



The power and will of the almighty God from Mulla Sadra perspective

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Abstract. The discussion of divine power and will is very important in theology, particularly in Islamic theology. Since other issues such as determinism and will are related to these attributes. Mulla Sadra opinions can be useful in this regard, therefore, in this article the historical trend (power and will) from the perspective of some pre-Islam philosophers including seven sages and post-Islam peripatetic and illuminati philosophers have been investigated and then the opinions of Mulla Sadra about these attributes and influence of Khawjeh Nasir have been explored. Khawjeh Nasir believed that the God is autonomous and his intellect is the cause of the intellection of the first effect and since both essence and intellection are unified so both of them will be unified. Thus, existence of the first effect is intellection of God. Mulla Sadra has discusses his beliefs about God that is interpreted as the knowledge of God; however, this knowledge is other than the peripatetic knowledge of God since Sadra believes in knowledge on everything in the being step and the power and will are referred to this knowledge. Hence he has stated in “Asfar”: all beings are attributed to God since they are originated from him and when they are assigned to his knowledge and he has knowledge on them and his knowledge is due to his will.

Keywords: Peripatetic, illumination, transcendentalism, attributes, God knowledge, power, will, reluctantly, love

1. INTRODUCTION

This article tries to investigate Mulla Sadra viewpoints on philosophy and theology and explain his philosophical opinions about the power and will of the almighty God. The power and will of the almighty God are the firm attributes of the God. These attributes will be expressed after proving them. This discussion is so broad that all scholars and philosophers whether pre-Islamic or post-Islamic have discussed about it. We try to mention the historical process of these attributes and then explain the opinions of Mulla Sadra about these attributes.

1.1. Overview on the almighty God’s power and will from Pre-Islam scholars viewpoints

Some pre-Islamic philosophers expressed their opinions about the divine attributes, but the late Islamic philosophers have neglected to mention their names.

“ In the book *Almelal va An-nah*, Shahrestani stated: The seven sages constituting the pillars of wisdom were Thales, Milesian, Anaxagoras, Anaximander, Empedocles, Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato, and their advocates Plutarch, Hippocrates, Democritus. These philosophers believed in unity of God and his knowledge about universe and his domination on universe. They had consensus about this question that who was the former and what was the reason for the creation and evolution of the universe? They sometimes introduced God dynamic and sometimes considered it static like Empedocles and the late Islamic philosophers have not referred to him except this point that Thales believed that reason cannot be perfected”(*Almelal va An-nah*, Mustafa Khalegdad, Hashemi Abbasi, corrected by Jalali Naenin, v.2, pp.88-89).

Shahrestani adds: The philosophers disagreed upon interpretation of the meaning of the creation and the creator whether they are interpretations of a concept or creation and there is a

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relationship between creator and creature and they have different opinions about “will” in the same way providing that is it intention or acted upon him. The Islamic theologians have different viewpoints about creation and the creature and will and it is questioned that the creature or attribute of creator? Anaxagoras followed Plutarch and expressed that will is intention and also act since act and will are not inherent forms other than agent and creator (both of them are autonomous), so will is sometime veiled in creator and sometimes manifested in the intention and the act is deducted accordingly. However, Plato and Aristotle do not accept that will and act have two forms originated from intention and effect is seen in what was created and it is essential to being affected by the effect and this is impossible. Hence, the act has cause and effect and both of them have a unit entity. Some philosophers believe that this attribute is manifested in will and it is not manifested in act and act is manifested by will. However, Thales and Empedocles believe that will is due to originator and it is interpreted as originator since the originator is willful and it does not mean the essence of actor is what being acted. Plato and Aristotle have common beliefs in this regard.

Abdullrahman Badavi states: Bona Venture believes in power and will related to each other since he considers will as assigned to possibility and power is flourishing of the aspect that has been assigned by will and then he criticizes power and responds that we shall assign complete things to God not incomplete ones and writes that the God power is potential unlimited not actual unlimited (Badavi, pp.152-153). He also states that the Saint Augustine believes in the same the essential knowledge and power (ibid:49).

1.2. Islamic philosopher’s viewpoints from Kindi to Mulla Sadra

1-Kindi believes that the divine attributes are as the same of the God essence and multiplicity of attributes leads to diversity in essence and he offers two definitions for will: first one is human will and the other is absolute will, he suggests human will as sensual faculty that tends to be used in accidental way that leads to preference or tendency of that faculty to do something or not (Kindi treatise, p. 175), the absolute will is a faculty that something is demanded by it(ibid: 168) will in the latter meaning is the base of the orators beliefs that consider the God as the actor and his will as his intention and in creation of the world, he is creator that created something from inexistence(ibid: 80). He considers the world contingent in contrary to Aristotle who knows the world non-contingent and he believes in the God contingent will (Kindi treaties, p.200).

