

Sadrian Utopia

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Abstract

Being an important problem of political thought, utopia is deemed to have various functions and applications. Mulla Sadra makes use of the concept of utopia in order to criticize his contemporary political setup and present an alternative pattern. In Mulla Sadra's utopia citizens and regulations are of great importance. This is because no society can be established without these elements. More important than these is, however, the executive system. On his view, a utopian society is one over which a prophet, an Imam or a jurist rules. In addition to having numerous benefits, his utopia brings about a situation in which the inner and the outer realms of existence get to some sort of harmony. It is by living in this society that man gets back to the right track determined by his Lord attaining thus ultimate happiness.

Keywords: Mulla Sadra, utopia, citizen, Regulation, ruler

1. Introduction

Ever since Plato, Philosophers have dealt with the question of utopia in one way or the other, presenting different sorts of utopias with different political requirements. Being a philosopher Mulla Sadra is no exception. He has dealt with the issue of politics in many of his works, but as to the question of utopia which is the culmination of his political philosophy, he has treated it mainly in his *al-Shawahid al-Rububiyya* (Mulla Sadra, 1360, pp. 357-9) and *al-Mabda' wa al-Ma'ad* (Ibid, 1354, pp. 492-4.). He urges all human beings to join his utopia arguing that living in a society like his utopia paves the ground for one's good and happiness (Ibid, p. 490). There is no independent work about Mulla Sadra's utopia save one paper presented to a conference held in Iran on Mulla Sadra. The paper is a good attempt, but it is, as the author himself admits, written hastily and is by no means comprehensive sketching the main outlines of his ideal society. Thus there is an urgent need to treat the question in a scholarly manner, especially if we pay attention to the present situation of Muslims who are fed up with their existing political setups and are earnestly looking for alternatives. A brief survey shows that the term 'utopia' is used in different senses. Before elaborating on Sadra's utopia it is necessary to pay a glance at the different meanings of utopia so as to be able to determine the sense in which Mulla Sadra uses it. Utopia is used in several senses some of which are as follows:

1-1. Utopia as a better society

According to some thinkers utopia means a better place or better society. This society is far better and more perfect than the society one lives in and is meanwhile achievable in this world. Making use of educational

tools one can change the mentality and behavior of people and prepare them for joining the society in question. (James M. Morris and Andrea L. Kross, 2009, xxiii- xxiv).

A utopian society needs to be necessarily a good and an ideal society. A bad society cannot be a utopian society, even if it is described in an imaginary fashion. According to these scholars to be good is a prerequisite for a utopian society.(Lyman Tower Sargent, 1998, p557). It implies that one must be hopeful about future leaving aside despair. (Ernst Bloch, 1986,p. 12).

2-1. Utopia as an imaginary society

Relying on the meaning of the concept of utopia that is constituted of 'topos' meaning 'place' and suffix 'u/ou' meaning 'no', some have claimed that utopia is a society that cannot be practically realized. Instead of trying to materialize their dreams in the real world, the advocates of such societies try to reach their desires and goals in their dreams and imaginations. They want to alleviate their pain and miseries through daydreaming (Gregory Claeys and Lyman Tower Sargent 1999, p. 16).

According to these scholars, if the architect of a social structure makes use of utopian or imaginary elements in constructing it, his work will be utopian whether it is optimistic or even pessimistic. This is because in both cases the element of imagination has a say in it (ibid).

3-1. Utopia as a literary genre

Instead of laying emphasis on elements such as 'good', 'imagination' etc. some have considered utopia as a literary genre. Begun by *Utopia* written by Thomas More this theory flourished with the publication of numerous

other works that were published in later centuries. Based on this theory, utopia is a sort of narrative that usually begins with a narrator journeying to a far flung unknown island. The account that the narrator gives of this island and the customs and etiquettes that rule it implies that it is far better than the society in which he currently lives. By highlighting the positive aspects of that island, the narrator aims at criticizing though implicitly, his own society, encouraging people to move towards the society he looks for (Kumar Krishnan, 1987, p. 3). It is based on such an understanding, that Kumar Krishnan denies the universality of utopia saying that it is exclusively related to western societies and culture (ibid, p. 19).

Based on the query made, utopia can be used in any of the above-mentioned senses, though its application in the sense of a better place or better society implying optimism and hope is more current and widespread.

