

Reading "Moral Constructivism" from Mulla Sadra's Philosophy

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Abstract

Moral constructivism is a metaethical view of the nature of truth and moral truths and characteristics. From the constructivist point of view, morality is subjective and dependent on human beliefs. In the view of constructivists, moral truths exist, but the existence of these truths arises from human existence and depends on human attitudes and conventions. In their view, moral values are not the product of discovery but the product of creation. By Analysis of Mulla Sadra's intellectual foundations, from his philosophy, the theory of constructivist ethics can be deduced. In Mulla Sadra's view, the human soul is moving towards evolution based on the substantial motion. Due to the physical coming-into-being in the world, and in the hereafter, this motion is due to the movement of ardent desire. The human soul is the creator of forms, and at every moment it is placed in a rank of the existential world, and in proportion to that rank, moral possessions are issued from it in gradation. The present article aims to provide an ethical constructivist reading of Mulla Sadra's philosophy by interpreting the important foundations of Mulla Sadra's philosophy.

Keywords: Moral constructivism, the primacy of existence, Substantial motion, metaethical, Soul, Mulla Sadra

Introduction

Undoubtedly, morality is one of the basic principles in human life, it is very important and human life will decay without this important principle; in the philosophy of ethics, there are different views, definitions, ontology, and epistemology about ethics. Nevertheless, the Philosophy of ethics generally includes the fields of metaethics and normative ethics. Moral constructivism is a metaethical view about the nature of truth and moral truths and characteristics and considers all moral truths to be human constructs. Ontologically, in the view of constructivists,

moral truths depend on human attitudes, agreements, and conventions created by human intellect. Historically, the theory of constructivism goes back to John Rawls's moral interpretation of Kant's philosophy. John Rawls was the first person who proposes the theory of constructivism. Among pre-Kant philosophers, such as John Locke, Hume, and Hobbes, traces of constructivist ethics can also be seen. But this theory was independently started by John Rawls with an interpretation of Kantian ethics and developed among contemporary moral philosophers such as Christine Korsgaard, Scanlon, and their students; the theory of moral constructivism has not been studied among Islamic philosophers to date. In the present article, the authors try to study the philosophy of Mulla Sadra (one of the Islamic philosophers) and infer moral constructivism from it according to the foundations of his philosophy. According to the philosophical foundations of Mulla Sadra (1571-1640 AD), the ethics of constructivism can be deduced from his philosophy. Mulla Sadra's philosophy is the philosophy of the primacy of existence in which the quiddity is based on existence. In his philosophy, the human soul is physically coming into being, it is perfected by substantial motion, and every moment is in a rank of existence. In his view, the human soul has the creative power of forms and can issue forms to its subsistence of issuing. At every moment, the soul is placed in a rank of existence as the result of union with the active intellect, according to the substantial motion and by existential gradation, and quiddity is abstracted from the existential ranks of the soul. The quiddity of morality, accordingly, is abstracted differently from every rank. In this research, Researchers intend to express the morality that can be inferred by- interpreting and analyzing Mulla Sadra's philosophical universality. They aim to answer the main question of whether constructivist ethics can be inferred from Mulla Sadra's foundations.

Research background

According to the author's review of the research that has been done in the field of Sadra's ethics, we can refer to the article "Mulla Sadra's Ethical Theory" by Hossein Atrak; Cited; In this article, he seeks to introduce Mulla Sadra's moral theory as virtue ethics, and according to the moral theory of virtue, introduces the attainment of moral possessions in terms of discovery. Another article titled "Moral Realism with Emphasis on Sadra's Thought" has been done by Behrouz Mohammadi Monfared. In the article, the author has not been able to explicitly introduce Mulla Sadra as a realist and has acknowledged that he has not reached such a conclusion¹. The article "Ethics in the system of Sadra's wisdom" has been done by Batool

Taherian Dehkordi. In this article, he describes and explains Mulla Sadra's ethics and calls it transcendent ethics. Another article entitled "Mulla Sadra's existential ethics and some of its accessories" to the research of Touba Lal Sahebi, in this article she believes that Mulla Sadra's ethics cannot be considered the only virtue; but it includes pivotal personality, pragmatism, and a kind of consequentialism. The advantage of this article over previous research is that the authors in this article try to study Mulla Sadra's ethics according to Mulla Sadra's philosophical foundations. With an overview of Mulla Sadra's philosophy, a kind of "ethics of constructivism" can be deduced from his philosophy.

