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## Mulla Sadra's View on Tolerance

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### Abstract

Despite the scientific and technological progress seen in the human world today, we are witnessing the disproportionate growth of violence in human society. It is, thus, necessary to talk about tolerance in such a time. The purpose of this study is to examine tolerance within the framework of Sadra's philosophy. The theoretical foundations of tolerance in Transcendent Theosophy will be explained in four categories: epistemology, methodology, ontology, and anthropology. Though Sadra has been influenced by Aristotelian virtue ethics, he takes a step forward and analyzes tolerance from an ontological point of view, understanding it not as a merely moral virtue but as an ontological-existential perfection towards Godlikeness "ὁμοίωσις θεῶν" [*homoiōsis theō*] which is the very essence of wisdom. Tolerance and violence in Sadra's philosophy constitute two pyramid-like structures reciprocally. The pyramid of tolerance has reason and justice at its pinnacle while on the top of the pyramid of violence lie ignorance and injustice. Thus, pro-tolerance behavior is resulted from a rational mindset and pro-violence behavior has its origin in ignorance and idiocy. Outcomes of tolerance are the increase of wisdom, social dignity, and influence on people while stagnation, social humility, and isolation result from violence. It is needless to say neither tolerance is always applauded nor violence is always despised. This is why one can speak of the wrath of God and His saints in a meaningful way. Rather it is because of the conditions and their relation with reason and ignorance that we can reach a judgment in this regard. The study is concluded by a reality-based account of Sadra's treatment of his opponents which is followed by an elaboration of his tolerance-centered approach.

**Keywords:** Sadra, Tolerance, Transcendent Theosophy, Virtue Ethics, Godlikeness, Violence.

### Introduction

Human diversity is a divine nomos and this nomos would never change. It is simplemindedness if we expect the people to think alike. The only issue that matters is our encountering with the difference of opinions. Some do not tolerate any form of opposition while some would prefer to listen to the

opponent's views well and even their denial is based on rational proof and kept by moral principles both in confirmation and denial. Smooth talk and gentle behavior with patience are the indices of men of tolerance. One can only speak of tolerance where it is voluntary and is not forceful. In other words, it would simply be "suffering" or "enduring"

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certain things that one does not accept yet against which one is powerless. However, it is wrong to conclude that the tolerant must be in a position to effectively prohibit or interfere with the tolerated. Needless to say that a minority without this power may certainly be tolerant in holding the view that if it had such power, it would not use it to suppress other parties (Williams, 1996, p. 1-18).

Nonetheless, according to Mulla Sadra, true men of knowledge promote tolerance while those who pretend to be men of knowledge side with violence. He sees tolerance as the major index for the identification of a true knowledge of man. The one who encounters his audience with violence is not an authentic man of knowledge. These fake scholars are described by Sadra with such attributes as animosity, curse, and hatred. They would harass and tease their opponents if they had the power, otherwise they would resort to defamation, ill language, and excommunication (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005b, p. 2/190).

Thus, people's encounter with their opponents is based on violence. This violent behavior originated in idiocy and ignorance.

In the present study, we intend to answer the following three research questions:

- 1- What is the nature of violence and tolerance and the outcomes of these two in Mulla Sadra's philosophy?
- 2- What are the theoretical foundations of tolerance in Sadra's view?
- 3- What relationship exists between the theoretical foundations of tolerance and Sadra's tolerance of his opponents?

### Research Background

In today's world, despite the progress that man has had in the domain of science and technology, we witness the disproportionate growth of violence in human society. In such a time, discussion of tolerance is an undeniable necessity. Tolerance can be examined from different legal, political, mystical, religious, or literary perspectives. In this study, we intend to study tolerance in the context of Sadra's philosophical system. No independent research has been conducted so far on this issue. A literature review similar to the current study shows that the following studies have been authored on this topic (Masroori, 2010; Yazdani, 2020; Tursunovna, 2019; Akhlaq, 2012; Herberg-Rothe, 2023; Kooshki et al., 2021).

Of course, it is needless to say that in none of these research works tolerance in Sadraean theosophy has been the core of the discussion. This study can also be seen as a humble effort in the path of applying Islamic philosophy in practical contexts because by discussing tolerance and uncovering its metaphysical foundations in Sadra's intellectual system the ground will be tilled for bringing philosophy to the life of contemporary man. No doubt, tolerance has an undeniable relation with the life of contemporary man who despite the development of civilization, science, and technology unfortunately is bogged down in the swamp of violent behaviors.

### Fundamental Place of Tolerance in Sadra's Philosophical Perspective

Tolerance as a term is considered to be one of the key good and praised human attributes implying patience before people's mistreatments (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/218).

The literal meaning of the word tolerance is 'to bear', as a concept, it means respect, and acceptance (Bakhtiari et al., 2005, p. 37). In Arabic, *tasāmuḥ* means soft and easiness (Ibn Manzur, 2003). Hence, tolerance means a deliberate decision to refrain from prohibiting, hindering or otherwise coercively interfering with the conduct of which one disapproves, although one has the power to do so (Horton, 2003 p. 9/230). It has been used with other words in Sadra's works the outline of which can show the place of tolerance in Transcendent Theosophy. According to Sadra, violence is the opposite of tolerance and its knowledge can help us to better understand tolerance (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/377).

