

# Fundamental Theories of Coexistence in Sadra's Philosophy

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## Abstract

Contemporary man is faced with the challenge of violence and the conflict of cultures and societies. Some types of violence have their origin in incorrect conceptions of man and religion. To tackle violence, one should make use of different solutions, one of the important ones of which is a rational effort towards the elimination of the causes of its realization as well as the creation of an appropriate context for its uprooting in human beliefs. Sadra's ideas concerning the interpretation of the belief in the Origin of Existence, man, and religion can set the ground for peaceful behaviors; because the correction of behaviors has its roots in the correction of beliefs. Mulla Sadra the Muslim philosopher of the sixteenth century (1571-1640) has offered some themes in his works that can be used for this purpose. Sadra's theories such as the theory of sanctity of creatures, the theory of internal order, the theory of assimilation to God, the theory of human freedom in nature, the theory of rational man model, the theory of common primordial nature of humans, the theory of hermeneutical approach to existence and the theory of divine laws can be used for tackling the challenge of violence. Research on Sadra's theological philosophy can provide useful theories for a better life for all humans. The method of the present article is library-based and descriptive-analytic and its objective is to use the written legacy of Mulla Sadra for solving the challenge of war and violence among the nations. Among the findings of the present article, one can refer to the establishment of the rational and philosophical foundations of coexistence in Sadra's philosophical works are originated in his perspective of existence, man and religion.

**Keywords:** Coexistence, Violence, Culture, Mulla Sadra.

## INTRODUCTION

Differences in cultural and religious beliefs can lead to conflict and violence. The violence occurring across the globe including Southwest Asian countries is among these cases. Violence in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other regions like Myanmar and many others are examples of this challenge. It is very likely that the people who are behind this violence even commit it under the influence of human and religious motives. These tensions have changed into the challenge of the contemporary world. To tackle this violence, different solutions can be offered. One of these solutions is the correction of anthropological and religious beliefs; because

human behavior is influenced by his belief. This point is reiterated that the foundations of Sadra's thought can lead those who accept his ideas to a peaceful life. Though Mulla Sadra is a philosopher of ontology, his works can usefully address social issues from a theological point of departure. The wider extent of Sadra's philosophical system allows the social problems to lie within the scope of his Transcendent Philosophy; it needs also to be heeded in particular that Mulla Sadra has paid specific attention to this type of issue and dealt with them. In building his philosophical system, Mulla Sadra has shown that not only as a philosopher of ontology rather as a cultural

and social philosopher, but he also engages with social issues. In “Kasr Asnam Al-Jahilyyah” [Breaking the Idols of Ignorance] and “Se Asl” [Three Principles], he has provided a critical analysis of religious history and social problems of his own time. The intellectual foundations of his other works are of the capacity of the application as to the macro social problems in the form of rationally grounded beliefs and thoughts. The analysis of the strategies of social coexistence through the works of this Muslim philosopher of the sixteenth century shows that his understanding of man and religion contributes to a peaceful life. If in some parts of the world, violent actions arise from the religious culture informed by the wrong and dangerous taking of religion which in turn is rooted in the ignorance of their leaders.

The process which Sadra presents under the titles of the sanctity of creatures and the internal design begins with human relationship with the Origin of Existence (God) and the account given of the belief in God is indeed a macro religious theory under which all human behaviors are interpreted. The goal he sets for human rational life as well as his theory of human freedom from nature can be used towards coexistence. His theory concerning the rational man is an appropriate model for a peaceful life. The theory of common human nature is a religious and human strategy for toleration of differences. Sadra’s hermeneutical approach is the basis of his interpretation of the world and the coexistence between human beings. His theory of Sharia also contributes to the belief in the peaceful coexistence of the followers of revealed religions. Coexistence in this context refers to the life, associated with peace, of different human groups with different beliefs, cultures, and even natural possibilities. The opposite of coexistence as interaction and dialogue is violence, conflict, and domination which have their origin in wrong thoughts, beliefs, and approaches of/toward life.