The concept of ethics and moral schools

Ethics in the world refers to a set of stable and firm attributes. Ethics is a set of rules of behavior that man can achieve his goal by practicing (Mesbah, 2007). Philosophy of ethics is a philosophical discussion about the science of ethics. Ethical schools disagree on the question of whether moral precepts represent reality or not, and are generally divided into "realistic" and "unrealistic" moral schools. Moral realism insists that moral facts are independent of our moral beliefs and determine the truth and falsity of beliefs (Naughton, 2001).

Says Arrington: "Realists believe that moral propositions, or at least many of them, directly describe moral truths," (Arrington, 1998).

Schaefer Lando sees moral realism as a theory according to which moral judgments have a certain kind of objectivity. Such judgments, when true, are independent of a person in a particular place and under certain circumstances (Malayosefi, 2006). In general, according to realists in morality, moral values exist in some way in the world around us, and we do not forge them; rather, those moral values exist in the real world, and we are the discoverer of them. According to realists, moral thinking does not create or fabricate values, but discovers values that exist and are independent of us in the world around us. Moral characteristics are the real characteristics of things or actions and are part of the furniture of the universe and their existence or absence does not depend on our thinking about them (Miyandari, 2010). In the view of non-realists, moral judgments and propositions are of the type of human sentences and do not indicate any external reality. The unrealistic belief is that reality is something that does not require reference to experience and sensory perception. Perception of reality is possible through a kind of modified image of what is independent of us and

outside of us (Fath Ali, 2001). Values lack absolute perception and are beyond the realm of reality (Tavakkoli, 1389). These absolute perceptions are obtained by the scientific method; therefore, they do not accept truth and falsehood. The middle ground between realism and unrealism is moral constructivism. The theory of constructivism is one of the theories in the field of philosophy of ethics, which was first stated by John Rawls during his research and interpretation of Kant's philosophy of ethics (1724-1804 AD). John Rawls derived the theory of constructivism from the interpretation of Kant's philosophy of ethics. In this way, the system of moral requirements can be made free of metaphysical requirements. The model of the normative world and our relationship with it, based on cognitive perception, is similar to the model of the empirical world and our relationship with it. We gain empirical knowledge to be influenced by elements from that world that these elements exist before we understand them. The epistemologist sees that the elements of moral order or normative order are somehow affected elements that exist before we understand them. But according to the constructivist conception, our relationship with those elements is essentially active, and in a way, our activity, explains the existence of normative facts (Leber, 2008). Moral constructivism holds that normative truths about what we should do are determined by an ideal process of reflection, choice, and rational agreement. Constructivism believes that the moral principles that we must accept or adhere to for them if we enter into a hypothetical or ideal process of rational reflection are principles that actors will agree with them or affirm (Atrak, 2018).

In terms of constructivism, the thesis of being independent of the subject is rejected while realism confirms it. For moral constructivists, the external realities of morality are determined by a procedure that depends on the subject (Copp, 2013).

In other words, man can be non-realism, realistic, or constructivist in the face of the outside world in the realm of morality. For non-realists, there is no reality called objective moral values independent of the human mind. In contrast to the unrealistic, the school of realism is contrary to their theory and considers moral values to be a reality independent of the human mind, and the existence of these values does not depend on the human mind and thought. The middle ground between these two theories is the constructivist view. From the point of view of moral constructivism, there are true and false moral propositions, but these propositions are not independent of human attitudes and beliefs but are human constructions, and it is not the case that moral propositions exist objectively and independently of human beings in the outside world. Human beings have a role to play in discovering them. This moral reality is constructed by the attitudes, actions, reactions, or views of

individuals under ideal conditions¹. In short, circumstances and actions that are preferred or accepted based on position make it a moral reality. The absence of a preferred position leads to the absence of moral reality (Schaefer, 2003).

