

The Multilayer Structure of Self in Mulla Sadra's Philosophy

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البنية متعددة الطبقات للذات (النفس) في فلسفة الملا صدرا

الدكتور حسين زمانيه

أستاذ مساعد في قسم الفلسفة والحكمة الإسلامية ، جامعة الشهيد ، طهران ، إيران

Abstract:-

Although the notion of "self" found a special place in the modern philosophy and ever since it has played a pivotal role in the western philosophy, pre-modern philosophers were not completely unfamiliar with the notion. We can find between the works of pre-modern philosophers, implicit information and discussions which lead us to an interpretation of the notion. In this paper I have deeply scanned all the corners of Mulla Sadra's philosophy to put forth an interpretation of "self" referring to his innovative ideas about the existential structure of man and its relation to pure and absolute being. I believe that in Mulla Sadra's philosophy corresponding to multilayer structure of being we can infer a multilayer structure of self. In this multilayer structure every layer originates in the lower one so that the deepest layer is the origin of the selfhood of self and foundation for other layers. These layers from the outermost to the innermost are the layer of personal characteristics, the layer of substance, the layer of proper existence and finally the layer of pure and absolute being. The first two layers constitute the essential layer of self and the last two layers together constitute the existential layer of self. Accordingly, the true self of man is realized when it is annihilated in the pure and absolute being as the ultimate origin of reality which is nothing but God in his ontology. This Sadraean idea about self and its relation to God like many other of his philosophical ideas is deeply rooted in Islamic teachings.

Key words: Mulla Sadra, Self, Multilayer Structure of Being, Existential Structure of Man, Transcendence of Self.

المخلص:-

رغم أن مفهوم "الذات" وجدت مكاناً خاصاً في الفلسفة الحديثة، ومنذ ذلك لعب دوراً محورياً في الفلسفة الغربية، لم يكن فلاسفة ما قبل الحداثة غير مألوفين تماماً لهذه الفكرة و يمكننا أن نجد بين آثار فلاسفة ما قبل الحداثة، معلومات ضمنية ومناقشات تقودنا إلى تفسير هذه الفكرة. في هذه الورقة، قمت بمسح عميق لجميع أركان فلسفة الملا صدرا لتقديم تفسير للذات بالرجوع إلى أفكاره المبتكرة حول التركيب الوجودي للإنسان وعلاقته بالوجود البسيط المطلق. في فلسفة الملا صدرا وفقاً للبنية متعددة الطبقات للوجود يمكننا استنتاج بنية متعددة الطبقات للذات. في هذه البنية متعدد الطبقات، تنشأ كل طبقة من الطبقة السفلية بحيث تكون الطبقة الأعمق هي أصل ذاتية الذات والأساس للطبقات الأخرى. هذه الطبقات من الخارج إلى الأعمق هي طبقة الخصائص الشخصية، طبقة الجوهر، طبقة الوجود الخاص وأخيراً طبقة الوجود الواحد البسيط المطلق. تشكل الطبقتان الأوليان الطبقة الماهوية والطبقتان الأخيرتان معاً الطبقة الوجودية للذات. بناء على ذلك، تتحقق الذات الحقيقية للإنسان عندما يفني في الوجود البسيط المطلق الذي هو الأصل النهائي للواقع و هو الله في فلسفة ملا صدرا. هذه الفكرة الصدراتية عن الذات وعلاقتها بالله مثل العديد من أفكاره الفلسفية متجذرة بعمق في التعاليم الإسلامية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الملا صدرا، ذات (الذات)، بنية متعددة الطبقات للوجود، بنية الوجودي للإنسان، استعلاء الذات.

Introduction:-

The notion of self is one of the most important notions in the modern and contemporary philosophy. This notion plays such a pivotal role that rarely can we find an issue which is not somehow related to this concept. At the outset of the modern era, we face Cartesian thought upon which all the philosophy and even all of our knowledge about world depends on our immediate knowledge of "self" and since post-Cartesian philosophy is not but a positive or negative reaction to his philosophy, the debates around this notion continued to be one of the main research trends in the post-Cartesian thought.

