

THE CONCEPT OF MOTION IN MULLÂ ŞADRÂ'S PHILOSOPHY: AN ONTOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE HUMAN SOUL'S DEVELOPMENT

Cecep Zakarias El Bilad

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palangka Raya, Indonesia
cecepelbilad@iain-palangkaraya.ac.id

Abstract

This article discusses the concept of motion in the perspective of Mullâ Şadrâ's philosophy and its application to understand the physical and mental changes of human being. Essentially a thing (maujûd) consists of substance and accidents. Everything moves or changes, and philosophers debate on how the motion takes place. Does the motion happens only on its accidents such as color, shape or weight, position, etc. or both on its substance and accidents? Mullâ Şadrâ believes that when the thing moves, the motion takes place on both its two essential elements, and even it is the substance which is the source. The motion of the accidents stems from that of the substance. In Şadrâ's philosophy, the study on motion is closely related to his ontology. This article tries to observe the definition of motion and its ontological background. This is the library research. The data collected will be analyzed interpretively to explain the gradual changes of the world especially of the human body. We found that the soul as the substance of the human being, and not like that of any other entities in the universe, is the foothold on which the human accidents (the body) upholds its existence. All the body's activities are moved by the soul and all its changes are the effects of the continuous motion of the soul. Without the soul, the body is only a lump of the dying meat.

Keywords: Motion, Existence, Substance, Accidents, Soul

Abstrak

Artikel ini akan membahas konsep gerak dalam perspektif filsafat Mullâ Şadrâ dan aplikasinya dalam memahami perubahan-perubahan pada diri manusia, baik secara fisik maupun mental. Secara esensial, sesuatu itu tersusun atas substansi dan aksiden. Setiap sesuatu juga bergerak atau berubah. Di sini para filsuf berdebat tentang bagaimana sebuah gerak bisa terjadi. Apakah gerak terjadi hanya pada aksiden sesuatu tersebut seperti warna, bentuk, bobot, posisi, dan lain sebagainya, ataukah pada keduanya? Mullâ Şadrâ menyakini bahwa ketika sesuatu bergerak, gerak tersebut terjadi baik di tataran substansi maupun aksidennya. Bahkan, dari keduanya substansilah yang merupakan sumber. Gerak pada aksiden bersumber dari gerak substansi. Dalam filsafat Şadrâ, pembahasan tentang gerak terkait erat dengan kajian ontologi. Artikel ini akan mencoba menelusuri definisi dan latar ontologis gerak. Ini adalah riset kepustakaan. Data yang terkumpul akan dianalisis secara interpretatif untuk menjelaskan perubahan-perubahan gradual pada alam semesta khususnya pada diri manusia. Ditemukan bahwa jiwa merupakan substansi manusia yang berbeda dari substansi entitas-entitas lain di alam semesta. Jiwa adalah pijakan eksistensial bagi aksiden manusia, yakni tubuhnya, untuk menopang keberadaannya. Semua aktivitas tubuh digerakkan oleh jiwa dan semua

perubahan yang dialaminya dari waktu ke waktu adalah efek dari perubahan-perubahan pada jiwa. Tanpa jiwa, tubuh hanyalah seonggok daging yang akan terurai.

Kata Kunci: *Gerak, Eksistensi, Substansi, Aksiden, Jiwa*

Introduction

Motion is a very real phenomenon in everyday life. Like space and time, motion is identical to that of all objects in the universe. Therefore, since long ago it has been discussed by the philosophers, no exception the Persian philosopher, Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Yaḥyā al-Qawwami al-Syirāzi known as Mullā Ṣadrā (1571-1640 M), whose theory will be discussed here. Almost all philosophers agree that motion is the nature of the universe.¹ It means that all entities in the universe are in a state of motion. Therefore, Ibn Sīnā (980-1037 M), for example, like Aristotle did, included the discussion of motion in the chapter of physics (*aṭ-ṭabī‘iyyāt*)² which is a branch of philosophy that examines objects in the physical realm.

Mullā Ṣadrā himself, in developing his system of philosophy, owes a great debt to his predecessors such as the Illuminationist school (*ishrāq*) of Surawardi, Peripatetic school (*mashsha’i*) represented by Ibn Sīna and Nasir al-Din Tusi, the gnostic school (*‘irfan*) of Ibn Arabi, and Islamic theology (*kalam*).³ In many ways, however, Mullā Ṣadrā attempts to synthesize and modify these traditions, and uniquely build his own philosophical-mystical school.

Motion is not an independent existent. Its existence is always closely related to the other’s existence. In the Islamic philosophy’s tradition, therefore, it is discussed under the theme of ontology, which talks about existence (*wujūd*)

and its division. Especially in Mullā Ṣadrā, existence becomes the main topic and basis for his system of philosophy. So we begin this paper with the ontological discussion of existence, as the foothold for tracing the nature of motion. Then, it will be used to understand the motion of the human soul and body. As part of the moving universe, humans also move. A man is originally formed from the fusion of two substances (the ovum and sperm), moves into a seed, then becomes a lump of flesh, fetus, and so on until it finally becomes a human. It keeps physically growing and mentally developing, so that they are able to indulge, multiply themselves, and establish the society and civilization.