#### Problem Statement:

Our main problem is the use of intellectual foundations of Sadra’s philosophy for the correction of anthropological and religious

beliefs; then this article is an effort toward answering the following questions:

- 1- What are the intellectual foundations of Sadra’s philosophy capable of correcting human thoughts and beliefs for a peaceful life?
- 2- How can these strategies lead humans to a peaceful life, despite many differences?

It needs to be mentioned that sometimes Sadra in his philosophy after rational demonstration of his ideas makes use of Quranic verses or prophetic traditions to endorse them. In the present article, we have also pursued this method to some extent. Moreover, in some cases, we have taken advantage of the commentators of Sadra’s philosophy.

#### 1- The Theory of Sanctity of Creatures:

This theory suggests that all creatures and particularly all humans despite their differences, enjoy a type of sanctity in view of their being God’s effects and creatures, whom the Lord and His servants love.

Sadra believes that if man knows God, he shall fall in love with Him because He owns all the qualities that can attract a man. If a man falls in love with God, he will love all of His effects, i.e. all creatures in the world (Mulla Sadra, 2001, vol. 7: 126). The man who knows God and believes in Him has already got connected with the center of compassion. The heart of such a man is the center of Divine Mercy and sees the world as a manifestation of Divine Mercy. World in the eyes of Sadra is an act of God, and said differently, the mirror reflecting the beloved’s countenance (ibid: 183).

As a result of the loving faith in God, one’s love is extended to His creatures and such a faith causes all humans to appear as noble and respected in one’s eyes. In this regard, Avicenna writes: “The mystic has a heartfelt sense of divinity inside and holds the younger people and those who are of lower social status in high regard, just in the way that he respects the older people and those who are of a nobler stature. How could he not be happy while he is filled with the joy of the Love of Truth, and sees all creatures and humans as affiliated to the Truth” (Avicenna, 2002: 391).

Loving faith in God makes humans responsible and committed towards His creatures because the creatures of God are sacred and beloved for such a man just like the Lord Himself. As he considers God to be obedience-worthy, he also believes in certain rights for His creatures. One can find a similar view in the following words of Imam Ali (peace be upon him): "Offer your heart's compassion to all people and unconditionally love them, because they are two groups: either your co-religious brother or a fellow human being who shares humanity with you. Turn a brown eye to everyone's mistake and treat people in the spirit of compassion and mercy, just the way you would like the Lord to treat you in the spirit of tolerance" (Nahjulbalaghah, Letter 52); or in other places, he states: "Those who are pure of sin should be compassionate with the men of sin" (Nahjulbalaghah, Sermon 140).

The knowledge of God and faith in Him if go beyond the limits of tongue and enter one's heart, this person's heart is filled with internal joy. If a relationship occurs between a man and God, a nearness is achieved that creates certain similarities between man and God (within the limits of human capacity). God in His Essence is of love and joy because He perceives the most beautiful thing ever (i.e. His Essence) and He is the source of all beauty (Mulla Sadra, 1975: 241). Love in the eyes of Sadra refers to the joy resulting from an existential relationship (ibid: 243). God loves His Essence and owns essential joy and the man who believes in Him does also reach such joy and love inasmuch as his nature allows in view of the relationship he develops with his Lord and as result, the creatures as God's effects. He will find the creatures divine and lovely.

The higher is one's level of faith, the more one experiences the love of God and His creatures. The highest level of faith in Sadra's view is the level in which he sees all the world as a manifestation of God (Mulla Sadra, 1981, vol. 1: 23). The true believer, in this level, sees his own action, quality, and even existence as manifestations of God (ibid: 75). Understanding of genuine monotheisms lies in this level where the man can see his own truth in the relationship he has with the Lord (ibid.)

With this Sadraean perspective, tribal and regional determinations and features lose their color; cultures are delivered from the trap of imaginary conflicts and sympathies that occur in an internal and natural form.

Then, existential relationship with God corrects human behavior in two ways: firstly, it endows man with cordial joy and openness for the reception of all people, secondly, man loves others as the effects of God and has a sense of responsibility toward them.

## 2- The Theory of Internal Design:

This theory suggests that human existential relationship with God modifies the internal inconsistencies which are rooted in the surge of internal faculties including the force of anger and violence.

