



**Mulla Sadra on the Relation of Sharia and Practical  
Philosophy**

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**Abstract**

To explain Mulla Sadra's viewpoint of the relationship of practical wisdom and Sharia, one needs to turn to the explanation of human soul and its perfection (happiness). It should be mentioned that the nature of practical wisdom and its principles are specified based on the definition that is offered of happiness. According to Mulla Sadra, true happiness lies in human soul's acquisition of rational truths and becoming a subject to the divine forms and the highest possible state for it is understanding divine presence; this is considered to be the ultimate goal of Sharia and divine laws. In fact, Mulla Sadra introduces practical wisdom to be part of Sharia and this is why Sharia and practical wisdom are thought by him to be pursuing the same objective. Generally speaking, relationship of Sharia and practical wisdom is envisaged as an extension of the "mode of absolute generality and specificity"; because according to Mulla Sadra, practical wisdom, as the act of teaching the method of advancement of the stations and stage of God-wayfaring and path of servitude, is part of Sharia. One may seek for the cause of this in the richness of Islamic doctrines in the domain of practical wisdom and explanation of its patterns in religion and Sharia; however, richness of Islamic doctrines and Sharia does not make us needless of the explanation and presentation of effective solutions for application of practical wisdom. This is in fact exactly what Mulla Sadra has neglected in this area.

**Keywords:** Mulla Sadra, Practical wisdom, Sharia, Soul, Happiness

## Introduction

In our explanation of the relationship of practical wisdom and Sharia, we are faced with Sharia, on the one hand, and with practical wisdom, on the other hand, the background of which dates back to Aristotle and even philosophers and thinkers before him; because knowledge resulting in action has always been noticed by thinkers and philosophers; but practical wisdom was discussed by Aristotle in an independent and detailed form. Of course, one needs to take it into account that Aristotle used the term “Phronesis” [φρόνησις] and not practical wisdom and translators and commentators of Aristotle have rendered it into practical wisdom. Although other translations have also been used for “phronesis”, the application of practical wisdom is completely popular and even more appropriate. Islamic thinkers have also discussed practical wisdom under the influence of Aristotle; but they have also presented certain inventions in this domain.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, we are dealing with Sharia which includes religious affairs and has been revealed by Divine Lord through the Great Prophet of Islam for conduction of the servants. These affairs include words, actions and sentences the observation of which leads to the regulation of worldly and otherworldly affairs. Moreover, religious affairs covered by Divine Presence include everything related to the whole Islamic nation including the elite and the laity and their observation leads to the realization of perfections in man (Sajjadi, 1994, vol. 2: 1060).

The majority of Islamic thinkers has discussed the practical wisdom under the discussion of Science of Soul or psychology as well as the classification of sciences and authored no independent work in this area. In general, there are different classifications of types of sciences. In the most famous classification, sciences are divided into two classes of theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom and the basis of such a division should be sought for in the subject matter of wisdom, i.e. being; because practical wisdom refers to the knowledge of beings that could be manipulated by man and human will while theoretical wisdom is dealing with the entities that lie outside the domain of human will and power. Of course, each one of the theoretical and practical wisdom is divided into several subclasses. In the most famous classification, theoretical wisdom is divided into three types of metaphysics, mathematics and physics while practical wisdom is divided into three subdivisions of ethics, economics and politics.

Farabi is among the thinkers who have devoted themselves to practical wisdom and divided sciences and arts into two types: 1) Arts the goal of which is the acquisition of beauty, 2) Arts the goal of which is profit acquisition. He believes that wisdom in its absolute sense (philosophy) is an art the goal of which is the acquisition of beauty; because it results in a firmly secured knowledge of God. Farabi has also divided beautiful arts into two types: arts that are merely science and arts that simultaneously include science and practice. He believes that a group of arts of philosophy are concerned with the knowledge of beings in which man does not have any intervention while the other group includes the arts that are manipulated by human will, or put otherwise; man is capable of doing them. Farabi has referred

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<sup>1</sup> For further study cf. “Aristotle and Phronesis (Practical Wisdom)” published in Peer-reviewed Journal of Mirror of Wisdom.

to the first group as theoretical philosophy and to the second group as the civil philosophy. He contends that in theoretical philosophy, one's goal is mere act of knowing and includes three divisions of mathematics, physics and science of metaphysics; but civil philosophy represents the knowledge that is of avail in practice and includes moral philosophy and political philosophy (Farabi, 2005: 111-113). According to Farabi, civil philosophy in its first division, i.e. moral philosophy, deals with the definition of happiness, difference of true happiness and suspicious happiness, enumeration of volitional actions, behaviors and ethics that have to be promoted among the nations as well as the identification of virtuous traditions versus non-virtuous traditions. He believes that civil philosophy in the second type of its discussions, i.e. political philosophy, paves the path for creation of an appropriate ground for promotion of virtuous traditions in human societies and responsibilities of the government in the promotion of these virtuous traditions (Farabi, 1996: 83). Therefore, according to Farabi, ultimate end of the affairs that civil science covers them is happiness; of course, here he intends one's becoming happy and prosperous not merely knowing happiness and the path that leads one to it (Ibid, 1986: 415-416, 312).

