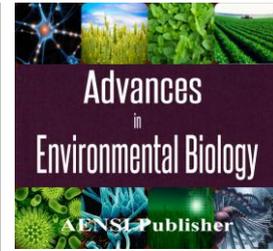




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“Beyond Intellect” and “Sphere of Religion” in the View of Mulla Sadra and Kierkegaard

¹Mahmoud Reza Sadraei, ²Abbas Hajiha, ³Akbar Goli Malekabadi, ³Seyyed Ali Alamolhoda

¹PhD Student in Theology Payame Noor University, Iran.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Theology Payame Noor University, Iran.

³Associate Professor, Department of Theology Payame Noor University, Iran.

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ABSTRACT

Is there a scope beyond Intellect that is irrational and its rules are against intellect? This question always has called the mysticism (Gnosticism/irfan) to be against philosophy. So, two domains of “Intellect” and “Beyond Intellect” and the relationship between these two have always been considered by mystics, those who study the mystic and theologians in the Christian West and Islamic East. Kierkegaard is a scholar in the field of life that in his classification of life stages, has considered the sphere of religion beyond the ethics, intellect and aesthetics. In the present research, we study the differences and similarities between these two ways of living (sphere of religion and Beyond Intellect) in the view of these two philosophers. Kierkegaard believes that the rules of the sphere of religion are irrational. Mulla Sadra has developed another theory which is considerable. In his theory, there are wits and elegances that they less have been considered. In the present paper, we try to study the intellectual principles of these two philosophers and the effects of these principles on their views.

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INTRODUCTION

Mulla Sadra is one of the famous philosophers of the tradition of Islamic wisdom that many believe that he is one of the pioneers of synthesizing “scientific wisdom” and “theoretical wisdom” in his works. In his worthwhile work, *Asfar al-Arba'a*, he has declared that neither the rules of “intellect” are void before “Beyond Intellect”, nor the rules of “Beyond Intellect” beside the “intellect” are so. Even he has described those who have a belief other than this with great generousities [24]. On the other hand, Soren Kierkegaard, the famous mystic Danish philosopher, that many know him of the founders of Existentialism philosophy, in his module about living spheres, configures the possible varieties of the life of human being at three levels of aesthetics, ethics and religion. According to him, these three possible ways of life in the path of the elevation of ontological human being are appeared at him one after another, are pooled with his soul and finally the ultimate truth is appeared at him at the last existential basis of human being, that is, the area of religion that according to him (Kierkegaard) is beyond intellect and ethics. [The whole explanation of this theory is seen in different works of Kierkegaard such as *Fear and Trembling*, *Either/or* and *The Stages on Life's Way*].

Therefore, it seems that these two scholars, Mulla Sadra and Soren Kierkegaard, believe in an apparently similar path for achieving human being to the most elevated meaning of life for him. The manner of sense and intellect of Mulla Sadra is measurable by the aesthetic and ethical life of Kierkegaard, and also some considerable common aspects, agreements and similarities can be found between Mulla Sadra's *Beyond Intellect* and Kierkegaard's thought which he refers to as *religious life*.

In this paper we try to study the affinity of these two views in the most important way of human life, that is, “Beyond Intellect” and “sphere of religion”, and analyze the differences and similarities of them.

It seems better to begin the issue by imposing several questions: what is the meaning of “Beyond Intellect”? And it includes which issues and by which specifications? Whether the overlapping of ontological view of these two in knowing insufficient the intellectual understanding and perfect validity of the presented awareness in the area of beyond intellect can be developed to anthropologic viewpoints of these two and obtained an identical

existential path through the ontology of “intellect” and “human being” to direct human being to achieve perfection.

To make clear the explanation and interpretation of Mulla Sadra about “Beyond Intellect”, at first the semiology of “intellect” before this scholar must be defined. Also, the method of anthropology in Mulla Sadra’s philosophy and his view about our human self help us to reach his view in this discussion.

The meanings of intellect in the view of Mulla Sadra:

Intellect, according to philosophers, has been used in different meanings. In an analytical trend, Mulla Sadra has classified the meanings and usages of the word “intellect”, and according to existential and epistemological trends, he has stated various definitions of “intellect” in his books. Based on the semantic aspect, he considers five meanings for “intellect” that include cleverness, collective (public) sense, practical element of self, practical power of self, and perception of practical power of self [26].

Mulla Sadra has stated the ontological aspects of divisions of intellect in *Descriptions of Usol-e-Kafi*. In this approach, he considers the susceptible aspect and having stages the reality of intellect in some meanings that the ontological aspects of the stages of self are more in them. These meanings, in fact, are the same previous meanings.

Mulla Sadra in his description on *Usol-e-Kafi* and under the third narration of Hadithes of *Al-Aghl wa Al-Jahl* (intellect and ignorance) book states six meanings for intellect:

1. Intellect means a part of human self (soul) that is common among all human beings and is the discrimination aspect of human from other animals. All human beings with all varieties of talent and intelligence enjoy this power. This type of intellect is called theoretical intellect (*aql'i nazari*). This type of intellect causes understanding the evident premises and human being by these introductions will find the ground for accepting theoretical sciences.

2. The second meaning of intellect is about human soul. In this area, intellect means the stages of the evolution and growth of soul. In the other words, the soul in its evolutionary sightseeing, using understandings and evident knowledge of the natural sense goes through stages that each stage is called intellect. The stages that are passed by the soul are material intellect (*aql haiolani*), solid intellect (*aql bi al-malakeh*), active intellect (*aql fa'al*) and the acquired intellect (*aql bi al-mustafad*). Each of these stages is called intellect and all of these stages are discussed as theoretical intellect.

3. The third meaning of the intellect is another part of human soul that is obtained due to carefulness of behavior and acts. This power of soul (self), in the ethics, is called intellect.

4. The fourth meaning of intellect is the traditional understanding of intellect. In this meaning, Mulla Sadra considers the intellect as cleverness and being smart and also he has interpreted it as the rate of understanding and inference. The proofs of this meaning of the intellect are individuals that discriminate right deeds from wrong ones with their cleverness and talent in the field of ethics and act to do right deeds.

