absāl⁹², the narrative of the ringdove mentioned in the book *Kalīle wa Dimne*, the narrative of Hayy-i bni Yaqzān. Shaykh al-Ra'īs [Ibn Sīnā] has composed an Ode (*Qaṣīda*) concerning the issue of the cause of the descent of the soul from its Origin, [the beginning of which is]:

You fell down from the lofty place

⁹⁰ To avoid confusion between the soul and the spirit it has to be mentioned that the author of this writing agrees with Sadra that the creation of the soul (*nafs*) occurs at the same time as the creation of the body, but it must be stated that the reasons for proving that the soul (*nafs*) exists before the body must be attributed to the spirit (*rūh*) not to the soul (*nafs*) which is bodily in its origination. It is the spirit that existed before the creation of the body and the soul. Also, almost all traditional reasons used the word 'spirit' and say it is the spirit that existed before body not the soul.

⁹¹ Sadra, *Asfār*, Vol. 8, p. 355. See also: Peerwani, L. P., *Spiritual Psychology*, pp. 302-303.

⁹² This is a symbolic tale of two-half brothers Salāmān and Absāl. Absāl was the younger of the two. He was brought up by his brother Salāmān who was the ruler of a kingdom. Absāl grew up to be a handsome man so the wife of Salāmān fell in love with him. She tried several ways to seduce him to satisfy her lust, but Absāl refused to comply with her wish. So eventually she had him killed by poisoning his food. The death of Absāl symbolizes the irreversibility of the journey toward the Orient of Light, once the Gnostic becomes divorced from the world of matter. (Henry Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, pp. 205^{ff}.)

For you is the elevation fortified and mighty⁹³

All these [narratives] support [the view] that for the soul there is a form of being prior to the body, and an existence in the lofty divine world; that it has a return and going back from where it descended, and the rising of the sun of its reality and the stars of its faculties from its occident, either illuminating straight, or eclipsed, or inverted, or clouded.⁹⁴

Some evidences which can support the idea that the soul existed before the body are as follows:

When thy Lord drew from the children of Adam – from their loins - their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you? they said: 'yea we do testify (this), lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment 'of this we were never mindful.'⁹⁵

This verse clearly shows that the human being existed before it came into its body and God took testimony from them that God is their Lord. There are many perfectly sound traditions which clearly say that the spirit (*rūh*) was created one or two thousand or more years before coming into this world and into the body. According to these traditions it can be concluded that the testimony was taken from the spirits. As the soul, body and the spirit are all united, the testimony taken from the spirit can be attributed to humans. We will state some of these traditions in the next chapter.⁹⁶

Sadra himself acknowledges that existence of the soul⁹⁷ before the body is accepted by the Scriptures revealed from Heaven, the symbolic teachings of the prophets, gnostics, and great sages, but relying on his basis that the soul is bodily

⁹³ Ibn Sina, *Mantiq al-Mashriqīyīn*, *al-nafs*, p. 4.

⁹⁴ Sadra, *Asfar*, Vol. 8, pp. 357-358. See also: Peerwani, *Spiritual Psychology*, pp. 304-305.

⁹⁵ Qur'an, 7: 172.

⁹⁶ For more details see: M. H. F. Saffār, *Baṣā'ir al-ddarajāt*, published by library of Āyatullah Najafī Mar'ashī, (Qom-1404 AH), p. 88. See also: M.T. Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār*, Vol. 58, p.133-134-142.

⁹⁷ Given the fact that Sadra knew the soul and the spirit as a single reality he said that the soul (*nafs*), rather than the spirit (*rūh*), existed before the creation of the body.

in its origination he tries to justify all of the evidences against his basis and to find reasons for supporting the idea that the soul could not exist before body.

Sadra and many of his followers stated many reasons to support the idea that the existence of the soul before the body is impossible. Our intention is not to accept one or reject the other, but to show that there is diversity of opinion on this as on the issue of immateriality of the soul. One reason, in short, which was propounded by Sadra in *Asfar*, is:

- 1- If the soul existed before the body, then it must be separate from body.
- 2- If the soul is separate from body, then the soul cannot be renewable (*al-mutijadidah*) or convertible (*al-mustahilah*).
- 3- If the soul existed before body, then the soul cannot be renewable (*al-mutijadidah*) or convertible (*al-mustahilah*).

