

PRINCIPLES OF THE RULE “SIMPLE REALITY IS THE WHOLE THINGS” IN THOUGHTS OF LEADER OF THEOSOPHISTS, MULLA SADRA

Hadith Rajabi
Assistant Professor, Alzahra University

ABSTRACT

The Divine, as the sole originator cause, has a simple essence, which is essence of His activity, and meanwhile has numerous essential aspects of excellence through which He can be the cause of many effects despite of His simple activity; and this while conforming to the principle of congruity can be explained and proved by principles of the rule “Al-Wahid” (the rule based on which one thing can be the cause of only one thing) as well. By adding this issue to the entity of relationship between the effects, principles of the rule “simple reality is the whole things” will naturally become necessary in the universe. That is to believe that the Divine has a simple essence which while being simple, complies with essences of all – and not only one – of His effects, due to degree of His existence.

Keywords: *Leader of Theosophists, Causality, Connector Existence, Simplicity*

THE CAUSE’S STATUS OF ACTIVITY

The truth is that when a thing is simple, and it is the cause of another thing, its essence is the entity of being the cause, so that the reason cannot analyze it to an essence and a cause; otherwise it cannot be essentially simple. Therefore, the simple source which is a cause, due to its simple essence, will be the origin of anything other than itself; so, inevitably, the simple cause has characters due to which, it can originate a certain effect and nothing else. It is therefore that certain character which is the real source of originating the cause, and existence of the cause necessitates existence of the effect.¹ Considering this issue and what mentioned before about necessity of cause and effect companion, it can be concluded that if the cause is existentially prior to its effect, such priority is not related to its activity as the cause; it is rather related to its essence before it has actually caused an effect.² Here, it becomes clear that whatever which gives existence to other things is a true cause, and all other things are not true causes; they are preparing causes which are called “causes” for the ease of reference. For further clarification of the subject, Leader of Theosophists has allocated a chapter to this issue in his “Four Intellectual Journeys”, where he explains: the cause can takes either of the two positions in relation with the effect; it either influences the effect directly or not. If the cause does not influence the effect directly, then there has to be a medium, such as a condition, an attribute, a will, a tool, an expedience, or any other things. In this case, whatever has been considered as the cause without the medium cannot be the true cause; the cause here would be a combination of the essence and the medium or mediums which influence the effect. Therefore, in this case activity of a cause depends solely on its essence, nature, and reality, and not on anything influencing on it. According to this explanation, when it is proven that a true cause is active essentially and naturally, and based on this ground we attribute decisiveness and influence to it, it is then proven that essence of cause requires the effect, which is abstracted from the cause and is attributed to it, has to exist.³

SIMPLE GENERATION

1 Leader of Theosophists, *The Transcendent Wisdom Regarding Four Intellectual Journeys*, Volume II, Page 204-205

2 Ibid: 212

3 Ibid: 227

Having proven that the cause is essentially active only when it is singular, and that a cause essentially has to have an effect attributed to it, it can be concluded that the effect occurring as the essential requirement of a real simple cause, comes to existence through a simple generation. According to the Leader of Theosophists, the philosophers consider a cause to be a true cause⁴ only when it gives existence to an effect; that it to say the effect's sole attribution to the cause is the existence; and it cannot be anything else, because, if the cause generates anything anywhere other than existence, the concepts of reflective attribution and illuminative attribution are no more realized, and therefore giving existence does not take place; therefore the causality has not been real. Based on this ground, natural acts cannot be true causes as they do not give existence, and their sole action is to incite.⁵ Therefore, it is implied that the true cause gives existence to the effect only through a simple generation. On the other hand, a preparing cause relates an existing being to a state or act such as movement; for example moves a still object. It is therefore proven that an attribute cannot be generated, because firstly it is not simple and a compound cannot be primarily and essentially generated, and secondly it requires compound generation and a true cause gives existence only through simple generation: "and generation and origination are indeed related solely to existence of an attribute and not to the essence of an attribute."⁶