5. The intellect in another meaning refers to the usual affairs that are common before the majority of people. Based on induction of the words of philosophers, it seems such that their intention of intellect is this meaning. In other words, the intention of intellect in this definition is the issues and axioms that are common before all human beings and all have accepted the existence of them. The difference of this type of intellect with theoretical intellect is that the theoretical intellect is the understanding power of evident sciences (axioms) and is necessary, but the verbal intellect is the issues and necessary sciences themselves; such as this theorem that number 2 is twice the number 1.

6. The last meaning of intellect is the entity that is not dependent to anything except God and is pure act. This definition of intellect holds true about an objective and external creature and its difference with other meanings of the intellect is that in other meanings the purpose of intellect is the human power and a part of his soul (self), but in this meaning the purpose is an independent entity that is not dependent to any thing including subject, material or body.

“*Intellect*” and “*Beyond Intellect*” are certainly considered as two acquainting or recognition areas. Each of these recognition areas refers to a certain domain of the existence; in fact, each of these two domains is considered as the equivalence of that recognition domain and human being is confronted with one of them rationally and can not be confronted with the other domain in such a way. What human being discovers by his intellect and consequently acquires a set of teachings is the same domain of intellect. But what human being is not able to find with intellect is confronted by it in another way (for example, through soul or inspiration) that creates a certain domain of knowledge which is called *Beyond Intellect*.

The thinking principles of Mulla Sadra in solving the relationship between recognition domain of “Intellect” and “Beyond Intellect”:

According to Mulla Sadra, the pious man after passing his sensual understandings and the rational understandings reaches the threshold if hyper-rational understanding or mystical insight. The key point to understand the thought of Mulla Sadra is to pay attention to his specific approach about human and his

anthropological principles and the second issue that paves the way to recognize the relationship of ‘*intellect*’ and ‘*Beyond Intellect*’ is his special view toward ranking intellect and rationality in this field that are explained in the following sections.

Anthropology in the Mulla Sadra Philosophy:

Mulla Sadra’s anthropology is based on this principle that the soul is a celestial entity and has a collective unity that is a light of God unity and due to this celestial entity is rational and has the sense, imagination, motion, and growth. The existential entities of human soul are not separated from each other and this collective unity is always maintained at all sensory imaginary, rational and hyper-rational hierarchies.

Mulla Sadra’s point of view is based on a certain anthropology that has deep roots in mystical and philosophical culture of Islam world, and in fact, the lack of attention to this way of anthropology in the current world, especially in the West, is the origin of many misunderstandings and even mental and spiritual crises.

Anthropology in Mulla Sadra’s philosophy is based on the followings:

Firstly, soul is of divine type and therefore is separated from material.

Secondly, soul due to its entity has a collective unity and this collective unity is a light of God unity.

Thirdly, human being due to having the same divine entity and essential unity has rationality and sense, imagination, motion and growth [27].

The position of intellect in the Mulla Sadra thought:

Intellect has various layers:

Mulla Sadra considers a certain principle about intellect that is very initiative and deep. Intellect before Mulla Sadra is not a level of understanding but includes levels or stages of understanding. Here, intellect finds a suspicious entity and has outward appearance and esoteric conscious and becomes depth. It is here that this place is provided for intellect to become co-border with heart in its esoteric entity and depth of its existence and is confronted with “*Beyond Intellect*”. In the view of Mulla Sadra, intellect has the crusts and esoteric and outward layers that will be discussed later.

Intellect and Knowledge:

Mulla Sadra believes that as the intellect has the power of accurate understandings by the same ratio has the power of perception of void beliefs.

The proportion of the intellect to these two perceptions is equal, in other words, achievement to accurate perceptions before the human soul is a created event and to attribute the soul to it, a preference is needed, and the soul itself and the intellect can not be the cause of this preference [30].

Mulla Sadra knows God as this agent (through active intellect) and believes that the accurate recognition is a guide that is bestowed to human being by God (ibid).

Mulla Sadra believes that the soul to understand overall intellect forms, if they are of original and true types, enjoys intuitive addition that is emanated through the light sources and their rational abstraction. In other words, perception of rational forms of the authentic essence types in existence (of God) is achieved only through intuitive addition and present lighting relation with various forms and rational lighting essences that are located in initiative world and are existed in the nature of the existence of God.

Therefore, in the knowledge process, the soul needs a celestial teacher. An abstract essence that includes all rational forms [26].

However, the process of rational knowledge and understanding the generalities are based on the strong bases of visual sense perceptions and esoteric powers, but these forms of the imaginary do not transfer to faculty or general meanings that are annexed to material interests do not create its form in faculty, but due to partial and imaginary forms of objects, a talent is created in the soul to accept the whole and rational form related to them. Then, by intuition of the emitted light from active intellect, these holistic forms that are abstract from material and its relations are formed in the soul.

Based on principles of transcendent theosophy, the soul is materially created in the body and remains spiritually, and is an entity that starts its motion from material and travels toward rational perfect stage that is the stage of separations and abstractions and in each stage obtains perfections that never existed before. The first self-actualization stage that the soul is qualified is physical form (of course, this is based on the principle that we consider the physical form as the activated form, not merely consider it as a gender meaning). Perfection, after bodily form, is in element form and the mineral form that is synthetic, and then vegetation form and animal form. After the animal stage, metaphysical stage and abstraction is started. If the perfection and improvement of soul is continued, it will travel toward a completely separated and abstract entity, i.e. active intellect. After reaching to that stage, it is called the acquired intellect that is qualified for all rational perceptions including imaginations and attestation [27].

The acquired intellect is very similar to active intellect, since both are entitled to all rational ideas and reasonable forms, with this difference that the acquired intellect is a separate entity that primarily is material,

and then reaches the level of abstraction due to its perfection, but the active intellect possesses all the intellectual perfections from beginning.

So, in Sadraei system of thought, knowledge is a holy entity that is obtained for human being by divine inspiration and this specific approach to human reasoning and intellect leads us to this issue that even in the knowledge field of intellect, in this system of thought, knowledge and recognition have a significant relationship with the divine world and what the human being discovers by intellect and he resorts to a series of teachings is not irrelevant to the knowledge of abstract intellect. Mulla Sadra believes that achieving to rational perfection and genuine knowledge is necessary to connect to high heaven. He has stated this fact in *Sharh-e Usol-e-Kafi* as follows.