The process of existential relationship with God in Mulla Sadra's philosopher, however, begins with the knowledge of self and self-identification. As to an epistemic principle, Sadra writes that the knowledge of self is a path that leads to the knowledge of the Origin of Existence (God) (Mulla Sadra, 1981, vol. 8: 224). The knowledge of self (soul) is the origin and its telos (end) is the knowledge of God. This process leads to the upbringing of a man who feels the spiritual beauty and pleasure in his heart. Mulla Sadra has a rational and discursive system for this theory and he discusses its details (Mulla Sadra, 2011: 17). The man in whose heart the belief in God resides will understand God as a beloved Being sharing the same nature with him. This man's perception of Divinity and His effects which are the divine creatures brings about a sense of internal pleasure and satisfaction (Mulla Sadra, 2010, vol. 6: 220). Although there are differences between human beings due to the conditions in which they are raised, these differences are the requirement for existence and a context for growth. Belief is an existential affair and a true believer is mindful of the Divine Presence thanks to his faith. This spiritual mindfulness influences his behavior. On the other hand, to create true belief or preserve it, man needs to avoid the incorrect beliefs that can trigger violence (ibid.)

Therefore, in the context of Sadraean philosophy, man is of the spirit of peace, sympathy, and coexistence.

According to Mulla Sadra, the true heart (i.e. the innermost layer of human existence) is the noblest level of human beings, and on the other hand, its evolution is due to knowledge. The nobler is one's knowledge, the better is this evolution. Then, human perfection lies in knowing the noblest knowledge, i.e. the knowledge of the noblest being (i.e. God). Sadra believes that the best of people is the one who devotes his lifetime to the correction of his own heart through the knowledge of God the best of all the known (Mulla Sadra, 2002: 20).

Sadra contends that there is a close interrelation between the tendency toward God and His knowledge, or said differently, between the love of God and the knowledge of divinity. More knowledge leads to more love and vice versa (Mulla Sadra, 2002: 100). Nearness to the Lord is possible via knowing Him right. With the belief in God and His love and knowledge, the desirable internal design is realized, because man is infatuated by the Noble Being who is identical with mercy and compassion. In his love and fascination, the man struggles to harmonize himself with this Divinity. The realization of this state thwarts the efforts for domination that is in turn the source of violence. Thus, healthy life and desirable coexistence come true.

### 3- The Theory of Assimilation to God:

The goal of human rational life in the eyes of Sadra is assimilation to God and becoming a perfect man (Mulla Sadra, 1981, vol. 1: 20). God is the ultimate beauty and compassion and all beauties and compassions are radiations of His beauty and compassion. Perfect Man is also a comprehensive manifestation of Divine Names. Therefore, philosophy's objective is to become a man who is at the highest level of compassion and is the comprehensive manifestation of Divine Compassion (Mulla Sadra, 2010, vol. 2: 206). The man who is the manifestation of Divine Compassion will resist oppression and violence. He sees divine compassion as the goal of life and since he

believes that God is the Absolute Beauty and Love, he struggles to let his behaviors manifest love and beauty (Mulla Sadra, 1981, vol. 9: 122; vol. 6: 340; vol. 4: 122).

According to Sadra, happiness is the common goal of ethics and politics, then ethics and politics are not two separate and irrelevant things rather they are one truth seen from two perspectives. Ethics in Sadra's thought is the spirit of politics and the latter is in the service of ethics (Mulla Sadra, 1975: 42). Therefore, coexistence is not merely a politics, rather it is rooted in ethics as well as knowledge and anthropology.

This Sadraean idea bespeaks the close relationship of the internal insight and the external behavior which is often neglected. Sometimes for correction of behaviors only tangible behavioral functions are underlined while in Sadra's view, external behaviors have their origin in personal thoughts and schema which in turn are impressed by his beliefs.