Christine Korsgaard is one of the contemporary constructivists. In his view, moral values are not achieved by intuition but are created by rational beings. They are made by a process that makes rules for us (Korsgaard, 1996). According to some ethic philosophers such as Korsgaard, constructivism can be seen as the middle ground between epistemology and ignorance. As Korsgaard acknowledges, constructivism is behind the epistemologist's and non-epistemologists conflict

"What I want to do now is to contrast the theory of normative concepts that I believe is behind the conflict between epistemologists and non-epistemologists..., I call this alternative theory, constructivism," (Korsgaard, 2008).

Since the authors of this article aim to analyze the ethics of constructivism according to the foundations of Mulla Sadra his philosophy, Therefore, It is necessary to the most important foundations of Mulla Sadra stated below

The most important philosophical foundations of Mulla Sadra

1. The primacy of existence

From Mulla Sadra's point of view, existence is the foundation and quiddity is derivative. The quiddity is dependent on existence, just as the shadow is dependent on the person (Mulla Sadra, 2011). From the point of view of those who believe in the primacy of existence, quiddity is derivative, and what is the foundation of the universe is existence, and the individuality of everything is its existence. Quiddity is a subordinate truth. What is established and realized in the external world is existence, and special different objects are special different beings. Quiddity is a thing that is abstracted from objective existence. The determinacy of quiddity is the determinacy of derivative and it is not realized and actual, rather, what is an external world is a matter called existence, and it has ranks and limits which a quiddity is abstracted from every limit and rank; In other words, quiddity is the existential limit (Sobhani, 2002). In Mulla Sadra's view, existence is a foundation and has objective truth. Existence exists in every phenomenon, and the quiddity of these phenomena, other than their existence, does not exist; but exists by their existence. Existence is the same as existence, as attributed is the same as attribution; Therefore, what is real, is this existence (Mulla Sadra, 1998).

Mulla Sadra says: “The truth of everything is its existence on which the effects and rulings are arranged...” (Mulla Sadra,1984)

2. Existential gradation

One of the most important philosophical foundations of Mulla Sadra is the theory of existential gradation. Existential gradation means that the one truth of existence at the same time includes all existential multiplicities (Mulla Sadra, 1998). Existence is a truth graded of essence it has different grades and ranks in a way that, what causes the difference in each rank returns to what is shared in common (Shirvani, 1999). According to Mulla Sadra, any form (rank) of existence is different from another form (rank) but is united in meaning and truth (Mulla Sadra, 1998). According to Mulla Sadra, the beings of the universe are one in existence, but they differ in intensity and weakness of existence. In Mulla Sadra's ontology, all beings, from the weakest being to the most intense being are present in gradation in a rank of God's existential expansion. According to Mulla Sadra's gradational unity, existence has innumerable grades and ranks that start from the highest rank _the Necessary Existence_ and ends at the lowest rank _the Primal matter_ (Mulla Sadra, 1998). The most perfect being is the essence of God, and in the lower rank, in order of existential intensity, are the Intellectual Non-material Things, followed by the souls, natures, physical forms, Primal matter, time, and motion (Mulla Sadra, 1998). In his point of view, the weakness and deficiency of the imperfect rank of existence are the same as its indivisible external reality, not redundant to it. Therefore, the rank of the existence of multiple beings is their essential and their constituent.

“Every rank of existence, their being in that rank, is inherent in that rank”

(Mulla Sadra, 1998)

when a rank for one special being, become constituent and essential, that being, it is not separate from that rank, and that being is its special existence in that special rank. Therefore, the truth of existence has different grades and ranks, which these ranks are not annexed to the existence, but are the same existence

3. Intensifying substantial motion

In general, from the philosophers' point of view, change is either gradual or instant. In instant change; duration and extension are meaningless; like a car that starts moving in an instant and reaches its destination in an instant. But a gradual movement occurs in time and duration; like a car moving between beginning and destination (Ibn Sina, 1984; Mulla Sadra, 1998). Philosophers have long believed

that movement occurs in only four categories (place, quality, quantity, and state) of the ten categories (Shirvani, 2008). But in other accidental categories and also in substance, there is no motion (Mesbah Yazdi, 2000; Aboudit, 1999). Substantial motion is the motion in the essence and interior of material objects that is the source of the apparent motions of phenomena and causes a change in the essence of objects. In other words, substantial motion is motion in the inward and the truth and principle of the object (Malekshahi, 1997).