This philosophical study will dissect the human self from her spiritual side, to be able to understand the structure of her spirit, and how the relation of the spirit with her physical dimension (the body) is constructed. The result of this study can be used, for example, as the philosophical basis for understanding or explaining human problems especially their psychological ones.

The Existence (*al-Wujūd*)

In the context of ontology, the word *al-wujūd* etymologically means Existence or Being and is the opposite of the word *al-‘adam* which means nothingness.⁴ Conceptually, *al-wujūd* is “something” whose nature (*ḥaqīqah*) is unattainable both by the senses and by the mind, so that it can never be conceived.⁵ As a result, it cannot be defined because definition is a description and/or limitation about something

¹Except the ancient philosophers like Zeno and his teacher Parmenides who considered the motion unreal, only an illusion in the mind. See: John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy* (London: A&C Black, 1920), 235-236.

²Ibn Sīnā, *al-Syifā’: al-Ṭabī‘iyyāt* (Qom: Maktabah Ayatullah Mar’asyī, 1404 H.), Vo.I, 81.

³Ibrahim Kalin, “Sadr al-Din Shirazi (Mulla Sadra) (b. 1571-1640),” accessed from <http://www.cis-ca.org/voices/s/sadra.htm>, on January 31, 2018.

⁴S. M. Khamenei, *Mullā Sadra’s Transcendent Philosophy* (Teheran: SIPRI, 2004), 50.

⁵Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Ḥikmah al-Muta‘aliyyah fī al-Asfār al-‘Aqliyyah al-Arba‘ah*, Vol. I (Beirut: Dar al-Iḥyā al-Turats al-‘Arabī, 1981), 37.

built on sensory informations and/or mental concepts about the composition of the thing. Meanwhile, existence is the simple one (*basīth*). It is the first one for someone to be aware of, before and while he or she is conscious of him/herself and of something else. Therefore, existence is “something” axiomatic (*badīhī*), so is understanding it. It means that every single person, even the kids, naturally has such kind of consciousness and conception about the existence so that it doesn’t need any description and there is nothing more obvious which is able to explain it.⁶

Mullâ Şadrâ conceives that existence is existence *par excellence*,⁷ the existence itself. It is not something; not part of something, not the whole of something, nor everything. It is, however, the one that gives birth to that thing and encompasses everything. Everything can exist because it is manifested or given “wujûd” by the Existence.⁸ It is existence that underlies everything that exists, not to mention the human themselves.

Some existents can be seen by the human senses, and humans with their mind recognize them in such a way of categorizing it such as quality, quantity, position and space. As a result, those existents appear to them in various appearances of what so-called realities. Mullâ Şadrâ makes the analogy about how the existence gives birth to the diversity of realities like the sun and its light. Existence is single, indivisible or undivided, and unlimited by anything. But like the sun, in its singularity the existence emits its ray. The radiant ray it emits has different degrees of perfection and strength.⁹ The farther it is from the source, the more diverse in intensity the ray becomes. That is the way how the existence with various intensities of its ray manifests into the great numbers of modes of existence as perceived by the human’s senses

and mind. It is just like the jet of the sunlight. The more distant it is from the sun, the more the varieties of light and heat it bears, which means the more distant it is from the Absolute Existence, the more diversities of modes are created. This principle is called *tasykîk al-wujûd* (gradation of existence).

Like his predecessors, Mullâ Şadrâ also simplifies his understanding of existence in three categories, *wâjib*, *mumkin* and *mumtani*.¹⁰ First, the *wâjib al-wujûd* is the absolute, independent, infinite existence. It manifests itself. It is not preceded, not caused and not dependent on the existence of the other than itself. Its existence is certain, because it constitutes the cause of the realization of everything other than himself. Clearly, this category belongs only to the Absolute Existence (*wâjib al-wujûd*). Second, the *mumtani* ‘*al-wujûd* is the one whose existence, if it exists, will give rise to contradictions. Therefore, it is impossible for it to exist. Third, the *mumkin al-wujûd* is something that is not obliged (*wâjib*) to exist but also not impossible (*mustahîl*) to exist.¹¹ If it does exist then its existence will not cause a contradiction, and otherwise if it does not exist its nothingness does not negate the Absolute One. This third category is occupied by the universe and all its dwellers. The universe exists but its existence is not absolute; not independent. It comes to exist because it is given existence by the Absolute Existence. Its existence also does not cause a contradiction with the existence of the Absolute who is the giver of its existence.