He also refers to miracle: Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, “Be!” and it is! (Ya-sin, 82)(Moheiedin Lavasi Hessam, p.149) and states that the God act is timeless. This miracle rejects the disbelievers belief in that if the size of sometime is big the time of its creation will be long; since they compare the God act with the people act(ibid: 143-146).

Also, about creation of the universe he states that the universe has been created from nonexistence and God has created it without time and matter (ibid:153).

2. ABUNASER FARABI

In chapters 17 and 18 of Fusuh Al-hakam states the God power is related to his essential knowledge and since he believes that the God is self-contained and his essential knowledge is origin of knowledge on creatures and that knowledge is origin of creation of the creatures so his knowledge is power and since it is originator of the creatures so that knowledge is the God’s power and its requirement is essential knowledge on the existence and then it is sign of absolute realities. This power has been manifested in the universe and God created immaterial world, so the divine power was manifested in universe. Hence unity is revealed as multiplicity and this multiplicity is unlimited and creation of the universe is his manifestation and other creatures as heavens are his effect and since in heavens and souls the miracles of the creator have been

emerged so the creatures praise him and gradually they leave material world and return to their origin and then join divine unity (Sharh Fosus Farabi, Gomshei divine wisdom, p.33)

3. AVICENNA

He believes in God knowledge and considers his will and existence the same. In book of Nijat he states God knowledge is not contradicted to power, will and existence but all of them are the same and the God existence is not analyzed by these attributes, then he describes that he intellects his existence and goodness of the existence and everything with known origin refers to that origin and the origin of everything is function of source perfection and both of them are lover and for this reason, that thing is will of the creator and existence is will of creator and his existence is not like humans existence which needs two different power with the same origin. Hence, God does not have existence other than essential knowledge and the almighty God power is reasoning about his being as his origin relative to whole not reasoning that is originated from wholeness, therefore, power is knowledge. This knowledge derived from the source essentially depends on the meaning of power (Avicenna, Nijah, pp. 249-250).

4. SUHRAWARDI

In illumination he states: the God has essential knowledge on himself and others and the smallest particles whether heavenly or earthly are not hidden from him since nothing can veil from him and his existence is the same as his vision and his illumination is manifestation of his power and he rejects the opinion of the peripatetic about essential knowledge (Sajjadi, Translation of Illumination, pp. 264-265).

The philosophers believe that the God does not create anything willfully since will reveals preferring something to something and this preference is whether due to his benefits or others benefits and for him the benefit is for his creature and it is an innate act and everyone knows that the God is far from intentions and what belongs to him, so his action is not based on intention but due to his essence (Sheikh al-Ishraq, pp.264-265).

5. IMAM FAKHR RAZI

He states that the philosophers do not accept that the God has intentions in these acts due to some reasons:

a- It is impossible the God seeks perfection that returns to him and any essence seeks perfection by returning to him, hence it is impossible to believe that he has intention.

b- Anybody who does an act for other sake the agent should be a person that does that act for his sake like a servant who does for the sake of his master and they have a relationship. Therefore, if the God does for the sake of other that other one will be superior to him. Then he states that the God will is due to his essence and in this case, his will is permanent and it never changes with difference in fulfillment or non-fulfillment of the purpose, since if his will is not permanent his essence will not be independent entity and it will lead to the former false opinions and when his will permanent that will is not genetic since his intent is impossible by achieving that thing, hence his will is not intent but it is result of this fact that he is reasoning his essence and existence and this existence is not in contrary to his essence thus knowledge on his order and this fact that it is not in contrary to his essence is his will and satisfaction. He points to the difference between intended and non-intended the former is the person who has knowledge on disagreed act and non-intended has no such knowledge like natural forces, therefore, some scholars refer to will in acting or non-acting and when will is proportional occurrence of intention is impossible and whenever one of the parties has superiority to others, will causes to act and otherwise, there is no difference between what created and will, then he witnesses providing that the condition of capability and intention of the essence is not possibility of avoiding act when the almighty God has knowledge on doing in defined time while that action

is not done at that time his knowledge is not known and his knowledge is ignorance and it is impossible and anything that its occurrence is impossible its occurrence necessary. Since egression from two opposite parts is impossible although, the God is capable of it thus it was clarified that possibility of nonoccurrence is not condition of possibility (Fakhr Razi, v.2,pp.490-491).