2. Sadrian concept of utopian society

As mentioned above, utopia is used by scholars in different senses. Now the question is: what is Mulla Sadra's concept of utopian society? Does he use it in the sense of a better society, imaginary society, literary genre or anything else? A study of Mulla Sadra's words in his different works shows that he does not use utopia but in the sense of a better society that is achievable in this world. This implies that Sadra is critical of the political status quo prevailing in his own society, making efforts to replace it with a new and better society through presenting his utopia as an alternative. He complains against his own time saying that in his day injustice is the rule of the day (Mulla Sadra, 1091, vol. 1, p. 7), but he does not, contrary to many, suffice to mere criticism. Instead, he tries

to give solution. His solution which is fully practicable is something that emerges out of his own metaphysical principles. His utopia is a model society whose members are believers, whose law is a divine law and whose ruler is a prophet. The government established by an imam or a jurist is tantamount to prophet's government. In other words, on Sadra's point of view a society is ideal that is ruled by an infallible or his successor. This is because it is in such a society that it is possible for human beings to reach perfection and happiness. According to Sadra mere divine laws cannot facilitate the establishment of a divine order. To have a divine establishment one needs, in addition to divine laws, a ruler who is determined by Allah and who is also obeyed by common people (Ibid, 1360, p. 490).

3. Main principles of Sadrian utopia

In order to explain the main principles of a society, sociologists have put forth different theories each of which is useful in some respects. The definition presented by Durkheim, an important sociologist, seems to be more plausible and more acceptable. According to him, society comes into being when there are people who are bound together by certain mutual relations and these relations are further solidified by the laws and social institutions that exist over there. These laws that are meant to protect relations among individuals are further strengthened by the punishment that is considered for their violations and it is the law enforcement agencies that implement laws and punish law breakers (David E. Greenwald, 1973, p. 157). This definition may not be the best, but it is surely a good one, for it includes the essential components of what is called a society. Based on this definition, in order to form a society we need three things; people, law and law enforcement agencies. Sarian utopia

being in the first place a society must also have these three essentials. We cannot by definition call something a society unless it meets these conditions. Thus we will focus on these three elements (people, law and law enforcement agency) while dealing with Sadrian utopia.

1-3 Citizens

Who are the citizens of Sadrian utopia? Is everyone entitled to be a member of his utopia? Since Sadrian utopia is founded on the bases of beliefs and values, everyone cannot be expected to be a member of it. Those who honestly and wholeheartedly accept the belief system current in this society and act in accordance with it are, in fact, entitled to be the citizens of this society. Factors such as geographical location, race, economic status etc. play no part in acquiring Sadrian citizenship. Every human being is practically a citizen of this society when he or she endorses the beliefs and values dominant in this society. According to Sadra man cannot live on his own without any dependence on society and therefore it is necessary to be a member of a society, but the best society one can live in and be a member of is according to Sadra the society that is led by a prophet or his successor (Mulla Sadra, 1354, pp. 492-4).

In order to explain his utopia, Sadra makes use of the model presented by Plato and Farabi. According to their model, members of a society are like organs of a body. Just as each organ of a body is designed for a specific work with a specific amount of importance every member of society is created for doing a particular task with particular importance. As body organs are not equal in ranks neither are members of a society. Some members of a society play, like heart, a very sensitive role whereas others do not, like other body parts, enjoy such status (ibid, p. 490). On Sadra's

point of view, a healthy and exemplary society is one in which everyone does, like every human organ, one's own specific duties, not interfering with the duties of others (Ibid, p. 491). Each part of body if healthy and sound can naturally do its own related duty but members of a society can reach this level of progress only through drill and exercise (ibid).

According to Sadra, though the part citizens play in bringing about Sadrian utopia is very important, they however cannot make laws nor can they elect law-makers. Law-making or electing a law-maker is a highly complicated task on Sadra's political theory, needing many different specializations which ordinary citizens lack. Based on this line of argument, it is only God who has such a right (the right to make law or choose a law-giver). Others need to merely follow him (Ibid, p. 488).

2-3. Law

Law is another main principle that is inevitable in Sadrian utopia. Man is created to attain perfection but perfection cannot be attained except through living in a society. Thus society is something that is inevitably necessary but at the same time natural as well. It is impossible to reach perfection without living in a society (Ibid, 489-90). It has to be however noted that society has its pros and cons. Despite having certain merits, society suffers from certain problems and difficulties. Man is a profit-driven being. If law does not restrict him, he, being profit-driven will be cruel towards his fellow beings. He will thus encroach upon their rights leading the society towards destruction and annihilation (Ibid, 1363, p. 57 and Ibid, 1354, p. 488).

