



Science Arena Publications

International Journal of Philosophy and Social-Psychological Sciences

Available online at [www.sciarena.com](http://www.sciarena.com)

2016, Vol, 2 (3): 1-5

# The Analysis of the Substantive Motion Arguments of Mulla Sadra

Sedighe Abtahi

PhD student at the Institute of Islamic Sciences and Cultural Studies

**Abstract:** One of the most highly regarded philosophical theories addressed by Mulla Sadra the acceptance of which has a big impact on other philosophical is the motion in the category of substance. Muslim philosophers before Mulla Sadra denied the substantive motion and criticized it. Finally Mulla Sadra paid attention to the substantive motion in his transcendent philosophy such that the belief in this motion played an important role in his philosophy. Mulla Sadra's look at this discussion is unique and using means of motion, he proves the substantive motion. Substantive motion that forms one of the branches of originality and gradation of existence is the basis for many transcendental philosophy issues. In this study the theory of substantive motion is examined in four directions: a) the background of substantive motion, b) the reasons and proofs mentioned to prove it, c) the analysis of criticisms against this theory d) results that related to the theory.

**Key words:** Mulla Sadra, substantive motion, transcendental philosophy

## Introduction

One fundamental question of the transcendental philosophy is the substantive motion topic. Before Mulla Sadra many Islamic and non-Islamic scholars denied substantive motion. But this scholar could prove substantive motion by many reasons and obtained very important results in this regard. Many scholars disagree about the history of this theory. Many of them such as Seyed Abolhassan Rafiei Qazvini, Allame Tabatabai, Motahari, Seyed Jalaluddin Ashtiani and Ebrahimi Dinani consider Mulla Sadra as the originator of the theory (Shavahed ol Raboubieh: 175). Others including Mohammad Taghi Danshpazhooh, Haeri Mazandarani, Hassan Malekshahi, Seyed Hossein Nasr and Ahmad Ahmadi believe that this theory is older than Mulla Sadra's transcendent wisdom. Here the concept of substantive motion and its position in transcendental philosophy is discussed and the evidence of substantive motion proof and the criticisms against it are analyzed and its philosophical implications are mentioned.

## Definition and background of substantive motion

One of the oldest intellectual debates is the discussion of motion. Motion is defined as "otherness" and "withdrawal of fairness", "object's motion from potentiality to actuality" and "the first perfection for the potential creature since it is potential". According to Sadr-ol-Mote'allehin the reality of motion is gradual occurrence and the best definition of motion is that the objects advocate all the limits between the source and the end totally.

Substantive motion is the intrinsic motion of the material things that is the source of the apparent motion of the phenomena and changes the nature and essence of the object. Someone has considered Heraclitus as the first one who discussed the substantive motion. Some consider the modern rule of mystics' renewal of likes as the ancient roots of this motion and others have related the argument of substantive motion to some speakers. Another group has considered the substantive motion as Sadr-ol-Mote'allehin's innovation.

Sadr-ol-Mote'allehin with reference to versus of the Quran against people who believe that substantive motion has no believer among the scholars believes that God is the most truthful Wise and He is the first Wise who has mentioned the substantive motion in the Quran. Then Ethologia which is attributed to Aristotle presents arguments from Zenon Akbar and the famous Muslim mystic Muhyiddin Arabi in confirming the substantive motion (Azhdar, 2012: 8). Peripatetic Muslims considered motion as the properties of the object but Sadr-ol-Mote'allehin has discussed motion in the topic of theology (Torpedoes, 2012, 9).

