

The Soul-Body Relationship in the Views of Plato and Mullā Ṣadrā

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Abstract

The connection between the soul and the body has always been acknowledged by philosophers, as seeing, hearing, remembering, recalling, thinking, experiencing joy and sadness, and enjoying, while being psychological phenomena, are deeply influenced by the body. Without the nervous, glandular, and muscular effects, these psychological events cannot occur. Similarly, psychological states have a significant impact on the body and human organism, a point often highlighted by psychologists and philosophers. This study, using a descriptive-analytical and comparative method, aims to examine Plato's and Mullā Ṣadrā's views on the soul and its relationship with the body. Based on the findings, Plato makes a distinction between the soul and the body, but believes in their reciprocal influence on one another. He

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identifies the soul with the essence of humanity and views the body as a foreign entity after death. Mullā Ṣadrā, however, sees the relationship between the soul and the body as a union, where each represents a stage in the existence of a single reality called "human." He believes that the soul and the body mutually affect each other, and in its initial emergence, the soul is corporeal, later reaching the state of abstraction through substantial motion. The soul's attachment to the body is intrinsic, and the soul remains a soul only while connected to the body. Overall, this study shows that although Mullā Ṣadrā has been influenced by Plato in some aspects, he also presents his unique perspectives in this area.

Keywords

Plato, Mullā Ṣadrā, soul, body, soul-body relationship.



Introduction

A large part of the philosophical inquiries and discussions throughout the history of philosophy has been centered around the soul. Philosophers and thinkers from all regions, from the earliest times to the present, and from East to West, have all, in some form, ventured into this realm, engaging in writing and theorizing. No knowledge has been more important or vital to them than the knowledge of the self. A detailed examination of the works of Plato and Mullā Ṣadrā reveals many commonalities in the thought of these two divine philosophers. If we accept that Plato's philosophy exhibits a particular philosophical coherence throughout, despite the stages of development, as with any philosopher, then there are many aspects in which we can compare and align it with Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophical system. Throughout his works, Mullā Ṣadrā defends Plato's intellectual positions, referring to him as a divine philosopher and the leader of philosophers, and considers himself the reviver of Plato's ideas. Based on this, it is worth investigating whether, despite these similarities in their views, Mullā Ṣadrā's theories on the soul—especially his ideas about the relationship between the soul and the body—are truly innovative, or whether they have roots in Plato's philosophy, to the extent that it could be said that he was influenced by Plato's ideas.

1. Soul (*Nafs*)

The term “*nafs*” (soul), in its literal sense, refers to the essence and truth of anything, as well as spirit, psyche, and life (Mullā Ṣadrā, 2009, p. 206). Philosophers have provided numerous definitions of the soul.

Plato does not provide a precise definition of the soul. In his *Laws*, he says, "What is the definition of that object which has for its name ‘soul’? Can we give it any other definition than that stated just now—‘the motion able to move itself’?" (Plato, 2001, vol. 4, p. 2200, §896). In

Phaedrus, he states, "Only that which moves itself, since it does not leave itself, never ceases to move" (Plato, 2001, vol. 3, §245). In essence, for Plato, the soul is the initiator or source of motion (Copleston, 1996, vol. 1, p. 239). One could say that the soul is a motion that moves itself, and since its motion is intrinsic, nothing else makes it move. At the same time, it causes the movement of everything else. Therefore, according to Plato, the soul is the first and oldest of things because it is the originator of all motion. The concept of motion is closely related to life, as everything that moves itself is alive. The soul, too, is that motion capable of moving itself, and for this reason, it is the final cause of all motion. In *Timaeus*, Plato explains, "the one and only existing thing which has the property of acquiring thought is Soul; and Soul is invisible, whereas fire and water and earth and air are all visible bodies" (Plato, 2001, vol. 3, p. 1743, §46).

Mullā Ṣadrā, like the philosophers before him, does not limit the soul to the human soul; rather, he attributes a soul to other living beings as well. According to him, four types of beings possess a soul in this world: plants, animals, humans, and the celestial bodies. Based on the observation of signs of life, such as nourishment, growth and development, reproduction, sensation, movement, knowledge, and discernment, Mullā Ṣadrā conceives of a perfection (*kamāl*) within these beings that is bestowed upon matter, and he refers to it as the soul.