In order to be able to overcome social problems Sadra says man needs to respect what is called law (Ibid, p. 488). If the reason why we

abide by law is the preservation of society and maintaining law and order in it, then it can be concluded that customary law cannot solve the problem. This is because man is intrinsically self-interested and profit-driven. If man can make any law at all, he will make it to serve his own interest (Ibid). Moreover, in order to reach happiness, we need metaphysical rules. How can one who is not aware of metaphysical world, make such laws? Thus there has to be a law and the law has to be divine; otherwise the goal will not be achieved (Ibid, 1363, p. 57 and Ibid, 1354, p. 488).

3-3. Executive power

According to Sadra law alone is not enough; in addition to good laws, there must be a good executive power as well. On his opinion, as it is vital to have a good law (as society will not flourish and prosper without it), it is similarly vital to have a good executive power. Which executive power is a good one? According to Sadra a good executive power is one that is led by a prophet, an imam or simply a jurist. In our subsequent discussion, we will follow the topic under three headings: government of prophet, government of imam and government of jurist. We will also finally touch the duties of the ruler (whether he is a prophet, an imam or a jurist), as the head of the executive power.

1-3-3. Prophet's government

According to Sadra, utopia is the best of cities. Here the best feasible government on earth governs. On his view, the best government is the prophet's government. But how can one prove that prophet's government is the best government? Based on Sadrian anthropology, man, despite being apparently weak, is the symbol of different worlds. On his philosophy,

there are three worlds; world of matter, world of forms and world of intellects. Given man is in possession of faculty of sensation, faculty of imagination and faculty of intellection, it can be said that he represents all these three worlds (Ibid, 1360, p. 137). From his perspective, man is related to material world through sensation, to imaginary world through imagination and to intellectual world through intellection. This implies that everyone of us has the capacity to be the manifestation of all these worlds, though in practice, few can reach such a lofty stage. According to Sadra he who tries to rule others needs to have passed all these three stages actualizing what is, potentially, existing in him (Ibid, 1354, p. 480). He declares somewhere in his works, that whosoever materializes all these potentials is indisputably a caliph and a ruler (Ibid, 1360, p. 341).

Now who has materialized all these potentials attaining a share of every world, material, imaginary or intellectual? Prophet or Philosopher? Sadra says it is the prophet who has mastered all these worlds and it is he who perfectly represents these worlds (Ibid, p. 344). Mulla Sadra believes that it is the prophet who is so perfect, having all these merits. Being enlightened by intellectual, spiritual and sensory lights, he represents angels through his intellect, heavenly bodies through his soul and a worldly kings through his senses.

In other words, he is an angel, a heaven and a king. He represents the highest, the middle and the lowest kingdoms (Ibid, p. 344). Being a comprehensive entity, he makes use of sense, imagination and intellect in the best possible manner. He uses his sense to administer the affair of his country and defend it against its enemies, his imagination in order to connect to active intellect and acquire knowledge from it and his intellect to actualize his intellectual potentials (Ibid, 1354, p. 492).

On Sadrian opinion, a philosopher is not so comprehensive. At best, he can only actualize his intellectual potentials. This is while a prophet can actualize his imagination in addition to perfecting his theoretical and practical intellects. Thus the comprehensiveness we find in a prophet, cannot be procured in a philosopher and that is why every prophet is a philosopher but every philosopher is not necessarily a prophet (Ibid, p. 493).

2-3-3. Imam's government

If there is no prophet then who is qualified to govern? Should we forget about utopian thoughts and keep silent when there is no prophet among us? Or should we continue our struggles where or not there is a prophet among us? According to Sadra, we must not give up hope doing nothing even in case there is no prophet available. From his point of view, the government of an imam is equal in status with the government of a prophet. The former produces exactly the same results and consequences that are produced by the latter. There is no vital distinction between an imam's government and a prophet's, as both can have the same applications and advantages. There are phrases and remarks in Mulla Sadra's works that substantiate this theory.