The definition of every science is the opening chapter of that science. Tolerance represents the opening chapter of philosophy. As we will see, tolerance is a considerable and colorful presence in philosophy from its definition to its end.

Philosophy in its definition is associated with tolerance. Sadra speaks of philosophy in two aspects (i.e. theory and practice) in the first volume of *Asfar*. In the domain of theory, he considers the end to be the knowledge of beings while in the domain of practice, the end is described to be assimilation to God. He explains both goals referring to Quranic verses. Having referred to these two dimensions, he mentions the renowned definition of philosophy, i.e. "philosophy is assimilation to God" (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2004, p. 1/25).

On the other hand, Quranic verses bespeak the ever-extending Divine Benevolence for everyone. Sadra takes divine provision for the livelihood of all creatures including the infidels and gives extra time to them to evade the punishment as a sign of divine tolerance with all creatures (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 417-419). Moreover, he refers to the Ever-extending Divine Compassion by quoting other verses (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a).

- Thus, one should say that assimilation with God and theosophization are associated with tolerance and open-mindedness. If a philosopher has theosophization or deification as his goal in view of his being a philosopher, he will not be neglectful of divine qualities and ethics. Philosophy is by no means in harmony with violence, aggression, narrow-mindedness, and bigotry. This is specifically the case with Islamic philosophers whose religion requires them to be open-minded and a man of tolerance. Referring to a prophetic tradition, Sadra considers Islamic Sharia to be magnanimous and tolerant (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2010b, p. 2/121).

Sadra openly recommends tolerance as a requirement of assimilation to ethics. This shows the relevance of tolerance to the definition of philosophy from his perspective (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/418).

He believes that the philosopher's ethics is constituted of tolerance with all people including family members, neighbors, friends, and relatives, or as in Sadra's words, "creatures as a whole" (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/418).

Thus, tolerance is a requirement of philosophy and the philosopher in view of his philosophical vision behaves in the spirit of tolerance. The phrase "creatures as a whole" implies that tolerance as understood by Sadra is no exception.

The more advanced a person is in this course and the further he moves toward wisdom and divine ethics, the more generous and tolerant he will be. In other words, the wiser is a man, the more tolerant he is with the creatures.

In this study, as we will see, tolerance (and the conceptual network driven by it) are considered to be branches of courage. Courage as the middle term of recklessness and cowardice is

itself seen as a moral virtue. It is important to note that although Sadra has been influenced by Aristotelian virtue ethics in his discussion of tolerance, he takes further steps beyond Aristotle in this sphere. Though he is a virtue ethicist, Sadra analyzes this virtue based on an ontological sense of perfection. Accordingly, he understands tolerance as something more than a moral virtue and as an ontological perfection towards Godlikeness.

### Sadra's Analysis of Internal Structure of Tolerance and Violence

In Sadra's works, tolerance is used in the sense of friendliness or kindness (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/376). On the one hand, Sadra has considered clumsiness to be a sign of ignorance and stupidity which opposes friendliness as the essence of tolerance. On the other hand, he defines clumsiness as a token of violence and oppression that conflicts with friendliness and tolerance (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/377).

Violation in this context refers to what stands against leniency and toleration such as torture, violence, and oppression. Accordingly, one can state that in Sadra's view, violence is the opposite of tolerance. Tolerance is the path of the men of reason while violence is the path of stupidity.

For tolerance and violence, one can deem a conceptual network. This network can be reached by referring to Sadra's words in his different works and contributes to a better analysis of these two concepts. It needs to be mentioned that this conceptual analysis can provide us with an outline of the concepts related to tolerance and violence which leads us in turn to a better understanding of the nature of tolerance and violence.

### Tolerance and Its Constituents

Upon a reflection on the works of Sadra, one can argue that tolerance as understood by him is of the following constituents:

- 1- Reason
- 2- Justice
- 3- Patience
- 4- Love and compassion
- 5- Security and immunity of oneself and others
- 6- Flexibility.
- 7- Soberness

Reason and justice respectively stand on the top of these constituents (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/349). These constituents together as a network relevant to tolerance show us its internal structure.

Sadra considers tolerance and patience to be the features of reason (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/419). He mentions tolerance and patience as a strategy in his prelude to *Asfar*, and he naturally recommends Imam Ali (AS) as his model in this regard (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2004, p. 1/11). In his commentary of *Usul Kafi*, he again quotes a tradition of the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) in which patience and tolerance are described as the essential factors of steadiness and eternity of the Islamic religion (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/271-272).

After patience come love and compassion as the key elements of tolerance. Sadra considers kindness and compassion to be equivalent to tolerance (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/376). The pro-tolerance and pacifist man who treats people in the spirit of friendship and compassion simultaneously allows himself and others to live secure and

healthy (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/399). Then, security and health for oneself and others are the alternative notions discussed along with tolerance. Being kind to others is one of the equivalents of tolerance (and being kind as it is tolerance itself) (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/418). Soberness (versus impetuosity and recklessness) is also among the other notions that can be included in the conceptual network related to tolerance (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/353).