Moreover, Avicenna has also been influenced by Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in the discussion of practical wisdom; but this does not mean that Avicenna did not have any invention in this regard. He has paid attention to the end of wisdom in his definition of it and argues that theoretical wisdom represents a well-grounded belief in creatures the existence of which does not belong to human action and it is just intended to serve man as a vehicle leading him to theoretical right opinion; but practical wisdom is the acquisition of an opinion concerned with action or good knowledge. In fact, according to Avicenna, soul reaches its own perfection through theoretical and practical wisdom. He believes that with wisdom in the domain of theory, we would know the universe (Being) while through wisdom in the area of practice we would come to grips with the ought and ought not both of which lead us to the perfection of soul. Thus, man turns into an intelligent universe similar to the external universe and reaches the final happiness in the otherworld (Avicenna, 1978: 30). Thus, Avicenna describes perfection of human soul as the ultimate telos of wisdom in both theoretical and practical branches. Furthermore, Avicenna in "*Uyun Al Hikmah*" [Fountains of Wisdom] and "*Theology of Shifa*" has accepted Aristotelian classification of theoretical and practical wisdom. He has subdivided theoretical wisdom into physics, mathematics and first philosophy and also subdivided practical wisdom into moral philosophy or ethics, economics and politics. He believes that moral philosophy or ethics deals with human knowledge of moral virtues and the quality of their acquisition as well as the knowledge of moral vices and the quality of one's being purified of them. In fact, Avicenna believes that man is able to reach virtues by application of moral philosophy and keep himself away from vices. As to economics or "wisdom of house management", he would argue that one's knowledge of this wisdom lays the ground for cooperation of family members, spouses and children and by application of this wisdom, they can know the reciprocal relations with each other and act according to it. Moreover, as to civil wisdom or politics, Avicenna argues that this is a wisdom in the light of which man can know the quality of collaboration with people and the knowledge of the quality of participation with people guarantees the interests of existence mankind (ibid,

1978: 30; Zabihi, 2018: 95). However, in “*Mantiq Al Mashriyyin*” [Logic of Illuminationists], Avicenna has presented an innovative classification in the domain of sciences and defined four branches for each one of the theoretical and practical wisdom. He contends that theoretical wisdom includes natural, mathematical, divine and universal sciences while practical wisdom includes ethics, house management, politics and prophetic knowledge. In fact, presenting prophetic knowledge as one of the branches of practical wisdom is considered to be one of his privileges in this regard (Avicenna, 1983: 7-8; Zabihi, 2013: 20).

Sheikh Eshraq has also divided wisdom into two types of theoretical and practical wisdom and contends that theoretical wisdom is concerned with the knowledge of affairs that do not have anything to do with human actions, e.g. knowledge of heavens, land and practical wisdom, knowledge of affairs that belong to human actions. He divides practical wisdom into three divisions of ethics, house management and politics. Moreover, Sheikh Eshraq believes that since man needs to know the virtues in order to do them and also needs to know the vices in order to avoid them, the existence and knowledge of practical wisdom are necessary (Sohrewardi, 1996: 2-3).

### 1- Mulla Sadra and Practical Wisdom

In many works such as *Al Hikmah Al Mutalyah fi Al Asfar Al Aqlyyah Al Arba*, *Al Mabda va Al Maad*, *Sharh Al Hedayah Al Athiryyah*, *Al Shawahid Al Rububyyah fi Al Manahij Al Sulukyyah*, *Tafsir Al Quran Al Karim* and etc., Mulla Sadra has discussed practical wisdom. Just like most of the Islamic thinkers, Mulla Sadra has not created any independent work in this area and his discussions concerning practical wisdom can be seen in his works on science of soul or psychology. In the fourth volume of *Kitab Al Asfar*, he has spoken of four applications of practical wisdom. It needs to be mentioned that practical wisdom in the fourth sense is equal to Aristotelian phronesis. Practical wisdom in its first application is one of the triple virtues of practical reason and is an in-between state of shrewdness and retardedness.