In this *mumkin* category, the Absolute Existence has gradually manifested his existence so as to create modes of existence – the universe. In this process, every mode of existence passes through the existential

⁶Murtaḍâ Muṭahharî, *Durûs Falsafiyah fî Syarh al-Manzûmah* (Beirut: Muassasah Umm al-Qurâ li at-Taḥqîq, 2009), 22.

⁷Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullâ Şadrâ* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1975), 28-29

⁸Mullâ Şadrâ, Vol. I, 39.

⁹Mullâ Şadrâ, Vol. I, 433-434.

¹⁰The three categorizations of existence were first introduced by Ibn Şîna and followed by later Peripatetic philosophers including Mullâ Şadrâ. See: Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages* (New York: Caravan Books, 1997), 26.

¹¹Rifâi, *Mabâdi’ al-Falsafah al-Islâmiyyah*, Vol. I (Beirut: Dâr al-Hâdî, 2001), 326.

shift, from potentiality (*al-quwwah*) to actuality (*al-fi'l*). Before anything becomes actual, it was still a potential.¹² At that level of potentiality, something is still in position between *wujûd* (exist) and *'adam* (nothing). As a possible existent, it does not have the ability to manifest itself. Nevertheless, it is a potentiality that is ready to accept the gift of existence from the Absolute Existence to become an actual existent. Water, for example, is an actual existent. Before it becomes the actual water, it is a potential one - a potentiality which, if it is actualized, becomes an actual being called "water." When it has become actual and is called water, it also stores potentiality of what will be called "steam". When the steam has already existed, it has escaped its potentiality and is now an actual existent called steam.

This existential procedure takes place continuously, in a chain, and on every entity in this universe – the *mumkin* level of existence. This is what the philosophers perceive as change (*taghayyur*), which is the escape of something from potentiality to actuality.¹³ Therefore, the universe is always identified with change or movement. The existence of the universe constitutes a continuous process of change. The change itself has two kinds. *The first* is instantaneous changes (*taghayyur daf'iyy*) like something connected or disconnected; something stopped, and so on. *The second* is gradual changes (*taghayyur tadrîjiyy*),¹⁴ which is called motion (*al-ḥarakah*). In other words, like Ibn Rusyd defines it, motion is "the process of shifting from one point to the next point by eliminating the first one and forming the second one, and so on".¹⁵ The point can mean place, state, quality, quantity and so forth.

¹²Rifâi, *Durûs fi al-Falsafah al-Islâmiyyah: Syarh Tauḍîhî li Kitâb Bidâyah al-Ḥikmah* (Iran: Muassasah al-Hudâ li an-Nasyr wa at-Tauzî', 2000), 537.

¹³Ibid., 543.

¹⁴Ibid., 543.

¹⁵Khalid al-Walid, *Perjalanan Jiwa Menuju Akhirat: Filsafat Eskatologi Mullâ Şadrâ* (Jakarta: Şadrâ Press, 2012), 49.

Motion: Accidents or Substance?

Further discussion on motion is tightly related to the ontological principle of each philosopher. In the upmost of his system of philosophy, Mullâ Şadrâ shares the concept famously attributed to Ibn 'Arabî', *waḥdah al-wujûd* (Oneness of Existence). It says that all things in the entire universe is nothing but an existential reflection of the God, the Absolute. The universe exists through God's existence. He is the Absolute Existence out of which all multiple entities appear. Amazingly, however, the emergence of the multiplicity of the creations does not degrade the His unique Oneness.¹⁶ It is because, in themselves the entities are actually nonexistent or do not exist. Their existence is not their own, but it is through the existence of God.¹⁷ Motion, therefore, as far as it is an integrated part of the existents which are actually not real, is not real too.

Ibn 'Arabî's discussion on motion is closely related to his notion on time and perpetual creation. The 'perpetual creation' states that the cosmos and all things in it, at every level and domain of existence, are perpetually re-created in every single moment of time. After created, every single thing will return to its nonexistent and will be created again and again.¹⁸ Motion is only an imaginal concept about the subject of motion – the thing in a single space within a single time which is re-created in the following place within the next time, and so on. There is no real motion but a change of place in the different time.¹⁹

Mullâ Şadrâ does not accept such an idea. On the ontological status of existents/realities, he proposes the *tasykîk al-wujûd* as briefly discussed above. God, the Single Creator, absolutely exists. In His Oneness, His Existence generates into multiple modes of existence, from the highest

¹⁶Mohamed Haj Yousef, *Ibn 'Arabi – Time and Cosmology* (London: Routledge, 2008), 120.

¹⁷William C. Chittick, "Ebno'l-'Arabi's Doctrine of the Oneness of Being Ebno'l-'Arabi's Doctrine of the Oneness of Being," *SUFI* 4: 6-14

¹⁸Mohamed Haj Yousef, 136-137

¹⁹Ibid., 42-43.

to the lowest. In other words, existents emerge/are created as modes of existence gradated along this “process” of gradation. They are real. In themselves they do exist with their own existence (mode of existence) gained from/emitted from the source of gradation, the Absolute One. Therefore, motion, as an integral element of realities, also has its own existence. Like others, it is also a mode of existence.²⁰ It is real and objective.