But the consequence - the soul being renewable or convertible - is false, so the antecedent – existence of the soul before body - is false too. Therefore the soul did not exist before the body.⁹⁸

By considering this issue it can be seen that on one hand there is Sadra and his idea that the soul is created at the same time as the body which is opposed by most philosophers.⁹⁹ On the other hand it seems that ignoring the traditions which confirm that the spirit (*rūh*) existed before body is not by way of precaution so it is better to find a way to bring them all to an acceptable notion. However, the dichotomy of the soul and spirit could be a solution to this argument. In other words we could say the spirit existed before the body, as all traditions and the Quran - as we will show in the next chapter - use the term 'spirit' in this regard and that the spirit existed before body, rather than the soul. Therefore it is possible

⁹⁸ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 8, p. 330.

⁹⁹ Aristotle also believed that the soul is bodily in its origination but his idea contains some problems, some of which we will point out in this chapter.

that, as Sadra says, the soul was created at the same time as the body and it has trans-substantial motion.

5.5.3. Unity or multiplicity of the soul

Finally we have reached the issue of unity or multiplicity of the soul which has caused even more dispute. The question is whether the human being has one or more than one soul. First of all for more detail we have to explain the ideas about unity or multiplicity of the soul and at the end we will consider the ideas and whatever they may have as a result.

5.5.3.1. Plato's notion: The human being has three kinds of soul, that is, vegetative soul, animal soul and human soul. The reason that there are three kinds of soul that they have three distinct functions. The human being can grow up, have feelings and volitional motion and, because of his ability to think, his actions cannot be foreseen. The existence of affection is a reason for the existence of influence.¹⁰⁰

5.5.3.2. The idea of Muslim Peripatetics' such as Ibn Sina and his followers: they believed that man has one soul, rather this soul is only able to do one action and without tools the only action is to think. The other actions are carried out by the soul's faculties. The faculty is an active power, for example the faculty of sight is to see things etc.¹⁰¹

5.5.3.3. Mulla Sadra and some of his followers: "the soul is all of faculties in its oneness." The soul does all its actions itself. The

¹⁰⁰ *The Series of Plato's Works*, pp. 961-963 (440, 442).

From one point of view the soul consists of three parts (reason, desires and emotion). However from a different point of view the human being has three souls which are the longitudinal levels of the human soul rather than its latitudinal levels i.e. the soul is firstly vegetative then it becomes animal soul and then it can become human soul. This does not mean that there are three souls which exist together.

¹⁰¹ Ibn Sina, *Shifā, kitab-i nafs*, p. 45.

soul is an existent which has tools rather than faculty. The doer of all human actions is the soul. This group rejects the faculties which Peripatetics believed the soul had. They say it is like the writer who writes with his pen and the pen is only a tool to write with not an agent faculty.¹⁰²

5.5.4. Multiplicity of the soul and the problem of inner conflict

As mentioned previously Plato says the soul is something which has a number of parts. He says the main reason for this claim is that the human being has inner conflict.¹⁰³ He asks why, if man has only one part, does he sometimes become involved in conflicts with himself? The issue of inner confliction is a thing that many philosophers and psychologists have debated intensely and it is still an unsolved problem. Malikīan made an important point about this. He said:

The problem of man's inner confliction is not something to be denied; rather its justification is difficult and complicated. Plato is making a reality clear which its reality it-self is not possible to deny; however its mechanism is doubtful. Plato puts forward a mechanism while Durkheim states a different one, Tabātabā'ī invents another way and the other thinkers as the like [many psychologists still claim that this problem is insolvable that why in some moods we do something which everybody knows that we will be repentant after doing it or everybody knows that it is wrong but we are going to do it and some time we will do that].¹⁰⁴

He continues saying:

".. You may think that this Mulla Sadra's theory, 'the soul is all of faculties in its oneness' (*al-nafsu fī waḥdatihā kol al-quwā*) will solve this problem, but no, rather the question still remains, namely The open question is that if this union soul does all its works then when and where from it becomes worrisome. When is it reproacher (*lāim*) and when reproached (*malūm*). Being reproacher and reproached needs to be two things and the question is that where from was this dualism

¹⁰² Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 6, p. 157; vol. 8, pp. 51, 71, 141, 221.

