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Temporality in Heidegger and Mulla Sadra's Philosophies

Abstract

Mulla Sadra and Heidegger are two different philosophers, of two separated philosophical traditions, who both concern to the problem of existence, and then time. They try to discover many virtues of time and its relation to existents. Heidegger emphasizes on Dasein for understanding the essence of the Being, he considers an essential relation between time and being by studying many manifestations of Dasein, like temporality. Mulla Sadra takes into consideration all material existents as temporal things and tries to show their essential virtues in the light of time. He considers time as the fourth dimension of everything and the base of its evolutionary movement to spirituality. In this paper, it is tried to comparatively study temporality and time in Mulla Sadra and Heidegger's philosophy, in order to find their similarities and differences.

Keywords

Time, Temporality, Dasein, Trans-Substantial Motion, Fourth Dimension, The Being.

1. Introduction

The significance of Heidegger (1889-1976) in the Western philosophy and that of Mulla Sadra (1571-1640) in Islamic philosophy is quite obvious and there is no need to discuss it here. Heidegger was a renowned existentialist philosopher and in effect challenged the philosophical fundamentals of modernity, encouraging a profound philosophical contemplation about human's major concern, that is, the question of the meaning of Being, thus demonstrating the primacy of existentialist thought over essentialist thought. On the other hand, as the founder of Transcendent Wisdom (Al hekmatul Muta'alieh), in Islam, Mulla Sadra through a combination of Ibn Sina's peripatetic philosophy, Suhrawardi's (Illuminative) philosophy and Islamic mysticism and apologetics (theology) established a new school of thought which is based on Primacy of Existence and whose components become meaningful in the light of existence. Moreover, Mulla Sadra utilized the outstanding features of the said intellectual currents in a manner that provided an answer to the unanswered questions of the same schools of thought, consolidating his own school of thought as well. Hence, a comparative study of the ideas of Mulla Sadra and Heidegger, particularly in the light of their differences and similarities as well as their influence in the Islamic and Western world, may help the thinkers of these two realms of philosophical endeavor to know each other better. In fact Mulla Sadra's philosophy is not known in the West, for they think that the Islamic philosophy comes to an end with Ibn Rushd. Indeed a comparative study of Mulla Sadra and Heidegger will help introduce some unique aspects of Islamic transcendent philosophy and wisdom.

In this paper, it is tried to focus on the idea of Time and Temporality in Mulla Sadra and Heidegger's philosophy, in order to show how time and temporality plays role in their philosophical thought and also in the material world and human being.

2. Heidegger and Temporality

Heidegger's main concern was to find an answer to the question of meaning of the Being. In order to find an answer to this question he naturally launched his studies about the Truth (of the things). In other words, the core of Heidegger's intellectual endeavor is constituted of the question of the meaning of Being and study the Truth. While by rejecting the existing definitions of truth such as evident or indefinable or its generality, he connected the said question to human as Dasein, that is, human is the only Being whose existence is different from all other beings, for in his opinion man is the only Being who is capable of asking questions about his being and think about himself. The key to understanding the meaning of Being is the very Dasein which has existence. In other words, human is the only being who asks questions about his own existence. On the other hand Heidegger's approach focuses on the Truth. For him, truth should be defined as appearance, openness or Aletheia, which is a fundamental concept in the Greek approach to the truth and logos (Heidegger 1996: 21-63).

Through once again putting forth the question of the meaning of Being and questioning the meaning of the Truth, Heidegger naturally undertakes to study other categories which are instrumental in solving his problem. Some of these categories

include Dasein, The World, Language, Time, Temporality, etc. Hence, he says: Dasein is an entity which, in its very Being, comports itself understandingly towards that Being. In saying this, we are calling attention to the formal concept to existence. Dasein exists. Furthermore, Dasein is an entity which in each case I my self am. Mineness belongs to any existent Dasein, and belongs to it as the condition which makes authenticity and inauthenticity possible. In each case Dasein exists in one or the other of these two modes, or else it is modally undifferentiated (Heidegger 1996: 53).

