An investigation of the relationship between political knowledge and happiness in Mulla Sadra's thought

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Abstract---According to Aristotle, wisdom is categorized into practical and theoretical in Islamic philosophy. Political philosophy, household management, and ethics are examples of practical wisdom issues in which the question of politics in wisdom and philosophy has been taken into account. Some Muslim philosophers, such as Farabi, have devoted more attention to politics and philosophy, although most Muslim philosophers have made explicit connections to philosophy and politics in their works. Mulla Sadra Shirazi was a Muslim philosopher who paid close attention to political issues in the sphere of philosophical thought in his works, particularly in the last chapter of the book of 'al-Shawahid al-rububiyyah.' On the other hand, the issue of happiness is one of the fundamental issues in ethics as a part of practical wisdom. The answer to the vital and philosophical question of whether politics is effective in the issue of worldly and afterlife, human flourishing must be taken into account thoroughly regarding the other pillars of practical wisdom. Mulla Sadra considered worldly happiness necessary for otherworldly happiness, and he considered man a civil being by nature, like his predecessors, and he expressed a close relationship between politics and happiness. By basing transcendent politics on transcendent theosophy, Mulla Sadra developed a spiritual-philosophical reading of politics.

Keywords---Politics, Happiness, Transcendent theosophy, Perfection.

Introduction

Political philosophy, as a branch of practical wisdom, has long been a focus of sages and philosophers, particularly following the Farabi era. Although some philosophers have questioned the relationship between politics and philosophy,
this relationship has never been disputed in general. Examining the relationship between politics and happiness is one of the most crucial issues in practical wisdom since happiness is one of the central and fundamental concerns in philosophy and wisdom, particularly Islamic wisdom. This study aimed to determine the relationship between politics and happiness by investigating the attitudinal qualities of Mullah Sadra Shirazi, a famous sage in Islamic philosophy who has written extensively about the issue of the worldly and otherworldly happiness of humans in his numerous works. This study aimed to find the answer to the following question:

What is happiness? What factors affect it? Can politics, the desired politics, be effective in human happiness? Can politics play a significant role in developing and promoting the sublime policy based on the transcendent theosophy?

**Human and Human Powers in Mulla Sadra’s Thought**

Since man is regarded as the subject of human knowledge (Jaafari, 1388, p. 183), it is crucial and useful to examine each school of thought and explain how it views man and his inner dimensions. According to Islamic philosophy, man is a rational soul with two internal powers: one is used to comprehend abstract concepts, and the other is utilized to carry out intellectual tasks. The ability that causes an action to be carried out is known as practical intellect, whereas the ability with which the rational soul comprehends the generalities is known as theoretical intellect. Mullah Sadra, the founder, head, and mastermind of transcendent theosophy confirmed this division of powers in the rational human soul and gave these two material powers different names (Alemeh and Ameleh, Elmieh and Ammalyeh, Allameh and Ammaleh), all of which mean the power of knowledge and practice (Molla Sadra, 2003: p.199). He holds that general perception in practical matters is the dignity and responsibility of an intellect known as the theoretical reason, which causes the perception of things like truth and falsity, obligations, and permissible and forbidden actions. However, it is the partial opinion that moves the general perception into the stage of action. It implies that the role of the mind is practical and that it can distinguish between right and wrong, beauty and ugliness (Mulla Sadra, 2002: p. 240).

In ‘Sharh Al-Hidayah’ book, he utilized the same expression and referred to what leads to the completeness of theory and practice powers as theoretical and practical wisdom (Mulla Sadra, 1981: p.6).

The confirmation of the expressions above cannot be seen as being too far from reality, and they can be summed up as follows: Perception of what is knowable is the focus of theoretical intellect. This intellect presents information beyond the scope of human strength and does not prompt action. However, since it is focused on practical issues, practical intellect is liable to human ownership, alteration, invention, and annihilation.

Nonetheless, while establishing definitions for these two forms of intellect, Mulla Sadra did not acknowledge their division and argued that they are the same and that it is incorrect to separate them (Mulla Sadra, 1981: vol. 4: p. 418)
He considered four degrees of theoretical reason: 1- monstrous or potential intellect, 2- masterly intellect, 3- actual intellect, and 4- applied intellect (Mulla Sadra, 1031: p. 99). Another statement is founded on skepticism about the degrees of knowledge, theoretical intellect, and, consequently, practical intellect.