¹⁰³ The Series of Plato's Works, vol. 4, p. 1177, No 603.

¹⁰⁴ Malikīan, *Tārīkh-i falsafa-i gharb*, vol. 1, p. 238.

produced? Plato said a part is reproacher and the other part is reproached. The interpretation of his work involves his interpretation of 'horse and charioteer'. He says: 'a complete man' who his reason (*'aql*) is his charioteer and other two components i.e. 'will' and 'sensual' parts are the two horses that are close to chariot and this charioteer rides these two horses –two parts- harmonious to each other and drives them to the path which he wills. However if the opposite case comes on i.e. the reason part become one of the two horses or the reason part becomes the only horse, man is imperfect. This is the image that he shows. Such conflicts come up very often. For example a person will set the clock to wake up then he wakes up but sleeps again. It seems two components are in conflict; one who wills to be awaked and the other who stays asleep¹⁰⁵."

The problem of internal conflict is an undeniable issue which everyone can find during their lives, but its justification, relying on the basis of philosophy and psychology, is very complex and difficult. Some scholars even claim that the problem still remains unsolved. It is a truth because if we want to solve this problem by multiplicity of faculties and conflict of powers – according to Plato's expression - then another problem arises that the soul possesses longitudinal levels in its existence; therefore when the soul is at one level it is not able to be at another level at the same time since the soul does not have latitudinal level. This point has to be explained more fully.

Man's soul has some levels which we can understand from the Holy Quran and traditions which come in the following sequence: the soul which incites to evil (*nafs-i 'ammāra*), the self-reproaching soul (*nafs-i lawwāma*), the rational soul (*nafs-i 'āqila*), the inspired soul (*nafs-i mulhama*), the righteous soul (*nafs-i mutma'inna*), the well pleased soul (*nafs-i raḍīya*) and finally the well-pleasing soul (*nafs-i marḍīyya*).¹⁰⁶ Verses of the Holy Quran which point out these souls persuade many exegetes to accept Plato's idea and they naturally compare the soul which incites evil to the sensual component in Plato's idea and the other parts as

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p. 238.

¹⁰⁶ *Qur'an*, 12: 53/ 89: 27-28/ 75: 2.

the like.¹⁰⁷ However as previously mentioned the problem with this idea is the justification of the longitudinal levels of the soul, since when the soul is at the commanding evil level it is not at any other levels and therefore the conflict has no meaning. Conflict must be between two things which are latitudinal to each other; rather the levels of the soul are all longitudinal to each other. More explanation about the subject should be useful.

5.5.4.1. The soul and the problem of multiplicity of faculties

Philosophers before Mulla Sadra believed that, based on the principle of *ex uno non fit nisi unum*, it is impossible for a single being to do numerous things. For example a vegetable soul carries out several acts and these acts cannot be made from a single thing so those philosophers try to make some faculties for the soul (based on their discoveries at that time) to attribute every act to one of these faculties. According to this idea the soul is only a manager (*mudabbir*) and the other faculties are under its control. This notion had many problems which Mulla Sadra and other philosophers after him tried to express. Mulla Sadra's idea regarding the soul's faculties is more comprehensive, but the problem of man's inner conflict is not solvable using the existing ideas.

Even the notion of 'the soul in its unity is all faculties' could not solve the problem since as Malikīān says: it is not known when the soul is reproacher and when it is reproached. It needs two things and this dualism is not compatible with 'the soul in its unity all faculties' which Mulla Sadra explains.

The question "if this unity of the soul does all its work then when and from where does it become conflicted?" still remains. Plato said one part is reproacher and the other part is reproached, but unity of the soul is inconsistent with conflict. If the soul controls all its actions then it does not allow confliction between its faculties. Existence of confliction in an incomposite soul is unnatural; it must be between two things. Therefore this conflict is not prompted by levels of the soul or multiple

¹⁰⁷ Malikīān, *Tārīkh-i falsafa-i gharb*, vol. 1, p. 238.

powers of the soul. We must find the key for the problem of inner conflict elsewhere.