1-2-3-3. Argument from nature of prophethood

Mulla Sadra's conception of prophethood is very helpful for demonstrating the question under discussion. His analysis of the concept of prophethood indicates that according to him there is no substantial difference between prophethood and imamate or sainthood. As these three concepts of prophet, imam and saint prima facie look different, it seems astonishing

to say they are in fact the same, but this is what Mulla Sadra intends to say. On Sadra's opinion, since the nature of prophethood, imamate and sainthood is the same, prophethood does not come into an end when revelation comes to an end. Instead, it continues in the form of imamate or sainthood. Though a mujtahid or an imam is not called a prophet, they are very close in rank to the prophet (Ibid, 1360, p. 377). Here we must try to prove two things; a) Imamate is the same as prophethood having no substantial difference with each other, b) Imamate has not come to an end; it has instead continued. The result we can draw from these two discussions is that prophethood continues in the form of imamate and thus its characteristics including the right to governing will also continue.

As usual, Mulla Sadra makes use of the terms 'imam' and 'imamate', but sometimes he uses saint and sainthood instead. Literally speaking, they differ from each other, but a brief survey shows that Mulla Sadra uses them interchangeably. It is based on such an understanding that he considers sometimes imamate (Ibid, 1366, vol. 2, p. 475) and sometimes sainthood (Ibid, 1363, p. 485) as the essence of prophethood. Thus, the two concepts of sainthood and imamate are used synonymously in Mulla Sadra's words. The argument used in favor of one can be used in favor of the other.

While throwing light on the essence of sainthood, Sadra uses three characteristics that are closely related to each other: a) sainthood is a characteristic thanks to which a prophet directly or indirectly receives messages from Allah – messages that give him perfection and nobility and he is supposed to preach them (ibid) b) sainthood is nothing but annihilation in Allah theoretically and practically, substantially and accidentally. The essence of a saint gets annihilated into the essence of Allah as his acts and

attributes get annihilated into the acts and attributes of Allah (bid, p. 487). A saint is a person who knows Allah, His signs and marks, angels, divine books, divine prophets and the Day of Resurrection through intuition and demonstration. Since intuitive and demonstrative knowledge does not fade away and disappear therefore sainthood (which is based on such knowledge) is an established position that does not change. If a person happens to reach the stage of sainthood, he will never leave it (ibid, p. 488).

Mulla Sadra uses three phrases in order to explain the nature of sainthood. They include 'the capacity to connect to the unseen', 'the capacity to get annihilated in Allah' and 'the capacity to know Allah and his act through intuition'. These phrases are in harmony with each other. If we deem sainthood as the capacity to connect to the unseen, then the capacity to get annihilated in Allah and the capacity to reach intuition will be considered as its consequence and aftermaths. Anyhow, if we want to present a comprehensive definition of sainthood from the view point of Sadra, then we must say that according to him sainthood is a capacity for connecting to the unseen and when this capacity is realized then knowledge and annihilation will also be attained.

Since Mulla Sadra has used imamate and sainthood in the same sense, it can be said that when sainthood is the essence of prophethood then imamate is also its essence, for they are synonyms in Sadra's literature. If they differ at all it will be in their accidental qualities. Prophethood has come to an end but imamate has continued to thrive (Ibid, 1366, vol. 2, p. 475). Now that we know that imamate and prophethood are the same in terms of meaning and we know as well that prophethood is terminated whereas imamate continues its life, it can be rightly concluded that it is the prophethood that is continuing but in a slightly different form (in the

form of imamate). In its new form, the prophethood has all its previous qualities except for risalat (introducing new religion) which is excluded. It is based on such an understanding that Sadra rightly claims that like a prophet an imam has an absolute power (ibid, p. 276).

2-2-3-3. Argument from reasons for imamate

There are arguments that prove that it is necessary to have an imam. According to Shiite theologians imamate is a grace and that is the reason why it is incumbent upon Allah to determine an imam (Nasir al-Din Tusi, 1407 AH, p. 221). Finding this argument unconvincing (Mulla Sadra, 1366, vol. 2, p. 475), Mulla Sadra presents other arguments to show that Allah has to determine an imam. Based on his theory which coincides with the theory of other philosophers we need to prove an imam's existence on the basis of traditional as well as rational arguments. These arguments show that it is impossible for the world to continue without an imam present in it. There has to be a divine authority whether in a visible or invisible form. What is important is that there must be an imam in the world (ibid). Now that prophethood has come to an end, divine authority needs to be available in the form of an imam; otherwise the land will go without an imam present on it. According to him, it is compulsory to have an imam thanks to the following two reasons:

First, the constant existence of divine authority is among the implications of 'ontologically higher possibility'. Those who accept this rational rule cannot refuse the necessary existence of an imam (ibid, p. 476).