In Şadrâ’s philosophy, discussion on motion runs on the basis of the ontological status of essence and existence. He rejects Suhrawardi’s ontology that “essence” is real and stands as the basis of all realities, while “existence” is unreal, just a fictitious or mental concept. Otherwise, for Şadrâ “Existence” is real; objective. It constitutes the principle of all things, while “essence” is just a mental concept in the mind abstracted from the existents perceived.²¹ When human being observes an existent, in her mind essence of the existent is produced and forms concepts (*aş-suwar*), meaning (*al-ma’ânî*), and understanding (*al-mafâhim*) about that very object.

According to the Peripatetic tradition, the essence of a thing is composed of two dimensions: substance (*al-jauhar*) and accidents (*al-‘ard*).²² This categorization of essence is the basis for Şadrâ’s further discussion on motion. Substance is the dimension whose existence stands independently,²³ while the accident is that whose existence dependently leans on the substance.²⁴ Epistemologically, substance is the basic conception (*ma’qûl awwâlî*) obtained instantaneously at the moment our senses perceive

some object. It is what we perceive as the selfhood of that object of perception (*maf’hûm mâhuwî*).²⁵ Meanwhile accidents are those which are carried by the object we perceive with which we can recognize that object and distinguish it from something else. Let’s take a white paper as the example. The white color is an essence whose existence depends on a “container” named paper. While the paper is the independent one whose existence does not depend on the existence of the white.²⁶ In this example, the paper is the substance and the white is the accident. The white may disappear from the paper while the paper keeps existing. It remains the same paper even though the previous color attached to it is has gone and another color may come.

Take hot water as another example. Water is something whose existence is independent, while the heat is something else whose existence rests on that of the water. If separated, the heat can not exist without the water while the water will keep existing even though the heat has gone from that water. In this case, water is the substance and heat is the accident.

Accident is the performance of an entity so that it can be recognized by human senses. We recognize a piece of paper, for example, through its accidents, such as its density, weight, color, position, function, and so on. According to peripatetic philosophers, accidents are categorized into nine kinds, namely relations, quantity, quality, place, time, position, possession, action (*al-fi’l*) and reaction (*al-infi’âl*).²⁷ Through these nine accidents an object or a thing can be recognized and defined.

Before Mullâ Şadrâ came on the stage of Islamic philosophy, the peripatetic philosophers agreed with Aristotle that when something moves or changes, the motion happens only to its accidents, while the substance keeps stable. They

²⁰Reza Akbarian, “Trans-Substantial Motion and Its Philosophical Consequences,” accessed from http://www.mullasadra.org/new_site/English/Paper%20Bank/Ontology/trans-sustantial%20%20Motion%20@.htm, on January 31, 2018.

²¹Muhammad Kamal, “Dressing after Dressing: Şadrâ’s Interpretation of Change” *Open Journal of Philosophy*, in *SciRes*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2013.31009>, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2013), 55.

²²Rifâî, *Durûs fî al-Falsafah al-Islâmiyyah*, 357.

²³Ibid., 357.

²⁴Ibid., 358.

²⁵Ibid., 359.

²⁶Ibid., 357.

²⁷Muhammad Hussein Tabâtabâî, *Bidâyah al-Hikmah* (Qom: Muassasah an-Nasyr al-Islami, no year), 88.

argue that, as the existential base for accidents, substance must be solid and stable. The solidity of substance becomes the backbone of the accidents, because everything that moves must rest on something that is fixed or immobile. Therefore, motion is only possible to happen on the nine accidents, while the substance is static as the foothold for them to move. For example, a mango seed was implanted in the garden, and ten years later it has turned into a large tree. On such period of time, changes have occurred on the accidents of the seed, such as its size (quantity), robustness and density of its trunks (the quality), its age (time), the spaces around its growing body (position), its contact with the soil and the other trees around (relations), and so forth. Substantially, the large mango tree is the same tree planted ten years ago in the garden. Changes that occur are only on its attributes, not on the substance or the selfness of the tree.

This Aristotelian principle of motion has a significant impact on the identity problem of realities. The Muslim peripatetic philosopher, Ibn Sîna, believes that all realities in the universe constantly change or are in the state of perpetual motion.²⁸ Behind all these changes of the accidents, there is something unchanging namely the substance.²⁹ This unchanging realm constitutes the selfness of a thing on which the identity of the thing is built. If the continuous motion also occurs in the substance then the identity of the thing will never be built, therefore, that is impossible. One day, Bahmaniyar asked his teacher Ibn Sîna, “why is it not possible for the substance to move?” Ibn Sîna replied, “If there is motion on the substance, then the last Ibn Sîna is no longer the present Ibn Sîna”.³⁰