As mentioned above, Dasein, which is the key to understanding the Being constitutes the base of Heidegger's thought, for what distinguishes Dasein from other beings in his viewpoint lies in this truth. Indeed Dasein not only enjoys his being, but for this being the very existence of being is a question. On the other hand, this question comes forth in the context of a world, that is, it has an existence and an appearance in a world of which he is aware. In other word, World hood is one of the essential attributes of Dasein and human without the world is meaningless. This viewpoint opens a new horizon against the viewpoint of Descartes and modernist ideas. In fact, in Heidegger's viewpoint Dasein always exists in the world and being-in-the-world or being in the world is tantamount to the basic condition or concept of Dasein. Hence human from the very beginning is the being-in-the-world (Heidegger 1996: 78-86). In his words: The compound expression 'Being-in-the-world' indicates in the very way we have coined it, that it stands for a *unitary* phenomenon. This primary datum must be seen as a whole. But while Being-in-the-world cannot be broken up into contents which maybe pieced together, this does not prevent it from having several constitutive items in its structure. Indeed the phenomenal datum which our expression indicates is one which may, in fact, be looked at in three ways. If we study it, keeping the whole phenomenon firmly in mind beforehand, the following items may be brought out for emphasis: First, the '*in-the-world*' (Heidegger 1996: 53). According to Heidegger another feature of worldly hood of Dasein is his temporality. He titled his masterwork as "Being and Time", for one of the pivots of his thought is Time and as one can discern from the said book, he tried to explain the essential relations between Being and Time. For Heidegger the main concern of all existents are rooted in the phenomenon of time. Heidegger tries to demonstrate this issue, because for Dasein being always rises in the horizon of the time and being cannot be understood by the Dasein without time (Heidegger 1996: 18-39) Heidegger therefore infers that the essence of Dasein should itself entail time. In the first chapter of his book, Being and Time, Heidegger interprets Dasein in terms of temporality and considers time as the transcendental horizon of the issue of being. Secondly, he also tries to offer an interpretation of time in terms of Being and thirdly he interprets Being in terms of Time (Heidegger 1982: 140; Heidegger 1985: 150). In the second part where he considers temporality the main component of Dasein, he departs from two main characteristics of Dasein: one, Being towards death; and second, the possibility of Being perfect. These two features are related to the evolutionary movement of Dasein (Heidegger 1996: 274-279). The evolutionary movement of Dasein means going beyond and transcendental of Dasein, that is, a move by Dasein towards its possibilities in the sense that Dasein always is progressive. Hence, Dasein always moves forward. Therefore Dasein in every stage of its life is imperfect and has not achieved its perfection. If Dasein is always progressing and is moving ahead, we

cannot say that it has achieved its perfection. Hence, Dasein as being is a totality and not a perfect totality; it is a being that occupies the arena of space-time. In this viewpoint, temporality is the possibility of “perfect-being” which is “towards-death”. Being in the way of perfection includes past and present and being towards death includes the future (Heidegger 1996: 279-304).

More than temporality, Heidegger’s argument mainly focuses on “Present”, for he considers the existence of Dasein as appearance and present time means appearance which is available in Dasein. Hence, in his book, *Being and Time*, Heidegger starts his argument about Time and Temporality on the basis of this identity of Being and Appearance, that is, temporality not only consolidates the structure of Dasein, rather it consolidates the structure of the world, for it is a necessary condition for the appearance of beings in terms of their being.

However, Heidegger’s discussion of temporality is related to Being, Dasein, the world, perfection, and being towards death as well as present, past and future. As a result it puts forth the issue of historicity of human being, existence and the world. Therefore, it is observed that Heidegger in his argument about time and temporality has negated the traditional meaning of time, that is, the quantity abstracted from movement and gives a new meaning to it which is prior to the traditional meaning, for with regard to time as expressed by Heidegger, which is appearance or present with past and future and that past and future are merely some horizons that present depicts for Dasein otherwise there is neither any potential past nor future (Heidegger 1996: 383-408). On the other hand, in order to understand the meaning of Time, Heidegger refers to the understanding of the public and maintains that temporality stems from the simple, everydayness understanding. In this sense, future is the main phenomenon of time and an aspect of appearance of the world, for the presence of the world becomes always meaningful only in relation to the past and future (Heidegger 1985: 14; Heidegger 1982: 370-71).

As Heidegger considers Dasein world hood, he also considers world hood the very temporality, that is, in his opinion, both Dasein and world are temporal. However, temporality that does not mean being in time rather it means being with the time. In other words, in his opinion, temporality distinguishes the way of being of human from other beings because he is with the time and temporality makes the appearance of the beings possible for the Dasein, prospering its being. It means that temporality is the condition of the appearance of the being of the beings for Dasein (Heidegger 1996: 401-415).

Heidegger maintains that there is a special relation between being and time, namely, there is an essential relationship between Being and Time, for time is the only horizon for understanding of the issue of Being and temporality is the necessary condition for appearance of beings. Hence understanding of being and answering to the question of the issue of being is depended on the understanding of the nature of Time. He also deals with the relationship between temporality and future, for he has a special definition of the future: having the future means we in appearance choose and decide to what is future becomes materialized. Therefore the first stage of temporality is having a future in the form of choice. Hence, Dasein, with respect to being in temporal overtones

has a world which is universal and its expanse spreads to the past, present and future. That is, Dasein has a historical background which interpreted as Dasman (Heidegger 1996: 424-449).