**Definition, Characteristics, and Types of Knowledge in Sadra's Thought**

**A) Definition of Knowledge:** “knowledge” refers to knowing, certainty, science, and awareness. In examining the meaning of the “knowledge” term, Mulla Sadra’s philosophical thought reveals that knowledge is an indefinable problem that cannot be fully defined. He has provided several justifications for his claim (Seyed Jafar Sajjadi, 2000: p. 353).

Despite providing evidence to support the indefinability of knowledge, he has provided various definitions of “knowledge” in his books (Mulla Sadra, 2009: p. 143). In the analysis of these definitions, it can be said that Mulla Sadra’s claims about the indefinability of knowledge are related to formal definitions of knowledge, not partial definitions, so there is no contradiction.

**b) Characteristics of Knowledge:** Since Mulla Sadra considered the return of knowledge to the truth of existence and considers the rules of existence to be true for knowledge, the examination of the characteristics of knowledge can be effective in a more accurate perception of the concept of knowledge. Some of these characteristics are:

1. It is debatable: knowledge, like existence, is debatable from words (truths), in that there is a common single meaning for it (truth is a unit with strengths and weaknesses) that differs in terms of achieving perfection and imperfection, as well as strengths and weaknesses (Mulla Sadra, 1990, vol. 2, p. 5).

2. This single truth in the common meaning is carried on all its levels in a common spiritual way. In explaining Mulla Sadra's opinion, Khomeini stated that in the truth of the concept of knowledge, no individual has an advantage over another. The distinction is made regarding external facts’ strengths and weaknesses, perfection, and imperfection. Just as existence is multilevel, with essence, accident, and addition, so is knowledge. Some knowledge members are essential, others are accidental, and others are still added. Besides, the existence of possibilities with the difference is based on shadow levels of the existing source, so the knowledge of possibilities with the difference is based on shadow levels of the knowledge source (God) (Khomeini, vol. 1, pp. 375-382).


4. Since knowledge is an existential matter, it cannot be separated from the matter because doing so would result in nothingness.

5. Entelechy is pure: Power has no way in knowledge.

6. It is simple.

c) Types of Knowledge: The late Akhund described various knowledge categories and divisions that can help us understand knowledge more accurately. These types are:

1. Knowledge by the Presence and Acquired Knowledge

Knowledge is obtained either through direct observation, and it is called Knowledge by presence, or through reasoning by using works and tools (by which only weak knowledge is obtained), and it is called acquired knowledge (Mulla Sadra, 1981, vol. 1: p. 53)

2. Knowledge of Revelation and Knowledge of Transaction

Revelation is a knowledge that is always intrinsically desirable and in which the main purpose is to depict the soul in the form of facts and the manifestation of the truth in its names and attributes in the soul. In this knowledge, only the pious men and the people of the truth can understand and reach it. Nevertheless, the knowledge of transactions does not have intrinsic utility and is always considered for practice. Transaction knowledge is meant to perform the practice (Mulla Sadra, 1990: p. 25).

3. Knowledge of Action and Reaction

Knowledge of action is the cause of creating the external existence, and the knowledge of reaction of the external is the cause of creating the scientific form (Authors, vol. 2, 2001: p. 310).

4. Reprehensible and Praiseworthy Knowledge

Mulla Sadra referred to a narration from the Prophet Muhammad who said: “A kind of knowledge is ignorance, and a kind of wisdom is ignorance too.” Since knowledge is the opposite of ignorance and they do not combine, if knowledge plays the role of ignorance in causing harm, then knowledge is objectionable and reprehensible. It is distasteful because of the harm and evil associated with it. (Mulla Sadra, vol. 2, 1990: p.30)

5. Practical and Theoretical Knowledge

Knowledge has been divided into theoretical and practical. This division is based on the idea that knowledge is either practical or theoretical, depending on how it relates to the quality of action. If knowledge does not require practice, it is considered theoretical.

6. Real and Unreal Knowledge

The division of Mulla Sadra’s knowledge into real and unreal knowledge appears to be the most significant division of knowledge. Real knowledge is knowledge of facts about beings as they are, whereas unreal knowledge is knowledge of details
that can change, actions and practices, and anecdotes and narratives (Mulla Sadra, 1990, vol. 2, p. 119).