2.SIMPLICITY OF THE EFFECT

Another issue revealed by thinking about aspect and direction of influence of the cause and its attribution to the effect is the fact that aspect and direction of influence of the cause depends on entity of its simple existence (as it is the cause and active)⁷, and this simplicity becomes evident when we separate the cause from all the things interfering its causality and effectiveness, in a way that what remains is solely existence of the causal and effective aspect of the cause. Also, when we separate the effect from all the things not influencing continuity of its attribution, it becomes clear that a cause is a cause due to entity of its essence and reality, and an effect is an effect due to its essence and reality. Therefore the effect has essentially no reality other than being attributed and secondary, and has no meaning other than being caused and dependant, without having an essence being attributed to these meanings.⁸ Simplicity of generation requires simplicity of the generated being⁹ as indicated in discussion of "primary being" amongst all possible assumptions and aspect raised by rational analysis of existence of the effect, including essence, existence, appearance, transformation of essence to the existence or any other assumptions, it is only the existence that can be generated by the cause, and this is due to originality of the existence and unity of the same type of existences. Based on the same ground, simplicity of the primary being is proven.

3.PRINCIPLE OF HOMOGENEITY AND RULE "AL-WAHID"

Another way of proving simplicity of directions of activity, generation, and attribution in discussion of causality is proving the rule "Al-Wahid". Principles of the rule "Al-Wahid" suggest that a real singular cause cannot have more than one singular effect of the same direction. Therefore, it becomes clear that a singular being is a simple being that has no plural composition in its essence; so the singular cause is a simple cause which has become a cause due to entity of its essence, and a singular effect is a simple effect which has become an effect due to entity of its essence. Further explanation of the rule "Al-Wahid" is that

4 Ibid: 213

5 Ibid

6 Ibid: Volume I, p 210; *Comments on the Evidences of Deism*, p 396

7 Ibid: Volume II, p 299

8 Ibid: pp 299-300

9 Ibid: P 299

the source of existence of the effect is nothing other than existence of the cause, which is the entity of its essence and has been discussed in details in discussion of direction of activity.

On the other hand, there should be an essential similarity between cause and effect due to which a certain effect is attributed to a certain cause; otherwise, everything should be cause of everything, and everything should be effect of everything. Therefore, if a singular cause whose essence does not consist of more than one direction, generates diverse and contradictory effects that cannot be attributed to that one direction in the cause, then essence of the cause must be consisting of diverse and contradictory directions, while from the beginning the cause was assumed singular and one-directional, and this is against the assumption. Therefore, it is proven that a real singular cause will not generate more than one single effect.¹⁰ Based on the above reasoning it becomes clear that due to necessity of essential homogeneity between cause and effect, this rule is not only limited to the Divine; it includes any being which is simple due to its external existence. Therefore, principle of homogeneity is more general, because it includes both the singular being and the singular type. Therefore, requirements of the rule “Al-Wahid” do not deny attribution of diverse effects to the Divine, because it is not contradictory to the principle of homogeneity and is rather in accordance with this principle. It is clear that the rule “Al-Wahid”, which is based on principle of homogeneity of cause and effect and is included in generality of this principle, requires comprehensive homogeneity of cause and effect in all aspects, so that nature of generation of a certain effect is limited to it and cannot be found in any other effects; otherwise the cause should be of divers directions of activity, which is against the assumption.¹¹ Therefore, if a really singular cause generates two effects, the two effects are either attributed to one same direction, or to two different directions. There is no way to accept the first hypothesis, because agreeableness is mutual similarity, and mutual similarity is a type of similarity of attributes. It is indeed a unity either between two attributes, which is called similarity, or between two attributed beings, which is called uniformity. In both cases similarity refers to real unity and homogeneity; therefore two directions are related to one direction. On the other hand, the second hypothesis is not acceptable as well, because if existence of the cause consists of two directions, the cause can no more be a real cause.¹² However, the important issue raised due to correctness of principles of the rule “Al-Wahid” is the question of how to explain diversity of beings in the world, where due to necessity of singularity and homogeneity of cause and effect, a singular cause cannot generate more than one singular effect? A cause can generate only one effect, and therefore existence of similar beings which are not in a causal relation is not possible for a singular type. The Leader of Theosophists’ answer is: “the best answer is to say that what is generated is a singular being; but it is accompanied by other things which exist as requirements and are not generated by any generator. According to the questioner, what is generated by the Divine is solely the existence, and nature, potential, and things of that kind do not need to be generated. Therefore such qualities are primary effects and not secondary effects; so the primary effect can cause diverse effects due to its inherent diversity, and is generated by the real singular cause due to its singular existence which has been generated primarily.”¹³