Those who believe in the substantive motion say that as the creature is variable in the quantity, quality and location, it is possible that he is variable in its substantive nature and at the same time keeps its unity. If we do not believe in the principality of existence and consider gradation in nature impossible, discussing the substantive motion theory is unnecessary. But if we believe in the principality of existence but consider the creatures as heterogeneous realities or believe in the principality of existence and deny gradation in it, again substantive motion will not be possible to prove (Saadat Mostafavi, 1998, 54)

### **The place of substantive motion in transcendental philosophy**

Mulla Sadra presents an analysis of substantive motion understanding of which requires discussing some fundamental discussions in his philosophy including:

1. Associating motion to the existence: Mulla Sadra considers motion in line with analysis and it is not possible to consider an external separation between the motion and existence. The presence of motion in the object is the same as the moving object the components of which are realized as connected unity every moment (Kadivar, 2006: 128).
2. Dividing the existence into fixed and fluid: In his division of the creatures in terms of potentiality and actuality, things are divided into two types: fixed and mobile - and motion is defined as moving from potentiality to actuality. Mulla Sadra by considering the difference between the fixed and the fluid considered the fluids as the material creature existence (Kadivar, 2006: 129).

### **Reasons to prove the theory of substantive motion**

1. The first argument is the one that is discussed by Mulla Sadra to relate the fixed and variable. In other words, in relation to relate the fixed and variable it is necessary to consider substantive nature as fluid in nature because the reason of accidental motions is similar to their vertical motion of the fire of their nature. Here the natures are the reason of the motion thus they are variable and has to be variable in nature. These variable forms cannot change in appearance unless they are motile. So accidental motions must lead to inherent motions. So the inherent motions do not need a reason to move but they need a reason that emanates that existence so the problem of relating fixed to variable is resolved.
2. The second argument discussed by Mulla Sadra based on the relationship between the accident and substance is discussed in Asfar as “فى استيناف برهان آخر على وقوع الحركة فى الجوهر” (To appeal the last argument on the existence of substantive motion). If the natural subject wants to be its own natural reason, it is necessary that it does not need the terms and conditions in the effect of its subjectivity. But its nature requires material. In any case expressing this relation indicates that the fluid in one is the same as the fluid in another (Iranpour, 2009, 31).
3. Mulla Sadra's third argument is called “the last oriental argument”. In this argument he has used the originality of “the accident of substantive ranks” and along with the principle of diagnosis presents another argument on the proof of motion in substance (Iranpour, 2009, 31)
4. The next argument is through the cancellation of generation and corruption. It is not that if it is destroyed, the two creatures are independent of each other. So since in the changes in the substance and accident of the objects the transformation from one form to another is not deniable and these changes cannot be in the form of generation and corruption or sudden, these changes must occur gradually in the essence of things and this is substantive motion. (Sharifi, 2008, 92)
5. Mulla Sadra's other argument is on the reality of time. He, unlike some philosophers, not only acknowledges the existence and reality of time in the outside but also considers it as a real dimension of realities (Sharifi, 2008, 91)
6. Mulla Sadra's other arguments on the substantive motion is through the teleology of nature. He says: the nature has an end. It means that any power in the nature tends to an end and this is only justified by substantive motion (Iranpour, 2009, 32)

Criticisms and problems associated with the theory of substantive motion and their disposal

One of the one opposing the substantive motion is Avicenna. Avicenna and his followers have presented some argument for denying substantive motion. Here three of the arguments and Sadr-ol-Mote'allehin's and his followers' response to them are presented:

The first argument: Whatever that is the inherent requirement of the nature of an object is never separated from it unless the nature is destroyed totally. On the other hand any component of the motion assumed by dividing the time or distance by the motion can be separated from nature while the nature

remains the same. Thus motion cannot be considered as the requirement of the essence and substance of the nature of the object. The thing that is denied by Mulla Sadra is the shortcoming of the argument because he does not consider motion as a consequence of the object substance as it could be separated from it and the substance is not voided but the motion is due to the existence of the object that is not separable from it (Furqani, 2006: 93).