The definition that Mullā Ṣadrā provides for the soul is as follows: "The soul is the first perfection (*kamāl awwal*) of a natural, living, organic (*ālī*) body" (Mullā Ṣadrā, 2009, p. 283).

To clarify this point, let us examine the conditions mentioned in the definition.

The term "perfection" in this definition functions as the genus,

while the term "first" serves as its species. In fact, the term "first perfection" is used to distinguish it from the second perfection in the definition. The first perfection determines the essence of the species (or type or kind), so much so that without it, the species in question would cease to exist. Therefore, the first perfection is the complementary element that is added to matter, showing it as a complete species in the world (Mosleh, 1973, vol. 1, p. 9), and this perfection is referred to as the "specific form." In contrast to the first perfection, the second perfection occurs after the species has been actualized, manifesting in the effects and actions that emerge once the species is fully realized.

The phrase "for a natural body" indicates that external bodies are of two kinds: natural bodies and artificial bodies. By including this qualification, artificial bodies are excluded from the definition, as they do not possess a natural form to unify their components. Rather, they acquire their form and shape through an external agent, such as a chair. In fact, we do not have a natural form called a chair; rather, the chair is the wood shaped into a chair by the carpenter. Although the form of the chair is the first perfection for the chair, it is not the soul for it. However, plants, animals, and humans, which are called natural bodies, possess a natural form.

The term "organic" is used to exclude specific (i.e., species-related) forms that do not carry out their actions through organs and faculties, but instead directly and without mediation. In contrast, the natural body in question must be such that its second perfections—i.e., the vital actions such as growth, sensation, and movement—manifest through organs and faculties, rather than occurring immediately. Therefore, the elemental or mineral specific form, like fire, is not considered a soul in the philosophers' terminology, as the effects of fire, namely its burning quality, arise from the nature of fire itself and

are carried out without any organ or intermediary.

The phrase "having potential life" does not mean that the soul-bearing being lacks life in actuality, but rather that it does not need to possess all the signs of life in actuality; the potentiality for these signs is sufficient. If it has qualities and actions such as speech, perception, growth, and development, it will be considered as having a soul. With this qualification, celestial souls are excluded from the definition.

Up to this point, the definition of the soul encompasses all types of souls, including vegetative, animal, and human souls. However, with the addition of the clause "from the perspective of what perceives universal matters and performs intellectual acts" (Mullā Ṣadrā, 2009, p. 292), animal and vegetative souls are excluded from the definition. This is because only humans possess the capacity to perceive universal matters and engage in intellectual activities. In the stages of its ascending development, the soul not only acquires the attributes of the vegetative soul, which include nourishment, growth, and reproduction, as well as the attributes of the animal soul, which include sensation and voluntary movement, but it also acquires the power of intellect.

Up to this point, Mullā Ṣadrā aligns with the philosophers before him and accepts their definition of the soul. However, at the same time, he does not accept the foundations of their definitions.

Philosophers consider the soul from two perspectives: 1) in terms of its essence; 2) in terms of its attachment to the body.

In light of this, the philosophers believe that the soul, in terms of its essence, is not definable, as it is an immaterial and simple substance. Since the soul is immaterial, it is not composed of genus and species, whereas a definition is composed of genus and species. According to the principle "what lacks a limit and proof cannot be

proven," no proof can be provided for it. However, in the second sense, when the soul is attached to the body, it becomes definable (Mesbah Yazdi, 1996, p. 41). In fact, the philosophers take into account the second aspect of the soul, namely its attachment to the body, when defining it. They do not consider this definition as a quidditative definition (*ḥadd*) but rather as a nominal (*ismī*) definition, because, from their perspective, this attachment is subsequent to the soul's existence and, therefore, not an essential attribute of the soul but an accidental one. Consequently, they believe this definition does not reflect the true essence of the soul.

