

# The nature of intellectual virtues from Mullā Ṣadrā's point of view

## Preface

In this article we will discuss what intellectual virtues are. The question of the nature of intellectual virtues is the first question that can be raised in this regard. This question has received the attention of different thinkers and various answers have been given to it, which can be discussed and investigated in its own place. What is important here is extracting or inferring Mullā Ṣadrā's view about the nature of intellectual virtues. Examining this issue from Mullā Ṣadrā's point of view is associated with certain complications. What makes it difficult to examine the question of what intellectual virtues are from Mullā Ṣadrā's point of view is that he did not address this issue independently. Therefore, in order to understand the above theory, in addition of considering his thought's foundations, it is necessary to carefully pay attention to his various sayings in his numerous works.

For this purpose, we will first examine the concept of virtue from his works to clarify the concept of intellectual virtues. Then we will search for the term intellectual virtues or terms related to it in his works to determine whether Mullā Ṣadrā basically used this term or not. The answer to this question is so important, because it will clarify the extent of his attention to the problem. In addition, if such a term or terms close to it are used, his position on the nature of intellectual virtues can be examined more carefully and his other expressions and sayings which is related to the issue can be explained and interpreted more precisely.

Another point that needs attention is the range and realm of intellectual virtues. This issue should be clarified which category of actions, attributes or dispositions are included in intellectual virtues from Mullā Ṣadrā's point of view. Examining the place of intellectual virtues is another issue that needs attention. This issue can clarify the priority level of this category of virtues compared to other human virtues and characteristics and highlight the importance of intellectual virtues.

Another discussion that should be pursued is the types of intellectual virtues. In this discussion, it is necessary to answer the question whether Mullā Ṣadrā

proposed different types of intellectual virtues or not, and what is the relationship between the types proposed by him with the types of virtues that are proposed today in the discussion of intellectual virtues by other thinkers.

It is also necessary to present the characteristics of intellectual virtues from Mullā Ṣadrā's point of view in the form of a list so that the instances of this category of virtues can be identified more precisely. Finally, a comparison is made between intellectual and moral virtues to determine their relationship with each other precisely.

## The concept of intellectual virtues

According to Mullā Ṣadrā, each of the states and dispositions that occur to the human soul is an existential description that can be considered a virtue or a vice for a person. Whether any of these states and dispositions are virtues or vices depends on the influence that they have on different dimensions of the human soul. Every psychical attribute is considered a virtue of the related faculty because it has a positive effect on the realization of that faculty. Therefore, it is true that every existential attribute is a kind of perfection, but every perfection cannot be considered a human virtue, because it is possible that an attribute, even though it is an existential matter, hinders other perfections that are specific to humans. In this case, the mentioned description is perfection or virtue, but it is not human perfection and virtue. As a result, if these attributes lead to the honor of the intellectual faculty, they are considered the virtues of the intellectual faculty, and the opposite attributes are considered the vices of the intellectual faculty. In the same way, attributes such as Greed, Foolhardiness, and Slyness are considered virtues for animal souls, but they are vices in relation to the rational human soul.

Therefore, virtue and vice are mentally constructed concepts that are used depending on the type of relationship between psychical states and dispositions on the one hand and each of the psychical dimensions of man on the other hand.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, the intellectual virtue is an attribute or disposition related to the intellectual faculty, which increases the human being's benefit as a whole, and by possessing it, a person will be placed at a higher level of existence. Intellectual

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<sup>1</sup> . (Shīrāzī, *Al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi-l-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]4, 1981, p. 115)

virtue is specific to the faculty of intellect and can include both theoretical wisdom (knowledge of generalities and fixed intellectuals), practical wisdom (knowledge of details related to human actions) and practical wisdom (a state between slyness and ignorance).