It follows, for Ibn Sîna, that motion is subjective. It exists only in the mind of the subject (the observer). When observing a moving object,

in her mind the subject imagines a point that becomes the starting position of the object. Then the subject imagines the following dots through which the object passes. So, motion is actually the whole moment of the object’s existence from the starting point to the ending one.³¹ This moment is fictitious (*khayyâli*) in the mind. What actually occurs in the real world about the moment is the in-between position between the beginning and the end. This in-between position takes place continuously on everything in the universe.³²

Mullâ Şadrâ agrees with Ibn Sîna that motion is an integral part of the material world, but he takes the different ontological stand. He bases his view on motion on his own principle of *wujûd*. As already discussed, Şadrâ’s ontology mentions that existence is singular and in such singularity it generates and displays various modes of existence. Those modes of existence result from the manifestations of the diverse intensities of the generated light of existence. The lowest level of the graded modes of existence is the material world. In this lowest realm, the diversities of the modes reach their peak. This is the level where space, time and motion are created as the weakest manifestations of the gradations of the *wâjib al-wujûd*. For Şadrâ, therefore, motion is objective. It is real – not just a fiction in the mind. Just like the time, motion is one of the modes of existence. It is, however, one of the weakest so that its existence is almost regarded as nothing.³³ Accordingly, motion is deemed a very substantial thing of every reality in this material world.

Although it is a mode of being, however, in itself it is not an entity or something. It is only the relation or process of renewal of something – not something itself that becomes the locus for the process of renewal.³⁴ With such an ontological status, it can be understood why many people think that motion is merely fictitious and does not

²⁸Ibn Sîna, *al-Mabda wa al-Ma’âd* (Teheran: McGill University, 1984), 34 & 38.

²⁹Ibid., 38.

³⁰Walid, 50.

³¹Şadrâ, Vol. III, 31.

³²Ibid., 32.

³³Ibid., 37.

³⁴Ibid., 67.

exist in reality. It is an inherent part of every reality, but its existence is subordinate to the existence of something else.

From this ontological status of motion, Mullâ Şadrâ goes further on explaining his unique theory on the ontological relation between accidents and substance – the theory known as *al-ḥarakah al-jauhariyyah*. According to Seyyed Hussein Nasr, *al-ḥarakah al-jauhariyyah* means ‘transubstantial motion’.³⁵ This principle says that motion on accidents does not occur without motion on substance. The motion of substance always precedes that of accidents. This principle reverses the Aristotelian which believe that motion happens only on accidents.

Mullâ Şadrâ believes that accidents are existentially not self-contained. It always depends on the existence of substance.³⁶ Therefore, if there is motion in accidents, it means there has been motion on the substance. The motion of accidents emerges as the effect of the substance’s motion. As a subordinate existence, the “fate” of the accidents depends on the fate of their substance. Therefore, the idea that motion occurs only on the accidents while the substance is fixed, for Şadrâ, is absurd.³⁷ It is contradictory to the principle of accidents’s dependence on substance. If substance is fixed while the accidents move, it means the accidents’ movement takes place without any cause from the substance. If accidents depend existentially on the substance’s existence, their motion should also be caused by the motion of the substance on which it stands. It is just like the shadow of an object, which is impossible to move while the thing on which it attaches its existence does not move. For, the existence of the shadow always depends on the existence of something, so that the motion of the shadow must be resulted from the motion of the thing it stands on.

³⁵Seyyed Hussein Nasr, *Sadr al-Din Shirazi and His Transcendent Theosophy* (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1979), 91.

³⁶Mullâ Şadrâ, juz. 3, 67.

³⁷Ibid., 38.

Transubstantial Motion of the Universe

As discussed above, the fundamental structure of every single existent in the universe contains both substance and accidents. The accidents as the dependent part will move only if the substance moves. When an accident (attribute of a thing) moves or changes, it means the substance also moves. Even the motion of the accident results from the motion of the substance.

Accidents are the attributes of an existent through which we, the subjects of perception, perceive it. When we recognize something, all what we see, describe or explain about it are its accidents. Then, when we notice any motion/change on those attributes we believe that the motion is caused by an inner motion of the thing. For example, if we observe a tree, we will see changes in the accidents of the tree, such as the trunk was tiny and now is big; previously was short, now is high; initially was weak, now is sturdy. Its leaves were green, now become yellow; previously were fresh, now are withered. Its branches were few, now become many. Its flowers become fruits. Its roots become long and ramified, and so on. All those changes happen because there is an invisible cause – the substance. Motion of the attributes is the reactions of that of the invisible substance.

Despite its invisibility, the motion of the substance sometimes needs to be described or explained. People usually visualize it by categorizing it into phases of motion based on the visible changes of the attributes. For example, people categorize the growth of the tree into several phases: starting from seed to stem; into young, medium, mature, and old trees. Each stage of the categorization has its own changes of the attributes differentiated from one to another. In the seed phase, the attributes differ from those in the stem phase; in the stem phase they are different from those of the young; etc.