However, Mullā Ṣadrā does not accept this view of the philosophers. Based on his own principles, including "substantial motion," "the gradation (*tashkīk*) of existence," and "the soul's corporeality at origin and spirituality in survival," he proposes a completely different theory. He holds that the soul does not have two distinct aspects. He expresses his view as follows: the soul is what it is because of its attachment to the body. In other words, the soul's very nature is derived from its mode of existence, and its attachment to the body is identical with its essence. More precisely, the soul is not a substance that attaches to matter; rather, it is the very act of attachment and relatedness, and as long as it is attached to the body, it remains the soul.

However, Mullā Ṣadrā also assigns another existence to the soul's quiddity, one that the soul attains through substantial motion, gradual intensification, and progression through different stages. He emphasizes that at that stage, the soul is no longer the soul but is intellect (Mullā Ṣadrā, 1989, vol. 8, p. 12). Therefore, as long as the soul remains the soul, it is not intellect, and the distinction between the soul and intellect is that intellect is an immaterial substance, whose identity is not one of attachment and is not relational to any subject to

which it is added. The act of addition depends on potentiality, and the assumption of this potentiality necessitates the materiality of the intellect. In contrast, at the core of the soul's existence, its attachment to the body is inherent. In other words, attachment to the body (the relation to the body) is an essential and intrinsic part of the soul's very essence.

It follows from the above that the key point that distinguishes Mullā Ṣadrā from the philosophers before him is that, for other philosophers, the definition of the soul pertains not to the essence of the soul itself but to the "soulness" of the soul. In contrast, for Mullā Ṣadrā, there is no distinction between the essence of the soul and the soulness of the soul, and the definition he provides articulates the true nature and quiddity of the soul.

2. Quality of the Soul-Body Relation

From the discussion of the nature (quiddity) of the soul and its dominance and superiority over the body, we arrive at an important reality in Plato's thought, which is the distinction between the soul and the body. This distinction aligns with his metaphysical dualism, and in the dialogues where the soul is directly mentioned, it is evident that he certainly believed in an essential distinction between the soul and the body.

Plato views the soul as a substance that existed independently before the body in a realm that is divine, eternal, and unchanging. In other words, the soul, for Plato, is pre-eternal (*qadīm*), and once a body is prepared, the soul descends from its realm and attaches itself to the body.

Motahari remarks on this point, stating: "This theory of Plato is unequivocally dualistic; he regards the soul and body as two

separate and distinct substances, and the relationship between them as accidental and constructed, similar to the relationship between a bird and its nest or a rider and their mount. He does not believe in any substantial connection that indicates a type of unity, interaction, or essential relationship between them" (Motahari, 1999, vol. 13, p. 31).

In *Timaeus* (Plato, 2001, Vol. 3, §34) and *Laws* (Plato, 2001, §892), Plato refers to the soul's existence before the body, which can be seen as definitive proof of the distinction between the soul and the body.

In *Laws*, this idea is expressed by stating that the soul is the origin and the source of the creation and the first movement of all things that exist at present, in the past, and future. In essence, the soul is the initiator of movement, or the source of every motion. In other words, it moves by its essence. Therefore, the soul is the first and the most ancient of all things, while the body is a moving entity that the soul sets into motion. This conversation thus proves that the soul precedes the body. In *Timaeus*, Plato states that the Creator designed the soul in such a way that, both in terms of time and perfection, it precedes the body and holds a status and rank that is older than the younger one; for the soul is meant to rule over the body and command it.

Plato refers to the rule of the soul over the body and the obedience of the body to the soul in several dialogues, highlighting the distinction between them. Among these, *Laws* (Plato, 2001, Vol. 4, p. 2026, §431), *Phaedo* (Plato, 2001, Vol. 1, p. 481, §80), and *Republic* (Plato, 2001, Vol. 4, p. 984, §431) can be cited as examples.