Second, the existence of an imam is the ultimate purpose of creation. If there is no imam as the ultimate purpose of creation, creation being meaningless and futile will not continue for long (Ibid). Mulla Sadra

frankly says that there must be an imam not merely because he meets our requirements, but because of a greater philosophy; if there is no imam the world will perish. Since the world, as we see, has thus far continued we therefore understand that there is an existing imam (ibid, p. 502).

Meanwhile the existence of an imam having many advantages is good in his own right (ibid, vol. 1, p. 80-99) and Allah knows that his existence is tantamount to goodness. When Allah knows that something is good He will then certainly create it, for His knowledge is the cause of the existence of things (ibid, p. 404).

Given all these considerations, he concludes that now that prophethood has terminated imam has to be available. In other words, now that there is no religion founding prophethood there is must be at least some sort of prophethoods that serves as a link between the seen and unseen worlds (ibid, pp. 476-477).

As you see, Mulla Sadra's arguments for the necessity of the existence of an imam are based on the essential unity of the two terms of prophethood and sainthood and it is based on such conception that the lack of one (prophethood) can be compensated for by the existence of another. This is what he somewhere alludes to, when he says that imamate has to continue for imamate and prophethood denote the same reality, though they are apparently different (ibid, p. 500).

It can thus be concluded that according to Sadra the right to govern is the prerogative of the prophet and if there is no prophet available a saint or an imam, being the same as the prophet, can assume public leadership, guiding people in their secular and religious matters. When a prophet, a saint or an imam assumes power the outward feature of the world will be

in harmony with its inward features.

3-3-3. The government of jurist

Though Mulla Sadra is critical of jurists saying they exploit saints as Pharaoh was exploiting the Children of Israel (Ibid, 1363, pp, 46, 48, 142, 239, 483), he does not reject jurisprudence and jurists altogether. If we do not restrict the term jurisprudence to its present sense (sound knowledge of Islamic laws) and use it instead in a broader sense that includes fundamental beliefs as well and if we set certain conditions including piety for a jurist, it can be said that reference to such a jurist in the era of occultation is not bad; it is something fully recommended. Sadra is, as a matter of fact, critical of a mammonish jurist who knows a few religions laws and based on it he peruses his own worldly objectives. He however, is not critical of those jurists who are pious and whose scope of knowledge includes fundamental beliefs as well. He, instead, deems it necessary to refer to such a qualified jurist. There are certain indications in his philosophy that affirm this point of view. Some of these indications are as under:

1-3-3-3. Argument from methodology of Mulla Sadra

Mulla Sadra's methodology requires us refer to a qualified jurist. Methodologically speaking, Sadra gives priority to intuition rather than other methodologies, though he respects the authority of Quranic verses and traditions as well. According to him, we must pay attention to the latter just as we are supposed to consider the former. Sadra has given no comments on the Quranic and traditional documents that back up the guardianship of jurist. If it is however proved that such documents exist and there is no objection in regard with their signification or their chain of

reporters, there is no reason for Mulla Sadra to refuse them.

2-3-3-3. Arguments from reasons for prophethood

To prove prophethood, Mulla Sadra has argued in two different ways. Whereas in some places (such as *Mafatih*) he has argued on the basis of necessity of law in other places he has based his argument on the necessity of law and on the need for a human law-maker. In his *Mafatih*, he says that man is a passenger who passes this world as one of the many stations of his long journey. According to him, man's body is a vehicle for him and therefore he needs to pay attention to the world as well as to his body. One however cannot pay attention to them unless one gives attentions to some needs that are more basic and fundamental. Needs are numerous, but from among them the physical needs including the need for food and drink, the need for physical comfort and the need for sexual satisfaction are among the basic ones. One cannot meet all these needs without the help of society. To live in a society has its own advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantages cannot be overcome except through the implementation of certain laws. Allah who has fulfilled man's trivial needs cannot be logically expected to ignore this urgent need. This is because if there is no law there will be chaos and mayhem and as a result society will perish (ibid, p. 57).

In his *Commentary on Usul al-Kafi*, Sadra has argued differently. After proving the necessity of social institutions for the survival of human beings, he points out that it is impossible for a society to survive without a law and a human law-maker (and a human executive power). Here the difference has to be discerned. In his previous stance he was laying stress on the necessity of law, but here he emphasizes on the necessity of law as well as a human lawmaker (ibid, 1366, vol. 4, p. 138).