### 4- The Theory of Human Freedom from Nature:

Violence is not always the outcome of the difference of beliefs rather sometimes it is created as a result of natural conflicts. For example, water, soil, and natural resources are limited and people oppose each other to achieve them. Sadra's solution for controlling the violence that occurs as a result of natural conflicts is human freedom from nature. Sadra understands ethics in terms of freedom (rational freedom), i.e. human overcoming nature and instincts (Mulla Sadra, 1981, vol. 1: 20).

Mulla Sadra argues that the measure of ethics lies in the man who is free from nature and natural instincts. He believes that human existence is of two dimensions: the theoretical dimension that is aimed at the heavens where man searches for eternal truths while the other dimension is focused on the lower side and manages the body. Sadra contends that the soul becomes pure light after its evolution and no darkness and fire remains in her, but in the time of its descent to the world of nature, it is immersed in darkness and burns in her fire whoever does not surrender to her (Mulla

Sadra, 2003: 256). Burning, violence, and oppression in Sadra's eye are rooted in a soul that is wholly immersed in the world of nature. If the soul tastes the pleasure of the ascension to the heavens, there will be light, peace, and security.

Sadra's theology is intertwined with social life. A man who has a correct personality orientation, could not be a man of oppression and transgression against others. Nevertheless, this is not an imperative function rather it is the result of strengthening the human internal dimension which is completely possible in Sadra's eye, and indeed in many cases, it has happened.

Sadra sees the knowledge of the soul as the fundamental basis in practical philosophy and ethics and his goal in the knowledge of soul (self-knowledge) is the strengthening of the human trans-material dimension of man (Mulla Sadra, 2011: 15). On the other hand, the material dimensions of man and his instincts should not be repressed, because they are part of the reality and existence of human beings in this worldly life. Accordingly, one of the ways suggested for the management of these bi-dimensional domains of man is the replacements that can lead man to his own goal; to put it otherwise, a spiritual desire is replaced with a human natural want. In other words, moral principles are used for the control of human tendencies.

#### 5- The Theory of Rational Man Model:

According to Sadra, humans are divided into three types: rational, ideal, and natural (Mulla Sadra, 2003, vol. 9: 123). This division is based on the realization of human faculties and potencies: rational man is a man who has reached the level of complete human realization and made use of natural and trans-natural potentialities. But natural man is in the stage of the world of nature and is just concerned with his own natural and sensory desires. The ideal man is also in a stage between nature and reason.

Sadra compares the behavior of natural humans with the butterfly who approaches the fire while the fire heat bothers it but as soon as it

moves away from the fire, it forgets that the fire has already bothered it, then it returns toward the fire. This behavior continues to the point where it burns itself in the fire. Likewise, the natural man pursues whatever he desires without considering the historical lessons or even his early bitter experiences are remembered. His strong desire causes everything to be forgotten. He wants to acquire even if this acquisition requires to be preceded by harassing others and violation of their rights. He does not care that this violation of other people's rights and harassment troubles him too. Ideal humans are those who escape any possible danger that would threaten them provided that they have already been once harmed by them. These people enjoy the faculty of imagination in addition to sensation because one bitter experience is enough not to repeat it. Rational humans are those who feel the danger even before they suffer any harm. They avoid all possible dangers for the sake of their eternal life and they believe in the eternity of the soul in the afterlife, then they are watchful not to commit an action that would cause spiritual suffering for them in the future (Mulla Sadra, 2003: 238).

Desirable coexistence for Sadra is envisaged in the model of rational humans. These humans take care of the threats that put their religion and soul in danger. They know that with violence, on the one hand, their world is harmed because the other party tries to take revenge or defend himself, and on the other hand, their soul is also harmed, because the soul in the depth of its essence seeks after peace, friendship, and happiness for all. He does not see his happiness as something separate from the happiness of others (Mulla Sadra, 1985, vol. 2: 320-322). Coexistence comes true through the humanity of human beings and this human quality lies in the rational level of human existence. The opposite of coexistence is the non-peaceful life that one finds in the animals of the jungle. It is needless to say that the material affairs needed by man (including the land, water, underground resources, and other vital materials) are limited and they willy-nilly trigger conflicts among the nations. Moreover, diversity of beliefs adds to