In fact, through establishing an essential relation between Dasein and Time, that is, temporalization of Dasein, Heidegger has been able to go beyond the Cartesian objectivism and modernism and establish other truths for human's being such as the world and time, which caused Heidegger to transit to own philosophy and going beyond the metaphysics.

3. Mulla Sadra and Temporality

Mulla Sadra found his philosophical thought on primacy and centrality of Existence. Like Heidegger, he too protested the essentialist thought of his predecessors and therefore Existence has the principal role in his thought. Putting forth the notion of primacy of existence vis-à-vis the primacy of essence and nature and explaining the attributes of existence, and generalizing them to the natural world, metaphysics, science and epistemology, he depicts a new philosophical horizon. To Mulla Sadra, Existence has weak and strong degrees and has degrees of Gradation of truth (Tashkik Vujoudi). In other words, it begins to move from pure potentiality to the pure actuality, which is the Absolute Truth. Therefore, in Mulla Sadra's conception of existence, gradation exists in its particular sense which causes a long chain of creatures among whom there is a specific causal relationship. This chain exists in the world of nature, matter, and meaning. On the other hand, Mulla Sadra believes in One and Many, and Many and One through which he rationally explains the Gradational relationship between beings. However since he believes in Gradation among beings and maintains existential gradations in the existence from potentiality to actuality for them, he discusses four main issues that are closely related to the issue of time: first, the notion of physical creatures of human being; second, trans-substantial motion; third temporal creation of the world; and fourth, the issue of time as the fourth dimension of matter.

Contrary to his predecessors, who considered time as an imaginary or perceptual issue or the amount of change in the quantity or changes in the accident, Mulla Sadra considered it as secondary intelligible concept and the way of the being of material thing. He maintains that Time does not have an existence separate from the existence of happenings and without Time essence loses its being and essence. Therefore, we must confess the existence of reality of time outside. In other words, the being of the material beings is in a manner that makes them temporal as it makes them worldhood as well. That is, the confinement of the things in time is an indicator of another dimension of their existence. This dimension speaks of the vastness of existence of beings that exist in time, involving time in their identity to the extent that time becomes a factor for priority and posteriority not their cause. Hence a being that is essentially temporal, is a being which is deeply in transition, that is, it has a volatile and ongoing existence, not a static one under the umbrella of existence. Hence one may conclude that there is no scale or container independent of things and happenings outside called Time. What exist are only the happenings and their existential gradation. In other word, time is not just like a container accommodating the things. Hence any

happening is so intertwined with its time that cannot be extricated from one another even in perception. Hence the time of any thing is in fact an aspect and a face of the thing itself, not a being outside it, rather giving independence to time occurs only in mind, but in outside time is the temporal thing itself and both are one and the same thing (Mulla Sadra 1999/vol.3: 110-147).

Another dimension of Time in Mulla Sadra's view is explained in his notion of trans-Substantial Motion. In his opinion, motion is a gradual, continuous issue, not composed of segregated and joint fragments. Therefore, in motion the moving thing leaves something and finds something or its puts once condition behind and achieves a new condition. And it is this continuous generation and degeneration that forms the nature and essence of the motion. Therefore, motion is possible in the beings that are potential from all aspects, for motion aims to achieve something which had not been achieved earlier, or it is the restoration of a condition or status whose possibility had existed, but itself did not. Therefore, if there is any motion in the world, it is an indication that the world is not total pure actuality, rather, it is a combination of potentiality and actuality. Hence, if we observe some motion in the appearance in the world, it is an indication of motion in the essences (Mulla Sadra 1999/vol.4: 33; Mulla Sadra 1999/vol.3: 180).

According to Mulla Sadra's notion of primacy of Being, since the being of a thing is its everything and nature is only an accident, by accepting the primacy of Being continuous motion becomes a kind of existence, the coming to being of the moving beings, which is nothing but their being, happens gradually and through continuous motion, which is the very substantial motion of the beings. Hence, according to the primacy of being, the being of the thing itself is its very being and motion is the kind of being. Therefore in trans-substantial motion the thing itself is the moving thing. On the other hand, in Mulla Sadra's opinion, Time is the offshoot of motion and wherever there is any sign of motion, time is there. Hence an essence with which motion is intermingled and encompasses it, is an essence which is accompanied with *priori* and *posteriori*, that is, motion is an existence the existence of whose components is a gradational existence and every component comes to being only in its stance, neither before nor after it. In other words, the set of material creatures is a moving unit. On the basis of trans-substantial motion, one can discern that this substantial, permanent, continuous motion that is the world is in the context of time and time is the indicator of this motion, which is in eternal continuous motion. Hence if the context of trans-substantial movement is the very time, namely, this motion that is oriented towards perfection takes place in the horizon of time and if we eliminate time from it, motion will lose its meaning (Mulla Sadra 1999/vol.3: 170-181).