Based on his previous argument, in order to survive human society needs only a code of law and when this code of law is provided this need will be fulfilled. However on his second opinion, we need not only a code of law but also a human lawmaker. Since the need for law and human lawmaker is persistent, therefor the need for a prophet or his successor will also be permanent.

3-3-3-3. Argument from need for emulation

According to Sadra the main reason behind religious prescriptions is to help man attain proximity to Allah and know about His attributes and acts. So, we must first of all learn about our religious duties and put them in practice and then use this situation as a vehicle for getting closer to Allah and knowing about His names and attributes. This has to be done by intuition or emulation. This is because in the process of emulation we follow scholars and scholars are the intermediary between the holy imams and the general public (Ibid, 1354, p. 489). Mulla Sadra asks us to know about ourselves and to know about Allah the Almighty. If a person begins worshiping Allah without trying to know about Him and His names, it is very possible for him to get derailed not reaching where he is supposed to. In order to avoid such a mishap, one must either reach the stage of vigilance and intuition or else follow the orders and rulings of scholars (Ibid, 1366, vol. 2, p. 509).

To justify the accuracy of emulation, he says that the relation between the person who emulates and the person who is emulated is like the relation between man's mental powers and his rational power. Just as man's mental powers are, ontologically speaking, inferior to his rational power and attain prosperity through following rational power, emulators are also inferior

in rank to those emulated (mujtahid) and attain happiness through their company (Ibid, 1360, p. 333. Ibid, 1361, p. 285). He similarly pinpoints that just as the life of human's nail and hair is subordinated to the life of his body, the life of an emulator or follower is also subordinated to the life of a source of emulation. As the life of your nail and hair is not independent from you, the life of an emulator or follower is not independent from that of a source of emulation (Ibid, 1363, p. 317. Ibid, 1360, p. 116). Now if one follows an infallible figure and takes instruction directly from him so much the better, but if an infallible is not accessible then one must not keep quiet and do nothing; in such a case one must follow a qualified source of emulation. If one follows such a figure one will attain one's goal (happiness). This is because if A emulates B and B emulates C, it follows that A emulates C. Similarly if A is dependent on B and B is dependent on C, it follows that A is dependent on C (Ibid, 1363, pp. 56-57). Based on such justifications, Sadra points out that in the time of occultation we need to follow and obey those who are known as 'scholars' (Ibid, p. 486).

4. Characteristics of Sadrian Utopia

Now that we have got acquainted with the nature of Sadrian utopia it is time to know a little bit about its most important characteristics. This will help us better understand his utopia.

1-4. Theocentrism

Based on Sadrian ontology, the entire existence is constituted of two main parts; necessary being and possible being (ibid, 1981, vol. 1, p. 86 and Ibid, 1363, p. 223). Contrary to a possible being, a necessary being that essentially requires existence is at the top of the pyramid of existence and

is absolutely needless. Possible beings that are dependent on a necessary being for their existence are not equal in rank with each other. Those possible beings that are closer in rank to the necessary being have a larger share of existence compared to those that farther in rank from it (Ibid, 1363, p. 234). The necessary being has a simple identity and its reality is nothing but concrete determination. The reality of the necessary being, being the same as the reality of existence is not conceivable and does not have any parallel in the existing world. Such an existence is infinite and thus it is not possible to prove such an existence with arguments based on possible beings (ibid, 1387, p. 15).

As some of his commentators have rightly pointed out (Yazdanpanah, 1389, p. 159), with his theory of *basit al-haqiqa kull al-ashya'* ('The simple reality is all things'), Mulla Sadra revolutionized the entire ontology. Based on this theory, the relation between a cause and its effect is of a particular kind. The cause and its effect are not two different things; the effect is in fact the weakened cause. If this is the case then it can be said that this theory presents a sort of monism according to which the only thing that really exists is the necessary being. As for the possible being, it is the shadow of the necessary being; nothing more. The monism Mulla presents does not absolutely deny the existence of possible beings as some monists rightly or wrongly suggest. It accepts possible beings as the rays of the light of the existence of the necessary being. Possible beings do not have anything of their own; whatever they have is bestowed upon them by Allah (Mulla Sadra, 1363, p. 240).

Based on his theocentrism, he takes the necessary being the efficient as well as the ultimate cause of all other things (Ibid, 1354, p. 139).