It may be said that the above description of virtue is related to moral virtues, because Mullā Ṣadrā has mentioned the vices of sluggishness, greed, and slyness in contrast to virtue, and these virtues are moral and not intellectual. Therefore, what is meant by virtue that stands against vice is moral virtue and not intellectual virtue. In response to this doubt, it should be pointed out that Mullā Ṣadrā is trying to express the meaning of virtue here, and this virtue includes both moral and intellectual types, and the instances he mentioned are only for example, not to restrict it to moral virtues. Therefore, the meaning of virtue is the same in both moral and intellectual virtues, and it is the characteristic of the soul that increases the overall benefit of human existence, but this characteristic can be moral or intellectual. In addition, it will become clearer in the following that moral virtues are also a prelude to intellectual virtues. Therefore, what deserves the name of human virtue is his intellectual virtue and not his moral virtue.

Another point in response to the above doubt is that Mullā Ṣadrā's interpretation clearly confirms that the mentioned virtue includes intellectual virtue. In his words, the phrase "virtues" related to the faculty of intellect is used. According to him, the virtues of the intellectual faculty are defined as the virtues that lead to the honor of the human soul, i.e. his intellectual faculty: "Some of these qualities necessitate the disappearance of other perfections that are specific to honorable souls, and some of them are not. Rather, it increases those souls with honor and splendor. These are the virtues of the rational power that man possesses:

The final point about the above doubt is that it is possible to consider one virtue related to the intellectual faculty, and for this reason it is considered an intellectual virtue, and at the same time, because of the human role in acquiring it, it is praised and the person attributed to that virtue is considered superior to others, and in other words, it can also be considered a moral virtue. This characteristic of intellectual virtue, which is one of the characteristics of **intellectual virtues** from Mullā Ṣadrā's point of view, will be examined in detail

in this chapter and at the appropriate position.<sup>2</sup>

## The technical meaning of intellectual virtues

In addition to the phrase that was mentioned before, there are other phrases of Mullā Ṣadrā in which intellectual virtues are mentioned with different expressions. Mullā Ṣadrā used the term "intellectual virtues" (*al-faḍāyil al-‘Agl āniyyeh*) in a sentence. Before using this term, he explains that all the perfections and beauties of this world are derived from a higher world and the higher truths can be understood by reaching that higher world. Then he addresses the given question that if this is the case, then why does man have love and passion for material things? In response, he points out that the beauties of the material world are tools and devices that make the oblivious man aware of spiritual goodness, intellectual virtues and divine lights:

It is no hidden to the one whose heart is enlightened and his mind illuminated after contemplating the above rules and principles that the ultimate purpose in the presence of love in the formation of souls and their love for the forms of the bodies and the beauties of the things and their approval of the adornment of materials is but an awakening them from the sleep of heedlessness and the slumber of ignorance and a practice for them to go away from physical matters and material idols toward spiritual beauties, *intellectual virtues*, and divine lights.<sup>3</sup>

Sometimes, intellectual virtues are mentioned by the term "rational virtues" (*al-faḍāyil al-‘aqlī*). For example, in the continuation of the previous note, Mullā Ṣadrā has used this term. According to Mullā Ṣadrā, when he wakes up from his slumber of ignorance and understands the facts, he will realize that contrary to rational virtues, physical pleasures and material beauties were nothing more than mirage while he considered them to be reality:

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Some of these qualities necessitate the disappearance of other perfections that are specific to honorable souls, and some of them are not. Rather, it increases those souls with honor and splendor. These are the virtues of the rational power that man possesses.

<sup>3</sup>. لا يخفى على من تنور قلبه و استضاء عقله بعد التأمل فيما مر من القواعد و الأصول أن الغرض الأقصى في وجود العشق في جبله النفوس و محبتها لشمائل الأبدان و محاسن الأجسام و استحسانها زينة المواد و الأجرام إنما هو تنبيه لها من نوم الغفلة و رقدة الجهالة و رتاضة لها من تخريج الأمور الجسمانية و الأصنام الهيولانية إلى المحاسن الروحانية و الفضائل العقلانية و الأنوار الإلهية.