In *Laws*, Plato expresses that everything we have can be divided into two types: one that is noble and superior, meant to rule, and another that is inferior and base, meant to obey. The truth is that the first type is superior to the second. In *Phaedo*, it is stated that as

long as the body and soul are together, the body, according to nature, is condemned to serve and obey, while the soul rules and commands. In *Republic*, Plato presents this distinction by stating that humans have two parts: one superior and the other inferior, with the former being the soul and the latter the body. If in a person the superior part governs the inferior part, that person is considered to be the ruler of themselves and is praised; however, if due to bad training, the inferior part triumphs over the superior, such a person is criticized and is contemptuously called a "slave to oneself," becoming unruly.

It seems that the ideas presented in these dialogues convey that the soul exercises managerial control over the body and uses it as an instrument to carry out its actions. Without the material body, the soul would not be able to perform any action. Hence, the soul dominates the body and governs the realm of the body.

In another passage from *Phaedo* (Plato, 2001, vol. 1, p. 521, §115), when Crito asks Socrates how they should bury him, Socrates responds by saying that if they can hold him and prevent him from escaping, they may bury him however they wish. He then adds that the body before them is not truly him, and after drinking the poison, he will depart from them and journey to the realm of the blessed. He instructs them that if, after his death, they burn or bury his body, they should not say, "We have burned Socrates" or "We have buried Socrates," for such statements would be incorrect. Instead, they should say, "We have buried the body of Socrates." Here, the soul is identified with the true self of the person, while the body is regarded as an alien entity that is discarded after death.

Another piece of evidence that shows Plato believed in the distinction between the soul and the body is his statement that the soul and the body were created separately. According to him, the divine

soul was created by God, and the body was created by the gods (Plato, 2001, vol. 3, p. 1772, §69). Therefore, according to Plato's view, the soul and the body are two completely separate entities, as the creation of God can never be the same as the creation of the gods. The creation of God is eternal, unchanging, and divine, while the creation of the gods is material and perishable (Rahmani, 2010, p. 561).

Plato believes that the soul and the body are inherently different in essence and quiddity, and this is a clear indication that he viewed the soul and the body as distinct. This distinction is evident in his works. He maintains that the soul is simple and non-dissolvable, whereas the body, being composed of parts, is subject to dissolution and destruction (Plato, 2001, vol. 3, p. 271, §78 and onward). Plato considers the soul immortal, attributing this to its perfect resemblance to the Forms, since the theory of Forms and the soul are intrinsically connected. Immortality is based on the existence of the Forms, and our knowledge of the Forms is rooted in the eternity of the soul. On the other hand, the other part of a human—the body—resembles the perishable objects. In fact, the origin of the soul is the world of the Forms, which is above the physical world, and the true world consists of eternal realities (Werner, n.d., p. 89). The soul and the Forms are connected in terms of quiddity. Thus, the soul, like the Forms, is simple, imperishable, invisible, and unchanging, while the body and the physical world are composite, perishable, visible, and mutable.

Plato is the first philosopher who explicitly refers to the existence of a non-material entity. He states that the soul is something that can remain active even when the body is motionless. We can think, plan, understand, love, or hate when we are completely still. Therefore, thinking, willing, and feeling belong to the soul. In our language, we say, "I think," "I intend," "I love," rather than saying "My body thinks," "My body intends," or "My body loves."

Plato believes that the body obstructs the acquisition of knowledge (Russell, 1994, Vol. 1, p. 211). He argues that whenever the soul seeks to perceive something through the body—when it engages the eyes and ears—the body pulls the soul toward something that is never constant. As a result of this contact with such things, the soul becomes confused and disoriented, losing its balance much like a drunk person (Plato, 2001, Vol. 1, p. 480, §79). To elucidate this point, it can be said that the primary function of the soul is contemplation of objects, and true knowledge is attained through this contemplation. However, due to its union with the body, the soul inevitably acquires knowledge through the senses. Since the senses are incapable of perceiving the true reality, they deceive the soul, leading it into countless errors (Werner, n.d., p. 89). According to him, if a person seeks true knowledge, they must abandon the body. It is then that the soul remains free from error and attains the knowledge it has long sought—knowledge that is immaterial, eternal, stable, and of its own nature. Plato's statement suggests that he does not consider the recognition of truth possible in this material world. This is why he asserts that only one who frees themselves from the body can reach the truth. Those who are enslaved by the body can never attain truth, but can only grasp a series of illusions through the senses. Plato refers to this state of the soul as wisdom. Accordingly, another distinction between the soul and the body is that the soul is wise, while the body is ignorant. In other words, the soul has the ability to think, whereas the body is incapable of thought (Plato, 1985, p. 2474, section 984).