So, what is learned from religious principles in the world by human is real sciences that are obtained through proof and certainty, he will be connected to heaven angels and drinks the pure wine with full bowl and studies the beauty and glory of God by insight of intellect and the truth of mystic [30].

Access to knowledge in "Beyond Intellect":

In Mulla Sadra's point of view, the knowledge and understanding field of "*Beyond Intellect*" and the collection of knowledge of this field is not accessible by intellect and is achievable in another way (through soul or inspiration) for human being.

Mulla Sadra believes that many mystical truths are out of reach of human in the field of mysticism and knows the only way to achieve them through inspiration. In the revelation domain, he knows many revelation truths out of the access of the intellect.

Some parts of mysteries of religion and shari'a are so transcendent that are out of the access of intellect and thought and the only way to know them is through prophethood and sainthood (*Welayat*) and the proportion of intellect and the sight of thought to the realm of sainthood and its light is like to the proportion of the sensory light to thinking light. So the realm of the intellect and the mind can not do much [30].

According to Mulla Sadra, some facts about the theology, recognition of leader and guide, autognosis, and in particular the issues related to sociology, are not understandable except through divine teachings and heavenly guidance.

He writes in "Three Principles Treatise":

Theoretical intellect is unable to precept the reality of the other world's affairs and the fact about the Domsday is of this kind which the duration of this day is equal to 50 worldly years and also can be so the mystery of the Resurrection Day and returning all creatures to the Lord of the world, souls and bodies, ... and what of this kind the Messengers of God (peace be upon them) have narrated all are of sciences and revelations that the theoretical intellect is unable to understand and are not reachable except by following the holy Prophet, Mohammad (AS) and his family (the innocent Imams). The philosophers and theologians are not much aware of it.

According to this issue, some fundamental questions arise that answer to these questions is quite disputable.

1- What are the characteristics of whatever can not be understood through intellect?

2- Whatever the human being must precept through something other than intellect, after perception, is there an opportunity for intellect to confront these findings, understand and analyze them?

To answer these questions, Mulla Sadra presents a specific analysis which is noteworthy in its type. He believes that the rules which are found by intellect are not void in "*Beyond Intellect*". Also, the knowledge that human being obtains in "*Beyond Intellect*" is not void before the intellect. However, it is possible, a rule be found in "*Beyond Intellect*" which is trans-rational and can not be explained by rational implications. But this does not mean these teachings are contrary to intellect. For example, the refusal principle of non- paradox is a principle that the intellect precepts its impossibility and finds that the existence of two paradoxes is impossible at a same time for a single subject. This principle is a principle of rationality. But the debate about "*Beyond Intellect*" is not so to be contrary to intellect, rather the intellect is incapable of understanding it and is not in the scope of intellect. For example, the "unity" which is posed by mystics is an argument that is not understood by the intellect, but it is not impossible issue that is in conflict with the intellect, but the accessibility scope of it is not that of intellect. Mulla in his book, *Asfar-e-Arbe'ah* (The Four Journeys), declares this fact. According to him, neither the rules of "intellect" are void before "*Beyond Intellect*", nor the rules of "*Beyond Intellect*" before "the intellect" are so. He even attributes the most extreme generousities to the people who believe otherwise [26]. Mulla Sadra has derived this theory from Ghazali, and according to Ghazali's opinion, Mulla Sadra says: "the wise sheikh, Ghazali, said that during the ruling of the sainthood (*Welayat*), the rules that the intellect knows them impossible are not permitted." During the ruling of the sainthood (*Welayat*), it is possible that a rule be found that can not be understood by intellect, it means that the intellect lonely can not be its evidence, and he who does not discriminate between *what is impossible by intellect* and *what is not understandable by intellect* is not deserved to be addressed and he should be left with his ignorance (ibid).

The key principle that Mulla Sadra relies on it here is two clauses of *what is impossible by intellect* and *what is not understandable by intellect*. He believes that the lack of attention to this issue is the cause of a lot of

mistakes in this regard. He accepts the second view. That is, the rules of “*Beyond Intellect*” are rules that are not set in the scope of the perception of the intellect, and the intellect can not access to it lonely and through rational promises, but this does not mean that if a human being achieves to discovery and understanding of “*Beyond Intellect*” through the ways other than rationality, logic and conceptual and inductive ways, the intellect is incapable of such understandings.

Travelling the intellect to its beyond prolongs travelling of it:

As mentioned, the intellect according to its own characteristics has limits and in its travel toward the beloved can go ahead up to a stage that is important and valid, but the peak of human perfection and closeness reaches to where which is “*beyond intellect*” and the intellect no longer reaches that manner. Mulla Sadra, however, is a man of intellect, argument and idea, always tries to go beyond the stage of intellect and argument and sees what is beyond the world; he attempts to become aware of the inability of intellect and thought by intellect and thought themselves.

It is here that we should say the intellect tries to eliminate itself and go beyond itself. Going beyond intellect by the intellect is the task of intellect and its glory and greatness is appeared by ignorance and going beyond the self. Of course, the interesting point that here is there, is that while Mulla Sadra considers the intellect and thought very important, he believes that stopping intellect and thought is not permitted at any stage.

Going intellect to its beyond prolongs travelling of it. Human spiritual journey and perception is not limited and the intellect is always straggling. Stopping of the intellect is done by the rule of the intellect itself, and there the intellect commands to stop, in fact, it finds its way to its beyond. If we pay attention that the command of intellect to stop the intellect is derived from the intellect itself, we should be aware of this fact that the intellect is ended when it commands to be stopped and goes beyond itself where it breaks (ignores) itself, it is the agent of ‘break’ and accepts its failure. Failure and breaking down is ‘to end’ but the ‘breaking/failure’ action is the continuation of the path (ibid: 419).

Intellect in the view of Kierkegaard

From the perspective of Kierkegaard, intellect, when used as a noun, denotes a dimension of human activities. These are the living creatures that think and their thoughts are the reflection of their experiences and permanent attitudes of their existence [13].