6. MOHAGEGH TUSI

He has analyzed the God knowledge used by Mulla Sadra. In the book *Al-Isharat and Tanbihat* after referring to Avicenna he responds to him: if it is said that you do not believe in unity of the intellect and advised and consider rationalities as the contradictory forms in the intellect essence and on other hand, believe that the God perceives everything and he has knowledge on anything, it is essential that the God essence is not to be unit and it intends to multiplicity. Avicenna responds that at first since God intellects his essence and it is the cause of multiplicity hence intellection of multiplicity is done by intellection his essence since it is multiplicity of his cause and effect and multiplicity forms are necessities of his essence and they are succeeding the cause hence multiplicities are not contradictory to unity of their causes and his essence is unit. Khawjeh Tusi stats that there is no doubt that appointment of attributes in his essence requires a unit object can be agent and able and its essence is object of multiple causes while the God essence is free from these causes and he never creates anything in contradiction to his essence that is in contrary to the ancient philosophers that believe in denial of the God knowledge and Plato and peripatetic scholars who believe in unity that have gone wrong way due to fear on criticisms.

Then he adds if I had no commitment to not protest disagreed opinions and show the way to escape these bottlenecks at the beginning of my speech now I never protest. He continues as a wise does not need anything expect essence for perception of essence so in perception of what is issued from his essence he does not need anything except that essence then he invites the man to pay attention to himself and states that if you consider your inner you will find that what you perceive as its form it is not issued only by you but it is issued by participation of others and you perceive it accompanied by form and you do not need to repetition of that form but sometimes the authenticities are repeated relative to that essence and form, now your situation is the same by participation of others thus what do you think about the perceived one that the things are created without interference of others and do not think your existence for it is your intellection condition relative to that form, since you perceive your essence, your existence is condition when it is condition for achieving that form and it is condition for your intellection and it is obvious that achieving something for agent is not anything except its achievement for qualifier so he will be intellection of that form without transduction.

He concludes: you knew that the God has knowledge on himself without contradiction of existence between his essence and intellection on essence and his intellection on essence is the reason for his intellection on the first cause, thus when two causes of essence and essence intellection are the same from existence perspective, so two effects are the same and there is no contradiction, however contradiction of two causes is reliable and contradiction of two effects will be reliable, in this regard, existence of the first effect is first intellection without need to separate form that descended in its essence. Since intellection of the intellectual essence is done by descending of the forms in them they intellect the first essence thus all real forms of the creatures for that essence will be existed and since God perceives all existences with the same forms not other forms thus, he has knowledge on everything and no former impossibilities are existed (Khawjeh Nasir Tusi, pp. 306-307).

Criticism: His viewpoints have been criticized. According to most philosophers the essential existence is a attentive agent and the principle for being attentive is that the object should be known for agent before existence and the agent should have knowledge on objects before realization, therefore, the essential knowledge on existence of the first intellect should be prior

to existence of the first intellect not coincide it, so the first intellect cannot be the same essential knowledge (Javadi Amoli, p.42).

To prove the pre-existence knowledge Mulla Sadra uses knowledge on all things and there is nothing wrong with it because God is aware on acts and perfections and everything in the worlds of existence of the universe should be known for him. Quran says: “And with Him are the keys of the *Ghaib* (all that is hidden), none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in (or on) the earth and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but he knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of neither the earth nor anything fresh or dry, but is written in a Clear Record.” Mulla Sadra introduces the God essence manifested agent and states that the reason for knowledge of the God on all universe is his existence and the extensive knowledge is whole perfections and virtues and Mulla Sadra interprets this knowledge the God knowledge and its knowledge on all objects in the essence step before existence of the creatures that is origin of the creation and it is interpreted as power. Then possibilities are attributed to him since they are created by that knowledge and this knowledge is due to power and the agent that his act is attributed to will and he is able to create without gaining credibility by others (Ashtiyani, The philosophical opinions of Mulla Sadra).

However, he explores essential knowledge based on others viewpoints that essential existence is aware on his essence and knowledge on causes requires knowledge on effects and since essential existence and knowledge on essence are both unified so the effects are known and known is as effects and both effects are unified (Description of transcendentalism, Javadi Amol, pp. 259-260).

6.1. God’s power in Mulla Sadra viewpoint

He considers human power in sensual state and it means that power is a state that is created by sensuality and when he wants it is not issued and he believes in power and inability relative to different issues since he states that the capable does not mean the ability to do everything; otherwise only the God essence is able to do everything. Mulla Sadra considers human power a faculty and essential since he introduces the human has been created free so power in human is as power and readiness to act but in essential existence considers it actual since he is real autonomous (Asfar, v.2, p. 312).