5.5.4.2. A suggestion to solve the problem of internal conflict

Can the problem of internal conflict be resolved by distinction between the soul and the spirit? Or from another side can the issue of internal conflict be a proved reason for the distinction between the soul and the spirit? This author believes that the existence of inner conflict could be a reason or at least an evidence for differentiation of the soul and the spirit. This is because this inner conflict must be raised from a special power in man which when man decides to make a mistake or commit a sin this special power goes against man's soul and tries to prevent man's will which decided to make the mistake. Socrates speaks about this preventive power in himself too. In other words this conflict arises from the two selves (I) in the human being, the celestial self (*man-i 'ilvī*) and lower self (*man-i sifli*). The true men of God who have been trained wall to wall of the spirit are free from this inner conflict.¹⁰⁸ It can be seen in some intuition of gnostics.

In short this confliction arises from a divine spirit which is to promote good and prevent evil. The dissimilarity between human and animal is also due to the existence of this spirit. We have more investigation and explanation about it which will be given later.

5.5.5. Evidences to support the differentiation

Two evidences form the gnostics' words which support the differentiation between the soul and the spirit.

¹⁰⁸ Therefore divine men who have been trained though the correct way and they grew up side by side to the spirit (internal prophet) are free from this conflict. One evidence for this location is the verse which says: "The friends of God will certainly have nothing to fear, nor will they be grieved"(Qur'an, 10: 62). As some of the commentators of the Qur'an have said, fear is related to the future and grief refers to the past. However divine men have not done anything to make them regretful about their past and nor are they worried about the future, so they do not have any internal conflict. We will discuss the verses which confirm this theory in the next chapter.

5.5.5.1. Mulla Sadra recounted a tale of gnostics in *Asfar*, he wrote:

The author of *'Awārif wal-ma'ārif* said, which we have also found it in the book *al-Ṭawāsīn wal-yawāsīn*, that 'the high, heavenly spirit pertains to the world of Command, while the human, animal spirit pertains to the world of Creation. The [human, animal spirit] is the locus and the entry-place of the high spirit. This animal spirit is bodily, it is subtle [and] the carrier of the faculties of sensation and movement. This spirit is for all animals. From it are emanated the faculties of senses. Its powers are the food and it controls it, according to the medical science. By it there is the equilibrium of the temperament of the humours. When the [high] human spirit arrives at this spirit it gains a certain kinship with it and becomes distinct from the spirits of the other animals, since it acquires another attribute. It becomes a soul, a place for rationality and inspiration. God the Exalted says: "*By the soul and Him who proportioned it and inspired with [discernment between] its virtues and vices* (91: 7)". It becomes 'proportioned' when the human spirit arrives at it and it cuts it off from the genus of the spirits of animals.¹⁰⁹

The points concluded from this quote:

- 1- This quote refers to the two spirits, the first one is the celestial spirit (*rūḥ-i 'ilvī*) which is from the world of divine command and is the spirit which has been breathed into the body¹¹⁰ and can be united with man's soul. The second is the human animal spirit - as the quote says - which is from this material world and is, as Mulla Sadra knew it to be, bodily in its origination called the soul.
- 2- The second important point is that the quote says: The [human, animal spirit] is the locus and the entry-place of the high spirit then it gains a certain kinship with it and becomes distinct from the spirits of the other animals'. This means the human soul is actually like the other animal soul at the beginning of its creation. This is the important main point which we will

¹⁰⁹ Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 8, pp. 320-321. See also: Peerwani, *Spiritual psychology*, pp. 277-278.

¹¹⁰ According to the Qur'an and some traditions which say four months after the start of the creation of a baby the spirit will be breathed into the body.

insist on and try to support it in the next chapter using Quranic verses and the traditions.

Before explaining the second evidence it seems necessary to express the difference between animal spirit and vaporous spirit (*rūḥ-i bukhārī*).¹¹¹ This is to prevent using celestial spirit instead of human soul, and animal soul instead of vaporous spirit. Mulla Sadra wrote in *Asfar*:

As for their saying: 'animal inhales the soul through the breathing', the intention is: in animal there is vaporous spirit which in purity and subtlety is like the bodies of the celestial spheres. It is the vicegerent of the soul in the natural body. By the breath its balance continues, and its substance feeds on the balanced air. This substance is also the bearer of the power of the senses and the movements of the soul. There is a continuous effusion from the soul on this natural [physical] body, so they have called it 'soul'. Shaykh [Ibn Sīnā] has mentioned it in some of his Persian works in the following expression: 'the vaporous spirit is called 'life' (*jān*) and the rational soul [is called] 'spirit' (*ravān*).¹¹²