Mullâ Şadrâ convinces that the substance’s motion leads to the existential (*wujûdiyyah*)

perfection, while the accidents' move toward infinite diversities.³⁸ As mentioned above, both are the fundamental structure of every single entity of the universe, so that motion occurs in every level of existents in the universe. According to the *tasykik al-wujûd* principle, substance moves toward the source of gradation in order to perfect its existence. In such an existential gradation, the farther from *wâjib al-wujûd* the weaker its intensity becomes and the less its perfection is. Otherwise the closer it gets to the source, the stronger and more perfect it is. On the whole, however, among other existing worlds, existents of this material world have the weakest intensities of existence, for the material world is the furthest jet from the *wâjib al-wujûd* gradation.

The transubstantial motion constitutes the journey of returning to the source of existential gradation – the journey rising to the levels of *wujûdiyyah* perfection. This journey takes place on the substance of all entities in the universe, man, animal, plant, earth, air, and so forth. In other words, all entities over the universe are in the backward motion approaching the *wâjib al-wujûd*, Allah SWT.

Transubstantial Motion of Human Being

Humans are among the existents (*maujûd*) born out of the existential gradation of the *wâjib al-wujûd*. The intensity of humans' existence is the most perfect compared to the other modes of existence, as indicated in the Quran:

“And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference.” (17:70)

The perfection primarily lies on the consciousness they possess – a special qualification sourced from her inner dimension and not possessed by any other existents. This speciality enables her, while she still resides in her physical bodies, to accelerate her substantial

journey, leaving behind other dwellers of the universe, even to the highest limit that an existent (*maujûd*) can reach.

For Şadrâ, the most obvious example of transubstantial journey is on the process of personal development.³⁹ Like any other entities, a man is fundamentally a composite of two elements: *al-mâddah al-ûla* (the first matter) and *şûrah* (the form), as it is said in a prophetic tradition, “God has created man in his/her own form.”⁴⁰ Initially in the first creation, the two elements are in an equivalent existential position, then they move on in different directions. The *al-mâddah al-ûla* as the accident develops into the physical body, while the *şûrah* evolves into the soul.⁴¹ However, unlike the form of other entities which merges in totality with matter to form the body, the human form which is called the soul (*nafs*) retains its identity while it keeps merging with the first matter to form the body. It can even play an active and independent role to move, control and manage the body.

The soul, more than just a name for the *şûrah* of the animate body like humans, animals and plants, is the capacity (*quwwah*) from which all the human bodily activities emerge. It is also the *quwwah* of the cognitive intelligence.⁴² Therefore, Şadrâ defines it more comprehensively as perfection (*kamâl*) of the body, just like the king as the perfection for a city or the captain as the perfection for a ship.⁴³ In Islamic tradition, however, there are some other terms concerning the inner dimension of human being such as *rûh*, *qalb* and *'aql*. Each term, on one side, has their specific meaning and usage. On the other side, however, it is difficult to discern explicit distinctions between them, because they are

³⁹Mullâ Şadrâ, Vol. IX, 53.

⁴⁰The original text of the hadits says: إن الله خلق آدم على صورته

⁴¹Walid, 51.

⁴²Jari Kaukua, *Self-Awareness in Islamic Philosophy: Avicenna and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 31-32

⁴³Mullâ Şadrâ, Vol. VIII, 7-8; 12-13.

³⁸Mullâ Şadrâ, Vol. III, 85.

invisible; immaterial or spiritual.⁴⁴ Mullâ Şadrâ himself many times uses *nafs* and *rûh* interchangeably, or in some places of his works uses *rûh* to refer to something he calls *nafs* in other places.⁴⁵

Şadrâ then divides the transubstantial motion of the soul into three phases. Each phase is distinguished from the abilities (*al-quwâ*) it possesses in controlling the body.⁴⁶ First, the vegetative soul (*an-nafs na-nabâtiyyah*), the stage in which the soul reaches its perfection so as to form, activate and process the digestive system, growth and breeding. In this stage, the perfection of the soul is in the same level as the soul of plants (*an-nabât*), which means that the ability of the digestive system, growth and breeding are also owned by plants. It is estimated that this stage begins in the phase of zygote, the new substance created of smelting the sperm and ovum cells.