There is no possibility in God and power is not categorized in any category but he believes that the God power is his being so that the creatures are created by him due to having knowledge on them and in his opinion, any affectless attribute like others knowledge and will is not the God power although the effect of power is obvious on both of them. Also, any attribute of God is the same as his essence and as before mentioned his essence causes to creation of creatures by his knowledge and this is his power. When all possibilities are attributed to him it is due his knowledge and the agent that his act is related to will that can be existed without others. It is obvious that ability is related to will and will causes to act or avoiding that act. The ability of the agent is essential when the act of will is done or there is possibility of occurrence and since the philosophers were unaware they thought that the agent has power that act and if an act is done without his will he has no power and if does willfully his will never changes whether unchanging of will is by chance or by nature, so the able agent can act if he wishes or not and it is possible that one party is honest or both of them are false(Mulla Sadra, Husseini Ardekani, pp.155-156).

6.2. God’s will in Mulla Sadra viewpoint

Sadra states that will in humans is eagerness resulted from motivation and motivator is imagination of something whether fictitious or imaginary that cause to its achievement. Since essential existence is free from any deficiency, the God will is as motive and his essence, thus, this innate knowledge on existence is cause of creation of universe. When God is aware of his essence that is the greatest creature has complete knowledge on everything. The agent and

purpose is the same here. If pleasure in the humans was self-contained certainly wanted that act inherently so that it was issued by essence and in that the agent and purpose is the same(Mulla Sadra, translated by Ahmad Hussein Ardekani).

He also states that will and reluctance in humans and animals are sensual attributes (Asfar, Mulla Sadra, v.6, p. 336 and v.4, p.113 and v.3, p.78) like other sensual attributes and they are coconscious but gaining knowledge on them is difficult. But in philosophers opinion, God will is his knowledge on all detail and wholeness of the world as human knowledge that it is empowered by externalization as climbing on tall and narrow wall that causes to decline(Asfar, Mulla Sadra, v.4, p.114).However, Mulla Sadra does not consider will in all willful creatures in the same meaning but will is function of their existence as truth has different existence and the creatures will is different(ibid, v.6, pp.339-340, 341). Since will is as existence (ibid, v.6, p.336) and also Sadra considers the will relevance to acted upon as knowledge relevance to existence since, first, will is not credible without intention and secondly, will is part of the intent cause(ibid, v.6, p.323).

6.3. Mulla Sadra considers love and kindness the God's will

He states that since God intellects his essence that is superior to everything and beautiful than every creature and also intellects that everything is issued by his essence and his act that is the firmest and best act he adorns love that is function of his essence, since who loves an essence loves all effects and acts of that essence loves the love that is function of that essence. The God says: He loves them and they love Him, but his love is due to fact that they are his act and since God loves his essence he loves the act related to his essence but their love is due to fact that he is the origin of the existence and their being and the origin is superior to secondary so his will that is free from deficiency is function of his knowledge on essence and his love is for his essence not following the light of any luminous object and goodness and supremacy as pleasure and love of his essence and since his essence is full of goodness and beauty and pleasure and existence perfection is the best goodness and also what is issued by his essence and his essence has dependence like his knowledge on that existence and since his existence is cause of existence of objects and his knowledge causes to knowledge on their existence and his love is cause of their love and these three attributes of existence, knowledge and love are the same from the perspective of cause and also in effect and effect of effect until descending step of existence and being essential and possible in reason and reason in nature and as knowledge has steps his will has steps as creatures ranks and since all creatures have been created by his will, so they eager to reach him, since he is perfection and beloved of all creatures and according to this will the universe is in the best order and it is unified(Mabda and Maad, Hussein Ardakani, pp.511-514).

6.4. Unity of knowledge, power and will from the perspective of Mulla Sadra

Mulla Sadra mentions two introductions and then he concludes:

1-Sometimes abstract meaning of a concept is out of the mind for instance all human natures and traits were collected in a person like rational soul that it posses all attributes.

2- Sometimes there are creatures with opposite natures and then join to each other in other worlds and there is no contradiction here but all have a noble essence like existence of the different essences in the mind without contradiction, then he concludes that existence and existence perfection are originated from the will, knowledge and power, though in the God that is essential existence, his existence and perfection is different from others and since his existence is self-dependent and existence of others not self-dependent, his existence does not need other and other creatures existence depends on him since it is spiritual common existence(Alsfar Arbah, v.1, p.35) between all creatures they are under the veil of existence by this difference that existence is in essential essence and also knowledge, will and power and other attributes are common among all creatures by the same difference in essential and possible

since Mulla Sadra believes that all perfections traits return to existence and their reference is existence and he believes in knowledge , power and will in plants(Asfar, v.6, pp. 334-335).

It is considered that Mulla Sadra believes that at first, all existential perfections return to existence and secondly he believes in hierarchy in existence reality and unity among existential perfections such as knowledge, power and will and there is hierarchy for existential perfections and since all creatures are under an existence and each of them has benefited by existence, so each of them will be benefited from existential perfection thus they have unity.

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