2-4. Emphasis on ultimate life

According to Sadra human beings are residents of or passengers in this world and thus we must pay attention to the requirements of being residents of and passengers in this world. The position of a passenger is in contrast with that of a resident. Contrary to a resident, a passenger is always in thought of his journey and thus he always seems worried and concerned, behaving sometimes in an unusual way. This may cause others to make fun of him, but Sadra advises us not to pay heed to such remarks (Ibid, 1363, pp. 14 & 51 and Ibid, 1361, p. 286).

According to Sadra, 'passenger' is a very profound concept that can include all phases of human development. On Sadra's opinion, man begins his journey through substantial movement from mere potentiality. He passes through inanimate and animate stages before reaching the human stage. When he reaches the human stage, again his growth and development will not come to an end. His evolution will instead continue (Ibid, 1360, pp. 361-2 & Ibid, 1354, pp. 500-1).

The belief in the hereafter or the ultimate life, being educationally important, is a pivotal concept in Sadra's philosophy. Sadra thinks that the belief in the hereafter has a positive impact on human life just as disbelief in it has a negative influence on human functions. He warns us against forgetting about the next world and getting instead indulged in affairs of this world (Ibid, 1360, p. 368).

3-4. Emphasis on philosophy

According to Sadra the main goal of human life is to attain happiness and since happiness cannot be achieved except through attaining proximity to Allah, therefore the main goal of human life is to get closer to Allah. The more you get closer to Allah the happier you will be. Since, however, the way

to Allah passes through the valley of philosophy and intellectual sciences therefore emphasis has to be laid on philosophy and intellectual sciences. As mentioned by Sadra, philosophy is a science that studies modes of existence on the basis of demonstration and one gets closer to Allah as one learns philosophy and carries out philosophical exercises (Ibid, 1981, vol. 1, p. 20).

Sadra states that the sciences we can learn are too many but many of these sciences are useless if not an obstacle on our way to perfection (Ibid, 1363, pp. 62-3). From among the existing sciences the only science that can help us get closer to Allah and consequently attain happiness is philosophy. Engrossing in intellectual sciences paves the way for spiritual ascent. Thus if a person is really in pursuit of happiness he must leave no stone unturned in order to know about Allah, his prophets and the Day of Judgment, using the methodology of demonstration (Ibid, 1380, p. 166). He calls such sciences philosophy or say, theosophy (Ibid, 1363, p. 275).

4-4. Deontologism

The citizens of Sadrian utopia are obliged to obey the city laws which are the laws of God. They cannot refuse to act in accordance with a divine law under the pretext of saying that they do not know its philosophy and its advantages when they apply their instrumental reason. They are obliged to obey all divine laws whether they know about their justifications or not. To justify this, Mulla Sadra says that since believers are obliged to obey religious orders in this world having no other option, they will have better choices in the hereafter. Divine grace requires those deprived in this world be in comfort in the next (Ibid, p. 642).

A believer does not have any will in the face of divine will. His will gets lost in the will of Allah (Ibid, 1360, p. 224). He knows that everything

is created in accordance with the best possible system, everything in this world has what it deserves and thus no right is violated. Having such a worldview, he obeys all divine laws with perfect consent (Ibid, p. 224) and considers no right for himself against Allah (Ibid, 1363, p. 674).

5-4. Rationalism

Despite being deontologist, Sadrian utopia is rationalist founded on precise intellectual calculations and deep analysis, not on illusions. The main element in rationalism is calculation that in turn leads to making use of the best means for getting a specific goal. Mulla Sadra is of the view that his project is perfectly rational and rational calculations require us follow the direction Sadra has determined. Sadra similarizes the citizens of his city to mature people who behave rationally. He compares the citizens of other cities to children who spend all their precious times playing, frolicking and making fun. The citizens of Sadrian utopia look at the citizens of other cities the way mature people look at children (Ibid, 1380, p. 241).

According to Sadra, as mentioned before, the main goal behind human creation is to attain happiness which by turn is bound to getting closer to Allah and getting annihilated in Him (Ibid, 1360, p. 116). If one's goal is to reach Allah then one must pick up a life style that facilitates such a project. He must for example, improve his knowledge about Allah, by strengthening one's intellect (Ibid, 1354, p. 366).