**Investigation of Political Knowledge and its Position in Mulla Sadra's Thought**

Farabi is regarded as the first Islamic philosopher to specialize in political knowledge, and he is the last brilliant figure to have pondered the nature of Medina and man’s relationship with it (Tabatabayi, 1995:p.117). However, such philosophical attitudes and philosophers as Farabi sometimes reject the entry of philosophers after him into the field of philosophy and political knowledge studies. In any case, Farabi has some interesting ideas about politics, and it is impossible to cover all of them in this article.

Like his predecessors, he considers wisdom to be divided into two parts: theoretical and practical; the latter is concerned with beautiful actions and morals and is referred to as the craft of creation. The second section is about political philosophy, which he describes as follows: “The second wisdom includes knowledge of things that city dwellers have as well as the ability to acquire and retain knowledge which is known as political philosophy” (Farabi, 1992: p.67).

In other words, he saw politics as a component of practical wisdom which is the knowledge of the things required of members of society and the means of learning and maintaining them. However, because it falls under practical wisdom, this knowledge is not merely abstract; it also explains how politics works in the eyes of the beholder.

He views politics in Al-Mellah al-Fazlah as an action that derives from the practice of governance which is learned through the specialized knowledge and experience of politicians (Farabi, 1985: p.54), but he studies and examines the process of acquiring political knowledge in the Treatise on Al-Siyaseh. He is familiar with human actions and behavior. Politics is one of the human knowledge s that aids in the perfection of man, following Farabi’s definition of human knowledge and its role in this process (Farabi, 1982: 62).

Happiness and perfection, according to Farabi, should be imagined beyond the world. Farabi’s perception of happiness has led him to regard worldly glory, dignity, wealth, and so on as an illusion and to criticize them:

Some believe that the goal of ruling and governing cities is their greatness, honor, control, enforcing their laws and regulations, and inspiring obedience and glorification of them (Farabi, 1971: p.47)

Now consider worldly happiness only as a prelude to the happiness of the hereafter:

The final perfection that perfection brings us is the ultimate happiness, and it is the absolute best; it is the influence that is desired for its own sake, and it is not; it is effective for the sake of others and the rest of what influences [it is effective] for the sake of its benefit in achieving happiness.
Perfection brings us the last perfection, the ultimate happiness and absolute goodness. An effect of perfection for the sake of the problem of perfection is desired. Even when perfection is effective for others, it is effective in achieving happiness (Ibid. p. 46).

In other words, Farabi believed that the world and its happiness are worthless and lack originality unless they serve as a prelude to the ultimate perfection, which is the ultimate happiness of the hereafter. Farabi’s efforts to affirm and reject the world are motivated by Islamic teachings that forbid humans from entering the world or the afterlife.

He bestows unusual conditions and attributes on the head of Medina, demonstrating his belief in the impact of politics on human happiness, at least for policymakers (Farabi, 1995: p.127).

In any case, even though Farabi, in the context of his thought, did not consider politics and knowledge to be effective in human perfection and happiness, he considered them a precursor to the happiness of the afterlife. Additionally, he believed that the head of Medina should step in the direction of happiness and that this knowledge is a helper in this path. Few philosophers wrote books specifically about politics after Farabi, and Mula Sadra later used Farabi’s ideas to write his philosophical theories about politics and happiness in transcendent theosophy.

Mullah Sadra did not write an independent book about politics, but it can be inferred from an analysis of his writings that he was interested in politics. Despite his exclusion and the signs of joining the lord of power, he thought about politics independently and expressed his views on both ideal politics and the laws and rituals of the state in his writings (Nameh Farhang, vol. 31).

As for the practical wisdom that deals with the human soul in terms of comparisons with morals and properties, it is also of three types because human measures and human policies are not mutually exclusive, but whether they belong to a single person only or not... and the second is civil wisdom (Madani). Furthermore, I forgeries, the fourth part of the second part, is divided into two parts because Madinah is divided into king and sultanate. It is also related to prophethood and the law. Thus, the first name is political knowledge, and the second is the knowledge of al-Nawamis (Mulla Sadra, 2001: p.9).