Ultimately, the creation of the physical world is a temporal creation, that is, the world contrary to the viewpoint of the previous philosophers who believed in the Temporal Eternality of the World, is a temporal creation, but in Mulla Sadra's viewpoint, temporal creation of world is not tantamount to creation of the world in time, rather it means its being with the time in which there is continuous and new generation (Khalqe Jadid). In other word, we cannot find a time in which the world has not been created and is created later, rather, since time is simultaneous with world, the existence of the world is always accompanied with the existence of time. In fact, the world is the

being of the temporal world and all its essence, either creation or evolution, is accompanied with time and basically creation outside time does not make sense (Mulla Sadra 1998: 50-150).

Overall, according to Mulla Sadra since the non-material beings have imperfection and potentiality and are moving towards evolution, they put all stages of their evolution behind in time. Hence, the entire material existence is temporal existence even man whose man chunk of existence is matter and soul achieves evolution in the horizon of Time. Therefore in Mulla Sadra's notion, the material being is a historic being, that is, it is standing on the roof of the past and through its motional nature creates time. Hence, world is not a not a being in the time, rather it is time which is in the world, for temporality is the very identity and way of being of material beings.

Given the above brief discussion about the issue of Time and Temporality in viewpoints of Mulla Sadra and Heidegger, it is observed that there are similarities and differences of opinion between them about this issue, particularly regarding the temporality, humanity, world, things, material world, and finally the entire material universe. Both have their own interpretations of each of the said topic. Heidegger looks at the world from the outlook of temporality of the being and world and essentiality of time in relation to man, while Mulla Sadra looks at time from the outlook of gradation in beings of universe and maintains a gradational chain between them from potentiality to actuality. Since there are gradations among the beings with regard to enjoying the truth, the potential beings in order to move towards perfection can only move through the horizon of time. Therefore, Time for the existence of material beings, particularly Dasein and the world, is an essential issue and temporality is an essential issue of the material existence, constituting one of the structural frameworks of man and the material world, but with its own specification. Therefore, in viewpoints of Heidegger and Mulla Sadra material existence, world, and Dasein have history and are historic, that is they have past, present and future.

4. Conclusion

Both Mulla Sadra and Heidegger are those of philosophers that ontology is of their fundamental questions and concerning, then they both establish their philosophies based on fundamental ontology, but with this deference that in Heidegger's ontology discovering of Dasein's virtues has the basic place to understand the Being, and in Mulla Sadra's one all existents have their proper place according to his interpretation of ontological gradation. In the other words, they both try to find the root of relations between Existence, but, while Heidegger tries to find the reality in the existence of human alone and does not look at other relational facts. Mulla Sadra interprets existence in the light of all existents, particularly by considering their gradual and ontological relations. By paying attention to this fact, Mulla Sadra and Heidegger consider time as one of the essential virtues of existence, but Heidegger pays more attention to temporality of Dasein and Mulla Sadra emphasizes on temporality of all corporeal things, including humans and animals. Heidegger considers time as the horizon of Dasein's life and Mulla Sadra takes it into consideration as fourth dimension of all material things, and regarding to human, both of them, but Mulla Sadra with more

emphasizing, believe that human has evolutionary motion in the temporal and corporeal world. Heidegger thinks that time and temporality make possible for Dasein to project and clarify and discover his possibilities and to know about his aspects of his being in the world, and his death as his the end, and finally his past, present and future, but Mulla Sadra considers time and temporality as the base of trans-substantial motion for all material things and traveling from materiality to spirituality. In fact, in Mulla Sadra's philosophy, time and temporality shows renewal and continual creation of every corporeal thing while their final end is spirituality.

So, time and temporality is one of the basic elements their philosophy, but Heidegger links it to Dasein and Mulla Sadra considers it for all material things. And both of them consider time as the context of material existents, including humans and non-humans. Therefore, time and temporality make their philosophical contemplations to project new horizons. In this case, it seems Mulla Sadra's explanations and theorizing on many virtues of time and temporality has more valuable elements, since he is able to explain the structure of corporeal world and its evolutionary traveling by utilizing time and temporality.

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