The next phase of perfection is the animal soul (*an-nafs al-ḥayawâniyyah*), the stage in which the soul begins to move the organs and utilize them to perform various activities of life. This phase starts approximately since the human has formed the fetus, when the systems and organs of the body have begun working. In this phase, the soul also begins to have what so-called consciousness – in its lowest level, i.e lust and anger. Here, a person begins to be aware of her needs, her desires. Awareness also begins to arise, about the physical feeling such as warm, cold, hot, cool, comfortable, sick, and the spiritual one such as happy, sad, angry, like, dislike, and

⁴⁴Detailed informations about the meaning and differences between *an-nafs*, *ar-rûh*, *al-'aql* and *al-qalb* are given by Al-Ghazâlî in his *Iḥyâ 'Ulûm ad-Dîn* in the chapter of *Kitâb asy'Syarḥ 'Ajâib al-Qalb*; differently, al-Ḥakîm At-Tirmidzî prefers *al-qalb* as the term to denote all the human inner dimensions. He categorizes *al-qalb* into four layers, *ash-shadr*, *al-qalb*, *al-fuâd* and *al-lubb*, in which *ash-shadr*, the outer layer, embraces the functions of what is in the philosophical tradition called *an-nafs*, see: al-Ḥakîm at-Tirmidzî, *Bayân al-Farq baina al-Şadr wa al-Qalb wa al-Fuâd wa al-Lubb* (Ardan: al-Markaz al-Malikî li al-Buḥûts wa ad-Dirâsah al-Islâmiyyah, 2009), 13.

⁴⁵Abbas A. Shameli, “the Soul-Body Problem in Islamic Philosophical Psychology,” in Christian Kanzian, Muhammad Legenhausen (Eds.), *Soul: A Comparative Approach* (Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2010), 234-235.

⁴⁶Mullâ Şadrâ, Vol. VIII, 129-130; 136-137.

others. There is also the instinct – the sensual perception of the objects around, so that the soul can respond to every contact with the environment – by which the human can respond to any advantages, disadvantages or dangers. This phase of perfection, however, is still parallel to that of animals (*al-ḥayawân*). It means all the functions and abilities of the soul in this phase can also be done by animals. For Şadrâ, in this phase the quality of human existence is actually *ḥayawân basyarî* (the human animal) and potentially *insân nafsânî* (the spiritual human).⁴⁷

The peak of perfection is on the phase of *an-nafs al-insânî* (the human soul). The soul, here, begins to perform an intellectual perception about herself and the objects around to obtain what is called knowledge and *haqîqah* (the truth).⁴⁸ It is this ability that distinguishes humans from animals, plants and other entities of the universe. With this special ability humankind creates civilizations i.e science, technology, values, norms, etc. – things that no other entities can do.

Such stages of mental development take place step by step within the laws of transubstantial motion. The first to emerge and grow is the vegetative soul, followed by the animal and finally the human one.⁴⁹ The latter existence does not diminish the earlier one. The latter is the refinement of the abilities which have emerged in the earlier stages, as well as the birth of new capabilities that were previously unavailable.⁵⁰ Şadrâ calls this principle *labs ba'da labs* (layered clothing). So, when entering this third stage, the soul has accumulated all the abilities that have grown and developed since the vegetative and animal phases.⁵¹ Each phase has its own base of growth and development on the body. The vegetative soul is centered in the liver, the animal in the heart, and the human in the brain.⁵² The

⁴⁷Mullâ Şadrâ, Vol. VIII, 136.

⁴⁸Ibid., 130.

⁴⁹Ibid., 129.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid., 51.

⁵²Ibid., 129.

three organs become kinds of work center for the soul in managing and operating the body's organs and systems.

The work of the soul in the body can be seen from the stages of human development as it has been informed by the experts. From their own perspective, they make periodic categorizations into a number of phases. From the modern medical information, for example, we know that human development starts from the stage of zygote, embryo, fetus, child, adolescent, adult and old. Such categorization is based on a series of body traits as well as the capabilities of both physical and mental motion, which continuously grow and develop over time. Each stage encompasses a number of various physical traits and motion abilities.

In other words, the characteristics of the human body with the series of abilities are formed as the reaction of transubstantial movement/

development at the spiritual level. It means that the growth of the body's organs and systems do not happen by themselves, but are driven by the soul that becomes their existential footing. Without that actively-working soul, the organs and systems of the body become dysfunctional and just a pile of flesh and bones that will gradually unravel. The soul herself as the substance that drives the body's development is a metaphysical existent whose existence can only be reached by the rational-philosophical or spiritual disclosure. So, the current Ibn Sinâ is also the previous Ibn Sînâ, but the latter is now different from the former. Formerly his body was small, lightweight and wak, now is aloft, heavy and strong. Previously he spoke haltingly, now smoothly. He was unable to walk, now he can even run. Mentally he was a child, now is an adult. He was stupid, now is knowledgeable; etc.