The second argument: the famous argument negating the substantive motion is based on the need of motion to the motile. In accidental motions the substance is considered as a constant subject but the substance itself has fluid and flow and there is no other phenomenon associated to it. The late Sheikh discussed this argument as follows: "Also we say the concept of actualized substantive form is not achieved unless by accepting the face and the essence in its nature is potential and it cannot move from one thing to another and substantive motion requires actual motile and that motile should have a form by which is actualized and the essence is actualized."

The third argument: The argument of the late Sheikh is presented as follows:

"The substantive form does not take quantity and intensity because if it takes, its moderation or extremes might be violated. Thus the substantive form does not change but the change is made in the effect because what is weak and then intensified is wasted but the substance is not wasted and this is not generation but transformation or anything of that matter. And if the substance is intensified it will not remain thus it has intensified other's substance" (Furqani, 2006: 94).

Mulla Sadra has quoted this argument in Asfar and considered it as the confusion between the essence and existence and taking the potential instead of the actual. Mulla Sadra has also quoted this argument in Shavahed ol Raboubieh and answered it based on the existence of motion in the form of quantity and quality (Iranpour, 2008, 47)

Substantive motion and the remainder of the object

The term object in logic and philosophy is used to denote various concepts. In logic subject is used versus predicate. The philosophical meaning is that is the context for the realization something. According to Mulla Sadra motion is not an external accident but one of the analytical accidents of the existence of fluid and thus it is among the secondary contemplative issues of philosophy. Thus the term object in the substantive motion topic is valid only in the third term. (Meshkat, 2007, 133)

According to Peripatetic school the motion requires object such that no motion is found without object. To be clear it means that motion always belongs to something and in other words motion is essentially an adjective and any adjective has a noun. Motion is the gradual movement from potentiality to actuality and the one that carries this trait should be an essential existence called matter that is based on that potentiality and the reality of that potential object is the reality of that potential (Sharifi, 2008, 86)

Results of the peripatetic philosophers' discussion is based on the object of this motion that should be a constant and unit matter on which the motion is performed, otherwise, the thing that is considered on the motion is that the concept of motion should be a fixed and constant matter on which the motion is exerted otherwise the potential is different than actual and the definition of motile does not ally for it. The second conclusion is that the motion's need for the object due to the need of the motion to something that is considered as a matter for the gradual changes is: the existence of fixed matter is only necessary in changes that are in the form of generation and corruption such that a form is lost suddenly and a form is generated instead of it but in case that the change is in the form of motion and gradual, there is no need for a constant object.

The third result is the motion's need for an object due to the existence of the independent: is the motion of adjective and accident. Accident requires the independent which is the Noun thus the motion needs a noun on which the adjective of motion applies to and it would be possible to use the interpretation of motile for it (Sharifi, 2008, 88).

Based on the principality of existence and nullity of essentialism and given that the motion is among the secondary philosophical rationale, the concept of survival of the object as intended by the peripatetic philosophers collapsed. Motile is the object of this motion and fluid is on which the movement is done and

since its motion is connected, it is a single connected existence so the thing that is constant is the same as the thing that moves. The object means that the motile constantly and connectively obtains a new form that has the prior form with it. In other words the reality is substantive that is being intensified, weakened or renewed. But the role of the parting substantive should not be ignored that as He is the guarantor of the matter by creating the forms. Motion is also the guarantor of the unity of the object of motion and thus although parting substantive is not the object of motion, it plays the role of object of motion that leads to unity (Meshkat, 2007, 140)

The philosophical results of substantive motion

First result: Creation of the universe in terms of time

Unlike most philosophers most theologians before Mulla Sadra have denied Time orientation of the universe. Although they believe in the orientation of the universe they interpret it as innate creation. Mulla Sadra attempts to explain the creation in terms of time that it is not inconsistent with the duration of divine grace. Proof of the creation of the world in terms of time based on substantive motion does not mean that a beginning is defined for this motion and a beginning is proved for the time but this consecutive sequence is until the infinity and we know that the consecutive sequence is not in contrast with rationale. The only effect of the substantive motion is that the objects not only in accidents but also in the essence are created and new but this renewed nature has never has a beginning which is not accepted by the theologians. Thus this substantive motion cannot prove the creation of the universe i.e. it precedence on the lack of time (Furqani, 2006, 96).