these conflicts. But if the human concentration is shifted from nature to the innermost human primordial nature as well as the trans-physical affairs, many of the existing conflicts are overcome. Under the auspices of this innermost human primordial nature, man has a right of defense against other people's aggression, because, in his eyes, silence before the oppression is an example of self-oppression; but he never allows himself to violate others and limit their freedom and dignity. Rational man has a divine nature from an ethical perspective and considers himself as a servant of God. Therefore, two features of selfishness and megalomania fade away in these people and come under control. There are similar themes in Islamic teachings as the Eighth Imam of Shia Muslims states: "The man of reason is the one who considers better than himself whomever he sees" (Ibn Shubah, 2010: 443). This moral quality that is of a rational root sets the scene for communication, dialogue, and coexistence. The major setback of interaction, i.e. selfishness and megalomania, is tackled in the level of reason. Thus, one can conclude that one of the ways of strengthening coexistence is the creation of the context for the development of humans towards rational man and his rule.

#### 6- The Theory of Common Primordial Nature of Humans:

The theory of primordial nature is an expression of the common internal dimension in humans. If this internal dimension is not blacked out, it would continue to be influential on human behaviors. By the acceptance of the theory of primordial nature and the effort for strengthening this primordial dimension in humans, a common ground is shared by them that serves as a basis for their sympathy and coexistence.

The problem of human primordial nature in the thought of Mulla Sadra and early philosophers – e.g. Farabi and Avicenna – is approached from a Quranic point of departure (e.g. verse 72, Surah 7). Human primordial nature represents those features that are found in human original creation (Motahari, 1994: 14). Primordial affairs are not acquired and do exist in all humans in potential form. Mulla Sadra

has used the primordial nature in various cases: firstly, primordial nature in the sense of potentiality and potency for evolution (Mulla Sadra, 1987, vol. 1: 445-446), secondly, primordial nature in the sense of the potentiality and potency for the acquisition of knowledge (Mulla Sadra, 2007, vol. 1: 493).

According to the theory of primordial nature, humans are all primordially interested in the acquisition of knowledge and perfection. On the one hand, one of the ways of the acquisition of knowledge and perfection is social interaction and relations. These social interactions and relations are acquired in the light of peaceful coexistence.

Humans are infatuated by coexistence and peace based on their primordial sense of perfection-seeking and interest in social relations. According to this theory, man is a unique species and is social by his nature. To reach the perfection that deserves him, the human species is by his nature socially oriented and seeks to set the ground for the collective spirit. Collective spirit serves as a means that leads man to his desirable perfection. Therefore, individual spirit or human primordial nature is the building block of collective spirit and since man is a unique species, human societies and cultures do also have a unique nature (Motahari, 1993, vol. 2: 231). The coexistence of the individuals of the same species is better possible.

The other application of primordial nature is the human-divine dimension versus his natural dimension. Man has two types of self: natural self which is his soul in a lower level and his divine and primordial self which represents his true self. In his noble self, man seeks the good for everyone, rather he does not see himself to be separate from the others (Mulla Sadra, 2003: 255). The genuine self of a human being is his very collective and social dimension the cultivation of which revives pure ethics in man. This is why Holy Quran states: "You may never reach the goodness unless donating from what you love" (Ale Emran: 92; cf. Motahari, 2011: 94-95). Then, one of the paths of strengthening coexistence is the human genuine self. If human natural dimension and instincts

prevail, or in Sadra's words, "humans are dominated by their natural self" (Mulla Sadra, 2003, vol. 9: 123), they would even abuse religious doctrines to fulfill their carnal desires. It is in this context that the execution of divine dictates would serve as an excuse for committing horrible crimes which have their origin in the animal and the instinctual dimension of humans. This is why in some regions of the world, we are witness to the eruption of violence incited by certain people and in the name of religion though it is against humanity and human rights. Then, one of the ways of strengthening coexistence is reinforcing primordial nature in humans in the light of revealing transcendence and under the leadership of the pure men of reason and peace lovers. Correct understanding of religion and acting according to the revealed dictates of religions can be of avail and useful in this case.