Unlike his predecessors, Mulla Sadra accepts motion in substance and proves it with reasoning. According to Mulla Sadra, motion is the gradual departure of the object from the potential state to actuality (Mulla Sadra, 1999). Mulla Sadra, proving that material beings are gradual beings who find new existence at every moment, believes that motion is one of the analytical accidents of fluid existence, not a description that is attached to it from the outside (Mulla Sadra, 1998); thus, according to the substantial motion, the material world is moving in a general flow towards the end, the origin of existence.

4. Union of the intelligent with the intelligible and The union of the soul with the Active Intellect

In Mulla Sadra's view, science is the existence of an immaterial object (Mulla Sadra, 1998). What is to deny from knowledge, its imperfections? In his view, there is a union between intelligence and intelligible. In his view, perception is not the realization of the form of an object in the perceiver. Rather, perception is the perceived presence of the perceiver. The soul, when it perceives something, becomes the same object and unites with it (Mulla Sadra, 1998). Mulla Sadra proves the union between intelligence and intelligible with proofs; such as Correlation Proof. In this way, the percept form is actual reasonable in its essence. If this form is by essence intellectual, it is necessary to be intelligent in return, because intelligent and intelligible are Coincidence of Opposites, and they cannot be realized without each other. Since intelligibility is in the position of the essence of Cognitive forms, then the existing rationality is by the Correlation Proof in the rank of the essence of those forms. Therefore, these immaterial forms are intelligent and intelligible. On the other hand, intellectual forms are not distinct from the soul because their existence is one for themselves and the soul and because there is only one rationality and intelligibility, if the soul is characterized by another rationality and intelligibility, it will be contrary to the hypothesis. Therefore, it must be said that the soul is both intelligent and intelligible, and its rationality and intelligibility are the same as the rationality and intelligibility of Cognitive forms¹. In Mulla Sadra's view, in addition,

the intelligent is united with the intelligible; the soul in its perceptual process unites with the active intellect and receives the sciences from the depository of sciences (active intellect).

“Certainly for the active intellect, it is one existence for itself and one existence in our soul. The perfection of the soul, its whole existence, form, and end, is the existence of active intellect for it and is union with it” (Mulla Sadra, 1998)¹

The perception of sciences from the active intellect depends on the existential vastness of the soul. The more the existential vastness of the soul is, the clearer the perception of the sciences from Active Intellect will be (Shirvani, 2005).

Sadrian psychology

According to Mulla Sadra, the soul is Physical in Coming-Into-Being and spiritual in survival (Mulla Sadra, 2011). At the beginning of the genesis, the soul is physical; based on the substantial motion, and after perfecting and departure from potential to act and during the ranks of perfection reaches immateriality, evolution, and spiritual survival (Mosleh, 2012). In his view, the soul is not an attributional concept derived from comparing the soul with the body. On the contrary, the soul is a single essence, and being soul is the mode of its existence. The identity of the soul is a belonging identity and being belonging is essential to the soul and its consistency (Shirvani, 2005). In general in Transcendent Wisdom, the human soul, according to the substantial motion, has a different form in each rank and universe and has no specific rank. The human soul is one of the five substances and inborn is moving towards the world of immaterial and Intellectual world. In other words; a human is a being whose quiddity depends on his existence and builds his identity according to conscious perceptions and conceptions. The essence and truth of man are in a state of becoming in every moment according to the substantial motion and are transferred from one type to another. the soul, based on the substantial motion and union with Active Intellect, has self-made and changed from one form to another and in the form of "Cover after Cover" and "existence after existence " achieves higher ranks perfections; and the essence and truth of human existence, evolves with the substantial motion, thus, the personality and rank of human existence are created by an intensified substantial motion (Shirvani, 2005).

The human soul has different faculties and human perceives many sensible commands at the beginning of birth and their perceptions increase over time, therefore, before the perception of any phenomenon, man is in the potential rank and after every perception, man is in the rank of actual. To the extent that he goes through

the ranks of existence with his substantial motion and his vastness of existence increases and includes the perfections of the previous types as well. According to Sadra's philosophy, the subsistence of the soul toward the forms is a Subsistence of Issuing, and the forms are issued from the soul according to the existential ranks of the soul.