In fact, according to him, intellect in the meaning of human thought is annexational, and the human intellect has been formed through experiences and attitudes that have obtained in relation to existence (Ibid: 186). At the thought of Kierkegaard, a boundary that the intellect is seeking it means the goal of intellect. But what is the issue which both defines the purpose and boundaries of intellect? Kierkegaard’s answer is ‘*paradox*’. The ultimate goal of thought, that the enthusiastic thought is also seeking it, is the paradox itself; that is, that there is something that can not be understood by thought (ibid: 224).

When the intellect, in a hegemonic way, claims totality, inevitably, faces with a paradox and understands that this fact makes it topple from its totality, and of course, this is the same unhappy love that is called “*offense*”. The ‘offense’ is that the intellect, by denying its limitations, be unable to do its tasks in an authentic way (ibid: 235).

Kierkegaard’s rationalism or anti-rationalism:

Kierkegaard, by advocating of the faith, is considered as the strong critic of rationalism. He wants to remind his readers the limitations of human intellect, a work that had been done previously by Kant. We know that Kierkegaard was a harshly critic of the Hegelian system, because it was founded based on the human intellect not the Christian faith. Gardiner believes that “Kierkegaard stands firm against any explanation in the form of rational and holistic terms [7]. However, Kierkegaard is the critic of the intellect, hence, some knows him as anti-rationalist. He tries to justify the refusal of rational and public moral principles with help of personal and intrinsically irrational divine rules [4]. Like Kant, he believes that God can not be proved by intellect and rational proof. Kierkegaard, without directly quoting the words of Kant’s first Critique, repeats many aspects of Kant’s criticism toward the ontological argument. In philosophical pieces, he writes: “I never try to present arguments to prove the existence, for example, I do not prove that there is a stone, but (I prove) whatever exists is a stone. The Court does not prove that there is a crime, but (it proves) that *the defendant*, who actually exists, is a criminal [8]; therefore, God is not an entity that can be understood by the intellect.

In the age of Kierkegaard, the rationalism has been intensified with the advent of scientism in the scientific and philosophical community. But at the same time, Christian theology from one hand and the influence of German Romanticism on Kierkegaard thoughts on the other hand prevented Kierkegaard accepts rationalism. He set the faith as the central axis in the Christian thought. Kierkegaard believes that the intellect does not play any role in religious belief [21]. In contrast, some authors such as David Swenson, MacKinnon and Fabro do not really consider Kierkegaard as anti-rationalist, because Kierkegaard’s paradox is not a logical and apparent paradox. According to them, Kierkegaard claims that the Christianity is beyond intellect not against it [5]. As stated previously, the struggle between intellect and faith is the struggle of Philosophy and Christian theology.

According to Kierkegaard, the intellect is not efficient in the recognition of Christianity. However, philosophy (i.e, intellect) is not a substitute for faith, but it is fundamental to clarify the requirements of the faith. Kierkegaard is fully aware of the value of philosophy for religion. Philosophy is also necessary to clarify the concepts and categories of Christian theological framework. Therefore, Kierkegaard can agree Hegel that religion without philosophy is blind [32].

About another question that relates to exploration of the relationship between man and God, we can say that in Kierkegaard's thought, not only the exploration of the relationship between God and man is not rational, but also it is not even intuitive. Because the intuition in its various forms is considered as a moment experience, while according to Kierkegaard, God is not an object that can be considered by intuition. Therefore, the answer of the third question is completely negative.

The change of rational dialectics to existential or religious dialectics:

Kierkegaard's dialectics is the leap dialectics, not dialectics of synthesis. Hearing the word "dialectics", unconsciously the name of Hegel comes to our minds, a dialectics that that explains the travel of diversity of thought and awareness of mind from reaching self-conscious, then general self-conscious and finally the stage of absolute thought. But Kierkegaard's dialectics means that we pass from one realm to another, not from thesis to synthesis. Consequently, we can not establish the relation of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis between sense, ethics and faith. Sometimes people go directly from stage of sense to stage of faith by leap, whereas if the dialectics is the Hegelian dialectics, it must necessarily be transferred from sense to the morals. Kierkegaard, under the influence of Hegel, interprets the literary texts in this field. Human being can live morally, but does not have religious orientation.

Triple spheres the life in Kierkegaard's theory:

In stating the issue of goal and meaning of life, Kierkegaard considers three spheres (stages or places); the spheres that each person selects one of them according to his /her personality growth and this selection is the determinant of the individual's measure of life. According to him, those who do not enter into one of these spheres, although they are biologically human, really they can not be considered as human [1].

The first sphere is the approving or feeling sphere in which the individual thinks of himself/herself and what satisfies his/her pleasure. In this sphere, according to the nature of pleasures, we face with two groups of human beings: the first group is those who resort any way such as lie, trick, deceit, treachery, theft, and murder to acquire the material and sometimes animal pleasures, like mendacious wealthy people and the treacherous politicians. The second group chooses the spiritual pleasures, such as literary and artistic creation, scientific initiative and creativity and production of thought, and their life is meaningful when they attain understanding such pleasures. The instinct is the main ruling and determinant factor in this sphere of life and human will and intention do not interfere in the selection of lifestyle, because the aesthete human since s/he has not chosen to be what, is not in the world of being rather is only at the circle of possibility.

The second sphere is the ethical sphere. At this stage, the person will get rid of the slavery of instincts, and all his efforts will be to help others; he does perform his duties and obligations toward others freely and willingly. Kierkegaard knew Kant's absolute fact related to this phase of human life. The man, who lives in the ethical dimension, thinks that he can overcome human weakness and problems facing human being in light of willing, knowledge, and ethical commitment; but when he is placed in a wonderful position, moral obligation can solve his fundamental problem no longer. Here is that, his quiet life becomes turbulent and if he overcomes the problem with courage, daring and acceptance of turbulence and anxiety, he passes the moral sphere and enters into religious sphere, otherwise, he will remain in the same moral sphere. In the religious sphere, the person transacts all his life and property with God and during an endless straggle with self and its temptations, leaves the infinite and then believing in impossible fact, at the same time that he has achieved to an authentic and stable faith in God, rediscovers his lost; as Abraham (PBUH), by acquiring the high rank of faith, found his in-altar son again; and Sheik San'an in Attar's narration at the end of the story, finds again his religious beliefs and concepts [the wisdom of the holy Quran secrets] and in addition to acquiring lovely mystical faith achieves a renaissance in the religion.