According to Mullā Ṣadrā, the issue concerning the relationship between the soul and the body is how it is possible for the soul, which is an intellectual and immaterial form, to have a connection with the body, which is material. This is because two things that have no affinity with each other cannot interact.

Before presenting his own view on the relationship between the soul and the body, Mullā Ṣadrā first explains the different types of dependence and attachment between one thing and another, to provide a clearer understanding of the issue. According to him, there are six types of attachment between one thing and another, which are as follows:

1. Attachment in terms of quiddity: This refers to the attachment of the essence to existence, which is the strongest type of attachment. The intensity of this attachment lies in the fact that essence, both in the mind and in reality, depends on existence.
2. Attachment in terms of essence and reality: This means that the essence and identity of a thing depend on the essence and identity of another thing, such as the dependence of the possible being on the necessary being.
3. Attachment in terms of individuation and specificity: This type of attachment occurs between a quality and its subject, where the quality depends on its essential subject for both its individuation and classification.
4. Attachment in terms of existence and individuation, both in coming into being and in persistence: This refers to the attachment of form to matter.
5. Attachment in terms of existence and individuation, in coming into being but not in persistence: This, according to Mullā Ṣadrā, is the attachment of the soul to the body at the time of its initial formation. In fact, he believes that the soul, initially, is in need of the body, but after progressing through stages of perfection, it reaches a point where it no

longer requires the body and, thus, can continue its existence without it.

6. Attachment in terms of perfection and the acquisition of virtues, not in relation to the essence and individuation of being: This type of attachment refers to the soul's need for the body from its initial formation until it achieves detachment from the body (or immateriality). In this case, the soul needs the body only to acquire secondary perfections. This type of attachment is generally accepted by most philosophers, as they considered the soul to be immaterial both at its origin and in its persistence. They believed that the soul only depends on the body for acquiring the perfections it deserves, which can only be obtained through the body and its faculties. However, Mullā Ṣadrā, according to his theory of "the soul being corporeal in origin and spiritual in survival," accepts both the fifth and sixth types of attachment. He posits that, in the beginning of its coming into being, the soul is like other natural forms, which depend on a matter that is ambiguous in its existence. Similarly, the soul's attachment is to a bodily matter, which is also ambiguous in its existence.

Therefore, the soul's attachment to the material body at the beginning of its existence is an attachment in terms of existence and individuation in terms of origination, not survival. However, this attachment changes after the soul reaches a certain stage of formal and natural maturity, when it becomes a rational (*nāṭiqā*) soul and, in terms of intellect, is actualized with the power of thought. That is to say, its theoretical intellect is still in potentiality and has not yet been actualized, existing at the level of the hylic (*hayūnlānī*) intellect. At

this stage, the attachment of the soul to the body is according to perfection and the acquisition of virtues, because human rational souls, at the beginning of their formation, are devoid of any existential perfections and qualities. Hence, in order to acquire existential perfections and spiritual virtues, they need tools and means through which they can attain these and be adorned with divine virtues.

According to Mullā Ṣadrā's theory, the soul is considered material at the beginning of its formation; however, through substantial motion and the use of bodily faculties, it reaches the stage of immateriality. Therefore, the nature of the soul's attachment to the body differs in terms of origination and survival. At the outset, the soul's attachment is tied to existence and individuation, while once it reaches the stage of immateriality, it only needs the body in its material actions. Through repeated actions, the soul gains such authority that it performs its actions without the aid of bodily tools and can even manipulate them.