According to several evidences which are used in some of our Traditions vaporous spirit is the same as vital spirit (*rūḥ al-ḥayāt*). All animals and humans have this spirit and the two other spirits, namely spirit of strength (*rūḥ al-quwwa*) and spirit of lust (*rūḥ al-shahwa*). So it seems that we should not use vaporous spirit instead of animal soul. However this subject requires more investigation.¹¹³

¹¹¹ The lack of distinction between the soul and the spirit has caused many researchers and philosophers to use these words instead of each other.

¹¹² Sadra, *Asfar*, vol. 8, pp. 250-251. See also: Peerwani, *Spiritual psychology*, p. 219.

¹¹³ Very often vaporous spirit – which may have no reality - gets used in philosophers' writing as a thing that is to do with natural actions of the human body like breathing, blood circulation and the like and of course philosophers have had various definitions for it, many of which were incorrect. In any case since it is used more and more in philosophers' writing, we have mentioned it to prevent any confusion with the animal soul.

5.5.5.2. Second evidence of gnostics' writings

Suhrawardī in "the anecdote of Occidental exile" – the story of his unveilings of inspiration - which is the story of a human falling from the above world accompanied by a brother called 'Āṣim, starts the story as follows:

While I travelled with my brother 'Āṣim¹¹⁴ from the land beyond the river to the Occident cities, to hunt a group of birds from the green sea coast, we suddenly found ourselves in a village called Qīravān which its inhabitants were oppressor. When the people found out that we suddenly entered their village and understood that we are the children of al-shaykh which is well known as al-hādī ibn al-khair al-yamānī, surrounded us and tied us with iron chains. We were jailed in a very deep well which its end could not be seen ... we were told you are free at night if you come up the palace alone, but in the morning you should be back into the well. It was dark over darkness at the bottom of the well and even if we tried to see our hand opened we could not see it. However we came up to the castle every night and entered the space and looked from the mountain. Sometimes several pigeons came to us from the side of Yemen bringing some messages from our motherland and occasionally we succeeded to visit lightning flashed from the right side of the eastern which tells us about Ṭawāriq-i Najd and the light air which increase our ecstasy more and more. In this position we were grief and craving home. The message was addressed to me that if you and your brother want to be released then you must not neglect to plan for the journey and stick to our rope which is a heavenly sphere substance prolate upon the aspects of the eclipse."¹¹⁵

The land beyond the river is the celestial world and the man's main home which is the world of light. The Occident lands mean the material world which is the world of *hyle* and darkness. Hunting birds of the green sea coast means the human being has come to obtain perceptible knowledge of the world and attain perfection in degrees. From this material world man can reach the habitual intellect (*'aql-i bil-*

¹¹⁴ This means retentive and conservatory.

¹¹⁵ Suhriwardī, *Majmū'a-i muṣannafāt*, vol. 2, p. 276.

malaka) then the *intellectus adeptus* (*'aql-i bil-mostafād*). The oppressor of the village inhabitants refers to this world. The people in this world are usually at war and there is no war without oppression.

Some important points in this story:

- 1- God has sent a human being accompanied by his brother called 'Āṣim.
- 2- The companion has been mentioned as 'Āṣim (retentive). A person who is with him during the whole journey. In the next chapter we will express some evidences which can confirm the content of this narrative.
- 3- As they were both jailed, being released from the well was for both the brothers - if you want to be released with your brother - this point will be supported with some traditions in the next chapter.
- 4- This story points to a special power for man which is with him. This is supported by some traditions which say every person has a spirit and a soul.

5.5.6. Metempsychosis of the soul

The principle of 'bodily in its origination' is the best solution to the problem of metempsychosis of the soul so it must be kept secure. On the other hand the principle is opposed by the issue of existence of the soul before body which has been mentioned in many traditions. Mulla Sadra has no solution for this opposition and he continuously tries to justify it. So what is the solution to having both of the principles above i.e. the principle of the soul being bodily in its origination as Mulla Sadra - and Aristotle before him - claims, and the principle of the soul existing before the creation of its body.