Kierkegaard, in his idea about spheres of life, classifies the various types of wordly life of human being in three stratifications of beyond the aesthetic flow, ethics, and religion. According to him, these three possible ways of life in the path of transcendence of ontological human being appear on human one after another, synthesizes with his soul and finally the ultimate truth appears on the last existential basis of human being, that is, the basis of religion that based on Kierkegaard's belief, it is beyond intellect and beyond the ethics.

Kierkegaard's intellectual principles in the threshold of reaching the sphere of religion:

In Kierkegaard's view, human being, after existential transition from self, is on the verge of entering the sphere of religion through the spheres of aesthetics and ethics. According to his belief, in order such a long leap and great change occurs for human in transition from a position named ethics to other position named religion,

he needs to be changed fundamentally in his existential mechanisms. This means that Kierkegaard believes that moral human being understands himself like a free, eternal, and self-sufficient human that has been set against oneself [14].

The features of 'the sphere of religion' and 'Beyond Intellect' in Kierkegaard's view:

The sphere of religion is a paradoxical matter:

Kierkegaard believes that the belonging of the faith must be something paradoxical. Without acceding to the paradox, the needed enthusiasm and the ground of decision-making will not be provided.

The enthusiastic man shows his ultimate eagerness and commitment to the belonging of the faith by acceding to the paradox [23].

He uses the term 'paradox' to explain the faith. Faith is a paradox, faith is paradoxical as much as the paradox itself; similarly, its belonging is also paradoxical and impossible [16].

The elements of rationality in Christianity:

In fact, Kierkegaard does not deny the intellectual content of Christianity, but he is seeking to explain this content exactly that its nature is dialectical.

The dialectical content is "absolute paradox"; that is, something which is specific for Christianity. This content should not only be understood as an intellectual work, but should be understood as an existential relation that connects itself to emotions as an incentive to obtain new results. In other words, certainly Christianity has a rational content, but the meaning of this content is that it provides a likelihood of a new enthusiasm; an enthusiasm that shows itself in an existential manner [16].

According to Kierkegaard, in the first place, one must believe, then, he must act on the belief. As we can deduce from this statement, according to the perspective of Kierkegaard, believing and acting are separated from each other. Kierkegaard does not merely understand the Christian beliefs in relation with the acts, but believes that the Christian belief only presents itself practically. Therefore, he tries to think about the nature of this belief such that such not only does it refute the belief as a rational act, but also denies the possibility of it (ibid: 210).

In fact, this is the content of Christianity that preserves it against all theoretical efforts. Christianity roots in the absolute paradox that this paradox is not the belonging of theoretical thought; rather it is associated with the existence itself. Paradox is a sign that should be applied in practical life.

Another word that Kierkegaard uses as the synonym of 'the absolute paradox' is the word "impossible". What is "impossible"? "Impossible" means that the eternal truth has come into existence during the time, that is, God has exactly come into existence like a human being and has entered into the earthly world. So, in fact, 'impossible' and 'paradox' are about this Christian claim that Jesus (PBUH) is the incarnation of God (ibid).

The paradox existing in the sphere of religion is an existential paradox:

In the perspective of Kierkegaard, the most important kind of paradox is the existential paradox that is embodied in the teachings of Christianity; and the most important Christian doctrine is 'Incarnation', and 'Incarnation' is in conflict with human ration. When we state paradox in the form of a sentence, we can say "God has appeared in the form of a human being"; this causes the meaning of paradox be understood, and this claim is the obvious violation of the logical principle of non-paradox [15]. According to Kierkegaard, the faithful man should accept the faith in spite of the paradox of this principle and other paradoxical principles that are of belongings of the faith, and by accepting them, enters the realm of faith. Therefore, the Christian faith is paradoxical. A subtle point that there is in Kierkegaard's thought is that exhibition of paradox should not lead the human mind toward logical paradox, because this is an existential issue and not a merely logical issue. His words mean that the subjective belief is superior to objective belief and esoteric faith is superior to outward faith. In his divisions of the stages of the life (approving, moral and religious), if we consider the approving stage as partial and the moral stage as a whole, the religious stage is superior than those of partial and whole, and at this stage the relationship of the individual with the absolute is considered and it is in this relation that the contradiction and paradox arise. However, the eternal truth does not have a void aspect naturally and per se, rather by being relevant with a living and worldly individual finds a void aspect [19].

Despair is the starting point of motion:

In Kierkegaard's view, the gap resulted from the discrepancy and disagreement between the two discrete and at the same time continuous perceptions (moral and religious life) is filled with an existential fact which is called despair. This desperation of Kierkegaard is an existential process that the entire world is immersed in it and arises from the inherent contradictions and dead ends that a person sees in current situations of the life [17].

This frustration is the result of the apathetic desire of human to be the self in the presence of self [18], and according to him, it is the turning point of the rupture of human from morals and linking to religion. This frustration is freely and selected and is the consequence of man's efforts to transition from morality and

understanding the higher order of existence. Man can not be despair without asking it at all. When human properly wished it, he correctly goes beyond it [17].

We can state the most important similarity between Mulla Sadra and Kierkegaard in this way that both thinkers accept that the intellect is not a perfect source of knowledge to understand the cosmos truths and there are truths in the realm of Beyond Intellect that are out of the access of intellect. Both thinkers consider intellect insufficient for leading human being and reaching to his ultimate perfection and the way of access to these truths is the faith or access to findings of soul, and considering independent the intellect in recognition of religious interpretations will lead to unfavorable results.

But the differences and separation of these two thinkers must be sought in the intellectual, religious and historical grounds.

Kierkegaard does not consider the religious belief systems the subject of rational evaluation and assessment. For example if we say we believe in the existence of God and have love toward human beings, in fact we have said: we have accepted this fact independent to any argument and affinity, and reject any endeavor which is done to prove or deny the love of God in human beings. This approach suggests that religious systems are not included in the format of rational measurement and fundamentally 'faith' is realized without any argument and rational affinity [22].