Saying that the notion of self plays a focal role in modern philosophy, does not necessarily mean that in pre-modern philosophy we cannot find any implication or interpretation of the notion. Many debates about the notion of "self" in pre-modern philosophy are usually found between the interpretations offered about man by the pre-modern philosophers. Islamic philosophy as one of the historical branches of pre-modern philosophy is no exception and in its different schools and currents, we can look for some implications or even interpretations related to the notion that help us to put forth new account of this important and controversial concept in the contemporary philosophy.

Mulla Sadra is one of the most outstanding features in the history of Islamic philosophy and his philosophical system is usually known as the pinnacle of Intellectual tradition in the Islamic world. His philosophy in spite of its unique and creative character is deeply rooted in the previous philosophical and even non-philosophical currents. His fundamental changes in many philosophical issues and the creative nature of his philosophy opened a new horizon in which many philosophical notions found a new interpretation. As I mentioned before, although the notion of self does not play a pivotal role in Mulla Sadra's philosophy, like many of other pre-modern philosophies, it does not mean that one cannot find any implication or even interpretation of the notion in his philosophy. His creative system of thought called transcendent philosophy has such a great potency which lets us to have a new perspective on the many modern notions including the notion of self.

Mulla Sadra's idea of self is deeply rooted in his existential view about human being in particular and about reality in general. In his philosophy he proposes an interpretation of reality upon which reality has some levels or, better said, layers which every layer originates in the lower one. This multilayer structure of reality allows him to have a creative interpretation of many philosophical notions and ideas including the notion of self. His idea of the reality despite being creative and innovative is not disconnected from the preceding philosophical tradition in the Islamic culture. His philosophical system which is usually called transcendent philosophy is a synthesis of previous currents of thought converged together in such a way that constitute a new philosophical outlook.

Mulla Sadra's system of thought is based on some philosophical doctrines amongst them primacy of being is the most fundamental. This doctrine is the result of his profound contemplation on the reality and has pervasive effect on all other aspects of his thought, inasmuch as rarely can we find any subject or discussion in his philosophy which has not been influenced by this doctrine.

This doctrine along with some other doctrines like gradation of being, trans-substantial motion and individual unity of being constitute the cornerstones of his philosophy. That is why every subject in his philosophy including his idea about self is fully rooted in these metaphysical cornerstones. In this article firstly I try to expose his metaphysical viewpoint about the multilayer structure of reality and then I will show how this metaphysical viewpoint has deeply affected his idea about man and self as well, inasmuch as his analysis of self leads to a multilayer understanding of it, corresponding to the multilayer structure of reality.

1- Multilayer structure of reality in Mulla Sadra's philosophy

The classical history of philosophy began when some ancient thinkers started to scrutinize the reality of things. Since then, the question whether reality is something that we can see with our eyes or it has deeper layers hidden from our senses has been the axis of philosophical contemplations and debates especially in the field of ontology. For Farabi and Avicenna, as two major Islamic philosophers before Mulla Sadra, objective reality or what we can see in external world around us has two different metaphysical

aspects: one of them is the essence or quiddity of a thing and another one is its being or existence (Izutsu 1990, p.52). this distinction is usually taken as one of the most infrastructural bases in Avicenna's philosophy (Ibid).