Mullā Ṣadrā believes that the soul's attachment to the body is essential to it, meaning the soul remains a soul only as long as it is attached to the body (Mullā Ṣadrā, 1989, vol. 8, p. 383). More precisely, the soul cannot exist without the body, and the essence of the soul is a relational essence. Thus, the soul's inherent existence is dependent on the body, and it is connected to the body through a kind of bond. Mullā Ṣadrā describes the relationship between the soul and the body as a concomitance, but not in the sense of two additional things accompanying each other, nor like two effects stemming from one cause, where there is no necessary connection. Rather, it is akin to the relationship between matter and form, where each is dependent on the other without leading to a circular cause, which would be impossible (Mullā Ṣadrā, 1989, vol. 9, pp. 47 and 55). In fact, according to Mullā Ṣadrā,

there is an essential and necessary concomitance between the soul and the body, meaning that there is a kind of causality between them. This causal relationship is not efficient or final causality, but rather a type of causality that exists between matter and form. Since he views the soul and the body as similar to matter and form in many respects, he also compares their relationship to that of matter and form. He believes that just as matter and form depend on each other for their existence, the soul and the body also depend on each other for individuation and existence. Although the soul, in terms of intellectual existence, is independent of the body, in its initial stage of coming into being, it is dependent on the body in order to achieve individuation. Furthermore, as long as the soul remains in the corporeal realm or has not attained the intellectual realm, its existence depends on the body. The causality between the two is mutual: just as the body is the material cause of the soul, the soul is the formal cause of the body. This means that the constitution and final purpose of the body, as well as its individuation, depend on the soul. If the soul were to cease, the body would not remain. Moreover, Mullā Ṣadrā believes that the soul is the form of the body. Since, according to the principle of "something is what it is by its form" (Mullā Ṣadrā, 1999, p. 293), form is united with matter, he considers the combination of the soul and the body to be a union. The argument he offers for this is as follows: it is unquestionable that the soul is described by attributes that are dependent on the body. Whatever is attributed to something is identical with that thing. Therefore, the soul is identical with the body (Mullā Ṣadrā, 1989, vol. 5, p. 286).

The minor premise of the syllogism is established by the fact that each of us attributes our bodily actions to ourselves. For example, we say, "I sat down," "I ate," "I moved." The major premise is

established by the principle that an attribute cannot be attached to two distinct subjects.

Mullā Ṣadrā's explanation of the union between the soul and the body implies that the soul and the body are not completely separate entities. Rather, each of these two is a level of existence of a single reality called the human being. Thus, the soul and the body exist as one unified existence, and in reality, the existence of the soul is not separate from the existence of the body. The body is the lower level of the soul, and the soul is the higher level of the body. In Mullā Ṣadrā's own words, the soul is the perfection and completeness of the body (Mullā Ṣadrā, 1989, vol. 5, p. 247). Therefore, Mullā Ṣadrā argues that although the soul and the body differ in various ways, they are essentially one truth, possessing different degrees within their unity and simplicity. It is as if they are one entity with two aspects: one side constantly undergoing transformation and decay, which is subordinate, and the other remaining fixed, enduring, and primary. As the soul progresses in its ascent through substantial motion, becoming more perfected, the body also becomes subtler, and their union becomes stronger. When the human being reaches the level of intellectual existence, no further discrepancy remains between the two, and they merge into one entity, possessing the perfections of both the soul and the body in their most complete form. According to Mullā Ṣadrā, as the soul undergoes substantial transformations, the body evolves alongside it. Therefore, he views the soul as the bearer of the body, rather than the body being the bearer of the soul (Mullā Ṣadrā, 1985, p. 73).

Thus, it becomes clear that the soul is never free from some kind of body in any realm; rather, in each world, it is accompanied by a specific body that is suited to it. As it has been said, the body of the

soul, inasmuch as it is its body, cannot be separated from it. In fact, in every realm, the body is the lower level of the soul, and this body, in the form of its outward physical manifestation, is constantly transformed through the renewal of its instances and substantial motion. However, the body itself remains. And when the soul leaves this physical shell behind on Earth, its true body is still with it (Hassanzadeh Amoli, 1991, p. 489). In reality, what Mullā Ṣadrā means by this body is not the earthly body. Rather, the soul, through its virtues and attributes that become fixed in it through repetition, constructs its own body, and this body is its true body. However, as long as the soul remains in this world, it requires this outward body. After death, the body it has created becomes its true body. Moreover, Mullā Ṣadrā views the relationship between the soul and the body as reciprocal. If one ceases to exist, the other ceases to exist as well. When the soul leaves the body, the body will not survive. What remains is not the body but a lifeless mass. This body, which once contained a soul, was a body, but without the soul, it is no longer the same.