The culture originated in human primordial nature lies before the culture grounded in nature and instinct. Instinctual culture thinks in terms of the particular, the sensory, and the immediate and there is no element of the sense of tragedy, death, aesthetics, and artistic originality in its taste (Bashiriyyeh, 2000: 48). Hedonism is the fundamental basis of the natural culture which is considered to be an objective for human redemption (Milner and Browitt, 2002: 109); while according to the culture originated in human primordial nature, it is this primordial nature of man that must govern the outside nature not vice versa. Human instinct and nature are not satisfied by any limit rather it seeks absolute freedom which cannot be denied by anyone as it wants everything for itself (Javadi Amoli, 2010: 27). From such a point of view, no opponent is tolerable and any opposition would lead to conflict and violence; particularly if the man has a sense of power. Primordial culture struggles to bring about unity because according to Holy Quran ('Araaf: 72), human primordial nature is founded upon monotheism and the latter is indeed the source of unity. On the other hand, in a society formed based on nature and instinct, ethnicity and contractual social relations rule instead of moral relations (Bashiriyyeh, 2000: 46). Of course, in

primordial culture, globalization is not in conflict with cultural diversity, because cultural diversity is meaningful in the light of human primordial nature. This theory is contrary to the stance taken by such figures as Wulheim who defend cultural diversity (Johnson, 1979: 215).

In human primordial nature, there is an interest in coexistence, peace, and altruism. Men of wisdom and prophets have come to awaken this primordial nature and turn this unconscious intelligence into a conscious intelligence (Mulla Sadra, 1987, vol. 1: 111). Therefore, Sadra's proposed solution here is strengthening the primordial dimension in man. Man is a trainable entity. The hidden forces and capacities in man are capable of reinforcement. Reminding, training, and making efforts toward the revival of the common message of the revealed religions and other works that can be influential should be assessed, but since this article struggles to explain the fundamental primordial principles, the presentation of more particular solutions lies outside the scope of it.

#### 7- Hermeneutical Theory of Existence:

If the dialogue between cultures and the coexistence of humans with different cultures and religions are possible, one of the conditions of their possibility is hermeneutical approach; i.e. a type of nearness to the phenomena, affairs, objects, and problems with a wider and open vision. Among the features of the non-hermeneutical approach is having a one-dimensional perspective of the subject and excluding vision. There is a type of non-hermeneutical approach in many of the modern philosophies; in other words, although each one of these philosophies has an interpretation of man and soul, it does not consider itself an interpretation rather it sees its stance and thought absolute. The other characteristic of hermeneutical understanding is paying attention to human finitude and essential poverty; said differently, it cannot reach all truths (cf. Safian, 2013: 248-252). In Sadra's philosophy, the primacy of existence and the belief in various levels and layers of existence allow us to accept the possibility of different levels of truth as in practice Sadra considers different ideas to be reflecting a dimension of

truth (e.g. cf. Mulla Sadra's definition of movement, 2004, vol. 3: 30-34). Thus, one can feasibly speak of the existence of Sadra's hermeneutical theory as a strategy for the nearness of humans with different beliefs.

#### 8- The Theory of Revealed Religions:

Divine cultures have taken form in the course of history circled around the prophet of every nation whose special teaching distinguishes them from other nations. Although in history, the prophets of all nations have common goals like the invitation to monotheism and social justice, the invitation of every nation due to its particular conditions is strikingly focused on a specific axis. In mystical language, it is said that every prophet has invited to a Divine Name (Ibn Arabi, 1991: 52). Sadra believes that Islamic religion centered around Holy Quran is a manifestation of Divine Word and other religions focused on their respective Holy Book refer in turn to the Book of God. The difference between the Divine Word and the Book of God lies in the fact that the latter given the particular conditions of every nation bespeaks of a dimension of the manifestation of truth but the former is a comprehensive manifestation of the Truth which is completely consistent with the spirit of Holy Prophet (cf. Mulla Sadra, 2001: 40-41). Since the Divine Essence is of different manifestations and there are different manifestations in view of formal differences, revealed books also vary in terms of these different manifestations. Then, every name which is more inclusive and comprehensive and stands at a nobler level, its respective Sharia and book are more sustainable and universal (Khomeini, 1991: 309).