“For the soul, the degrees of existence are in order from the highest existence to the lowest existence. The soul has a perfectionist substantial motion, and whenever it reaches the rank of substantial perfection, its existential encirclement increases and it includes the previous ranks” (Mulla Sadra, 1998)

Ethics of Sadrian philosophy; the crystallization of the morality of “Transcendent Constructivism”

As mentioned above, John Rawls acquired the theory of constructivism by interpreting Kant's philosophy of ethics. So, Kant himself has not mentioned constructivism in his philosophy, and this theory is obtained by interpreting Kant's philosophy. Mulla Sadra's philosophy is no exception to this, and by interpreting the whole of his philosophy, the ethics of constructivism is abstracted from it. From Mulla Sadra's point of view, according to existential unity, the beginning of existence and the end of existence are one; all beings have emerged in the expansion and manifestation of the one existence of God. Other than the existence of God, it is Pure Non-Existence, the human soul, as a physical come-into-being, has a fluid existence, and by acquiring intellectual perfections from the reservoir of perfections (active intellect), is becoming every moment in a rank¹ because it is only one being and the rest of the beings are the manifestation of the same absolute being and are abstracted from the ranks of its manifestation. This is absolute existence, absolute perfection, and absolute goodness; therefore, by acquiring perfection, the soul acquires the characteristics of that rank as much as its vastness of existence. On the other hand, according to Mulla Sadra, the human soul is the creator of forms and creates moral values by a substantial motion based on its existential vastness. The soul does not create anything from non-existence, but by being present in a certain existential rank, as much as its existential vastness creates those values within itself by Subsistence of Issuing. Moral constructivism believes that the reality of morality is constructed by attitudes, actions, reactions, or views of individuals under ideal conditions. According to Mulla Sadra's theory, it can be deduced that the ethics that can be inferred from Sadrian philosophy is constructivist ethics; because in his view, moral reality such as "good" and "evil", etc. is made according to human actions based on the theoretical reason. Human continues their movement with the knowledge of

existence and as knowledge increases, moral values become more intense in them; as a result, moral values based on human knowledge (theoretical reason) are constructed. From Sadra's point of view, the accident has incarnated in its substratum, and sensory and imaginary knowledge has a Subsistence of Issuing to the soul, and the tools related to the senses and imagination are like mirrors and manifestations of sensory and imaginary forms (Javadi Amoli, 2018). In Mulla Sadra's view, external forms are preparatory causes for the soul to create through them. The soul is not passive to the forms, but has a maker and active state; in this way, in Mulla Sadra's view, input is not something that came in from outside; rather, it is the human being who creates his inner self according to the outside; human, with the help of the faculty of imagination, intervenes in forms and meanings and creates external forms.

According to Mulla Sadra, practical reason is based on theoretical reason and moral values are like practical reason; in this way, the soul, in union with the active intellect, become more and more self-made and based on its mode of being in the scientific rank, makes moral values objective and practical. As knowledge increases and the existential vastness of the soul become more, the soul shows moral values better and more intense, and this showing is based on the soul's self-construction. Therefore, moral values are based on the "unity with the active intellect" and "creativity of the soul" are made of the existential rank of the soul, therefore, according to the totality of Mulla Sadra's philosophical system, his moral system cannot be realistic or unrealistic but, it is one kind of constructivism ethics that we call "Transcendent Constructivism." which is constructed in the transcendence of the soul in union with the active intellect and ascending process of the soul, and with the Subsistence of Issuing of the soul. The state of the soul to the moral possessions of the soul is not the state of discovery but the state of making.

There are differences between Sadra's constructivism and the constructivism of others. In Sadra's constructivism, the man's soul creates forms inward and manifests them outward and perception is through the union. Scientific forms and moral possessions are issued to the "Subsistence of Issuing" and nothing enters the soul from outward; rather, the external forms are the preparatory cause.

Another difference is that Sadra's constructivism is based on theoretical reason and practical reason is in the light of theoretical reason and its servant; but other constructivists emphasize practical reason, and in their view, as mentioned; the reality of morality is constructed by attitudes, actions, reactions, or views of individuals under ideal conditions. In other words, Sadra's constructivism is a reaction inward and the constructivism of others is a reaction outward. They manifest

special behavior in reaction to external actions; but in Mulla Sadra's view, the inside of man expands his existence based on his knowledge and manifests special actions and these external actions are man's inward reaction to inward knowledge.