Table: Phases of the Human Soul Development

Phases of Human Soul Development			
No.	Phase	Functions/ Jobs	Description
1	Vegetative	Digestion	This is the body's main system. The first system operated by the soul in the human body is digestion. The running of the system based in the liver produces energy to activate other bodily functions such as growth and breeding.
		Growth	Along with the energy generated from the operationalization of the digestive system, the soul carries out the mission of growing the body's organs. The body was a zygote, then became an embryo, fetus, baby, and so on until it grows to an old man. At each stage, every organ of the body experiences growth and development.
		Breeding	At the same time when the body's organs are growing, the soul also carries out the mission of breeding the elements of the organs. At the cellular level, when the organ grows in terms of size or weight, there is the proliferation of the number of cells that make up the organ. Also, in this function the soul processes the marriage of sperm and ovum cells into a new individual/human substance. That's the way a human multiplies. The three abilities that the soul possesses at this stage are also owned by plants so that it is called <i>an-nafs an-nabâtiyyah</i> . Plants can process their digestion, grow-flower, and also breed.
2	Animal	Movement	At this stage, the body's organs have begun to be formed, including the heart as the base for the soul to work in this stage. The soul began to have ability to move the organs so that they can function. Gradually, the organs that are ready enough, begin to work according to their respective

2	Animal	Movement	organs that are ready enough, begin to work according to their respective functions. The more complete the growth of the constituent elements, the more optimal and perfect the motion and work of the organs are. At this stage, the soul is not just a direct driver of the body's organs and systems, it also produces stimulus powers (lust and anger) to move the body's organs and systems. With her lust, one wants to eat, drink, sleep, wake up, have sex, and various other daily activities. Meanwhile the anger is a stimulus to move the body's organs when the soul faces the obstacles or difficulties when trying to meet what she wants.
		Perception	When the heart begins to function, so does the brain. The soul starts to possess the ability of sensory perception using the senses as well as of the internal perception (managing the perceptual results of the senses, wahm, imagining, memorizing, and remembering that is already memorized). These two new abilities of the animal phase, plus three previous ones of the vegetative stage, are also owned by the animals. Therefore this stage is called <i>an-nafs al-hayawâniyyah</i> . That means, an animal can digest its digestion, grow as well as develop its body, and multiply (vegetative phase). It also can move its body's organs and perform perception (animal phase).
3	Human	Movement	At this stage, the soul's ability in moving the organs and systems of the body is more optimal. If at the animal stage the motion of the body's organs is done only based on the stimuli, lust and anger. Now, the movement is connected with the system of the mind or intelligence that has just begun to be activated.
		Intellection	At this stage, when the development of the brain has been optimal, the soul begins to activate her intellectual ability. This constitutes a refinement of the perceptual ability that has grown since the animal phase. This intellectual activity is automatically connected with the ability of movement that has grown earlier, so the mind can be a guide, controller and manager of any bodily movements. With this ability, the soul (human) produces knowledge and truths. Through reasoning methods (logical-philosophical), she produces knowledge; through the intuitive method, she acquires truths. This is the highest stage of development that mankind can achieve, which no single animal affords to do, and let alone other entities in the universe.

Something moves because there is something else that causes it move. Like any other entities in the universe, the human body moves (grows, develops, does activities) and it is the soul which moves it. In principle, according to Ibn Sînâ, something can move only if it stands on something else that is stable, fixed. So, if the soul as the mover of the body also moves, on what does it stands? The soul's motion also does have the foothold to stand, which is the higher existents that are existentially more stable, fixed and perfect. It is because the higher the level of existence is the closer it is to the *wâjib al-wujûd*. Accordingly, based on this *tasykik al-wujûd* principle nothing is stable, fixed, unmoved, and perfect essential but Him, the *Nûr al-Anwâr* (the

Light of the lights) – borrowing the words of Syaikh al-‘Isyraq Suhrawardi. The universe and all the entities in it, are in the state of motion and change.⁵³ No single existent in the universe is fixed, stable, unmoved. Everything is in motion and sustains one another; the lower existent relies on the higher which is more robust and stable. Only God is the Stable, Fixed, Perfect. He is the Unmoved Mover.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that continuous motion or change occurs in the accidents of every entity in the universe. Accidental motion is nothing

⁵³Ibid., 95.

but the effect of the motion of the substance on which the accidents existentially relies on. In other words, motion of substance becomes the cause of the motion of accidents. Such a substantial motion takes place on every entity in the universe, and the direction of the motion is to return to the source, the *wâjib al-wujûd*, to achieve its existential perfection.

Among the modes of existence generated from the *wâjib al-wujûd* are human beings. In herself, a human is also an entity whose basic structure contains substance and accidents. The soul, however, as the substantial dimension of humans is not an ordinary substance as that of other entities. After merging with the matter to form the body, the soul does not lose her identity. On the one hand, along this phase of the worldly life, she rests existentially on the body. On the other hand, however, she remains independent and even becomes the source of the body's motion. The soul treats the body like the vehicle by which she travels during her wandering in the physical world. Without the soul, the body is just a pile of the dying flesh decomposing soon into its basic materials.

This research is one of the beginning steps to understand the transcendent philosophy of Mullâ Şadrâ in the context of humanity. Even it is limited only to use it as the ontological tool to interpret the human physical and mental development. However, the findings pave the way for further researches on, for example, how Şadrâ's Philosophy in general and his idea of transubstantial motion in specific, is practically used to understand and explain human problems, physical or psychological; personal or social. For, as the love of wisdom, it is philosophy that potentially has the wise solution to offer for any problems of humanity

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