In fact, practical wisdom in this sense is not part of philosophy rather it is a mental disposition. Generally speaking, key moral and mental virtues that serve as the source of good deeds include three moral virtues of courage, chastity and wisdom. Courage is a middle term disposition between fearlessness and cowardice, chastity is a middle term disposition between lechery and subsidence while wisdom is the middle term between shrewdness and retardedness. Every act of radicalism and negligence in the domain of these virtues is considered to be a vice. However, radicalism in practical wisdom as an alternative of theoretical wisdom is a virtue. Practical wisdom in its second application is the science of disposition while in its third sense, it refers to the actions issued from the disposition. Practical wisdom in its fourth application is an alternative to theoretical wisdom and equal to Aristotelian Phronesis. Practical wisdom in this sense is neither an extension of disposition nor part of philosophy. This application of practical wisdom includes a second and third type; because it discusses both the science of disposition and actions issued originated in the disposition. Thus, practical wisdom in the present study does not refer to disposition rather to human knowledge of the dispositional features, their

quality, nature of good and bad as well as soul's knowledge of the process of their acquisition by the soul or the latter's purification of them and the knowledge of economic, civil and political knowledge and in general, the knowledge of those affairs in the existence and extraction of which we are involved. Moreover, Mulla Sadra believes that this type of knowledge is not instinctual and it is reached through acquisition (Sadr Al Din Shirazi, 1981, vol. 4: 116-117).

Generally speaking, Mulla Sadra divides wisdom in the sense of perception of universals and rational truths the existence of which is immovable and brings about human perfection, into two types of theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom (ibid: 116). According to Mulla Sadra, philosophy or wisdom is perfection of human soul through the knowledge of the truths of beings. He divides beings into two types. First type covers those creatures that are not in our custody and we do not have any impact on their existence and their actions are not in our control. Mulla Sadra believes that such entities belong to theoretical wisdom; but the second type includes the creatures the action, creation and existence of which are in our control and such entities belong to practical wisdom. He argues that the ultimate telos of theoretical wisdom is that man would achieve existential promotion that leads him to divine characters. In other words, he would become a rational world similar to the objective world. Furthermore, ultimate telos of practical wisdom is that one would allow his own soul to govern the body in order to prepare himself for the divine ethics. In fact, Mulla Sadra believes that the telos of theoretical and practical wisdom is expressed in verse 6 of Surah Al Tin "*except those who have faith and do righteous deeds. There will be an everlasting reward for them*". He believes that "except those who have faith" is referring to the ultimate telos or end of theoretical wisdom and "and do righteous deeds" presents the end of practical wisdom (ibid, 1981, vol. 1: 20-21; ibid, 1998: 7; Hassanzadeh Amoli, 2008: 120-122).

In general, Mulla Sadra has considered the subject-matter of practical wisdom to be human soul and contends that the perfection of human soul is known as the true happiness and original existence of man. Therefore, understanding of practical wisdom as the knowledge that leads to and ends up in action is contingent upon the definition that Mulla Sadra has offered of happiness for human life; but human happiness and prosperity has different definition given the varied worldviews and approaches. Happiness in one type of classification is divided into worldly happiness (reaching material positions and happiness in world) and otherworldly happiness. There is no doubt that humans have had always different views concerning worldly and material happiness and every school and group has offered a particular definition of happiness. In proportion to this type of classification and categorization, practical wisdom is also given different definitions. According to Mulla Sadra, human true happiness is understood in relation to the perfection of soul. Moreover, Mulla Sadra believes that there is no doubt that the specific and proper perfection of everyone and everything is the most perfect degree that s/he/it can achieve. Thus, according to Mulla Sadra, perfection of human soul is joining intelligible truths and reaching the state of immateriality and divine nearness. Therefore, to understand the position of practical wisdom in the philosophy of Mulla Sadra, one needs to pay attention to soul and its perfection as the subject-matter of practical wisdom.