Therefore, we conclude that every religion's conditions and revealed book should be taken into consideration. Moreover, Islam if correctly interpreted can have dialogue and coexistence with all religions based on the above-mentioned measure. As to the followers of other schools, one can bring about a mutual understanding by way of ethics and common human affairs. Accordingly, this is why in Holy Quran we read: "People, We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into

nations and tribes that you might know one another. The noblest of you before Allah is the most righteous of you. Allah is the Knower, the Aware" (Holy Quran, Surah 49: 13). In this verse, the Lord speaks of "knowing one another" and implicitly refers to the necessity of dialogue and mutual understanding. Moreover, from the verses 24 and 25 of Surah 34 of the Holy Quran, one can infer the etiquettes of dialogue in Quran: "Say: 'Who provides for you from the heavens and earth?' Say: 'Allah.' Surely, either we or you are rightly guided or in clear error. / Say: 'You will not be questioned about our sins, neither will we be questioned for your actions.'" Then, there is no room for slander in dialogue, because "Surely, either we or you are rightly guided or in clear error". Guidance and error are equally and indeterminately attributed to both parties. Secondly, this verse teaches us that in dialogue, you have to consider yourself to be even lesser than others so that the ground is set for the dialogue. This is why in the next verse, sin is attributed to ourselves and the actions are described as belonging to others (Zakiani, 2013: 204).

The main objective of the Sharia codes is the knowledge of the Origin of Existence (God) the premise of which is the purification of bad qualities and moral deficiencies. Therefore, all humans should be united in the core of religion which is the fulfillment of these objectives (Mulla Sadra, 2002: 154). Sadra explains the latter point referring to the following verse: "He has made plain for you the Religion with which He charged Noah and that which We have revealed to you, and that with which We charged (Prophets) Abraham, Moses and Jesus, (saying): 'Establish the Religion and do not be divided therein.' That which you invite them to is too overwhelming for the idolaters. Allah brings close to Himself whom He will, and guides to Him those who turn in repentance" (Holy Quran, Surah 42: 13). Moreover, he refers to "we do not differentiate between any one of His Messengers" (Holy Quran, Surah 2: 285), to explain the common core of religions. Then, if the existing differences are related to details they are concerned with the conditions of nations and cultures while if these



differences are a matter of generalities, they are indeed rooted in the wrong conceptions of the realities of religion and failure of correct understanding of truth (ibid: 155). Sadra believes that one of the paths that reveals the truth of religions is piety; said differently, the followers of the religion mustn't make it a means for reaching their personal and worldly interests (ibid). All sharia codes and religious rules are for correction of the human innermost nature and the latter in turn is for knowing the Truth (ibid: 151). Thus, Mulla Sadra denies all types of dispute and conflict among the followers of the religions, because the religious scholars and clerics should be the heir to all prophets who share a chief goal (ibid: 158).

Religion in Holy Quran has been basically referred to as wisdom, knowledge, and light and this implies that the followers of revealed religions should peacefully live together based on wisdom avoiding conflict and tension rooted in ignorance. Also, Holy Quran suggests that in the course of history based on the capabilities of nations as well as the temporal and spatial conditions the truth of religion, i.e. surrender to Truth (Holy Quran, Chapter 3: 12), has become manifested in the form of different religions. All revealed religions share the same goal in the invitation to human primordial nature and reason. The content of religion is in harmony with the existential structure of man. All revealed religions are ways and methods for reaching the universal principles and goals that have taken form proportionate to the capacity of nations and the status of the prophets. These ways are complementary, not inconsistent with each other. Having recited the verse of Quran (Chapter 98: 5) in which the Lord orders the servants to worship out of religious sincere devotion and recommends the observation of daily prayers and remembrance of God, Mulla Sadra continues to explain that religion should be pursued beyond the tongue and superficial codes as its goal is the purity and luminosity of heart (Mulla Sadra, 2011: 108). It is needless to say that violence, conflict, and violation of people's security and peace are all in contradiction with the purity of heart because man is an altruistic creature. Accordingly, religiosity should be based on knowledge,