Kierkegaard is a thinker that has grown in the Christian culture and therefore, his philosophy has completely affected by Christian teachings. But what religion is Christianity? It is a religion that its fundamental doctrines are completely irrational; concepts such as God, Christ, Incarnation, sin, and sacrifice, all are the anti-rational concepts. Therefore, Kierkegaard understands that there is no compatibility between Christianity and the wisdom and knowledge. How such a thing is possible; however, the more a person is immersed in it and the deeper he looks into it, the more he understands that nothing can be seen except contradiction and confrontation. Because of this, he, like every other Christian thinker, knows intellect incapable of understanding religious teachings. In this thought, intellect not only is not the indicator of religious propositions, but also is a modesty of it and causes the religion loses its authentic identity. Based on this perspective, those, who insist that they can achieve to religious truths by philosophical thinking and intellect, are superstitious and totality seeking humans.

But in Islamic thought, faith is not an anti-rational object. In the view of Mulla Sadra, faith includes spiritual wisdom (wisdom by soul/heart) and intuitive knowledge. Faith has different stages. One stage of faith is intuitive knowledge. Another is knowledge of God through the proving comparison. According to Mulla Sadra, faith, however, is related to heart, but the heart faith is not limited to discovery knowledge; and knowledge of God which is obtained by intellect and argument, namely a verification that is achieved through theoretical intellect, can be considered as spiritual faith. Mulla Sadra attempts to establish consistency and reconciliation between intellect and religion, or in other words, between mysticism and proof. He argued that we should not think that the words of mystics (Sufis) are devoid of proof. But the words of mystics commonly agree with argumentative data, and philosophical propositions are not in conflict with the religious laws and propositions.

Mulla Sadra's thought includes subtle points in this area that are unique in their kind. For example, Mulla Sadra, in analyzing the issue of faith by a certain semantic method, the elements that apparently do not have a direct relation with the concept of faith, relates to this concept and even knows them equivalent. He reconstructs the concept of faith and other concepts such as light, knowledge, wisdom, and intellect in a new superior framework, and recounts the theological concept of faith with Quranic, mystical and philosophical literature.

For example, Mulla Sadra knows the concept of "wisdom" (*Hikmat*) as equal and congruent with faith. According to him, every human is a faithful wise man and any true faithful man is a wise man. Because the true wisdom is the same knowledge of objects that is perfection according to human endurance; and the essence of the creatures is God, angels, prophets and His holy books.

Light is another concept that Mulla Sara knows it equal to faith (ibid). He explicitly states the frequent positions of this subject. For example, he says that the true faith is a light that shines from the Lord of the universe to the heart of a servant [31].

In the semantics, intellect is also considered as the concepts equal to faith. Mulla Sadra says: intellect in the concept that has been used by the wise men in the self-recognition sciences (*Elm u-Nafs*) is one of the names of soul (self) that in its path of perfection from superior faculty reaches recent limit of perfection, and this meaning of intellect is synonymous with the word of faith in the tradition of our religion [29]. It is due to this intellect that when Mulla Sadra reaches to the debate of "Beyond Intellect" is seeking to open a window between intellect and heart (soul), but when Kierkegaard reaches the third stage of life or sphere of religion in his paradigm, states the problem of paradox.

Is "Beyond Intellect" or entrance into the sphere of religion paradoxical?:

What are the secret of separation between intellect and heart, and therefore the lack intrinsic inner integrity of human being? In other words, what is the secret of illogicality of "Beyond Intellect" and the sphere of religion?

It was mentioned that Kierkegaard in his panorama knows the sphere of religion essentially paradoxical. To explain his idea, he gives the example of Socrates and Abraham. Kierkegaard believes that there is a relationship between the concept of paradox and the concepts of the objective non-believability and truth. Socratic ignorance that Socrates hangs inside in full enthusiasm was an interpretation of this principle that the truth is the eternal matter associated with the individual, and thus, this truth should be a paradox for him as long as he exists [14].

Another term that more clarifies the relationship between the concept of paradox and the objective concepts and truth is this: When introspection (inwardness) is truth, the truth is scientifically a paradox. The paradoxical feature of truth is its objective non-believability (ibid).

The paradoxical faith in the faith of Abraham (PBUH) is that, from one hand, Abraham wishes to obey the command of God, that is, to sacrifice Isaac (PBUH), but on the other hand, God has promised Abraham the generation of prophets will continue by the children of Isaac (AS). In other words, if it is supposed to the generation of Isaac (AS) will continue, he should remain alive to get married and his children continue the way of Abraham (AS). Therefore, an evident paradox occurs for Abraham (AS). The paradox is that, at the same time, Isaac (AS) must remain alive and he must be sacrificed. In explaining the concept of paradox, we should say that Kierkegaard insists that paradox can not be understood [13].

With approach to the history of Abraham (AS), Kierkegaard concludes that the sphere of religion and entrance into the stage of faith is a matter that is based on Existentialism and does not related to the concept of *conceptual being* and the concept of *being*, but there is a kind of integration between it and the indigenous being (*Wu'jud*) and even we should say that the faith is the same Existentialism and what Kierkegaard calls Paradox is beyond intellect. According to Kierkegaard, the completion of faith entails the inhibition of intellect; however, it does not mean its removal and refusal [20].

In Islamic thought, the mystics have presented some of their mystical experiences; the presentation of these experiences is called idle talk (*Shat'ih*). The mystics know their manner beyond the understanding and beyond intellect.

The idle talks (*Shat'heyeh*) of unity of existence and monotheism, in appearance, like the story of Abraham (AS) is paradoxical.

According to Ibn Arabi, unification (*Tawhid*) is paradoxical and its basis is "*Ho'wa la hoo*" (He is not He). He says: "There is nothing save He" (*ma ho'wa ela hoo*). In terms of existence, God is like creatures, and it is due to this concept that about Him, we say: "He is not He" (*Ho'wa la hoo*); Thou are not thou (*anta la anta*); so, He is the first and the last and the esoteric and apparent power.

But Mulla Sadra, by his interpretation of "*Beyond Intellect*", accepting that, however, the rules of "*Beyond Intellect*", is not accessible for intellect and the intellect is not capable of understanding it, meaning that the intellect lonely can not be its proof, but this does not mean that, if a human being reaches to a discovery and the concept of the rules of "*Beyond Intellect*", in a way rather than rationality, logic and inductive and conceptual ways, intellect is blind and deaf to this understanding.