## 1-2- Explanation of Soul and Its Perfection as the Subject-Matter of Practical Wisdom

As to the problem of emergence or eternity of human soul, most Muslim thinkers until the time of Mulla Sadra had sided by the theory of Spiritual Emergence and Eternity of Soul. Relying on his own specific philosophical foundations such as primacy of existence, analogical gradation in the levels of existence and trans-substantial motion, Mulla Sadra broached the theory of physical emergence and spiritual eternity of soul. According to this theory, at the outset of its emergence, soul is a physical substance; but thanks to its continuous trans-substantial motion, it carries on with its evolutionary initiation through reaching the higher and more intensified levels of existence until the point where it turns into an immaterial being. Therefore, Mulla Sadra contends that soul is a physical entity at the outset and later it grows into the level of vegetative soul level in its embryonic form in the mother's womb. In his childhood until reaching the stage of growth, it has the level of animal soul and after development of the power of thinking and intellection the soul turns rational. On the other hand, Mulla Sadra believes that the happiness and prosperity of every faculty is its reaching to what seems to be desirable for that faculty's nature without any further disadvantage. Happiness of every faculty is also deemed to be the fulfillment of the perfection of the faculty at issue without any further impediment. In fact, according to Mulla Sadra, every faculty's perfection shares the same genus or species with the faculty. Accordingly, perfection of soul based on its rational essence is "reaching the rational truths and becoming the subject for divine forms and existential hierarchy and overall ontological makeup from the First Intellect to the lowest level of existence" (Sadr Al Din Shirazi, 1975: 361). He believes that human perfection lies in the nearness to divinity or in mystical term, intuitive knowledge and union. Quran has conceptualized this notion as follows:

*"Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord" (Al-e Emran: 169); "In an Assembly of Truth, in the Presence of a Sovereign Omnipotent" (Qamar: 55); "Is it not to Allah that sincere devotion is due? But those who take for protectors other than Allah (say): "We only serve them in order that they may bring us nearer to Allah." Truly Allah will judge between them in that wherein they differ. But Allah guides not such as are false and ungrateful" (Zumar: 3); "And was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) nearer" (Najm: 8-9).*

Therefore, human perfection lies in seeing oneself as mere attachment to God and identical with divinely grounded entity. This is conceived based on the doctrine of relationality and existential dependency of the effect as compared to cause. Then, the ultimate telos of perfection is presential knowledge (knowledge by presence) and it is acquired through action and observation according to/of obligations laid by Sharia (Mesbah Yazdi, 2014: 93).

Thus, human perfection needs to reach a degree where man sees himself as mere attachment to God. Accordingly, man is deemed to be identical with relationality. This has been noticed in the verse 15 of Surah Al Fatir: "O ye men! It is ye that have need of Allah: but Allah is the One Free of all wants, worthy of all praise". Mulla

Sadra believes that man can reach this position when he achieves divine knowledge and he would keep up with divine teachings and rules in the domain of practice. Then, requirement for divine union is also knowledge and application of theoretical wisdom as well as the knowledge and application of practical wisdom. In fact, according to Mulla Sadra, theoretical wisdom alone cannot lead man to divine union, because without action, knowledge will not have any value. By the same token, without theoretical wisdom, action will be meaningless. Mulla Sadra argues that reaching happiness and understanding divine presence are of different levels and degrees in the sense that they include both worldly and otherworldly happiness. It needs to be noted that in “Kasr Al Asnam Al Jahilyyah” [Breaking the Idols of Ignorance], Mulla Sadra has considered divine knowledge to be the true happiness of man rather even identical with the latter. He contends that as long as the heart is in the world, it cannot understand this “identity with happiness” and such an understanding can only be reached in the otherworld (Sadr Al Din Shirazi, 2002: 75). In volume ninth of “Asfar”, he argues that true happiness belongs to the otherworld. He states that when the soul reaches original and true knowledge, it can turn into the “Evidential Reason”, “Theoretical Reason” and “Fulfilled Reason”. In proportionate to this knowledge, the soul can be benefitted from true happiness. According to Mulla Sadra, as long as the man is present in this terrestrial globe and resides in the body, he cannot take advantage of pleasure and happiness as much as the time of departure from the body. He believes that pleasure and happiness that are reached in the moment of departure from body is not comparable with the worldly pleasure and happiness, because there are internal and external impediments for the soul that obstruct the soul’s wayfaring towards the highest pleasure and happiness in the worldly life. He has described the potential state of soul and its belonging to body as the internal impediments and argues that the soul in this state cannot be mindful of its own essence and become united with the Active Intellect. Furthermore, elemental body and senses are taken to be the external obstacles and Sadra contends that after departure of the soul from the body, these obstacles are overcome and man can reach the most perfect degree of happiness (ibid, 1981, vol. 9: 125-126; Mohammadrezaei and Eliasi, 2008: 103-104). But this does not mean that man in this world cannot reach happiness. Rather the soul in the domain of practice can reach the best pleasure in the world and touch the happiness by taking good actions and purification of mental pollutions. However, worldly happiness can never be in its highest level due to the existence of internal and external impediments. Thus, practical wisdom is the requirement of worldly happiness and the latter is the premise of the otherworldly happiness. Then, to reach true happiness, both theoretical and practical wisdom are necessary. Therefore, as it was previously mentioned, perfection of soul lies in reaching the level of intellectual purity and presential intuition of divinity and this is the very goal of practical wisdom.