Thus, tolerance with all of its pillars is under the governance of reason and justice. Pro-tolerance behavior has its origin in rationality and rational thinking. The person who treats the creatures of God with tolerance is a man of reason and justice.

### Violence and Its Constituents

On the other hand, there is another conceptual network that revolves around violence and one can infer it from the works of Sadra. At the top of this network stands ignorance followed by oppression which in turn comes before the ancillary concepts such as animosity, curse, grudge, barbarism, hatred impetuosity, denial of security of oneself and others, and violence (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/399,383).

Thus, all the features we enumerated for a man of reason including love and compassion find their opposites in ignorant man. Animosity and harassing other people are key features of the ignorant (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/399).

The key feature of ignorance and the ignorant is that contrary to the man of reason, even the person himself is not immune and comfortable let alone the people around him whose security and health can be easily damaged by his animosity and curses. Sadra clearly describes "hatred, barbarism, and narrow-mindedness as the consequences of ignorance" (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/399).

He openly emphasizes the point that compassion and kindness are requirements of reason while barbarism and animosity result from ignorance (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/403-404).

Sadra believes that the truth of hatred, animosity, and violence is fire. He argues that whoever treats the creatures of God in the spirit of violence and animosity upon different excuses belongs to hell:

- "There would be a chest which wages a war for two thousand times a day against the Muslims out of his animosity. This chest is full of curses, lies, defamation, and malediction. The fire of divine rage continuously burns in that chest and indeed that chest is a burning wood in hell" (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2002b, p. 39).

### Tolerance as a Moral Virtue and a Fruit of Courage

As physical balance is the source of body health, mental balance is also the origin of mental health which one refers to as good manner (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/349). Justice is achieved when one's internal faculties are in balance and this moderate stance of internal faculties is called good manner (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/384). Sadra has studied three faculties of perception, anger, and lust, and discussed the excess, negligence, and balance of each one of them (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/352).

Balance in the faculty of anger leads to tolerance as excess in anger results in violence to the faculty of anger, Sadra speaks of excess, negligence, and moderation. Excess in anger is referred to as recklessness and fearlessness while negligence is thought to represent cowardice and finally, courage stands

for the middle term between excess and negligence. Thus, courage is one of the moral virtues that stands in between recklessness and cowardice which in turn represent moral vices. Then, Sadra writes of the branches of courage and interestingly, he speaks of such notions as patience, forgiveness, overcoming one's anger as well as soberness and awe: "and from its equilibrium results ... patience and gentleness, overcoming one's anger and forgiving people, soberness, awe and compassion" (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/353). Therefore, according to Sadra's words, overcoming one's anger, forgiveness, and being compassionate toward people are among the fruits of courage (equilibrium in the faculty of anger (passion). Since violence stands against tolerance, then overcoming one's anger (self-control) and forgiveness leads us to the same conceptual network under tolerance. Having this analysis in mind, one can state that tolerance is among the ramifications and results of courage which is in turn the equilibrium of the faculty of anger. Said differently, the faculty of anger when it is in balance has tolerance, overcoming one's anger, forgiveness, and soberness as its fruits. Here a subtle point is revealed to the effect that in Sadra's view, forgiving people is a sign of courage. To state the matter otherwise, a man is courageous and can forgive.

Sometimes Sadra uses the term "dignity" to refer to the balance in the faculty of anger which has rush and impatience as its opposites (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/383). Thus, soberness lies under the conceptual network of tolerance while impetuosity and recklessness are part of the conceptual network of violence.

Therefore, violence is rooted in excessive anger and imbalance of the faculty of anger. Violent behavior is a sign of an imbalance of internal faculties and as a result, bad manners. Such a person is no more under the control of justice and reason and in Sadra's words, he is a man of oppression, ignorance, and idiocy.

A man who knows only the language of punch and insult instead of rational thinking is an ignorant person who does not have any balance and ethical beauty. Pro-violence behavior is analyzed in this way and finally ends up in ignorance and idiocy. But on the contrary, one who approaches the opponent in the spirit of flexibility, patience, compassion, and dignity bespeaks indeed his moral beauty and balance.

It is noteworthy that in this study, tolerance is considered to be an attribute of perfection and virtue when it originates in reason, and also, violence is seen as a vice when it is rooted in ignorance, otherwise it is evident that tolerance-based behavior is not prescribed forever rather in the face of evil and injustice, tolerance is itself a sign of weakness and ignorance. By the same token, violence and wrath are not always evaluated negatively. This is why we can speak of the wrath of the Lord and His saints. Said in a nutshell, tolerance, violence, and wrath all represent perfection and virtue if they are enlightened by reason and rationality not overshadowed by bigotry and ignorance.

### **Violence and Tolerance: Mulla Sadra on Their Consequences**

So far, we have analyzed each one of the violence and tolerance as opposing notions and within the context of their respective exclusive conceptual-essential network. Now we intend to excavate their consequences in Sadra's system.