In summary, Mullā Ṣadrā rejects the theory of the pre-eternity of the soul and its spiritual origination. Instead, he adopts a different view on the origin of the soul, known as the theory of "the soul being material in origin and spiritual in survival." Based on this view, he considers the soul to be a fluid substance that, from the beginning of its materiality to the ultimate realization of its spirituality, is constantly in motion and intrinsic transformation. In fact, he explains the relationship between the soul and the body through the framework of the soul's material origin and its substantial motion.

From these points, it can be concluded that Mullā Ṣadrā does not view the relationship between the soul and the body as that of two completely distinct and separate entities. Rather, he asserts: (1) The

attachment of the soul to the body is essential and natural. In fact, the soul's connection to the body constitutes the very essence and truth of the soul. Without this attachment, the entity would no longer be the soul, but rather intellect. (2) The combination of the soul and the body is that of union. That is to say, although the soul and the body differ, they exist as one unified reality. There is no duality between them; rather, each is a level of the same single truth. According to Mullā Ṣadrā, the issue regarding the relationship between the soul and the body—that an immaterial being cannot combine with a material one—does not arise. This is because, initially, the soul is material, and after combining with the body, acquiring perfections, and undergoing its substantial motion, it attains the status of immateriality.

3. Soul-Body Interaction

Plato believes that the soul and the body are distinct from one another, yet at the same time, he acknowledges the reciprocal influence they have on each other.

The factors Mullā Ṣadrā presents regarding the influence of the body on the soul are as follows: He mentions in the *Timaeus* (Plato, 2001, vol. 3, p. 1791, §87) that every human being becomes bad and wicked due to bodily defects, illness, and poor upbringing. This is because all humans naturally strive to avoid evil; thus, one who is evil has been led to it against their will. He continues by stating that physical pain and illness cause various ailments in the soul. He explains this as follows: "For whenever the humors which arise from acid and saline phlegms, and all humors that are bitter and bilious wander through the body and find no external vent but are confined within, and mingle their vapor with the movement of the soul and are blended therewith, they implant diseases of the soul of all kinds, varying in intensity and

in extent; and as these humors penetrate to the three regions¹ of the Soul, according to the region which they severally attack, they give rise to all varieties of bad temper and bad spirits, and they give rise to all manner of rashness and cowardice, and of forgetfulness also, as well as of stupidity."

In *Laws* (Plato, 2001, vol. 4, § 775), he also emphasizes the importance of inheritance, stating that the human being is nothing beyond the material and physical conception of the seed. If there are flaws or ailments in the bodies or souls of the parents, these effects are passed on to their children as inheritance. A person born from a mother and father is not only similar to them in physical characteristics but also in spiritual traits.

In *Republic* (Plato, 2001, vol. 2, Book 3, p. 911, § 401), he discusses the impact of various types of music on the soul. He explains that whenever someone listens to music or a melody, it affects their spirit. If they listen to sorrowful music, their soul is impacted and becomes sad, while listening to cheerful music makes the soul lively and joyful. Plato believes that music and poetry are the most important methods for the education of the soul, because rhythm and melody penetrate deeper into the soul more swiftly than anything else. He asserts that, since music is heard through the ear, which is part of the body, this can also be seen as an example of the body's influence on the soul. Furthermore, he states that anyone who engages in physical exercises and training nurtures their spirit through the testimony of their own existence (Plato, 2001, vol. 2, p. 922, § 41). This indicates that Plato believes the strengthening of the body has an effect on the soul.