Again this author believes that the distinction of the soul and spirit is the best solution available. The soul is created with the body at the same time and there is no problem and relying on this principle metempsychosis of the soul will be rejected since the soul did not exist before body so transmigration of soul has no meaning. On the other hand the spirit existed before the creation of the body and

the traditions specifically used the word 'spirit' for this, they did not use the word 'soul', so there is no need to ignore or justify these groups of traditions.

5.5.7. Active and passive intellect (*'aql-i fa'āl wa monfa'il*)

This argument could also be useful from two aspects. First, active and passive intellect could be a sign of the distinction between the soul and the spirit, and the active intellect could be a special indication of the spirit. Second it could prove to be significant even if it possesses some ambiguity. This topic was stated in Aristotle's discussion and we will base the subject on what Aristotle said.

Aristotle believed that the human being has two sorts of intellect, active and passive. In explaining the difference between the two intellects he says that passive intellect is one which can be the possessor of universal knowledge, whereas active intellect is one which can create notions.¹¹⁶ The question is how can a thing create the object of knowledge? The object of knowledge must be in an open space of existence for the intellect to be conversant with it. We interpret this surrounded knowledge as perception. This is our understanding, which he calls passive intellect, but can the intellect create an object perceived? Malikiān explains it as follows:

"However from the time of Aristotle on all thinkers can admit passive intellect, but not active intellect, so they have had different interpretations about active intellect." Among all the interpretations two were more acceptable than the others. One was the interpretation of Tomas Aquinas¹¹⁷ in which stated that what Aristotle

¹¹⁶ Aristotle, *Nafs-i arastū (De Anima)*, P, j, 736, B. 28.

¹¹⁷ Saint Tomas (sic) Aquinas (ca. 1225-1274) was an Italian priest of the Catholic Church in the Dominican Order and an immensely influential philosopher and theologian in the tradition of scholasticism. He was the father of the Thomistic school of philosophy and theology. His influence on western thought is considerable. Much of modern philosophy was conceived as a reaction against or as an agreement with his ideas, particularly in the areas of ethics, natural law and political theory. See: Pius XI, *Studiorum Ducem* 11 (29 June 1923), AAS, XV.

called active intellect is the very 'eternal spirit' or 'immortal soul'.¹¹⁸ Second is Alexander the Aphrodisias' interpretation which says:

What Aristotle called active intellect is the very same as what we call 'God' in our religion'. Among Islamic philosophers it is only Ibn Roushd who accepts this interpretation and says Aristotle means God by active intellect.¹¹⁹

The second of these interpretations concludes that if God is one then active intellect must be one which means that all humans can have a different passive intellect, but active intellect is one for all humans.

In respect of the above we can refer to some points:

The first point is that, as previously noted, Aristotle and Mulla Sadra had the same idea about the soul origination. Aristotle did not believe that the soul existed before the body; rather he believed that the soul is created at the same time as the body's creation.

The second point is that, also as previously noted at the beginning of this chapter, Aristotle did not believe that the soul can exist after death since he did not recognise the soul and body as two separate substances, but in regard to active intellect he recognised active intellect as immortal. He says pre-eternal will also be everlasting. However Aristotle does not explain how this pre-eternal (active intellect) comes into the body. He says: 'since active intellect comes from outside the body then it can exist after the death of the body'.¹²⁰ It is clear that Aristotle's idea has some ambiguities. He did not explain this problem. Many commentators on his works confirmed that Aristotle did not talk clearly about intellect. One important commentator points to Aristotle's problem regarding the soul and says:

¹¹⁸ Malikīan, *Tārīkh-i falsafa-i gharb*, vol. 1, p. 374.

¹¹⁹ Plotinus was the first person who said active intellect is the first emanation. He took this point from his master Ammonias Saccas and later this statement slipped into the Islamic philosophical books.

¹²⁰ Aristotle, *Nafs-i arastū (De Anima)*, P, j, 736, B. 28.

However as considered, in Aristotle's full idea the great problem, which he was aware of, was not personal experience – man's special and hidden experience and our knowledge about other minds - rather, the form of thinking or pure intellect. Aristotle assumes that pure intellect does not need to any physical or physiological organs which belong to it; he believes that this kind of the soul, i.e. 'nous' can continue his life away from body. But the problem mostly is that he did not speak clearly about this act which has no organs and this form which has no matter¹²¹.