10 Seyed Mohammad Husain Tabatabaei, *Ultimate Philosophy*, (Qom: Institute of Islamic Publications for Theology Lecturers, 1983) pp 165-166

11 Leader of theosophists stresses on this fact and says (Arabic): *The Four Journeys*, Volume VII, p236

12 Ibid

13 Leader of Theosophists, *Explanations on Ethereal Guidance*, Beirut, Institute of Arabian History, 2001, 1st Edition, Edited by Mohammad Mustafa Fooladkar, p426

Analyzing Reality of Causality

- Connector Existence

One of the most identical philosophical accuracies of the Leader of Theosophists is to provide an image of the effect's type of existence, showing its entire state of dependence and attribution to another being. In this image, he considers existence of the effect to be the entity of its relation and dependence on an independent existence called the cause, and not an essence which is related to its cause. In other words, in the relationship between cause and effect, and the effect's attribution to its cause, what comes about through rational analysis consists of two things and not more than that. One is the cause, and the other is the relation generated and determined by the cause, and this relation is seen an entity of independent of existence of the cause from an independent perspective; otherwise, it does not have an independent identity by itself; and thus the Leader of Theosophists name it "connector existence", which means an existence whose identity is entity of relation to its cause, and not an existence which is related to its cause. The Leader of Theosophists explains that "existence of the effect essentially depends on existence of its cause, in a way that it cannot be imagined without existence of its cause."¹⁴ The most accurate understanding of the nature of connector existence is provided by Scholar Tabatabaie in his image of connector existence in discussion of propositions, suggesting that in all predictive bounding and compound propositions there is something between the subject and the predicate, which is considered a relation, and is neither seen in subject alone, nor in predicate alone, and cannot be seen independently between subject and predicate, or between subject and non-predicate, or between predicate and non-subject. Therefore in such propositions, there is a third being other than subject and predicate, which is not essentially independent of subject and predicate. It is a being which depends on subject and predicate and is not separated from them, and is meanwhile neither entity nor part of either of them. Therefore, existence of a different existence named "connector existence" is proven.¹⁵ Considering what explained above, connector existence in propositions requires identical and essential unity between the two sides of proposition, because its existence depends on realization of existence of the two sides. Connector existence, due to its dependant nature, cannot have an identity; because identity is an answer to "what is...", and has an independent concept, while connector existences cannot have independent concepts.¹⁶ That is to say, an identity with substantially independent existence makes a concept in accordance to its existence which is indicative of its independent identity as well. The connector existence depends on existence of subject and predicate; so it cannot be of such property, and cannot make an independent concept based on its existence.

- Ambiguous Essence of Connector Existence

An interesting issue about the connector existence is the fact that as per the Leader of Theosophists' clear explanation of existence of the effect, from an independent perspective, one may see only one secondary existence and not more than that, while having thought deeply about reality of the essence of existence, we confirm Mohaghegh Sabzevari's argument in this regard suggesting that reality of existence is conceptually known by all of us, and this is something clear, yet reality of essence and its origin is something beyond human perception; "its reality is the most know fact, while its essence is ultimately concealed,"¹⁷

14 The Four Journeys, Volume I, p417

15 Ultimate Philosophy, p28; The Four Journeys, Volume I, p328

16 Ibid, p30

17 Poetic Interpretation, Volume II, p59

With this introduction it can be concluded that it is not possible to understand reality, state, and essence of being “appointed link”: “we have evidently explained that the effect as a secondary being is related to the cause in a certain way whose essence is not known.”¹⁸

- Illuminative Attribution

Maybe the Leader of Theosophists’ best interpretation for connector existence in position of effect, and its relation to the cause is the term “illuminative attribution”¹⁹ which implies attribution and relation to entity of the cause’s existence, resembling arrays of light for the sun.