Mulla Sadra, in *Asfar*, after discussion about "*Beyond Intellect*" and by strength of Ghazali's and also Ain ul-Ghozat's words, conclude that we can not deviate from the accurate rule of the intellect, and in other words, the evident rule of the intellect is not void in any way of manners. The most interesting and considerable point in Mulla Sadra's words is that he, at the end of his understanding of Ghazali's words, poses the problem or the *Shat'heyeh* (idle talk) of "*the unity of being*" and says, those who are strong in mysticism and Sufism, never they have meant the refusal of possibilities by "*the unity of being*" and in fact the refusal of the superfluities, in order to challenge the intellect and the rules of it [26].

Then Mulla discusses the mystics' *the unity of being* and analyzes and interprets the monotheism of mystics in details and with reference to the statements of Ibn Arabi and Sadr al-Din Qonawi (ibid: 331-323). So, according to Mulla Sadra, even the "*Shat'heyeh*" (idle talk) of *the unity of being* that in the view of mystics is one of the main pillars of "*Beyond Intellect*" has the capability to be analyzed and explained rationally. Even Mulla Sadra, by posing and explaining the principle of "he develops the reality of all objects" and making it argumentative in his various works, including *ash-shawahid ar-rebubeyeh* [26] has encouraged the "*Shat'heyeh*" (idle talk) of *the unity of being* and has attempted to make it logical.

But Kierkegaard in facing with the paradox existing in the sphere of religion commands the intellect to stop. Here, Kierkegaard poses the term 'leap in religion' to reach the truth. According to Kierkegaard, the individual, in order to possess the true faith, should leap within the faith, without having any proof or indication showing the truth of belief in it, because the grace of this leap is bestowed by the Lord on human. However, it is not clear that the landing place of this apprehensive leap and jump, and is always associated with anxiety and concerns. In *Philosophical fragments*, at first, Kierkegaard tries to prove the existence of God through the analogous, inductive, and teleological or existentialistic proofs. But finally, he concludes that such arguments are insufficient to prove the existence of God. He adds: "as long as we believe in adducing argument to prove the existence of God, we find that the existence of God does not appear, but when in this trend, we leave out adducing argument, the existence of God will appear to us. In this case that, the existence of God is revealed in an individual, in fact, the individual has leaped. Kierkegaard's purpose of leap is qualitative leap and this term

has been used exactly against the notion of the quantitative leap (transition) that has a special place in the Hegelian system. On the other hand, we should know that the leap is of category of decision. In this case, we should recognize that the quality of leap in Kierkegaardian system is correlated with the subject of freedom [6].

Facing “beyond intellect”, Mulla Sadra believes that the provisions of “beyond intellect” are not in the scope of understanding of intellect, but are in the other knowledge scope that is called “perception by heart (soul)”. Rational perception and understanding by heart differ in the following cases:

- a) Intellect understands in distance and heart understands in closeness.
- b) Intellect due to limitation in conceptual understanding is incapable of understanding a lot of facts. But the heart (soul) due to intuitive perception is aware of many holistic and partial secrets.
- c) The intellectual knowledge is learnable, but heart knowledge is achievable [11].

Mulla Sadra, by the interpretation that he presents from “Beyond Intellect”, in fact, denies the alienation of the heart (soul) and intellect, because according to Mulla Sadra, self (soul) has a celestial gender and has a collective unity. Therefore, Mulla Sadra does not consider the soul (heart) and intellect absent from each other; and the intellect does not consider the findings of the soul impossible. The interpretation and explanation of Mulla Sadra is based on his special view toward intellect and certain Islamic anthropology. But while Kierkegaard knows “the sphere of religion” illogical, and in fact, irrational; and he unconsciously (or perhaps consciously) offers a particular interpretation of human being which is incompatible with the interpretation of Mulla Sadra. Because by this interpretation, he knows human being an archipelago completely separated and alienated from each other, and he says: “in the field of ‘Beyond Intellect’ there is ‘leap’ not ‘wisdom’, in fact, he makes close all windows between intellect and heart (soul) and the separating point of Mulla Sadra and Kierkegaard is also latent in these principles.

The views of Mulla Sadra and Kierkegaard about the subject of knowledge:

In the previous pages, the thinking principles of Mulla Sadra and Kierkegaard about intellect were pointed out and stated that in the view of Mulla Sadra, firstly, the process of intellectual knowledge is a heavenly matter and soul, by connecting with sensory and imaginary forms, provides talent to receive intellectual forms from active intellect (*aq'l'i fa'al*). Secondly, intellect before Mulla Sadra is not a level of perception, but includes levels or stages of understanding and perception. In fact, Mulla Sadra, after setting the truth of divine wisdom out of the reach of intellect and intellectual proofs, establishes its position in “Beyond Intellect”. He writes: Be aware and be careful and try to become knowledgeable of what I said and am going to say to be of the intelligent people, because God said, they do not remember save the intelligent men, and those are who do not know sufficient the crust of intellect and the mentioned appearances, and try to achieve the core of intellect by following the prophets. So, the prophets take them out of darkness of human crusts and reach them to the esoteric light of divine teaching. So, as the knowledge of God has esoteric forms and appearances, the intellect also has crusts and essences and the intellect in its inner essence and esoteric form, becomes co-border with heart (soul) and they interact with each others; and it is here that some windows are opened for intellect to ‘beyond intellect’, and it is because of these windows that intellect does not consider ‘beyond intellect’ contradictory to itself. However, Mulla Sadra believes that we should not confine ourselves to the crusts of intellects and be convinced with acquisition of changeable appearances, and we should pass from the crust and access to the core and essence of teachings. It is here that one can have the internal reflections beyond the merely conceptual knowledge.

But in Christian thinking, there are two kinds of knowledge that not only with regard to their sources, but also in subjects are different from each others. In terms of source, we know one of them by natural intellect, and another by faith in God. Having considered the matter, in addition to functions that the natural intellect can achieve them, to comprehend our sealed and hidden beliefs in God, apart from that part which is divine revelation, there are some proposals that are not well known. Based on the testimony and supernatural grace of God, the faith is something other than philosophical knowledge which is based on experience and sensory perception and it only grows within intellectual faculty. The special works of philosophy and sciences are within the scope of natural intellect, while faith is guided and revealed by the Holy Spirit.