In *Charmides* (Plato, 2001, vol. 1, p. 197, § 156ff.), Plato presents an idea that indicates the influence of the soul on the body. He explains that if someone goes to the doctor due to eye pain, the doctor will

advise that in order to heal the eye, the entire head must be healthy, and healing the head is not possible without treating the whole body. Therefore, the doctor prescribes treatment for the entire body, and through healing the body as a whole, he also addresses the eye, which is a part of the body. Plato uses this example to discuss the influence of the soul on the body, saying that just as every pain in the eye arises from the head, every good or bad influence also spreads from the soul to the body. In fact, Plato seeks to convey that since the soul affects the body, if we wish to have a healthy head and body, we must first focus on healing the soul with utmost care.

According to Mullā Ṣadrā, both the soul and the body influence each other. The common belief among people is that the soul is subordinate to the body, meaning that whatever state the body is in, the soul must follow. For instance, if the body grows and develops, the soul must also grow and develop; or if the body is in disorder, the soul will not function properly, and so on. However, this is not the case. On the contrary, the body is subordinate to the soul, and this subordination of the body to the soul is intrinsic. Since when a form is imparted to matter, it gains being and existence, and since the initial form of the soul is vegetative, the essence and determination of matter come from the soul. Therefore, the body has no inherent or genuine reality except as it follows the soul (Ardabili, 2002, vol. 3, pp. 256-260). Mullā Ṣadrā believes that the soul and its attributes and faculties are like the root and the brain, while the body, along with all that is in it, is like the branches and the skin of the soul. The influence the soul has on the body is such that, for example, when the soul adopts the attribute of humility, its effects become apparent in the body. If the soul becomes angry, its effect on the body is that the face turns red and the movements become more rapid. If the soul is frightened, the

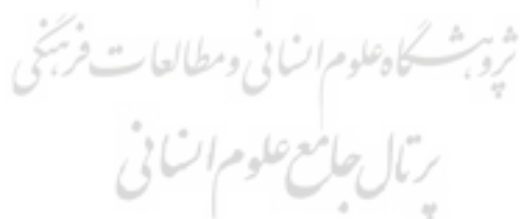
face turns pale, and the body becomes weakened (Mullā Ṣadrā, 2004, vol. 1, p. 385). The impact of these passions of the soul on the body is such that emotions like fear, affection, and joy cause changes in temperament and the secretion of saliva. For instance, in a state of sadness, the level of carbon dioxide in the blood increases, and the body needs to expel it. This is why those who suffer from depression often sigh repeatedly (Shirazi, 2004, vol. 2, pp. 1803-1804). According to Mulla Sadra, physical illnesses and injuries also affect the soul. Furthermore, he believes that while the soul is an immaterial substance, and the body is a dark material substance, the soul is also affected by the body. He explains the soul's susceptibility to the body by stating that it becomes shaped by the body's qualities and attributes, and it becomes capable of hearing, seeing, and moving (Mullā Ṣadrā, 2001, p. 387).

Based on what has been said, Mullā Ṣadrā holds that the influences the soul and body exert on each other stem from the intrinsic and natural connection and dependence that exists between them.

Conclusion

Plato does not provide a precise definition of the soul, but he considers it the source of movement. Mullā Ṣadrā, on the other hand, defines the soul as "the first perfection of a natural, organic body" and views it as having stages, including the vegetative, animal, and human. Both philosophers attribute certain characteristics to the soul, such as simplicity, substantiality, immateriality, and persistence. Plato makes an essential distinction between the soul and the body but believes in their reciprocal influence on each other. He equates the soul with the essence of humanity and regards the body as a foreign

entity after death. However, Mullā Ṣadrā sees the relationship between the soul and the body as a union, where each is a level of the same existential reality called "human." He believes the soul and the body mutually influence one another, with the soul initially being material and, through substantial motion, reaching the stage of immateriality. The soul's attachment to the body is intrinsic; it remains a soul only as long as it is attached to the body. According to Mullā Ṣadrā, the body also evolves alongside the soul in its substantial transformations, and the soul is the bearer of the body, not the other way around. In general, this study has examined and compared the views of Plato and Mullā Ṣadrā regarding the soul and its relationship with the body, showing that although Mullā Ṣadrā was influenced by Plato in some areas, he also has his own distinct views on the matter.



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