In his explanation of types of attribution, he introduces the effect’s attribution to the cause as a specific type of attribution in which, if the cause appears in the world of existence, it has a kind of companion whose existence depends on a being although its existence is accompanied by another being. Existence of this companion is entity of existence of the same effect, and the companionship is specified to this type of attribution, like paternity; a father is inherently a father and doesn’t become a father due to others’ paternity.²⁰ Here, what is real and original is existence of the cause, and whatever attributed or related to it is considered an aspect of the cause: “...whatever is called the cause, is the origin, and the effect is only an aspect of it; and causality and effectiveness refers to evolution of the cause in its self, realization of its potentials, and not disjunction of something independent from the cause”²¹ The Leader of Theosophists, based on this definition of cause and effect existence, believes that the Divine is the sole real instance of primary and true existence, and therefore nothing other than the Divine could be a primary being. All the beings come to existence due to their attributions to the Divine, and are thus secondary beings. Therefore, reality of effecting and generating consists of granting existence upon the effect by the cause while relating and attributing it to the cause (the Divine) in a way that the effect, due to its attribution to the Divine, is capable of abstracting concept of the existence and becomes an instance for predicating “the being” to it.²² In *Four Journeys* he says: “the conclusion is that philosophers and followers of the Divine philosophy believe that all the beings, including reason, carnal soul, and corporate forms are all arrays of the true light and manifestations of the eternal existence of the Divine.”²³ Therefore, according to the Leader of Theosophists, attribution to the cause and being an aspect of it is the entire identity of the effect, and as pointed out before²⁴, the effect has no essential reality other than this attribution and its sole significance is to be the effect and subordinate of the cause without an essence as subject of such meanings. On the other hand definition of the active cause means to be the origin, source, reference, and influential, and these are all entities of His existence. Beside this true issue, considering the fact that chain of causes end by a simple real being whose light of existence is free from defects, diversities, and uncertainties, it can be concluded that this simple and real source of light, which is the Divine, is inherently active, and His existence is the source of the world of creation and order; and the same fact reveals that all beings are of a same origin and nature, which is the sole reality, and anything else is as aspect of it. He is the true existence, and all other things are attributed to His directions and aspects. It is concluded from this exposition that whatever called an existence in any way is nothing but an aspect from

18 The Four Journeys, Volume I, p414

19 Al-Sabzevari, Comments on the Evidences of Deism, Mashhad, Academic Publication Center, 1981, 2nd Edition, edited and commented by Sayed Jalal-al-Din Ashtiani, p476

20 Footnotes on *Shafa Divinities*, p151

21 The Leader of Theosophists, Divine Evidences in Behavioral Approaches, Mashhad: Academic Publications Center, 1981, 2nd Edition, edited and commented by Seyed Jalal-al-Din Ashtiani, p476

22 *Departure & Return*, p56; *Sentiments*, pp53-54

23 *The For Journeys*, Volume II, p291

24 *Ultimate Philosophy*, p28

many aspects, and an attribution from many attributions of the Divine. Therefore, based on what was initially said about preliminary division of existence to cause and effect, it was eventually concluded that the real existence belongs to the cause, and the effect is only as aspect of the cause. Thus, causality and influence is evolution of the cause in one of his aspects, and not disjunction of something contrasted to it.²⁵ The Leader of Theosophists stresses on inherent singularity of the existence and accordingly limits the causality to manifesting aspects of the cause; meanwhile, believing in unity of the existence, he rather uses attribution instead of causality, and considers the simple existence to be the first thing attributed to the Divine and introduces it as the first thing sourced by the Necessary Being. He doesn't consider originality of the Divine's donation of existence to the first being a causal relation, because he believes that causality requires contradiction between cause and effect, which occurs only when their exclusive existence attributed to their unchangeable entity is taken into consideration, while from a unity-oriented approach to the existence, the absolute existence is singular and different from all types of homogeneity including numeral, typical, and corporal homogeneity.²⁶ Therefore, due to the differences between attribution and causality, it is revealed that these two concepts are similar in terms of being attributed to the source, but the source can be the cause (in the approach not believing in existential unity) or not (in the approach believing in existential unity); therefore, attribution is more general than causality. That is to say a cause is certainly a source, but a source is not necessarily a cause.²⁷