(Shīrāzī, *Al-Hikma al-muta‘aliya fi-l-asfar al-‘aqliyya al-arba‘a* [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]2, 1981, pp. 78-79)

So when the soul awakens from the sleep of heedlessness and awakens from the slumber of ignorance and opens the eye of its insight and examines its world and knows its origin and its future (resurrection), then certainly understand that bodily pleasures and material beauties - all like the opposites of *rational virtues* and the imaginations of spiritual lights, do not have an inherent and independent reality, but rather are as a mirage of a reality that the thirsty person thinks it is water, until when he comes to it, he finds nothing, but finds God with it, and He fulfills it.<sup>4</sup>

Mullā Ṣadrā has also used the term "*rational virtues*" in another position. He considers people who are looking for rational virtues to be superior to those who are looking for useful techniques (arts) with the help of their faculty of estimation. Of course, superior to these people are those who receive knowledge directly from the active intellect: "And the best among them is a group who begin to seek rational virtues and delve into certain knowledge with perfect reasoning and the power of reflection and contemplation".<sup>5</sup>

In another position, the term "*cognitive virtues*" (*al-faḍāyil al-‘elmīyyah*) is used to refer to intellectual virtues. After explaining the true perfection of man and its relationship with theoretical and practical reason, Mullā Ṣadrā praises people who have a greater desire to acquire cognitive and practical virtues than others. According to Mullā Ṣadrā, cognitive virtue, along with practical one, is an essential element for the realization of the true perfection of man:

And whoever ... is inclined and desirous of acquiring the cognitive and practical virtues, his ascent to the ascents of perfection and his endowment with the virtues of states that lead to good deeds, and his gradation from one state to another is more both in terms of quantity and quality.<sup>6</sup>

The precision in the wordings that Mullā Ṣadrā used about intellectual virtues shows that intellectual virtues are acquired and must be acquired using theoretical

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<sup>4</sup>. فإذا انتهت النفس من نوم الغفلة واستيقظت من رعدة الجهالة وفتحت عين بصيرتها وعاينت عالمها وعرفت مبدأها ومعادها لتيقنت أن المستلذات الجسمية والمحاسن المادية - كلها كعكوس الفضائل العقلية وخيالات الأنوار الروحانية ليست لها حقيقة متأصلة وذات مستقلة بل كسراب بقية يحسبه الظمان ماء حتى إذا جاءه لم يجده شيئا ووجد الله عنده فوفاه

(Shīrāzī, Al-Hikma al-muta‘aliya fi-l-asfar al-‘aqliyya al-arba‘a [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]2, 1981, p. 80)

<sup>5</sup>. (Shīrāzī, Kasr asnam al-jahiliyya, 1343, p. 62)

<sup>6</sup>. (Shīrāzī, Kasr asnam al-jahiliyya, 1343, p. 161)

and practical methods. Therefore, intellectual virtues cannot be considered as natural and intrinsic phenomena.

## The realm of intellectual virtues

Intellectual virtues refer to the virtues related to the faculty of intellect. Probably for the first time, Aristotle explained this group of virtues and separated them from moral virtues. So what is certain is that the intellectual virtues are related to the faculty of intellect and not to other faculties. Considering that the intellectual faculty is concerned with both the understanding of the facts and the understanding of values, and the two terms of theoretical and practical intellect are related to these two types of knowledge, the question arises as: to which, the intellectual virtues related? Whether it related to theoretical reason or practical one? Or does it include both?

Paying attention to the meanings wordings of intellectual virtues that were mentioned in the previous discussions shows that intellectual virtues in Mullā Sara's thought include virtues related to both theoretical and practical reason. In other words, intellectual virtues from Mullā Ṣadrā's point of view include both virtues such as practical wisdom, which is considered a psychological disposition, and understanding the truths of the world through connection to the active intellect, which is related to the theoretical reason. From this point of view, Mullā Ṣadrā's view is similar to Aristotle's one, because in Aristotle's view, intellectual virtues were related to the faculty of intellect, which consisted of two components: scientific (theoretical reason) and calculative (practical reason), and were include all the virtues related to theoretical reason (scientific knowledge, intuitive reason, philosophic wisdom) and virtues related to practical reason (art and practical wisdom).<sup>7</sup> Also, these two views are common in that they have not applied the Mean rule in the theoretical reason.<sup>8</sup> However, Mullā Ṣadrā's point of view is different from Aristotle's, because according to Aristotle, the virtues of practical reason are not based on applying the Mean rule, but the virtues of practical reason

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<sup>7</sup>. (Aristotle, 2009), 1102a-1103b p. 19-24/1139a-1139b p. 102-104

<sup>8</sup>. (Shīrāzī, *Al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi-l-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]4, 1981, p. 115). Of course, there is a questionable statement by Mulla Sadra that the implementation of the Mean rule may be considered even in the faculty of theoretical reason, but many contrary evidences indicate that it is not applied to theoretical reason.

in Mullā Ṣadrā's thought are explained based on the application of this rule on the faculty of intellect.