## 2-2- Ontological Status of Practical Wisdom

Mulla Sadra has proposed three reasons in “Sharh Al Hidayah Al Athiryyah” and four reasons in “Kasr Al Asnam Al Jahilyyah” concerning the superiority of theoretical wisdom over the practical wisdom from the point of view of ontological status. The reasons broached by Mulla Sadra in “Sharh Al Hidayah Al Athiryyah”

are as follows: first, practical wisdom is a means of action and the means of everything is lower than it; then practical wisdom is lower than action and it is evident that action (praxis) is lower than the knowledge of the truths. Secondly, theoretical wisdom is a complementary element of theoretical power of soul that is taken to be its higher aspect while practical wisdom is the complementary part of the practical faculty that is the lowest aspect of soul. Thirdly, as final reason, theoretical wisdom comprises of the knowledge of Origin and Return and contemplation of the universe created by the Creator and from practical wisdom the knowledge of the system of worldly life and otherworldly salvation are reached (ibid, 2000: 7; Hosseini Ardakani, 1996: 93-94; Samadieh, 2018: 15).

In “Kasr Al Asnam Al Jahilyyah”, sciences are divided into two intuitive and transactional types and it is stated that given the fact that practical sciences are related to the transaction with the Creator or the creatures, they are known as the transactional sciences; while knowledge types particularly divine theoretical science are intuitive. Mulla Sadra’s reasons of the superiority of theoretical wisdom and intuitive sciences have been expressed in this book as follows: first, the level of practical sciences due to their being a means for reforming the actions is lower than the actions themselves; because every premise is lower than the conclusion. Secondly, what is intended to pave the ground for fulfilment of a goal is surely itself lower than the goal and the latter is higher and superior and sciences are always the main goal. In fact, Mulla Sadra believes that sciences are higher and superior than the actions and considers the former to be a goal for the latter. Thirdly, there is a hierarchical relationship between the intuitive sciences. In other words, some of these sciences are higher than the other. Thus, knowledge of God is superior and higher than all of these sciences, because it is the means through which one can reach true happiness, rather it is identical with true happiness and good (ibid, 2002: 59, 75). Fourth reason of the superiority of the theoretical wisdom over practical wisdom is that religious rulings consist of the ought and ought not related to the voluntary affairs. Voluntary affairs in this context represent those affairs that man has the capability of undertaking or refusing to undertake them. In other words, man is free to choose to let them come to existence or refuse to let them happen. Nevertheless, mental dispositions and cordial states are natural affairs that have their roots in Supreme Origin and the servants do not have any immediate involvement in it. Thus, there is no need for encouragement and persuasion in their fulfilment or eradication (ibid: 82).

In fact, Sadr Al Din Shirazi in his “Kasr Al Asnam Al Jahilyyah” introduces divine knowledge as the goal of human actions and deeds and believes that divine knowledge is the crown of all sciences, knowledge and their origin and also the end of all techniques and arts (ibid, 2002: 69-71). He argues that the noblest knowledge among the sciences is the knowledge of God that is in itself a goal and not a means for reaching a goal; because true happiness is acquired through it and precisely speaking, it is identical with true happiness. He does not consider the divine knowledge to be a means rather he contends that it is the goal as such (ibid: 74-76). Actually, Mulla Sadra once has sided by the idea of superiority of practical wisdom over the theoretical wisdom. He believes that if people are not deeply thinking of their sciences, states and actions, they will consider the sciences to be the premise of states which are themselves believed to be the premise of actions. Finally, they



would give the highest stage in the hierarchy to the deeds, because they are the ultimate goal. But Sadr Al Din Shirazi argues that in people who have a deep vision and enlightened nature the contrary occurs, i.e. they want the actions and deeds for their attributes and states (ibid: 71-72).

But in “Shawahid Al Rububyyah” [Heavenly Evidence], Mulla Sadra has endorsed the idea of equality of the status of theoretical and practical wisdom and took them to be one. He contends that two faculties of soul, i.e. faculties of knowing and doing, would become united and turn into one unique faculty through soul’s evolution in its path of intellectual perfection and becoming needless of movements and thoughts. As a result, its knowledge turns into action and the latter turns into the former. Soul has two theoretical and practical faculties. Theoretical faculty is used for understanding the truth and falsity while practical faculty is used for understanding the good and evil of the affairs. Theoretical faculty is concerned with the contingent, the Necessary and the impossible entities while practical faculty is referred to in the domain of the beautiful, the ugly and the ordinary. Theoretical reason requires the body and practical reason at the outset and if man is among the divinely minded humans who are nearer to the Divine Presence in this world; his theoretical reason is dependent on his own (ibid, 1981: 201-202).