In the First Vatican Council, it is tried to establish a distinction between two types of knowledge:

- a) The natural knowledge that is interpreted as Ratio.
- b) The supernatural knowledge that is interpreted as Fides.

This distinction is done based on the topic of wisdom and how it comes into mind. In natural knowledge, the natural human intellect and his conventional means finds the object by inherent observing of that object, and in the faith, this knowledge comes into mind through reputation and authority of divine revelation. Faith is really the obtaining of a true knowledge, with the exception that this knowledge has its roots in a field that is beyond intellect and intellectual wisdom (Beyren: n.d.: 805). So, in light of this view, explaining the relationship between the sphere of religion and intellect is impossible.

Being unexplained:

When the general criteria are synthesized and the rules are changed, the language will also lose its effectiveness. Since, language is the result of a general agreement on denotative relationships between various *signifiants* and *signifies* (*dāl and madlul*) and it is due to this public acceptance that all individuals understand the meaning of the words of a speaker who talks about a denotative relation in this framework. But in sphere of religion and religious way, due to losing common bases that the structure of language has formed based on it, being unexplainable, language inefficacy and general non-understandability become a part of human experience.

Mulla Sadra knows symbolic the beyond intellect. According to him, the solution of religion language is that we consider it symbolic that its relation with language of creatures is as suspicious spiritual collaboration; it means that language of religion in terms of concept and meaning is exactly the same usual language that these two are separated from each other through evidence. The reason of Mulla Sadra for this reason is that if the language of religion is not symbolic, we have to use it in its real meaning as parallel and say that there is no difference between the language of religion and other languages or paraphrase it and make it out from its real meaning and use it in its opposite meaning. In the first case, we are captured by comparison (simile) and in the second case we are faced with abyss of suspension of work.

Mulla Sadra, about the Holy Quran as a symbol of the language of religion, according to previous premises, concludes the following:

The Quran has hierarchies and stages, as human being has hierarchies and stages, and the lowest stages of the Quran are like the lowest stages of human being which is the stage of crust and cover. As the lowest stages of human being are his/her skin and body. And for each stage and level of it there are bearers that maintain and record it, and do not touch it unless with purity and purification of the foul, and the supremacy and sanctity of attachment to their place, and even their possibility; and human skin does not touch it *save* the blackness of the (letters of) Quran and its sensible form; and the superficial observer human being does not understand anything except the apparent meaning, but the spirit of the Quran and its core and secret can not be understood, except by the wise men ... [28].

Under this approach, a person who is in the world of sense understands nothing but the crust of statements and words of divine verses, and the rest of the truths which is in the world of ideas (*ālam'i mithāl*) and the world of intellect, for him is in indirect and symbolic language, and as long as s/he is in this stage, there is no way to understand its great truths except applying symbolic language; but he who is in the higher level of existence, the more concepts of the truth of divine words are evident for him [24]. Understanding the different positions of the word by different stages of human existence and his levels of knowledge is entirely a humanistic view based on symbolism; therefore, comprehending the symbolic language of Mulla Sadra without considering this approach is not understandable at all.

Kierkegaard also shows this principle by the term of religious secrecy and mystery versus moral openness and publicity and interprets it in the sphere of religion as the terrible loneliness of responsibility. In his view, the knight of his faith is the lonely and without unanimity Abraham, because he can not find a unanimity to make him partner in his great relationship with God. Abraham is silent, but he can not speak ... for when we speak, if we can not make our words understandable to the others, we do not speak ... the consolation of words is that to translate my words to a universal language. Abraham could tell Isaac the most beautiful words that there are in one possible language about his love in him. But he has something else in his heart (mind). Abraham's deep thought is that he wants to sacrifice Isaac because it is an experiment. The idea can not be understood by anyone, and therefore, all his first words (about his love in Isaac) are badly understood [18].

Conclusion:

In this paper, we have compared Kierkegaard's sphere of religion with Mulla Sadra's "Beyond Intellect" that considering these results are useful for researchers:

1- We can state the most important similarity between the thinking of Mulla Sadra and Kierkegaard in this way that, both thinkers accept that the intellect is not a perfect knowledge source to precept the truths of the universe and there are truths in the field of 'beyond intellect' and the sphere of religion that are out of the access of the intellect.

2- What Kierkegaard calls *Paradox* is a manner beyond intellect. According to Kierkegaard's view, the perfection path of faith requires prohibition of intellect; of course, this does not mean the elimination and denial of intellect.

3- According to Mulla Sadra, in the process of knowledge, the soul (self) needs a divine teacher.

4- Mulla Sadra believes that the rule of 'beyond intellect' are rules that that are not set in the scope of the understanding of intellect and the intellect can not achieve it lonely and during the intellectual premises, but this does not mean that if a human being achieves to discovery and understanding of "*Beyond Intellect*" through the ways other than rationality, logic and conceptual and inductive ways, the intellect is incapable of such understandings. According to Kierkegaard, sphere of religion is paradoxical. Facing with the paradox existing in the sphere of religion, Kierkegaard orders to stop the intellect.

5- These two interpretations have been resulted from two different viewpoints towards the anthropologic issues. From the view of Kierkegaard, perceptual realms and knowledge fields in the sphere of religion and 'beyond intellect' are completely alienated with intellect and can not establish any affirmative relation with intellect. For example, intellect and mind (heart) are two separated fields and even are incomplete and human being has a discontinuous archipelago and a disconnected entity, but from the view of Mulla Sadra, perceptual realms and knowledge fields whether in the scope of intellect or in 'beyond intellect' are integrated and human being also has an integrated entity.

6- According to Mulla Sadra's view, the intellect has different levels and it should not be limited in one level.

7- Based on the views of two thinkers, the sphere of religion and "*Beyond Intellect*" both have a mysterious and allegorical identity the this allegory and simile is not poetry language or literary structures but indicates the way of existence of the manner "*Beyond Intellect*" that is a special way of thinking and a certain technique to achieve knowledge in metaphysic discussions. Therefore, the issues of "*Beyond Intellect*" should not be treated in a simplistic sense.

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