For Avicenna, every entity has two metaphysical aspects: essence(quiddity) and existence(being) (Avicenna 1996, v3, p.18). Under the inclusive concept of essence or quiddity different notions and descriptions can be situated that they all together prepare a definition for a thing. For example, for a tree its quiddity includes both its apparent characteristics like color, height, texture and also its more hidden constitutional descriptions like substantiality or having ability to grow. But according to Avicenna these characteristics and descriptions are insufficient for making a thing what it is. Avicenna believes that for a thing to be what it is, another metaphysical element is needed; a metaphysical element which is external or accidental related to the essence of a thing. This external element is the being or existence. Existence is not a part of the essence, rather it is bestowed upon it by an external agent. "The existence is neither the quiddity of thing nor parts of the quiddity of the thing namely those things which have quiddity, the existence is not included in their quiddity, rather it is an accidental predicate" (Avicenna 1996, v3, p.61). Avicenna clearly asserts that quiddity essentially is neither existent nor non-existent; Rather, it is in a balanced situation related to both of them. He calls this balanced situation essential contingency (Avicenna, 1996 v3, p.18). thus, existence is something bestowed to quiddity by an external agent or cause and without the presence of such an agent it would not exist per se. Finally, the chain of causes terminates in a final cause that is not essentially contingent and its being is necessary, otherwise an infinite regress will happen. Avicenna using this argument can put forth a new division in his philosophy which has no background in Aristotelian thought which is the division of beings into two different kinds: necessary and contingent beings. (Avicenna 1983a, p.37; 2000, p.546)

This Avicennian view led to many philosophical debates in the later philosophical tradition in the Islamic culture. One of the questions which emerged some centuries later due to Avicennian viewpoint was about the metaphysical priority of one of these two aspects. If essence and existence are two different metaphysical

aspects of reality, are these two elements metaphysically equal or one of them has primacy over the other one? Mirdamad as the Master of Mulla Sadra was the first Islamic philosopher who raised explicitly this question in his works and answered it by arguing that the essence is the metaphysical element which has primacy over the other one (Motahari 2010, v3, p.89). After him, Mulla Sadra as one of his disciples initially believed the idea of his master but then he changed his mind and criticized the idea of his master and argued against the idea of the primacy of essence over existence (Mulla Sadra 1999, v1, p.26). On the contrary, he believed that among these two metaphysical elements it is existence which has primacy over essence. This finally led to one of the most important doctrines in Mulla Sadra's philosophy namely the primacy of existence over essence (Mulla Sadra 1999, v1, p.75-76). According to this doctrine in a deeper contemplation, the reality of a thing has a multilayer structure; the outermost level is its accidental characteristics like color, shape and so forth. beneath this layer is the layer of substance which together constitute the essence or quiddity of a thing but a thing has yet a deeper layer; a layer which is the foundation of the reality of a thing and the source of all its effects. This is the layer of existence, the ultimate source of reality and the criteria for the thisness or even the thingness of a thing (Mulla Sadra 2014, p.11-19). For Mulla Sadra essence has no reality per se. Rather it is the outer layer or the manifestation of existence.

But if we contemplate on the existential layer of things, we find out that in this layer, different entities are not separated from each other, because in this level there is nothing to separate different beings except their existence. In other words, in this level if something is to be taken as a separator, it is again in its turn being. This leads Mulla Sadra to this conclusion that being is just one reality with different levels and every level of being has its own manifestation or quiddity (Mulla Sadra 1981a, p.49-50). In this way, he penetrates to a deeper level of reality which is the unique graded reality of being. For Mulla Sadra, existentially speaking, every entity is the special level or grade of this unique graded reality and essences are the manifestations of these grades and levels. Thus, every entity has a specific situation in this unique graded reality of being.