According to one explanation of Mullā Ṣadrā, he applies the Mean rule on the faculty of intellect beside the faculty of lust and anger. Based on this, the middle point of intellect is Wisdom, and the extremes are Slyness and Foolishness. The virtue of the faculty of lust is Continence, which is between the two vices of Greed and Sluggishness of appetite, the virtue of the power of anger is Courage, which is the middle point between Recklessness and Cowardice.<sup>9</sup> The sum of the virtues of Wisdom, Continence and Courage is called Justice,<sup>10</sup> and the vices that are on each of two sides are called Injustice.<sup>11</sup> Of course, in some positions, he has spoken of Injustice as an excess of justice.<sup>12</sup>

Undoubtedly, from Mullā Ṣadrā's point of view, theoretical reason, in the sense of understanding universals that have a fixed and unchanging existence, is considered one of the intellectual virtues. This virtue deals with theoretical reason. Also, practical wisdom in the sense of knowing what moral dispositions are, their quality, knowing amount of their value, knowing how to strengthen and weaken psychical dispositions, as well as knowing the policies related to managing the home and city is also a part of intellectual virtue. This wisdom also deals with the understanding of generalities which are related to theoretical reason. However, the knowledge of the details of practical affairs and wisdom which is considered as one of the dispositions is related to practical reason<sup>13</sup> and is one of the intellectual virtues due to its connection with the faculty of intellect, although it is usually next to chastity and courage. Arises. This wisdom, which is also called practical wisdom and should not be confused with practical wisdom in the previous sense, is the source of other secondary virtues.

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<sup>9</sup> . (Shīrāzī, *Al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi-l-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]3, 1981, p. 514); (Shīrāzī, *Al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi-l-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]4, 1981, pp. 116-117); (Shīrāzī, *Al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi-l-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]9, 1981, pp. 90-91); (Shīrāzī, *al-Mabda' wal-Ma'ad*, 1354, p. 258); (Shīrāzī, *Mafatih al-ghayb* [Keys to the Unseen], 1363, p. 515); (Shīrāzī, *arshiyeh*, 1341, pp. 48-49)

<sup>10</sup> . (Shīrāzī, *Al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi-l-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]4, 1981, p. 117); (Shīrāzī, *Mafatih al-ghayb* [Keys to the Unseen], 1363, p. 691)

<sup>11</sup> . (Shīrāzī, *Al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi-l-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]4, 1981, p. 117); (Shīrāzī, *Sharh Usul Kafi*1, 1370, p. 423)

<sup>12</sup> . (Shīrāzī, *Sharh Usul Kafi*1, 1370, p. 421); (Shīrāzī, *Tafsir al-Quran al-Karim* 6, 1366, p. 284)

<sup>13</sup> . (Shīrāzī, *Al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi-l-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]9, 1981, p. 82) Introduction of Mulla Hādī Sabzewārī to (Shīrāzī, *Shavahed al-Robubiyyah*, p. 663)

In another explanation, while enumerating wisdom and freedom as the main virtues, Mullā Ṣadrā considered the realization of these two important virtues dependent on moderation in the four faculties of knowledge, anger, lust, and the powers of reason and justice, which results in the realization of wisdom, courage, chastity, and justice.<sup>14</sup> In this explanation, wisdom is obtained from moderation in the faculty of knowledge. According to an explanation by Mullā Ṣadrā, knowledge here refers to the use of external and internal senses in worldly affairs. This meaning is different from the rational knowledge of the facts of things using the theoretical reason, because unlike the intellectual knowledge of the facts and realities, which is the more the better, excesses in the faculty of knowledge in question are reprehensible, and only the middle of it, which is wisdom, is considered a virtue.<sup>15</sup>