Aristotle himself accepted that the subject of intellect has some ambiguity and complexity. In the book *Nazarīyya-i soūra dar falsafa-i arastū* (the idea of form in Aristotle's philosophy) the subject is explained as follows:

There are many uncertainties in Aristotle's idea about the intellect and of course he believes that the situation is less clear. For example about whatness of intellect that is distinction between human being and lower existents. Aristotle believes that it is different to the soul's faculties. When he was talking about vegetative and animal soul in Chapter Two in the book of the Anima he says: it is another kind of soul and only it can exist separately, as eternally can be separated from corruptible.¹²²

Aristotle acknowledged that intellect is another type of soul. This shows that in his opinion there is a soul which he defines as "the first entelechy for organic natural body"¹²³ and also there is another soul which he called the 'intellect' or 'active intellect' or 'nous'.

However, three kinds of interpretations have been stated for 'active intellect' which can all be evidence that there is an inner faculty which is different from the soul. The first interpretation says that active intellect is the 'eternal spirit'. The second says it is the same as 'God' and the third interpretation states that it is the creator of knowledge. All of these interpretations can be true since we have an inner power which if its impediments get removed knowledge and wisdom will overflow from it. We will explain some traditions which state this point in the next chapter.

¹²¹ J. L. Akrl, *Arastūy-i fīlsūf* (philosopher Aristotle), translated by A. Āzādī, the first publication, (2001, Tehran).

¹²² Qawām safarī, *Nazarīyya-i Sūrat dar falsafa-i arastū*, (2003, Tehran), Hikmat publication.

¹²³ Aristotle, *Nafs-i arastū (De Anima)*, P. 5.

This is a divine force and according to the Qur'an it is a 'Divine Spirit' and that will also be explained fully in the next chapter. Finally this is the 'eternal spirit' according to Aquinas. With the help of the evidences which will be stated in the next chapter we will be able to explain that this divine power or active intellect or eternal spirit or whatever else it might be called, is other than the soul. It is, as Aristotle acknowledged, different from the soul, however he was involved in an ambiguity in justifying it.

The important point at the end of this chapter is that Mulla Sadra himself accepted the existence of the soul before the creation of body in some books which he wrote in the latter years of his life. In the *'Arshīyya* he says:

The human soul exists before the creation of body, without needing the reincarnation (*tanāsokh*) or the eternality (*qidam*) of the soul – which Plato believed in -... and there is no problem with the division of the united soul into multiple souls or to say that the soul has been doing nothing before the creation of body... as if the existence of the spirits (*'arwāḥ*) before bodies is one of the requisites of the Imamite Shi'as.¹²⁴

Now the question arises as to whether Mulla Sadra withdrew his theory (bodily in its origination) by believing in the existence of the soul before body. As can be seen at the beginning of the paragraph he uses the word 'soul' and at the end of the paragraph he uses the word 'spirit' which shows that he still does not believe in the separation of the soul and the spirit as some of the current philosophers have concluded.¹²⁵

However the following points can be discussed about this statement:

- 1- This statement has not been proved in an intellectual or philosophical manner, whereas Mulla Sadra always brings all evidences for his claims.

¹²⁴ Sadra, *'Arshīyya*, correction by, G.H. Āhanī, 1341 SH, p. 239.

¹²⁵ S.M. Khamini'ī, *Rūḥ wa Nafs*, Bonyād-i ḥikmat-i Sadra publications, first edition, (1384 SH, Tehran), ISBN 964-7472-66-8, pp. 178-189.

- 2- This statement is contrary to his main theory of bodily origination of the soul since he denies any pre-existence of the soul before the body and the denial of metempsychosis is based on this. If the soul did not exist before the body that does not mean to say that the soul has moved from another body (including any animal or human) into this current human body.
- 3- It seems that Mulla Sadra has been influenced by the verses and traditions which clarify the existence of the spirit, and not the soul, before the creation of body. So he has ignored his explanation of the traditions or withdrawn his theory in this regard.
- 4- However this does not reduce our duty as some others have also accepted this separation but they have no evidence for their claim. This is what we are trying to prove in this chapter and the next chapter which has not been previously done by anyone.

In the next chapter we will discuss the verses and traditions to see whether or not it can be understood that the human being is an existence with three parts.