Briefly speaking, we can say in Sadraean viewpoint reality has some layers that every layer originates in a deeper one. These layers from the outermost to the innermost are the 1-the layer of the accidental characteristics 2-the layer of substance (these two together constitute the essential layers of thing) 3- the layer of determinate and limited beings 4-the layer of the unique graded being as the innermost layer of reality and as the ultimate source of reality (these last two are the existential layers of thing)

We can compare the structure of the reality to a pyramid. Although this pyramid includes all the diversities and multiplicities of beings, it is in itself a unique graded reality (cf. Hairi Yazdi 1385). In the pyramid of being every entity has a special position except from human being which does not have any special and fixed position in the graded structure of being and can evolve existentially from the lowest to the highest level. In the following part I will try to explain the Sadraean viewpoint about man and its existential position. The highest level in this pyramid is the origin of all other levels and it is the foundation of the being the existence of the whole pyramid. While other levels have some limitations it has no limitation at all. This level is the pure and absolute reality of being. It is pure because its mere being has not been combined with nothing else and it is absolute because its being has no limitation and because of its pureness and absoluteness it is unique as well. This level is the ultimate source of being and it is the innermost level of reality. All other beings are nothing but its manifestation. In this way Mulla Sadra's philosophy passes through the theory of gradation of being to the theory of the unity of being. This means that all other levels are nothing but the manifestations or determinations of this absolute and unique being. Since this absolute being is God, all the reality originates from God and this result is in full harmony with Islamic teachings and Quranic verses. In Quran there are many verses which explicitly state that God is the reality (Quran 24:25)

2- Existential situation of human being in Mulla Sadra' s philsoophy

In Mulla Sadra's viewpoint man is different from other entities in that it does not have any special and fixed position in the graded structure of being. Rather it has special ability to evolve through trans-substantial motion and existential intensifying and pass all the

levels and grades of being (Mulla Sadra 1999, v8, p.347; 1981 p.227-229). Accordingly, while for previous Islamic thinkers like Avicenna and Farabi, human being is the combination of two different substances: body and soul and these two substances are substantially fixed and are unable to essentially evolve to higher levels of reality, in Mulla Sadra's viewpoint human being can pass all the levels of being through the existential intensifying (Mulla Sadra 1999, v8, p.343). Man is the only being which its levels of completion start from corporeality then through trans-substantial motion and existential intensifying gets to the lowest level of abstraction which is called imaginal abstraction and finally leads to the rational abstraction and even to a higher level called beyond abstraction (Ibid).

According to this existential interpretation of man, man is not a combination of two essentially different substances, namely body and soul, which one of them is essentially corporeal and the other one is essentially abstract and incorporeal. Rather, for Mulla Sadra, soul and body are different levels of the existential structure of man as one reality. Mulla Sadra in his works criticizes this Avicennian view that soul and body are two different substance which are essentially separated from each other.

As Mulla Sadra occasionally asserts in his works, human being is like a bridge stretched across mere corporeality and full abstraction and incorporeality (Mulla Sadra 1981, p.223). Man does not have any fixed status and existential limitation, rather his existence is in a permanent completion (Mulla Sadra 1999, v7, p.170). That's is why for Mulla Sadra human being, contrary to other beings, does not have any definite quiddity or essence and it is he himself who can define his quiddity or essence by his choices. In other words, because in Sadraean philosophy quiddity or essence is the manifestation of existence and human existence is not a fixed existence and does not have any limitation, along with his existential change and intensification, his essence changes as well.

According to Mulla Sadra, although the primacy of existence over quiddity is true for all beings, it is only man who can identify his quiddity by his choices. Man has this freedom to make his quiddity.

3- The structure of self

In Mulla Sadra's philosophy the words "self" (*nafs*) or "I" (*ana*) reflect the reality of every one of us as human being. As Mulla Sadra argues, man, corresponding to being, has a multilayer structure. In the beginning, it is worth noting that in Arabic language the equivalent word for self is "*nafs*". This word is not merely used as the equivalent for "*nafs*", but it is also used as the equivalent for "soul". This double implication of the word "*nafs*" may sometimes lead to misunderstanding. This shows that the Avicennian viewpoint that the selfhood of a self originates in the abstract and separated soul, has a long background in Arabic language and Islamic culture as well.