Wisdom is the outcome of tolerance and radicalism is the outcome of violence:

Among the outcomes of tolerance, one can refer to wisdom while intellectual radicalism and stagnation are some of the key results of violence. It is interesting to note that radicalism and idiocy in one sense are themselves the source of violence but as we will see, violence itself can lead to the increase of radicalism. Tolerance and compassion are of paramount importance in the achievement of wisdom. Sadra quotes a prophetic tradition in this regard and refers to modesty as a prerequisite for the flourishing of wisdom. Then, he discusses its reason. As previously mentioned, Sadra considers modesty to be tantamount to tolerance and he believes that its role is undeniable in the acquisition of wisdom (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005b, p. 2/193).

Tolerance, flexibility, and dignity influence one's inner purity and spiritual preparedness. Thus, the soul becomes capable of the reception of divine wisdom and knowledge. On the other hand, if the soul is associated with certain qualities that contradict the aforementioned ones, e.g. remorselessness, violence, and rag, it will benefit just from intellectual stagnation, oppression, and ignorance (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005b, p. 2/193).

Thus, tolerance guides man in the direction of wisdom, and violence and rage distance him from wisdom and lead to radicalism.

Humility is the outcome of violence and social dignity is the outcome of tolerance:

Sadra believes that humility is the outcome of violence while dignity is the outcome of tolerance. This is articulated in his words as follows:

"If you are seeking to reach dignity and an honorable life not merely by the creatures rather by the Creator too, then you need to be humble both in words and acts" (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/557).

According to Sadra, compassion and humbleness make man respectable and valuable both by the people and God. On the other hand, violence is the source of humility and wretchedness by God and people. Sadra says that if you are interested in wretchedness and humility, you need to act in the spirit of violence (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/557).

### **Influence as the Outcome of Tolerance and Isolation as the Outcome of Violence**

Among the other outcomes of tolerance, one can refer to influencing others as violence thwarts influence and even creates hatred in the audience.

Sadra refers to Quranic verses (20/44; 3/159) which seek to articulate such outcomes of violence and tolerance. In this verse, i.e. "Speak to him with gentle words; perhaps he will ponder or fear" (20/44), God orders Moses and Harun to speak with Pharaoh using gentle words while in the other verse, i.e. "It was by that Mercy of Allah that you (Prophet Muhammad) dealt so leniently with them. Had you been harsh and hardhearted, they would have surely deserted you. Therefore, pardon them and ask forgiveness for them. Take counsel with them in the matter and when you are resolved, put your trust in Allah. Allah loves those who trust" (20/159), God warns His Prophet that if he was harsh and hardhearted, people would have never gathered around him.

Therefore, one can speak of tolerance as a method and strategy that increases influence on the audience contrary to violence that leads to isolation and loneliness.

- This is also why he mentions compassion and kindness as the first qualities of a teacher when he discusses

the status of the latter (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005b, p. 2/201). Moreover, a teacher is required to speak gently and indirectly. Sadra argues that a teacher must speak indirectly using allegories not directly and his language should be compassionate away from rebukes (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005b, p. 2/203).

He believes that direct speech lessens the majesty of the speaker and forces the audience to take a stance against the speaker as if frank language provokes the audience to deny the speaker's words and strengths denial and revolt (Sadr Al

Mutalihin, 2005b, p. 2/203).

Thus, indirect compassionate talk using allegories and ironies can lessen the opposition and prepare the ground for acceptance and this pro-tolerance pattern in one's encounter with the audience is very useful in increasing the influence.

To better comparatively understand this matter, one can depict the conceptual network formed based on Sadra's statements concerning tolerance and violence along with their consequences in the form of two mutually opposing pyramids:

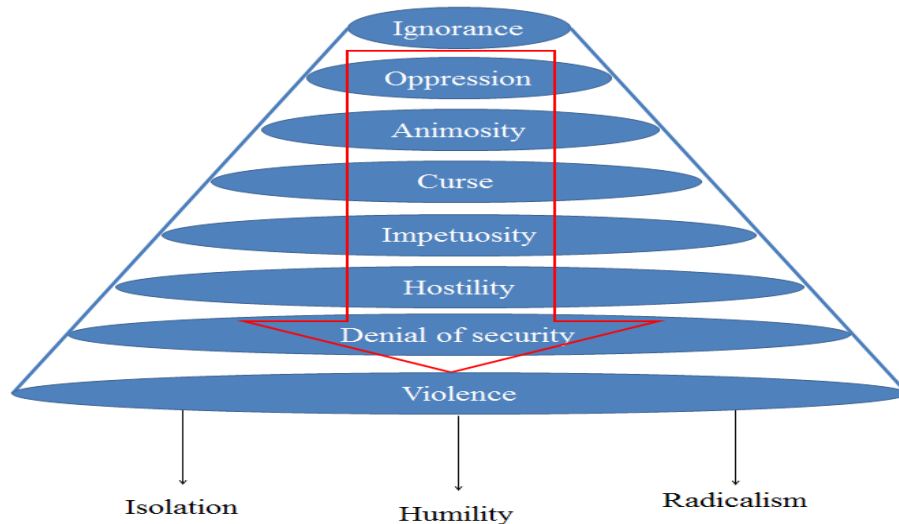


Figure 1. Conceptual Network of Violence

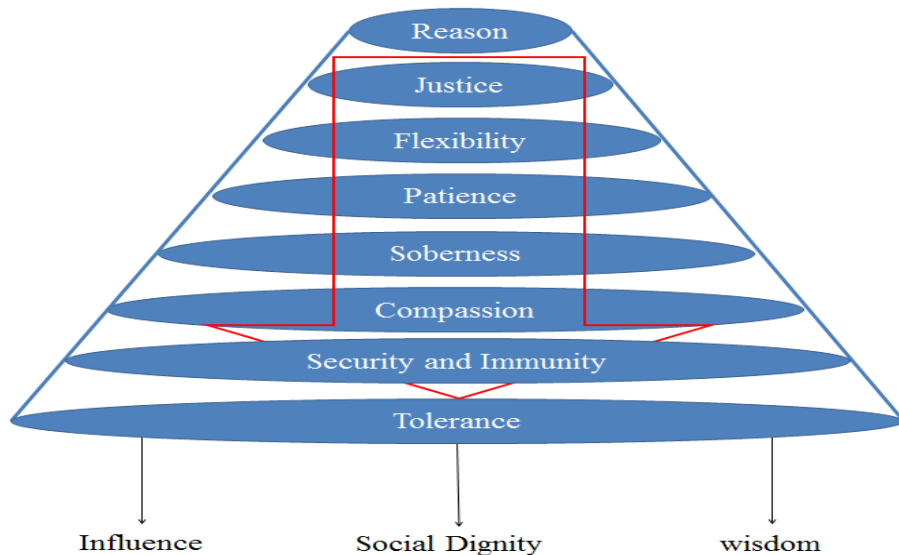


Figure 2. Conceptual Network of Tolerance

Thus, on the top of the pyramid of tolerance stands rationality, and then comes its relevant features. Among the consequences of tolerance, one can name wisdom, social dignity, and growing influence. By the same token, on the top of the pyramid of violence stands ignorance which is followed by its relevant qualities. Finally, one can refer to dogmatism, despondence, and seclusion of people as the results of

violence.

We must now understand that tolerance as a way of life rests on a number of pillars and foundations.

**Theoretical Foundations of Tolerance in Sadra's Theosophical System**

- Though tolerance in Sadra's intellectual system is conceptualized in terms of virtue ethics, more importantly,

tolerance, as conceived from a transcendent point of departure, has its origin in wisdom and is contingent upon the true exemplification of Divine Character. He clearly describes tolerance in terms of the reality of wisdom which is Godlikeness (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/418).

Exemplification of Divine Character, according to Sadra, is of an ontological substructure that is explained based on three fundamental principles of Sadra's philosophy (i.e. fundamental reality) of existence, analogical gradation of existence, and generic unity of existence. At the opening of the first volume of his magnum opus, *Asfar*, Sadra understands the exemplification of divinity in terms of reaching existential goodness (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2004: 1/25).

Regardless of these three Sadraean principles, upon a deep reflection on his theosophy and works, one can infer further principles from his discussion of tolerance. These principles are classified under four categories epistemology, methodology, ontology, and anthropology.

Thus, one should say that although Sadra has not independently discussed tolerance as a philosophical problem, our reflection on his works endorses the point that tolerance in his view is of philosophical basis. Although he introduces tolerance as a moral virtue, he does not stop here; rather, he continues to explain it as being originated in wisdom and related to the exemplification of Divine Character and Godlikeness:

- "You should know that tolerance with the people is among the prophetic qualities and cherished attributes ... as it paves the way for exemplifying the Divine Character and Godlikeness" (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/418).

- It is exactly due to this fact that he not only insists on tolerance with human beings rather with all creatures as a whole. To state the matter differently, one of the Divine Names is "the Merciful" which bespeaks God's universal mercy upon all creatures. Exemplification of Divine Character, thus conceived, puts man on the path of being merciful toward all creatures and tolerant to all living beings. It is interesting to note that Sadra clearly highlights such a relationship and immediately speaks of the universality of God's mercy and tolerance upon and with all human beings even the infidels. He understands tolerance in terms of an ontological perspective and relation to all humans and creatures (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2005a, p. 1/418).

Here one should say that in Sadra's intellectual system, tolerance is beyond being a mere moral virtue as it has ontological foundations. It is thought in relation to the essence of wisdom, i.e. Godlikeness, and takes a universal form related to all creatures. These can be inferred upon reflection on Sadra's words. Thus, one should say that Sadra's metaphysics is the basis of his discussion of tolerance.

The foundations of tolerance in Transcendent Theosophy are as follows:

### Epistemological Foundations

#### 1- Understanding Truth Cannot Be Monopolistic:

According to the triple basic doctrines of the primacy of existence, analogical gradation of existence, and unity of existence, one can speak of the unity of truth and the hierarchical nature of existence. Truth is unique and it has different manifestations and modes.