Thus, according to Mulla Sadra, one can study the status of practical wisdom and theoretical wisdom from two perspectives. Firstly, from the point of view of their subject-matter, attributes and goal; in this case, Mulla Sadra believes in the superiority of theoretical wisdom over the practical wisdom; because the subject-matter of theoretical wisdom is the knowledge of God while the subject-matter of practical wisdom is human action. On the other hand, theoretical wisdom is a complementary part of theoretical faculty of soul that is its noblest aspect and practical wisdom is the supplement of practical faculty which is believed to be the lowest aspect of soul. Secondly, it can be considered from the point of view of the status of these two in human life for reaching happiness. In this case, Mulla Sadra has taken knowledge and practice to be of mutual nature (Samadieh, 2018: 14-16).

### 3- Mulla Sadra on Sharia

In “Mafatih Al Gheyb” [Keys of the Invisible], Mulla Sadra defines Sharia and its subject-matter as follows: “Prophecy has an essence called Velayat [guardianship] and an appearance called Sharia. Then, the Prophet receives the meanings and truths from God or angel thanks to guardianship. These truths are the highest level of prophecy and guardianship. He notifies to the servants whatever he receives from the Lord either directly or indirectly. In doing so, he purifies the servants and teaches them wisdom and the book and this is not possible but through Sharia. Sharia consists of a series of affairs conveyed by the Prophet from the Book and the Tradition and what is inferred from the jurisprudential judgements through Ijtihad” (Sadr Al Din Shirazi, 1984b: 485).

Moreover, in “Shawahid Al Rububyyah”, as to Sharia, he would state that Sharia is law; it is the law that regulates the worldly affairs and paves the ground for nearness to God. Sharia is something that continuously reminds the otherworld and human return to God. Mulla Sadra contends that for regulation of people’s livelihood in this world and paving the ground for them to near themselves to the

Lord, we need a Sharia sent by God and through the prophet for them. This Sharia cannot be sent through the angels for cultivation of the mankind and also other creatures have lower status than that of man. Thus, there must be some humans with divine signs like miracle who can receive the divine Sharia and notify it to the mankind (ibid, 1981A: 360; ibid, 2007: 370).

As to the goal and end of Sharia, one can also state that one of the reasons of the revelation of Quran and Sharia is that with it, human ignorance is overcome and at the same time, undesirable ethics and behaviors are eradicated (ibid, 1992: 17-18). In fact, Mulla Sadra has referred to the levels of human soul in his explanation of the goal of Sharia and considered its fulfilment to be the goal of Sharia. He believes that human soul has several levels like potentiality, physicality, inanimateness, vegetativeness, instinctuality and brutality as well as sensation, imagination and illusion. After these, there is human level from the earliest stages to its noblest stage and after it, there lies the angelic level that ends up in union with divinity (ibid, 1981a: 361-362). In "Asrar Al Ayat", Mulla Sadra has argued that the goal of Sharia is the invitation of servants towards God in this world and the otherworld as the ultimate destination of the wayfarers and servants. He believes that in Quran, knowledge features human deliverance from wretchedness and misery and reaching the noblest level of perfection. He also expresses the quality of wayfaring towards God and acquisition of his satisfaction and keeping the company of the divine spirits and angels (ibid, 1984A: 47-49).

Therefore, Mulla Sadra believes that the goals of Sharia include the reform of states of human heart, eradication of undesirable attributes and behaviors and internal diseases, eradication of human ignorance, reform of instinctual faculty and human brutality, leading man from the lowest level of defectiveness to the climax of perfection, reinforcement of noble aspect of human existence, leading human soul to the perfection, leading man to true happiness or nearness to God. As a result, we can summarize all these goals in one single ultimate telos of Sharia, i.e. revelation of the essence, attributes and actions of Divine Presence in human soul; this is indeed a goal as such and not a means for reaching a goal; because true happiness is reached through it and precisely speaking, it is identical with true happiness. Therefore, Sadr Al Din Shirazi has introduced divine knowledge to be the goal of human actions and deeds.