In Sadraen philosophy the selfhood of self is not merely rooted in an abstract substance called soul. Rather, for Mulla Sadra, the selfhood of self originates in the existential structure of man as a whole (Mulla Sadra 1999, v6, p.157). Since man is one being with multiple layers or levels, self has a multilayer structure as well. These layers start from the personal characteristics as the outermost layer then gets to the essence of man and these two together constitute the essential aspect of the "self". But yet the selfhood of self does not originate in these layers. The selfhood of "self" originates in a deeper layer namely the existence of self. The existence of self is the foundation of its selfhood and the origin of all of its determinations. (Mulla Sadra 1999, v6, p.157). What makes self a specific self and differentiates it from other selves is its existence. For Mulla Sadra the layers of "self" do not terminate in this layer and there is still a deeper layer which is the deepest foundation of self that is the layer of absolute and pure being. In this level self is united with the reality of being and has an existential relationship with other beings and selves.

On the other hand, In Sadraean viewpoint self is not a fully realized entity, rather it is more like a process. As I mentioned before, for Mulla Sadra the existence of self is the root of its selfhood and this existence is not a fixed and static existence. Rather, it is more like a flux or process which is perpetually fulfilled and realized (Mulla Sadra 2003, p.566). In this way, Sadraean view of self diverges from the Avicennian and even Cartesian view in that while in Avicenna and Descartes' philosophy the selfhood of self originates in an abstract and fixed substance which is grasped

using introspection and immediate intuition, in Sadraean viewpoint self is not a fixed substance and cannot be fully grasped using introspection and immediate intuition. Immediate intuition just reveals a cross section of self.

Accordingly, in Mulla Sadra's philosophy "self" is realized and fulfilled in two different dimensions: one of them is the vertical dimension of metaphysical layers originated in the pure and absolute being and another one the horizontal dimension of completion during time and through trans-substantial motion. These two dimensions should not be considered as two different or separated dimensions. Rather, they are complementary aspects of the fulfillment of self. The true self or the deepest level of self is just realized and fulfilled when "self" annihilates in its origin and becomes united with the unique reality of being.

According to Mulla Sadra, the emergence of the true self just happens by the process of existential intensification. This existential intensification is the only way for the penetration in the vertical layers of "self". This process has two different aspects: one of them is the theoretical aspect which is done by philosophizing and reasoning, another one is practical aspect which is fulfilled just by making balance between different wills and temptations of self through the following of practical reason. (Mulla Sadra 1981, p.227)

In fact, the four journeys in Mulla Sadra's philosophy, adopted from the mystical tradition before him, are different levels of the existential intensification of self and different phases of its realization and fulfillment. Although the first of these four journeys in mystical interpretation is usually taken as the journey from *khalgh* to *Hagh* or from the creatures to the creator but in a deeper contemplation it is a journey from the illusive self to the true self. Because in Sadraean view self has different layers and the deepest level of self only emerges after its unification with the reality of being which this reality of being is nothing but the true God in his philosophy. This view about self is deeply rooted in Quranic teachings. In Quran we face a verse which states that "And be not like those who forgot Allāh, so He made them forget themselves. Those are the defiantly disobedient" (Quran 59:19). This clearly shows that forgetting God as the ultimate source of reality and as the deepest foundation self, leads to the forgetting of the true self.

Mulla Sadra's viewpoint about self can be analyzed from an epistemological aspect as well. Looking from this aspect, although self can have immediate knowledge of himself, this knowledge is not complete. In other words, in Mulla Sadra's philosophy self-consciousness corresponding to self is a process which is perpetually evolving. Through immediate intuition and inner contemplation one can be only aware of a cross section of self. This stands in sharp contrast both with Avicennian and Cartesian viewpoint. Avicenna in his famous flying man puts forth a mental experiment upon which one can be thoroughly aware of himself even if all of his body organs are suspended (Avicenna 1983b, p.225). This awareness is immediate and punctual. This means that conscious subject through immediate intuition is aware of himself in a moment. This is exactly what Descartes asserts in his works. He believes if someone is aware of himself, he is aware totally and there is no aspect or state of self which is not conscious. In his philosophy there is no room for unconscious mental states (Rosenthal 2009, p.158). But Mulla Sadra has a linear view about self-consciousness upon which self-consciousness is like a process that is realized during time not in a moment.