- Singularity of Existence

Although individual singularity of existence is an indicator of theosophical teachings, it has been criticized extensively. By the way, the Leader of Theosophists has accepted it and tends to prove it as a requirement of attribution-oriented approach to causality.

There are three assumptions about concept of the singularity of existence: 1- Everything is the Divine and nothing else exists; 2- Anything other than the Divine is unreal, void, and illusive; 3- All the things other than the Divine are manifestations and aspects of the Divine. Here we describe the concept taken and proven by the Leader of Theosophists and explain the difference between bounding aspects and causal aspect: in causal aspect there are two realized existences; one is original and exists independently, and the other exists due to existence of the first one. The first existence is named the cause, and the second is named the effect generated due to existence of the cause, and define the effect's aspect of existence as causal existential aspect. In this aspect, the effect has its own existence, but its existence depends on something else; it is an existence besides existence of the cause. On the contrary, in bounding aspect, the second being has no existence other than existence of its source, and its existence is like the secondary philosophical concepts, which exist and are not solely abstract, yet their existence is realized through existence of their source of abstraction and not separated from it. This bounding existence is the entire and entity of existence of its source of abstraction, like attributes of the Divine which are rooted in His existence. Sometimes this bounding existence is considered only an aspect of its source of abstraction, like powers of the soul for the soul, or beauty for the human. According to Mulla Sadra, all the things other than the Divine are of a bounding aspect and not of causal aspect. That is to say, unlike peripatetic philosophers such as Avicenna, he believes that no existence can stand next to existence of the Divine, and all the things exist due to His existence. Of course they are not rooted in His existence like His attributes; they are rather manifestations of His aspects. This is how the Leader of Theosophists defines individual singularity of existence. Certainly, such definition of existence of all things other than the Divine is derived from, and even similar to, his definition of connector existence, which was explained before. Generally speaking, the Leader of Theosophists argues about individual singularity of existence in

25 *The Four Journeys*, Volume II, pp299-301

26 *Ibid*: p331

27 *Ibid*: footnote 2 (Sabzevari)

two different ways; one is to suggest that existence of the effect is a connector to the cause, and that the entire universe is of such character; so the entire universe with all its components is the entity of attribution to the Divine. Even the intermediate causes are of the same character, and therefore the entire universe is manifestation of aspect of the Divine aspects from this perspective. In the second argument, reality of the existence is simple and singular, and simple reality includes the entire universe with no exception. Therefore, there is only one existence, and it is individual and singular. Apparently, the main issue is the questionable unity of the existence, in which existence of the Divine and its aspects are seen as effects and degrees of existence, and due to this questionable unity, the personal unity raised by the attribution-oriented approach is realized as a secondary existence. These two are not two things or two existences; it is rather a same reality perceived in two different ways; otherwise, perceiving personal unity of existence as a specific singular existence with personal unity (although its unity is real) besides perceiving diversities as aspects of this personal unit which are of real ranks, is a difficult thing to do in realm of philosophy, and discussing its possibility or impossibility in details is out of our current discussion. By the way, others have made researches in this regard. Some philosophers believe that amongst all reasonable assumptions about unity of existence, only “unity of existence and diversity of the beings” can be proven, which is same as questionable unity or unity despite of diversity. Naturally the Sufis’ approach to this issue, which is unity of existence and beings, can be proven only through contemplation and not in the realm of philosophy.