Truth is unique, extended, and all-embracing. Thus, it cannot be limited to personal understanding and comprehension. Everyone encounters it from one certain

perspective and a particular point of departure appropriate to his existential status: "Verily truth is not limited to the cognitive capability of all those who are of faculty of understanding as it is not also delimited by the capacity of people's reason and imagination" (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2004, p. 1/15).

Therefore, no matter how distinguished one is in science and knowledge, he will not be capable of limiting all truth to his knowledge. Then, truth is not any person's personal property and every human being can only touch one aspect or several aspects of the truth.

One needs to pay sufficient attention to this point in this context because most conflicts have their origin in the fact that sometimes we prefer to see ourselves as the axis of the quest for truth and consider other people to be wrong. However, Sadra makes the crucial observation that truth cannot be monopolized in his preface to *Asfar*. Even though human reason aids in his quest for the truth, it is by no means able to confine it to its shape or dimensions. Truth is limitless. Everyone with his reason and proportionate to his capability can touch a droplet of the sea of truth. It is needless to say one would be an idiot to pretend that truth is only what he has reached!

- Thus, narrow-mindedness of truth is a sign of ignorance while open-mindedness in this regard is a sign of knowledge. The one who is a better and more successful wayfarer in the domain of knowledge would be of a wider perspective (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2010b, p. 3/775).

2- The human existential level is hinged upon the level of his understanding:

Sadra clearly warns man not to deny whatever contradicts his belief rather he argues that since "there is an all-knowledgeable over whoever knows" one needs to believe in analogical gradation of truth (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2004, p. 1/15).

A person will be imprisoned by his narrow knowledge and deprived of a deeper understanding if he ignores what contradicts his ideas. It is interesting to note that such a man is existentially limited to his knowledge, not anything else (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2004: 1/15).

Given the unity of the intellector and the intellected in Sadra's system, our knowledge constitutes our identity. Now if this knowledge is not conditioned by others, then our identity will be limited and closed because it is identical with this level of knowledge. However, if man gets accustomed to making his knowledge unconditioned, then the identity of such a man will not be restricted to his knowledge.

#### 3- Human Fallibility:

- Among the other foundations in the debate of tolerance, one can refer to human fallibility. Acceptance of this point not only informs man of the danger of arrogance; rather, it justifies the objection of our opponent against our error. Sadra pays attention to human error and considers the occurrence of error in human thought to be something in nature. "Human beings are exposed to errors and deficiencies" (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2010a, p. 5/409).

- He quotes a prophetic tradition to the effect that whoever struggles to understand the truth and reaches it will have two rewards while the one who struggles but fails will have one reward. This quotation is indeed a confession of the acceptability of mistakes and errors in the process of knowledge acquisition (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2010b, p. 2/435).

Of course, man needs to reduce his errors to the minimum

by resorting to logic and rational proof, but the occurrence of error in human knowledge due to the errors of his perceptual faculties is evident though it is neglected in some cases and thus, the ground is tiled for conflict, violence, and confrontation in daily human interactions.

### Methodological Foundations

#### 1- Confirmation and Denial Relying on Proof:

- One of the key points of Sadra's methodology in reaching truth is that one needs to follow proof and nothing else. He does not tolerate any confirmation or denial without proof. He argues that if there is an error in my writing in your view and it is a verbal mistake, you should revise it; otherwise, if it is a semantic error and you do not have proof, you should not deny it immediately rather you have to deem it as possible alternative stance (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2010a, p. 5/409).

One of the key points of the discussion of tolerance is that man should teach himself in a way that he would never proceed to confirm or deny an idea without a reason. Sometimes man becomes agitated seeing opposition and decides to resist and retaliate. This gives rise to conflict and violence. Getting accustomed to denial based on proof can be useful in this regard.

#### 2- Majority Is Not the Criterion of Truth:

Proof as the decisive touchstone of truth leads us to the conclusion that the popularity of a view or the majority's consensus cannot be the basis of acceptance. In his last will in the final part of his *Hikmah Al Arshyyah*, Sadra refers to this point and asks the audience not to consider the view of the majority as valid and fear its opposition (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2012, p. 177-178).

Sadra warns man not to limit and restrict truth to what he has managed to learn. Such a method leads man to intellectual stagnation and radicalism and prevents his ascension to truth. "Beware not to limit Sharia and truths of people just to what you have heard from your teachers and mentors, because this would cause you to keep with your elders without embarking on the path of wayfaring towards your Lord" (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2012, p. 178).

### Ontological Foundations

#### 1- Primacy of Existence, Analogical Gradation of Existence, and Unity of Existence:

- These triple doctrines build the very basis of ontology in Sadra's philosophy. They are of paramount importance in the discussion of tolerance. According to Sadra, existence constitutes the outside reality (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2003, p. 15). This existence is a unique reality that is of hierarchical makeup. Different realities are the levels or manifestations of this single unique reality (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2003, p. 15).