In this statement, practical wisdom is based on three types of ethics, household wisdom and civil wisdom, which is divided into political knowledge and the knowledge of al-Nawamis.

The book ‘Mazaher Elahiya’ referred to this division in which politics was considered as knowledge related to the communication and interaction of humans and as one of the three sub-knowledge s in the six-stage path of perfection:

This knowledge means how humans deal with worldly objects, some of which are included in this knowledge, such as the ego, sensuality, and anger, which is called "moral refinement." Some of them are gathered inside the house, such as
family, servants, parents, and children, and it is called "household," and some of them are gathered outside or in a city, and it is called "policy" and "Sharia laws" and it includes Diya, retribution, and governance (Mulla Sadra, 2008: p.15).

Although Mulla Sadra believed that the principles of the Sharia and the knowledge of politics were equivalent in this statement, he distinguished between the two in terms of specifics and referred to the Sharia as the end of politics:

Furthermore, finally, the end of politics is obedience to the law, and it is like a slave to a master, obeying him once and disobeying him another time (Molla Sadra, 1981: p.366.)

The two distinctions between politics and Sharia were then discussed, one from the perspective of action and the other from the perspective of inaction. The actions of politics are an incomplete part completed by Sharia, whereas the rules of Sharia are the entire system. However, from an inactive perspective, politics is a contradiction for them, while Sharia is required by human nature:

In terms of action, the differences between Sharia and politics are that the actions of politics are partial, incomplete, retained, and complemented by Sharia, whereas the actions of Sharia are completely independent of politics.

Besides, in terms of emotion, the Shari'ah command is necessary to what is commanded, and politics are separate from it (Ibid, p. 366)

He considers politics without Sharia as a body without a soul and believes:

Attributing prophecy to Sharia is like the ratio of the soul to the body in which the soul and politics abstract from the Sharia are as a body without a soul (Ibid, p.365)

This shows that MulSadra rejects politics that do not adhere to Shariah. According to the late Akhund, because of man's civil nature, society must be created for him to live in peace, and the knowledge of politics is responsible for managing this society (Mulla Sadra, 1984: p.557). Moreover, the Islamic state is in charge of the world’s affairs, people’s spirituality, their remembrance of the afterlife, their guidance, the provision of security, and the punishment of criminals (Mulla Sadra, 1983: p. 557). This statement tells about the role of politics in all aspects of human life in the Sadrai transcendent theosophy.

He describes the qualities of the first ruler of Medina in detail (Molla Sadra, 1984: 565-566). These qualities include wisdom, a love of learning, a desire to avoid corrupt pleasures, and pride in oneself and others, all of which point to the importance of politics in the development of society and its citizens.

Based on what has been stated so far, it appears possible to highlight the following points in Mulla Sadra's study of political knowledge:

1. The knowledge of politics is linked to man's practical power and is investigated under practical wisdom.
2. The fundamentals of this knowledge, like other knowledge, can be obtained directly or indirectly.

3. It is classified as transactional knowledge instead of revelational knowledge, and current knowledge can be classified as either praiseworthy or reprehensible.

4. Political knowledge is unreal knowledge.

5. The link between politics and Shari’ah is unbreakable.

6. One of the details is that the content of this knowledge is contrary to human nature.

7. Because of the civility of human nature, this knowledge is important.

**Perfection, Perfect Movement, and Happiness in Mulla Sadra’s Thought**

The definition of perfection is completeness, wholeness, and aesthetic beauty of qualities. The term “perfection” is used idiomatically in situations where a thing, once finished, means everything required for the principle underlying its existence and the possibility of having higher degrees than that degree.

Perfection expresses something’s vertical direction, while whole expresses something’s horizontal direction; that is, when something reaches its end in the horizontal direction, it is said to be finished, whereas if it moves in the vertical direction, it is said to have reached its full extent (Motahari, 1994: pp. 18-20.)

Every being’s true perfection is one or more of the qualities that it must possess to carry out its final act. All other qualities are preliminary perfection to the extent that they help a being achieve its true perfection. Based on this, for instance, one should not consider similarities between humans and other animals and consider them to be the true perfection of man. For instance, obesity cannot be viewed as the pinnacle of human perfection (Mesbah Yazdi, 2003: p. 36)

According to him, the ability a being has to achieve an existential attribute (perfection) becomes actual as a result of gradual changes that take place for that being (ibid: p. 42).

Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that Mulla Sadra believes that knowledge, with its skepticism, is one of the key elements of human perfection. He thought that knowledge was beneficial to the perfection of man in two ways: first, as a source of inspiration and excitement, and second, because it is the best tool for taking active action.

If knowledge is one of the true knowledge s, in his opinion, it will be most effective in advancing human perfection. Therefore, credit knowledge s cannot be seen as the endpoint of human perfection; Mulla Sadra holds that true knowledge s and divine knowledge give people a radiant interior and spiritual heart and intellectual life that allows them to ascend to the holy world. He also holds that people's essence is derived from the essence of near angels and saints (Mulla Sadra, 1990,
Mulla Sadra offered a rational analysis of happiness with a deep look based on cognitive existential thinking and said: “The essence of existence is goodness and happiness, and its perception is another goodness and happiness.” He considered pleasure and happiness to be concomitance (Mulla Sadra, 1984: p. 757), and pleasure is the perception of truth and the existence of perfection. (Mulla Sadra, 1981, vol. 2: p. 39). The existence of any object is pleasurable, and the perception of the reality and essence of any object is even more pleasurable because the perception of the essence of perception is the cause of that object, and the cause of every object is the foundation of the essence and the perfection of the identity of the effect (Mulla Sadra, 1981, vol. 9: p. 122)

In his speeches about the term happiness, Khomeini also said: “Happiness is the pleasure of receiving, where the perceptive faculty finds something pleasurable and that which is mild. For example, consider happiness, the sense of taste is to find what is mild for the sense of taste. If a sense of taste has always perceived the mild with nature and has used delicious foods suitable for nature in terms of smell and taste, then such a sense of taste has always been blessed. He was born happily and lived happily and died happily; the same is true of the sense of hearing, sight, and touch. According to Mulla Sadra, happiness is achieving what nature requires, and for each sense to achieve what it requires, the perfection of that sense is called perfection, and every power is of the same type” (Khomeini, vol. 3, 2008: p. 450).

Mulla Sadra mentioned various forms of happiness from various angles, and he thought there are both intellectual and animal forms. Animal happiness is perfection, the outcome of sensory perceptions, whereas intellectual happiness is based on realized intellectual perception. As a result, intellectual happiness is greater than animal happiness because it has higher quality and greater quantity” (Mulla Sadra, vol. 4, 1990: p. 300).

On the other hand, happiness is split into two parts, material and spiritual, based on the two-dimensionality of human existence in Mullah Sadra’s thought prism. The fulfillment of man’s material needs is the responsibility of material happiness, while the fulfillment of man’s spiritual needs and policies is the responsibility of spiritual happiness. Mulla Sadra gave careful consideration to the discussion of material happiness in his writings, mentioning such axes as

* Saadat, which means happiness and the opposite of misfortune in Arabic, derives from the root "Saad," which is the opposite of "Nahs" (Khalil Ibn Ahmad Farahidi, 1993., Vol. 2: p. 821). Ideologically, this phrase is defined as "assisting in divine works to achieve goodness," with misery serving as its antithesis. It appears that the word "Falah" from the Holy Quran is more closely related to the idea of happiness in Persian. Falah translates as good survival (Khalil Ibn Ahmad Farahidi, 1993., Vol. 3: p. 1413) In contrast to Saadat, which is mentioned twice in the Quran and is one of Fawz’s synonyms, which is mentioned 29 times, Falah is mentioned 40 times in various combinations.
health, bravery, beauty, accessibility to necessities of life, and provision of material goods (Mulla Sadra, 1987, vol. 6: p. 268),