wisdom, and practice. The religiosity minus knowledge and wisdom is the source of sedition and arrogance and can even serve the Satan. Thus, Mulla Sadra recommends that "Take care not to boast on worldly knowledge and visionless discretion" (Ibid: 113). He recommends that religious action should be under wisdom and reason. Mulla Sadra recommends his readers to recite the following verse to fathom the meaning of "God-wariness and piety": "In the alternation of the night and day, and in all that Allah has created in the heavens and the earth, surely there are signs for people who are cautious" (Holy Quran, Chapter 11: 6). From this verse, one can conclude that God's creatures with all their differences are signs that lead the people to the Truth. Night and day are acts of divinity which contradict each other and this contradiction must be used as a clue to the knowledge of the Truth and this is why the men of belief are the people of peace and tolerance: "And their greeting will be: 'Peace!'" (Chapter 11: 10) (cf. ibid: 117-118). These people's otherworldly life is also of the same bent.

The other goals of revealed religions, according to Mulla Sadra, are the strengthening of the divine aspect of human existence and exaltation of the Word of Truth (Mulla Sadra, 1975: 231, 235). This goal should be achieved in this world. Accordingly, worldly life is necessary, and since the knowledge of God is a knowledge for the human species, respecting the worldly life of all humans is necessary so that it can provide an opportunity for the knowledge of Truth (ibid: 235). Thus, best devotion is that which leads man to the knowledge of God and the worse of all sins is that which distances man from the Truth. Therefore, the most virtuous of all deeds is that which enhances human knowledge through teaching and learning and provides the necessary ground for it within a secure financial, mental and physical space. Thus, homicide, harassment, and insecurity are the worst of all sins for them (ibid: 837). Accordingly, since this world is a path to the knowledge of God and humans are its passengers and all respected. Then, building this world as a passageway of this sacred journey is necessary (ibid: 239). Sadra

considers these goals to be shared by all revealed religions. According to Sadra, the greatest of all sins is that which is taken to be a sin in all religions (ibid: 238). It is in this philosophical space that coexistence becomes necessary and turns into a sacred mission. It is indeed a necessary premise for the fulfillment of the goals of religions. Revealed religions are all the paths that lead to the same destination and if someone observes the rules of a revealed religion he would believe in all these beliefs (Nasr, 1997: 118).

### Conclusion:

In social studies, although the dominant approach is empirical and field-based, the rational study of these cases had been prevalent among the philosophers. The study of Sadra's works for answering the contemporary challenges can simultaneously show the capacity of the intellectual system under study and set the ground for the use of the philosophical and scientific heritage for solving the problem. In his works, Mulla Sadra has implicitly answered the question of whether it is rationally possible to speak of the interaction of societies with different beliefs and conditions. Of course, Sadra's answer to this question is from a theological point of departure and this is indeed what one would feasibly expect from him as an existentialist philosopher. But this answer has its own audience and can be effective within the range of its capacity. In this article, we have taken advantage of Sadra's eight theories to answer this question. Thus, we have concluded that the coexistence of humans is both rationally possible and necessary for social life. Coexistence requires a non-exclusivist approach and Sadra has systematized this approach in his philosophy. Here we have discussed mostly the results of Sadra's philosophical approach. In his non-philosophical works, Sadra makes use of Quranic doctrines and traditions for broaching the problem and confirming it. These doctrines have also been used in this article. The key results of the present article can be outlined as follows based on Sadra's intellectual system:

- 1- The goal of philosophy is a cordial relationship with the Origin of Existence, i.e. Origin of Compassion. The requirement of this relationship is the expansion of peace and altruism because essential unity with the Origin of Existence and loving His effects are among the outcomes of this philosophy.
- 2- The diversity of cultures is an ontological necessity because existence has taken form in different forms and conditions.
- 3- Their interaction and coexistence are an anthropological and theological necessity because human needs and their primordial nature are in harmony with religion.
- 4- Conflict and violence of cultures have their origin in their wrong interpretation of existence, man, and religion.

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