- Sadra in his different works proposes proofs for this problem and raises possible objections and answers them (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2004, p. 1/47-92; Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2003, p. 9-15; Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2012, p. 342-357).

#### 2- Evolutionary Movement of All Creatures towards God:

- All creatures by their instinct move toward God and distortion and ignorance are meaningless to them. Of course, man is of a special status due to his free will. He has two movements, that is, instinctual movement and volitional movement. However, ontologically speaking, all creatures including man himself move in the path that leads to God (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2010a, p. 1/139).

Guidance and aberration of man as well as his happiness

and misery all depend on his volitional movement while there is no distortion given his instinctual and essential movement.

- Sometimes Sadra refers to this issue as the love of all creatures for God: "There is no single being in the world who is not a lover of the Lord" (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2010b, p. 3/894).

Love of God is flowing through all creatures. Then, all creatures are his lovers and wayfarers. This issue changes our perspective of the world.

The man who does not share the same thoughts and ideas with us is ontologically on the right path. This ontological orientation is by no means ignorable. Paying attention to this ontological aspect makes our perspective of the world and man amicable and compassionate. Needless to say, such a perspective is distant from violence.

### Anthropological Foundations

#### 1- Human Dignity and Honor qua Human Being:

- Islam often teaches its followers to be forgiving toward other religions, the forgiving attitude of the noble mind and humanity and respect the rights of others. However, the politics of tolerating differences in Islam requires reconciliation with history as well as a reconciliation (as in the relationship between Islam and modernity) that must first come from within Islam (Gole, 2003, p. 17-30). According to Sadra, and in line with the Quranic verses and prophetic traditions, man is the vicegerent of Allah and owns a holy spirit. Man is the manifestation of Divine Names and Attributes (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2002b, p. 68). This issue endows dignity and honor to man qua man regardless of his nationality, race, culture, religion, and rituals. He speaks of the human essential dignity and refers to a story of the Holy Prophet who once would stand by the corpse of a Jew and people ask isn't this a Jew? "Isn't he a human being?" (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2010b, p. 4/1223).

According to Sadra's analysis of this prophetic tradition, the Prophet was indeed standing by the dignity and majesty of the human soul. For this soul is from the world of sanctity and divine spirit.

Paying attention to this point can help us to manage to have a better interaction with different people in society. If we know that our opponent, regardless of his faith, nationality, and race is a human being of essential value, validity, and dignity, then we would never allow ourselves to behave disrespectfully.

#### 2- Love of Existence and Love of Humans:

In Sadra's theosophical system, God stands at the top of the Pyramid of Existence. Rather, we can say that He is the Truth of Existence. He is the Simple Truth that has every reality inside (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2010b, p. 4/87).

- The love of God is followed by the love of all beings. Man in the overall makeup of existence is the great masterpiece of creation. Therefore, the love of God leads to the love of people. The person who loves God will also love others out of his divine compassion. According to Sadra, the love of others is not due to their nature but rather in view of their relationship with the truth (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2002a, p. 141).

- It is interesting to note that Sadra considers this extensive love of all creatures to be a requirement of theism (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2002a, p. 142).

- Upon the arrival of love and compassion, the mechanism of interaction and behavior with others in general changes. When one comes to love, tolerance, and patience with the other elevates. In Sadra's words, the religion and sect of the lovers

are different from others (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2010a, p. 5/538).

### 3- Man as a Diverse Species:

One of the significant foundations of the discussion of tolerance is the idea that humans are of a diverse species instead of being individuals of one single species. This is noted in Sadra's different works in different ways.

- According to Sadra, humans though are individuals of the same species (animal species) given their appearance, they are diverse in view of their essence and truth (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2010b, p. 3/893).

Thus, humans contrary to what they seem to be at the surface are so diverse and different that one cannot consider them to be the individuals of a species. Differences of thought, will, desires, knowledge, action, and morals are to the point that every man will be a species not an individual of a unique species.

### 4- Human Differences in Primordial Nature:

- According to Sadra, humans are even different in view of their primordial nature (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2010a, p. 1/148). Thus, this difference in primordial nature leads to the difference in perceptions, will, and motivations of individuals. Finally, these differences end up in the difference in success and failure of individuals as well as their happiness and misery (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2010a, p. 1/148).

Acceptance of differences in primordial nature makes the acceptance of differences in behavior and action easier and is an important basis for tolerance.

5- Human identity is a function of his ideas, actions, and desires and human resurrection is a function of his identity:

- Human identity takes form based on his desires, behaviors, and character. Sadra speaks of human resurrection based on his identity: "Generally speaking, everyone resurrects in the wake of whatever towards which his essence is oriented and his actions are taken for the sake of it while he loves it in his heart and his chest is full of its desire" (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2010c, p. 6/169).

As the above-quoted phrase shows, the human character is not merely a function of his actions rather whatever he loves or desires or aspires all and all are involved in the formation of his character.

- According to Sadra, "Everyone will rise from the dead in the form which represents the key qualities of his character even if they are anger, hostility, and mistreatment of people" (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2002b, p. 45).