Another thing one can do is act in accordance with religious laws. This in turn leads to the removal of obstacles from the way of practical reason. Once theoretical and practical reasons are improved then one will have a better opportunity to get closer to Allah. All these can be done through living in Sadrian utopia (Ibid, 1360, p. 367).

Thus Mulla Sadra's project is a rational one. This is because the goal is to get closer to Allah and the programs Sadra proposes are very helpful for attaining this goal. Those who are critical of Sadrian approach they need to review their own approach (Ibid, 1380, p. 240).

The citizens of Sadrian utopia know about the dangers of the road and thus they get ready to encounter them. Those who are, however, unaware of such dangers, do not take precautionary measures. Whose behavior is then rational: the behavior of those who know about the dangers and take necessary measures or the behavior of those who are ignorant knowing nothing about their journey spending thus their time in vain? (Ibid, p. 241).

Moreover, the programs Sadrian utopia presents are in harmony with heavenly dos and don'ts. To act in accordance with such commandments is like acting in accordance with what a specialized physician says. Just as acting in accordance with a physician's words is the requirement of reason acting in accordance with divine prophet's words is among reason's implications. Thus to follow religious commandments is nothing but mere rationality just as ignoring them is nothing but mere folly and irrationality (Ibid, 1366, vol. 2, p. 39).

6-4. Delight and liveliness

One of the most important characteristics of Sadrian utopia is that its citizens are delightful and lively. Delight and liveliness are among the crucial elements in human life. If a person is not delightful and happy he will not enjoy his life even though he is rich, lacking nothing. Despondency and depression are among the particulars of a disbeliever. A believer is always happy and hopeful. Having attained spiritual perfection, citizens

of Sadrian utopia are happy and delighted as they observe divine signs. They never get disappointed and fall in despair. (ibid, 1363, p. 171).

Following Avicenna, Mulla Sadra states that the spiritual pleasures a mystic attains are far more intense and profound than sensual pleasures. Just as spiritual worlds are fathomless, spiritual pleasures are unending (Ibid, 1981, vol. 7, p. 190, Ibid, 1380, p. 239). Because of his wayfaring and spiritual exercises, a mystic ascends to the stages of angels. Just as angels do not swap spiritual pleasures for physical pleasures those of human beings who join angelic circles after undergoing long and tiresome spiritual exercises are not ready either to make such deals. If you find someone who prefers associating with animals to keeping company with angels, substituting bestial pleasures for spiritual ones, you can make sure that he is suffering from ignorance not realizing his lofty status (Ibid, 1981, vol. 7, pp. 190-1). On Sadra's opinion, after being connected to the unseen, a mystic can get access to all sorts of perfections and thus if one terms the pleasures he attains as something far above description one does not exaggerate (Ibid, p. 191).

Moreover, believing that the world system is the best system with everything having what it deserves and believing that the current system is in harmony with human nature (Ibid, 1363, pp. 201-2) a mystic enjoys looking at everything, big or small in this world. Encountering nothing that disturbs him, a mystic is always delighted and happy (Ibid, 1981, pp. 333-4).

7-4. Loving the entire world

Based on their world view, the citizens of Sadrian city love the entire world, hating nothing. They look at the world as a divine sign. Since they love Allah as the source of creation, they love the whole creation as His sign (Ibid, 1363, p. 248).

According to Sadra, it is impossible for one to love Allah without loving the creation as His work. Even in ordinary life, when a person loves another person he loves his belongings as something pertaining to him. From a mystic's perspective, the entire universe is the work of Allah. Thus if one loves Allah one must love all creation as His work (Ibid, 1380, p. 108). On Sadra's opinion, one cannot separate the love of cause from the love of its effect. To love the effect of a cause as the effect of that cause is equal to loving the cause itself (Ibid).

5. Conclusion

Being related to man's perfectionist nature, utopian discussion has long been the focus of philosophers' attention. Our aim was to illustrate Mulla Sadra's utopia. To do so, we first related the different senses in which the term 'utopia' was used with the aim of determining the sense in which Sadra uses it. We then turned to the issue of explaining the nature and main pillars of Sadrian utopia. Finally we dwelled on illustrating the different characteristics of Sadra's utopia. According to Sadra a city is utopian when it is governed by a prophet or his successor on the basis of divine laws which are respected by all the citizens. According to Sadra a good code of law alone is not enough. We must have, in addition to good laws, good executive power. Once such a society is built then it will be very ideal for one to live in it. This is because it is in such a society that the outer aspects of the world coincide with its inner aspects.

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