The perfection of the natural body is the soul. The result is that material happiness reaches the soul (Isfar, vol. 4, 2000: p. 11). The development of this soul, which represents the pinnacle of human perfection, brings it closer to reality. Additionally, since the soul's presence in the body is due to perfection and the pursuit of perfection, according to transcendent theosophy, the soul leaves the body once it has attained perfection. In other words, Mulla Sadra believes that, in some instances, death is the result of the human soul achieving perfection, in contrast to popular belief, which holds that death results from the loss of the body. According to him, the soul resides in the body to follow the path of perfection under the influence of the movement of the essence (Mulla Sadra, Vol. 8, 1981: p. 325). When the soul reaches perfection, it separates from the physical body. The soul is the carrier of the body, not the other way around, claims Mulla Sadra (Mulla Sadra, vol. 9, 1981, p. 48). So, once its needs are met, the soul leaves its carrier and travels to the world of abstraction.\footnote{In this regard, Sadra distinguishes between two types of death: natural death, which results from the soul's attaining perfection and ceasing to require a physical body, and sudden or cosmic death, which is brought on by an accident. It is discussed how the corruption and degeneration of the body exploits the capacity to seize the soul. Asfar Arbaa, the book's author, explained it this way: "When the soul achieves strength and perfection, the body becomes weak. As a result, the movement and journey of the soul causes the destruction of the house, not that the soul travels because the house is destroyed."}

Although there are many levels to true happiness, given what was said, it is important to distinguish between true happiness and other levels. Mulla Sadra’s theory of true happiness is based on the following principles: authenticity of existence, doubt in existence, the physicality of occurrence and spirituality of soul survival, essential movement, the union of the soul with an active mind, and union of subject and objects (Mohammed Rezaei, 2007: p. 77).

According to Mulla Sadra, true happiness is connected to the afterlife and can only be attained by acquiring and embodying the truths of divine knowledge. This happiness is incomparable to the dark pleasures laced with deficiencies and harms that affect the senses (Mulla Sadra, 1984: p. 587)

Every level of happiness can be a stepping stone to true happiness. As a result, everything that works for achieving the lowest levels of happiness is also important for achieving true happiness. According to Sadra’s sublime thought, the human soul must pass through this world to reach the happiness of the afterlife (Molla Sadra, 1984: 642). As a result, three things are required to achieve

"Soul decided to travel, I told him to go, it said what should I do, the house will come down" (Molasadra, 1981, vol. 9: p. 52).

Mulla Sadra provided an example to differentiate between the two types of death. He compared life to a ship’s motion and death to its stillness. The ship can come to a halt due to two factors: sail damage and wind failure (Molla Sadra, 1981, vol. 9: 54 p.).
a state of happiness: perceiver, perceived, and perception. The greater the value of these three factors, the greater the happiness and the stronger and more intense the happiness. For instance, because the first intellect perceives its essence and the essence of an object is perfectly gentle with an object, the perception of the essence, which is a good and noble essence, is good and noble. This perception is also strong, and its knowledge is noble and honorable. Furthermore, its information, which is all existential truths and pure goodness, will be honorable; because the effect is very gentle with the cause.

It is crucial to consider the perceiver, perceived, and perception when analyzing the knowledge s and their connection to happiness. Politics is typically reserved for the intellectual aspects of society because it is an unreal current knowledge that has addressed the civil aspect of human nature. In light of this, Mulla Sadra emphasized the following:

The politician, Peshwa, and imam are clearly in this position due to their expertise and technique (Mulla Sadra, 2002, p.69).

As a result, Mulla Sadra considered this knowledge to be important and effective in the path of happiness of political scientists and politicians of societies, which has been effective in various ways.

**Conclusion**

Mulla Sadra thought asserted that political knowledge contributes to human happiness in several ways, including:

1. Through mediation, politics as a starting point with Sharia as a goal can significantly promote human happiness.

2. Political knowledge, such as knowledge of civil design, can help pursue human perfection because human happiness as a social being is related to civil happiness.

3. Political knowledge, while not achieving high levels of happiness in humans due to its low level of knowledge, can achieve low levels of happiness for humans, which can be a prelude to the realization of real happiness. This is because the knowledge s are effective in the perfection and happiness of man.

4. The happiness of politicians and rulers is one of the political knowledge’s significant effects, and the society’s supreme leader must possess psychological perfection with the traits mentioned.

5. According to Mulla Sadra, worldly happiness serves as a springboard for the afterlife and ultimate happiness. By laying the groundwork for this realization, political knowledge contributes to a person’s afterlife and ultimate happiness.

6. In contrast to Farabi, who did not believe that happiness in this world was important, Mulla Sadra accepts worldly happiness as one of the types of happiness and claims that the knowledge of politics helps achieve this happiness.
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