Sadraean view has a counterpart in contemporary western philosophy especially in the famous philosophical current called existentialism. In recent century the advent of this new philosophical current fundamentally changed our idea about the selfhood of self. Existential philosophers, have identified various layers including personal, family, social and historical layers in the structure of self. But beneath all of these layers, there exist a deeper reality called the existence of self. For existentialist philosophers, amongst them Sartre is a prominent feature, existence is the foundation of the individuation and selfhood of the self. According to Sartre human being is different from all other beings in that while other beings have predefined essences or quiddities, it is just human being that cannot be initially classified in any specific category. Man is different from other creatures in that man does not have any predefined quiddity. Man has existence and it is this existence that makes man's essence. Existence is prior to essence in such a way that man with his choices makes his essence. (Sartre 2007, pp.20-23)

Comparatively speaking, Mulla Sadra, like Sartre, believes that the selfhood of self does not originate in the personal or social

characteristics. It is not even rooted in the abstract and incorporeal soul. Rather, it is rooted in the deepest layer of the reality of man namely his existential layer. Existential layer, as Mulla Sadra argues, is prior to all other layers of self, including its individual and social layer. According to Mulla Sadra all of these layers all together constitute the essence or quiddity of man and are posterior related to man's existence. Man has a special ability which is unique and has no counterpart in other creatures. In spite of being limited with possibilities and limitations imposed on him by his milieu and society, he has the ability to make his essence through his choices.

Although Sadraean viewpoint has some similes with existential approach, we should not forget the fundamental difference between these two standpoints. While for existentialists proper or individual existence of man is the foundation for all its determinations and characteristics, for Mulla Sadra the existence of man is in its turn deeply rooted in the unique reality of being. It is the mirror in which the full structure of being is reflected. Thus, it is the full manifestation of being.

On the other hand, Mulla Sadra considers human existential evolution as the vertical evolution corresponding to different levels of the being. This means the evolutionary levels of human being is not limited just to this corporeal world and human existence have some other spheres and worlds other than this corporeal world. This vertical intensifying or evolution is not acceptable by all the existential philosophers especially those philosophers who don't believe in incorporeal world beyond this world.

4- The transcendence of self

Mulla Sadra calls his philosophical system "Transcendent Wisdom" (Mulla Sadra 1999, v1, p.13) and because there is a correspondence between the phases of his philosophy and the levels of human completion this transcendence is principally refers to the existential structure of self. According to Mulla Sadra the transcendent structure of self is deeply rooted in this reality that self is not an encapsulated and confined entity. Despite the environmental and social constrains, self is not existentially confined. Rather, it is able to surpass all of these limitations.

This is mostly because in Mulla Sadra's philosophy self existentially depends on the absolute and infinite being. Making a philosophical foundation for such a claim, he tries to put forth an innovative interpretation of the causality, so, he argues that effect is not something related to the cause. Rather, effect is the very relationship itself. It is worth noting that this analysis is just applicable when we are talking about efficient cause, a kind of efficient cause which bestows existence on its effect. Here we should consider that in Islamic philosophy, contrary to Aristotle, we have two kinds of efficient cause: one of them is the efficient cause as the mover and another one is the efficient cause as the source and bestower of existence. They were Islamic philosophers who laid the philosophical foundation for such an efficient cause. Avicenna in his works, after establishing the distinction between essence and existence as the most fundamental principle in his metaphysics, comes to this conclusion that because existence is something out of the essence or quiddity and the quiddity is per se in a balanced situation related to both existence and non-existence when a quiddity exists this existence must be bestowed upon it by an external cause. Mulla Sadra takes one step forward and argues that before bestowing existence quiddity is nothing so, the effect is nothing but this bestowed existence. Accordingly, effect does not have any kind of independence from its cause and its existence is fully derived from the pure and infinite being (Mulla Sadra 1981, p.49).