If I know that with my thoughts, actions, reactions, and encounters, I am building my character, and my behavior with others has a deeper impact on myself and not just on others plus the fact that my resurrection in the Otherworld will proceed with the identity that I have made in this world, I will never permit myself to act carelessly; instead, I will choose to be more watchful of my thoughts and deeds.

Now we talked of the many differences between people and also of the difference in their primordial nature as well as the impact of their knowledge, actions, and behavior on the formation of their identity, we can conclude that man is of extensive scope for his spiritual initiation.

### 6- Man and Extensive Scope of His Initiation:

- Among all creatures, man is of the quality that he is faced with a wider scope of action. Proportionate to his thoughts, actions, and behavior, he would choose his own identity from the meanest to the noblest. Therefore, man is an exceptional creature from this point of view (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2010b, p. 3/894-895).

- According to Sadra, with his choices, man can reach a position ranging from the lowest to the highest (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2010b, p. 3/895).

- What can have a more decisive role in this context is human knowledge and action. Human knowledge and action can elevate him to the noblest position in the world or take him down to the lowest position (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2002b, p. 69).

### Mulla Sadra's Practical Approach Based on Tolerance

We conclude our discussion of Sadra's doctrine of tolerance with his practical use of this doctrine in real contexts where he faces his opponents.

In his preface to the first volume of *Asfar*, Sadra relates a real story of his own when he was contemplating in peace of the sea of wisdom, and like every other thinker, he was just focusing on his research and writing until the course of his life changed due to a series of events and he experienced new conditions. Some new setbacks appeared on his path that were supposed to impede him in his struggle to fulfill his goals (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2004, p. 1/8).

Sadra depicts the conditions of his time well when oppression and ignorance prevailed and justice and fairness were isolated. Needless to say, any intellectual distortion on a societal scale is naturally followed by deviation in practice and behaviors and the result of all these will be the victimization of truth, justice, and prevalence of corruption and error (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2004, p. 1/10).

But it is important to know how he treats his opponents in these conditions.

He says that it was through resorting to patience and tolerance that he managed to overcome the problems and continue his life in society as is expected from a philosopher of his stature (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2004, p. 1/11).

But the relationship between his practical approaches with his theoretical foundations in the discussion of tolerance is as follows:

I) Truth is a unique reality of many dimensions and it is more extensive than what can be fathomed by a single person. On the other hand, man is fallible given his perceptual faculties.

- No one can consider himself to be the absolute champion of the truth game and say that truth is what he says nothing else. Rather, truth is of a wider breadth that everyone can benefit from as far as his efforts and talent allow. Sadra speaks of his belief in these principles (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2004, p. 1/15).

II) Any form of radicalism and bigotry in the denial or confirmation of every idea is pointless. To deny or confirm something, one needs to follow rational proof.

III) On the other hand, the difference of humans is a divine nomos and this difference in Sadra's theosophy is to the point where every man is considered to be an exceptional species. Therefore, the fact that people differ from one another is divine nomos, and it is impossible to imagine a period when everyone will think alike and have no differences. As previously mentioned, Sadra with the theory of diverse human species considers the existence of differences between human individuals to be something essential and substructural.

- The love of God is associated with the love of people. Therefore, one's opponent should be treated in the spirit of compassion as a creature of God. Thus, Sadra, in his preface to *Asfar*, refers to his opponents as his brothers and friends (Sadr Al Mutalihin, 2004, p. 1/15).

IV) Mulla Sadra's patience and tolerance with the literalists of his own time was indeed active not passive. Sadra keeps away from them in order to avoid hostility and violence and just has an intellectual confrontation with them and he prefers to answer them as a philosopher using his proofs and pen.

### Conclusion

- From Sadra's perspective, tolerance and violence are opposites and serve as a criterion to distinguish the true man of knowledge from a fake one. Accordingly, the wiser turns to be the more tolerant either.

- One can compare the nature of tolerance with a pyramid the pinnacle of which is reason and justice while its baseline is constituted of such factors as patience, compassion, nobility, and forgiveness. On the other hand, at the top of the pyramid of violence stand ignorance and oppression while the baseline is formed by animosity, curse, barbarism, and hostility.

- Therefore, tolerance is an order of reason and a sign of moderation in character while violence is the order of

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ignorance and a sign of imbalance of identity. Outcomes of tolerance are an increase of wisdom, social dignity, and influence on people while stagnation, social humility, and isolation are the results of violence.

- Mulla Sadra accepts tolerance as a moral virtue and describes it as one of the branches and fruits of courage. Courage in his eyes is itself a moral virtue and the middle term between recklessness and cowardice. However, Sadra does not suffice this and sees tolerance as something more than a mere moral virtue and explores it from an ontological point of departure. He studies tolerance in light of the Godlikeness which is the core truth of wisdom. He prescribes tolerance not only with the humans but also with the whole gamut of the creatures.

- In this study – as clearly suggested in the diagrams – tolerance is considered a virtue and an existential perfection when it is under the shadow of reason and it is such a tolerance that is a feature of the people of wisdom while violence is a vice when it has its root in ignorance.

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