Maybe there rise a problem that in the view of constructivism a moral reality like goodness is constructed; but in Mulla Sadra's philosophy, the soul manifests this fact from an existential rank; so cannot we say that this is constructivism?

In response to this problem, it can be said that also in Sadra's view moral reality is made of the soul when the soul gets the higher rank. In other words, in the ascending of its evolution, the soul receives the sciences from the Active Intellect, and manifests those sciences as much as its "existential vastness"; therefore, we can look at the problem in two ways: one is that there are sciences without intermediaries in existence and the second way there is a time when these sciences appear through intermediaries. The mediator himself is involved in the change and quality of science and forms. For example, when sunlight shines into a room through glass, its quality is different from light that shines without intermediaries due to the glass that is mediated. This means that glass has played a role in changing the quality of light. The soul also is like this; it makes the knowledge received from the Active Intellect within itself as much as its existential vastness and what comes out belongs to the soul. The soul, with its presence at every rank, receives the virtues from the Active Intellect and, from its input, constructs the moral reality as much as its existential expansion. Therefore, it can be said that in Mulla Sadra's philosophy, with the help of the fluidity of the soul, moral propositions are made by its substantial motion in the inward, and the soul manifests them outward as much as his existential vastness.

Conclusion

1-4. the theory of constructivism is one of the theories in the field of philosophy of ethics, which was first expressed by John Rawls during his research and interpretation of Kant's philosophy of ethics (1724-1804 AD). John Rawls derived the theory of constructivism from the interpretation of Kant's philosophy of ethics. According to the constructivist conception, our relationship with moral elements is essentially active and our activity somehow explains the existence of normative facts. Normative facts are determined about what we should do, through an ideal process of reflection, choice, and rational agreement.

2-4. from the totality of Mulla Sadra's philosophy, constructivism ethics is inferred. Among the important foundations of Mulla Sadra in the interpretation of constructivist ethics are "the primacy of existence", "substantial motion", "existential gradation", "psychology", "union of the intelligent with the intelligible and The union of the soul with the Active Intellect".

3-4. It is inferred from the generality of Mulla Sadra's philosophical system that his morality cannot be called realistic or unrealistic; rather, it is a kind of constructivist ethic that we call "Transcendent Constructivism" because this process takes place with the transcendence of the soul. In this way, moral values are constructed in the process of ascending of the soul and in union with the Active Intellect and Subsistence of Issuing of the soul.

4-4. there is two important differences between Sadra's constructivism and the constructivism of others that distinguish Mulla Sadra's constructivism:

1- In Sadra's constructivism, the human soul, according to Mulla Sadra's foundations, makes forms inward and appears outward. Scientific forms and moral possessions have "Subsistence of Issuing" from the soul and nothing enters the soul from outward; rather, the external forms are preparatory causes.

2- In Mulla Sadra's view, practical reason is dependent on theoretical reason and is a servant of it, and the soul makes moral possessions based on theoretical reason. Sadra's constructivism is a reaction inward and the constructivism of others is a reaction outward. According to other constructivists, human beings behave in a certain way in response to external actions; but in Mulla Sadra's view, the inside of a human expands his existence based on his knowledge and manifests certain actions, and these external actions are the "inward reaction" of human to the "inward knowledge".

Endnotes

¹. Monfared, 2013

¹. Based on what has been said, it may be said that we are in the face of a subject such as the "external existence of color", or in a state of negation, and we do not accept an external existence independent of the mind. In this case, our position is unrealistic. Or we are in a position to accept that subject and give an external existence to the "color" whether we think or not, color exists in the outside world. In this case, we are in a position of realism. Or we consider the external existence of "color" to be made by the individual's mind,

which we accept as input so that we can accept the external reality of "color" in the output;

In this case, we have a constructivist view of the subject.

¹. Mulla Sadra, 1998; Javadi Amoli, 2018

¹. See also; Almadba O Al maad., 2004; Arrasayel, 2004.

¹. Mulla Sadra , 2011

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