

An Analysis of the Existential Type and the Process of Perceiving Moral Concepts Based on the Principle of Disposition and Emanation (Qā'ida-yi Isti'dād wa Ifāḍa) in Mullā Ṣadrā's Philosophy

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Abstract

The question of the type of moral concepts and the process of their acquisition is one of the concerns of moral philosophy. Despite extensive studies in the field of Mullā Ṣadrā's ethics, previous research has focused on normative and descriptive ethics and has not examined in detail "how the process of the realization and acquisition of moral concepts in the soul" occurs. The present article, relying on the foundations of the Transcendent Philosophy (*Hikmat-i Muta'āliya*), seeks first to determine the ontological type of moral concepts and then to explain the process of knowing them. The findings of the research show that moral concepts are of the type of philosophical secondary intelligibles (*ma'qūlāt-i thāniya-yi falsafī*); for they are abstracted from the particular mode of realization of the voluntary act, they have no independent quiddity, their predication of instances is graded (*tashkīkī*), and while being reality-disclosing, they do not terminate in independent entities. In the next stage, by applying the principle of disposition and emanation to moral concepts, the article shows that these concepts, like scientific forms, are immaterial. Moral situations serve only as preparatory causes (*'ilal-i mu'idda*) and bring the soul to the threshold of disposition; then the intellect, as an immaterial cause, emanates moral concepts upon the soul. This process unfolds at both the particular and the universal level.

Keywords

Mullā Ṣadrā, moral realism, moral concepts, existence, illumination.

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