Second result: four-dimensionality of the matter

By accepting the substantive motion the matter must have four dimensions: length, width, thickness and time. In this regard Mulla Sadra defines the time as the amount of nature that is renewed in its essence in terms of its inherent priority and recency. According to him the nature has two extensions and values one of which is time dependent and the other is sudden.

Third result: Relevancy of the created to the precedent

According to the substantive motion the problem of relevancy of the created to the precedent is solved because when a creature is motile in terms of its nature that forms its flow and motion of existence, only needs the latency of the existence and does not require any other simulator. Mulla Sadra's interpretation is that anything has a type of stability that is forged by the forger. So if stability is in the stability of its renewal the thing that is granted by God is the stability and actuality and the creature that its stability is in its renewal is the same as physical nature (Furqani, 2006, 99).

Fourth result: The constant need for the obligatory (continuous creation)

Based on substantive motion, the matter in any situation is constantly being created and emerged because it is motion and motion has an instantaneous existence. Such an existence is not spontaneous because motion without the stimulus is nothing. Now if the whole world is known as motion and flow, the creation of the world is the same as its movement because creating the world means creating the motion and the creator means the stimulator. Motion is not something that could be known as simulator or the creator might leave it on its own. Therefore the result of substantive motion is that a non-material nature constantly creates material substance and in all cases and accidents the matter is moving along with the material substance and this is the constant creation of the substance (Furqani, 2006, 100).

Fifth conclusion: the physicality of self in creation and its spirituality in survival

This is one of the results of the substantive motion and its proofs. Mulla Sadra in V 8 of Asfar considered the celibacy of the rational soul as the physicality as one of the proofs of substantive motion.

Sixth conclusion: what is precedent in terms of time is posterior in terms of rank and honor

Mulla Sadra has considered this principle as one of the important results of substantive motion is the issues of the soul because based on the substantive motion the rational soul "in its creation is physical and

in its survival is spiritual” and based on the principle “The extended reality is everything and nothing” rational soul “at the same time of unity is the whole force”.

Seventh conclusion: man has infinite resurrections

Mulla Sadra in Asfar has presented a chapter with the above title and has proved it in terms of substantive motion. He says: “God has created the senses and imaginations as ranks that lead to Him in an upward trend. Thus the man does not reach the lowest degrees unless he has passed all middle work levels. So all the worlds and their ranks are the houses towards God, thus the traveler in all these houses is subject to death and resurrection in the next stage.

### **Eighth result: Resurrection**

The principle of resurrection in terms of its physicality is proved in the light of substantive motion because according to it the whole world is moving toward an end and its end has an end until an end is obtained in which all ends exist (Furqani, 2006, 100).

### **Sources and references**

1. Azhdar, AR., 2012, A critical examination of the theory of substantive motion of Mulla Sadra wisdom.
2. Iranpour, P., 2009, Demonstrating substantive motion, the growth of Islamic Education, Issue 72.
3. Iranpour, P., 2008, Proof of substantive motion, Mulla Sadra, the growth of Islamic Education, Issue 71.
4. Saadat Mostafavi, SH, 1998, Concerns about the substantive motion, No. 64.
5. Sharifi, A H - Yousefi, MT, 2008, The analysis of the substantive motion Fluid person in the category of substance, philosophical knowledge, the first issue.
6. Furqani, MK., 2006., Reflecting the theory of substantive motion, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, No. 46.
7. Kadivar, M., Khoshdel Rohani, M, 2006, the role of the originality and ambiguity of existence in theory Substantive motion, Journal of Literature, No. 199.
8. Meskat, M., 2007, Issue of survival in substantive motion, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, No. 51.