4.CONCLUSION OF THE RULE “SIMPLE REALITY IS THE WHOLE THINGS”

After proving simplicity of causality (in three directions of cause, generation, and effect) and providing an accurate image of existence of the effect in terms of being attributed to the cause through illuminative attribution, especially from perspective of personal unity of existence, in which there are no contradictions between cause and effect, and the entire existence is consisting of a single reality and its aspects, which are sources of all other beings, reality of the existence can be seen as a singular and simple being which includes the entire universe, yet cannot be related to all its instances separately. Here, the rule “simple reality is the whole things and nothing is independent of it” is apprehended well. That is to say that the Divine is reality of all things, and not all things. All the things which are apparently separated from the Divine are indeed abstracted from a reality which is an aspect of the Divine existence. Therefore, as suggested by the Leader of Theosophists, a simple being, despite of being simple, can carry diverse meanings other than its own concept without negating its unity of essence, or unity of direction of its essence.²⁸ Mulla Sadra believes that understanding meaning of “simple reality is all things” in a way to consider it a simple rational essence which includes all the things is true, pleasant, and obscure; and for this reason none of the preceding philosophers, even Avicenna, have not been able to apprehend it as it is.²⁹ In order to prove the simple reality rule, the Leader of Theosophists brings about a contradictory argument: if something is independent of real existence of the Divine, its existence must be attributed to something depriving from it; otherwise depriving from a deprived being occurs in it, which is indeed the proof of the being, because combining two contradictory beings is not possible. When negation of a being occurs in the Divine existence, the Divine existence would have to be consisting of reality of something and negation of something else; and this requires a composition. Even if this composition is outcome of a rational analysis, it would be against the assumed simplicity of the Divine existence. This argument proves inclusion of all existences in the simple reality. The Leader of Theosophists says:

“When something is simple in all aspects, that thing with its entire characteristics includes all the things. Otherwise, its essence has to be consisting of two qualities. One to be essence of something, and one to be negation of something else; therefore, it will be of a compound essence, though limited to rational

28 *The Four Journeys*, Volume III, p337

29 *The Four Journeys*, Volume VI, p187

analysis... Therefore, something which is of simple reality in all aspects, which is indeed the Divine, will be consisting of all the things in the highest degree, and the only thing excluded from it would be defects and shortcomings. This simple existence is in this sense the whole things, and the whole of a thing is naturally prior to and stricter than that thing.”³⁰ This is extended in the same way to separable beings, which are realized after the Divine existence and are singular and simple.

REFERENCES

- A Collection of Philosophical Article from the Leader of Theosophists, Tehran, Hekmat Publications, 1996, 1st Edition, Research and edition by Hamed Naji Isfahani*
- Al-Sabzevari ,Comments on Evidences of Deism, Mashhad: Academic Publications Center, 1981, 2nd Edition, Edited and commented by Sayed Jalal-al-Din Ashtiani*
- Divine Evidences in Devine Evidences in Behavioral Approaches, Mashhad: Academic Publications Center, 1981, 2nd Edition, edited and commented by Seyed Jalal-al-Din Ashtiani*
- Departure and Return, Iranian Philosophical Society, 1975, Edited by Sayed Jalal-al-Din Ashtiani*
- Explanations on Ethereal Guidance, Beirut, Institute of Arabian History, 2001, 1st Edition, Edited by Mohammad Mustafa Fooladkar (this book contains plenty of mistakes, it was compared to the lithographed copy and corrected as much as possible: Nur Islamic Computer Research Center)*
- Mesbah Al-Yazdi, Mohammad Taghi, Comments on Ultimate Philosophy, Qom, Rahe Hagh Institute, 1984, 1st Edition*
- Seyed Mohammad Husain Tabatabaei, Ultimate Philosophy, Qom: Institute of Islamic Publications for Theology Lecturers, 1983*
- The Transcendent Wisdom Regarding Four Intellectual Journeys, Beirut, Al-Torath Publications, 1981, 3rd Edition*
- The Leader of Theosophists ,Explanations on Shafa Divinities, Qom, Bidar Publications [no date specified]*

30 The Leader of Theosophists, A Collection of Philosophical Article from the Leader of Theosophists, Tehran, Hekmat Publications, 1996, 1st Edition, Research and edition by Hamed Naji Isfahani, p94