This innovative and yet deep interpretation of causality is the result of the most important principle in his philosophy namely the primacy of existence over quiddity. As I mentioned above, for Mulla Sadra, quiddity is nothing but the limitation or manifestation of being so, in every entity it is its being that is the deepest foundation of its thingness. The being or existence of every entity is fully related to the pure and absolute being as the ultimate cause (Mulla Sadra 1981, p.50). Figuratively speaking, in Sadraean philosophy we can compare the relationship between absolute being as the ultimate cause and other beings to the relationship between the sun and its ray. As the sun ray is not an independent entity from the sun and it is existentially related to the sun and even let's say it is the very relationship itself, the finite beings are the same as rays and sparks of the pure and absolute being. (Mulla Sadra 1984, p.234)

Although this is true for all limited entities and beings, it is human being which is aware of its relational situation. Man finds himself related and at the same time open to the pure and absolute being. By understanding his relational situation, he can find his true self as well. The self in Mulla Sadra's philosophy has a contradictory situation. On the one hand, it defines and understands itself by distinguishing itself from other entities and selves. On the other hand, because of its transcendent nature self is fully realized and fulfilled just when he understands and lives his relational entity. At this time, he finds himself nothing but the manifestation of pure being and redefines himself in his openness to the absolute and pure being. When man finds himself as the full manifestation of pure being, he becomes a mirror in which the attributes of true and absolute being is fully manifested. (Mulla Sadra 1981, p.254)

This superficial contradiction can be resolved by recalling this point that in Mulla Sadra's philosophy self and consequently self-consciousness is much the same as a process. Self in his philosophy despite of being initially limited is perpetually evolving inasmuch as one can truly say that self is realized and fulfilled during its life. The highest level of its realization just happens when self finds out and better said, lives his relational entity and becomes united with the absolute and pure being. Here, its boundaries vanish out and he finds himself united with absolute and pure being through knowledge by presence. This is the highest level of human completion and by reaching to this level the man turns to a complete man. (Mulla Sadra n.d., p.41)

According to Mulla Sadra, knowledge by presence or presential knowledge is different from the acquired knowledge in that the presential knowledge is based on direct and immediate existential relationship. For Mulla Sadra our knowledge of ourselves and our inner states are samples of this kind knowledge (Mulla Sadra 1976, p.109). He emphasizes that although human being cannot have knowledge of the true nature of absolute and pure being, he can know this pure being to the extent of its existential capacity through some kind of presential knowledge. (Mulla Sadra 1976, p.39; 2009 pp.211-212)

Conclusion:-

Mulla Sadra's philosophy, due to his innovative ontological view specifically what is usually called the primacy of existence over essence has a special capacity to put forth new and ingenious interpretation of many new subjects. The notion of self is one of those subjects that can be analyzed and reinterpreted using his philosophical foundations. Despite the notion of self does not play a pivotal role in pre-modern philosophy, we can find some implications related to the matter in these philosophies. Mulla Sadra's interpretation of human existential structure corresponding to the multilayer structure of being which is based on his philosophical foundations including the primacy of being, the gradation of being, the trans-substantial motion and so forth lets us to infer an interpretation of self upon his philosophical ideas. According to this interpretation self has a multilayer structure. These layers starting from the outermost to the innermost are as follows: the layer of the personal and social characteristics, the layer of substance, the layer of proper existence of the thing and finally the layer of pure and absolute being. The first two layers together constitute the essential layer of the self and the last two layers constitute the existential layer of self. On this view the innermost layer of self and the ultimate foundation of the selfhood of self is the layer of pure and absolute being. This means that the true self is just realized and fulfilled when it is annihilated in the pure and absolute being.

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