#### 4- Relationship of Practical Wisdom and Sharia

Before Mulla Sadra, Avicenna in his "Uyun Al Hikmah" had discussed the relationship of Sharia and practical wisdom. He has considered Sharia to be the origin of all three types of practical wisdom, i.e. civil, economic and moral wisdom (Avicenna, 1978: 30). In fact, practical wisdom in Avicenna's philosophical system is based on Sharia and part of Sharia. To explain the relationship of practical wisdom and Sharia according to Mulla Sadra, one needs to pay attention to a number of important points.

#### 4-1- Goal of Practical Wisdom and Sharia

According to Mulla Sadra, Sharia and practical wisdom pursue a unique goal; because the goal of practical wisdom and Sharia is leading human soul to perfection. In “Shawahid Al Rububyyah”, he clearly states that among the task of prophet is that he would make the man alert to the devotional actions and servitude so that they are brought back to the angelic stage from the animal stage (ibid, 1981A: 361-362). In fact, Mulla Sadra believes that the general principle governing the wisdom of Sharia rules is happiness. He argues that search for the otherworld is the fundamental principle of happiness as a whole and the love of this world is the origin of every misery. Generally speaking, according to Mulla Sadra, the goal of all Sharia rules is the reinforcement of the noble aspect of man (ibid: 368). He believes that legislators of the Sharia rules struggle to reform the noblest part of human existence and its intention is purification of the existential substance of man that stands until the Doomsday and to this end, one is strongly recommended to reform the lowest part and defected existential substance of man. Moreover, Mulla Sadra believes that the goal of all Sharia rules is leading the man to Divine Presence and the honor of meeting the Lord, purification of the faculty of lust and anger, leading man from the lowest level of defectiveness to the climax of perfection and from the fall of this world to the nobility of the otherworld and this is merely possible through the Knowledge of God and His Attributes, belief in angels and Divine Books and His prophets and the Last Day ; because soul is constituted by reason and the latter owes its existence to the Divine Presence. In fact, according to Mulla Sadra, servitude is constitutive of the essence of soul and becoming divine is also identical with the Nature of Divine Presence (ibid: 371-372).

On the other hand, as it is noted in the text, according to Mulla Sadra, perfection of soul is also considered to be the goal of practical wisdom. To put it otherwise, reaching the stage of rational purity and presential understanding of God is the very goal that is pursued by the practical wisdom. In volume 1 of “Asfar”, Mulla Sadra argues: “The key avail of practical wisdom is that by doing good deeds, man would reach a place where the soul has the state of ecstasy and full control of body and the latter is overcome by the soul” (Sadra, 1981: 21; Mesbah Yazdi, 2014: 86).

#### 2-4- Subject-Matter of Practical Wisdom and Sharia

Moreover, there is also correspondence and harmony between Sharia and Practical Wisdom in view of their subject-matter. According to Mulla Sadra, one of the subjects of Sharia is practical wisdom; this is to say that practical wisdom in his eyes is a part of Sharia. In *Mazābir Al Elahyyah* [Divine Manifestations], *Asrar Al Ayat* [Secrets of Signs] and also in *Mafatih Al Gheyb* [Keys to the Invisible], Mulla Sadra argues that Sharia has six sets of accessories. Three sets represent the principles while the second trio is composed of secondary affairs and branches. These six sets consist of 1) knowledge of Truth and its attributes and actions, 2) knowledge of the correct path and degrees of ascension and quality of wayfaring towards God, 3) knowledge of resurrection and returning to God and states, 4) knowledge of prophets, 5) warning of God’s servants of falling the path of error by

remembering the words of the deniers of God and revealing the diversions and irrationalities and miseries to them, and 6) teaching the method of building the stations and stages of initiation towards God and the path of his servitude (Sadr Al Din Shirazi, 2008: 13-14; *ibid*, 1981b: 21; *ibid*, 1984b: 49-50). He calls the third principle of the secondary principles and supplements, practical wisdom and he divides it into three types of purification of ethics, management of house (economics), and political science. Third secondary principle consists of teaching the method of building the stages and stations of wayfaring towards God and the path of his servitude and the way of choosing a vehicle and preparing a good provision for the Last Journey (otherworldly life) and getting oneself ready for bodily discipline. In the words of Sadra, it includes the knowledge of quality of behavior and human treatment of objectivities of this world some of which are inside the man himself and one's knowledge of them is referred to as "Purification of Knowledge" while some others are outside the man and includes management of house (e.g. family, maids, parents and children) and political science and Sharia rules (e.g. ransom, revenge and rules) (*ibid*, 2003: 17-18). Moreover, Sadr Al Din Shirazi in his "Kasr Al Asnam Al Jahilyyah" has also categorized practical wisdom as one of the subdivisions of Sharia and part of it and argues that religion includes three parts, i.e. sciences, states and deeds (*ibid*, 2002: 71).

### 3-4- Practical Wisdom and Its Becoming Applied

One may argue that the most important issue in the domain of practical wisdom is application and the modes of becoming applied; because practical wisdom includes simultaneous knowledge and action and none of the knowledge and action alone can be regarded as practical knowledge; this is what Aristotle has underlined it in numerous occasions. Aristotle believes that practical wisdom in no way refers to the accomplishment of noble deeds. Many people would do just actions while they are not truly just. For example, they would do some actions that are out of the compulsion of law or reluctance or ignorance or another incentive and the accomplishment of an action is not just for the end of the action (Aristotle, 2004, 1144a 8-23). Moreover, there are some mental states in which some people undertake different actions as if a righteous one takes them; such actions are not considered to be practical wisdom, because practical wisdom refers to the knowledge and actions that are accomplished out of free will and for the sake of the actions themselves (*ibid*: 24-27). Thus, none of the knowledge and action alone is regarded as practical wisdom (Stefanazzi, 2013: 3-4; Samadieh, 2017: 10-11). Therefore, one can be referred to as a wise and a man of practical wisdom only if he has the knowledge and action together; But after Aristotle, thinkers gradually strayed from his main purpose and emphasized on knowledge more than action. Of course, as mentioned in the introduction, Aristotle himself used the word *phronesis*, and the word practical wisdom was used by Aristotelian translators and commentators, and it can be said with confidence that this provided the ground for the separation of commentators from the original meaning of Aristotle. Brought. In fact, Aristotle meant *phronesis*, as Heidegger points out in his commentary on *Plato's Sophist*, as a mode of human existence, while the translation of practical wisdom refers more to the knowledge of the guide to action than to a mode of human existence. . When

phronesis is considered as a way of human existence, the meaning is no longer based on knowledge or action alone, but they find meaning together. This distance from Aristotle's original omen is also seen in the texts of Avicenna and Mulla Sadra. However, in the theoretical explanation of this issue, Mulla Sadra considers both knowledge and practice; But in fact it has distanced itself from phronesis or practical wisdom as a way of existence.

Thus, putting practical wisdom into action and letting it to become applied is among the necessary actions should be taken by the societies and individuals as regards the individual, social and political behaviors. Like Aristotle, Mulla Sadra (in the theoretical issues) considers both knowledge and action [episteme/praxis] to be important and vital in practical wisdom but since the practical wisdom is part of Sharia, then no sufficient attention is paid to the modes of making it applied and also presentation of solutions for making it applied. One might find the cause of this in the richness of Islamic doctrines in the domain of practical wisdom and explanation of its patterns in religion and Sharia.

## 5- Conclusion

In general, given the definition Mulla Sadra offered of happiness and its goal, one can explain the relationship of practical wisdom and Sharia. In fact, to explain the relationship of these two, on the one hand, we are faced with Sharia as the totality of beliefs, rules and values that have been sent by the Lord through the prophets for guidance of the mankind and this set of beliefs, rules and values cover different dimensions of human life including worldly and otherworldly, physical and spiritual aspects and regulation of these aspects for human enjoyment of an appropriate and proper life in this world and the otherworld. This appropriate and proper life is the one in which the ultimate telos of human life as a whole is noticed and efforts are made towards their fulfilment. On the other hand, we are dealing with practical wisdom that refers to the knowledge that is concerned with praxis and action and guides man to reach a proper and appropriate action. This definition of practical wisdom includes individual ethics, family ethics and political and social ethics. The influence of Sharia on practical wisdom depends on the definition that Mulla Sadra offers of the practical wisdom and its goal.

In explanation of the relationship of practical wisdom and Sharia, we need to study their goal and subject-matter. According to Mulla Sadra, practical wisdom and Sharia have a unique goal; because both are struggling after it in order to pave the ground for human soul to reach perfection. Moreover, as to the subject matter, we have to note that practical wisdom as conceived by Mulla Sadra, is one of the issues and subdivisions of Sharia. In fact, Mulla Sadra clearly takes Sharia as the origin of practical wisdom and refers to the latter as the former's part. According to Mulla Sadra, Sharia presents the principles of practical wisdom and this is why Mulla Sadra does not have any independent work in the domain of practical wisdom and in one sense he has neglected it in his discussions. The most important criticism that one would level against Mulla Sadra in this area is his forgetfulness of the interpretation of practical wisdom and presentation of solutions for making it applied; this is what every individual and society requires its existence and knowledge.



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