The disposition of wisdom in this explanation is also related to practical reason and intellectual virtues. Although practical wisdom in this sense is a psychological disposition, it is either directly related to the human knowledge of dos and don'ts, advantages and disadvantages, or it is closely related to understanding of advantages and disadvantages in details. In addition to putting this virtue under practical wisdom or the faculty of knowledge, there are other evidences about the relationship between this wisdom and the perceptive faculty of man, one of the most important of which is Mullā Ṣadrā's statement on this matter. In many cases, he has attributed wisdom and its excesses, i.e. Foolishness and Slyness to the cognitive faculty.<sup>16</sup>

## The position of intellectual virtues

In the discussion of Mullā Ṣadrā's foundation, it was clarified that the ultimate goal of man is to achieve perfection, and the ultimate perfection of man depends on the realization of human talents. Therefore, dealing with vegetative and animal faculties cannot be considered human perfection. Therefore, human perfection passes through the perfection of intellect - which is unique to humans. Therefore,

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<sup>14</sup> . (Shīrāzī, *Al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi-l-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]9, 1981, pp. 87-89)

<sup>15</sup> . (Shīrāzī, *Tafsir al-Quran al-Karim* 6, 1366, pp. 284-285)

<sup>16</sup> . (Shīrāzī, *Tafsir al-Quran al-Karim* 1, 1366, p. 95); (Shīrāzī, *Al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi-l-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]6, 1981, p. 57); (Shīrāzī, *Al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi-l-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]7, 1981, p. 64)



the virtues related to this faculty have a special place and importance. In addition to practical wisdom, practical reason which is responsible for managing the body, includes other virtues such as courage and chastity. Meanwhile, the virtue of practical wisdom ranks higher than other virtues. Practical wisdom, along with other virtues related to practical reason, serve theoretical reason to achieve its perfection, which is connected to active intellect. From this point of view, the virtues of theoretical reason are in a higher position than the virtues of practical reason. Among the virtues of theoretical reason, there are levels, all of which are the prelude to achieving the highest level, that is, the highest level of theoretical wisdom and connection to active intellect.

## Types of intellectual virtues

The intellectual virtues in the works of different thinkers have been explained in different ways, based on which the intellectual virtues can be divided into two categories: the intellectual virtues based on abilities and faculties, and the intellectual virtues based on character traits. Intellectual virtues based on abilities are called those epistemic virtues that are based on human cognitive abilities. A group of epistemologists, i.e., reliabilists, such as Goldman, Sosa, and Greco, emphasize good cognitive abilities more than anything else in knowledge about reality. Character-oriented intellectual virtues are also called virtues that are based on human characteristics and behaviors, and according to some thinkers such as Zagzebski and Baer, paying attention to them is important and influential in acquiring knowledge. In the following, we will briefly explain each of these two types of virtues.

### Faculty-based intellectual virtues

Epistemologists such as Ernest Sosa (1940- ) have already discussed about the faculty-based intellectual. He follows the reliabilism view in justification of knowledge, according to which a belief is epistemically justified when it is obtained or maintained by an epistemological process that reliably leads to the truth and not to false and error. Based on this, he mentions various cognitive powers that reliably lead to the truth, and in his opinion, these powers are

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<sup>17</sup>. (Sosa, Knowledge in Perspective, 2003, p. 237).

epistemic virtues. According to him, intellectual virtues are abilities that reliably make a person successful in obtaining truth. According to him, some powers provide access to information that was already in the mind, and some powers produce and create beliefs without being dependent on the previous information of the mind. These two groups of powers are respectively called transmissive faculties (Rationalist deduction and memory) and generative faculties (sight, intellectual intuition, perception and introspection).<sup>18</sup> According to him, virtues such as open-mindedness, intellectual courage, persistence and single-minded obsessiveness can be considered auxiliary virtues and not the main intellectual virtues.<sup>19</sup>

Based on the explanation of the three stages in the learning process, Jason Baer has explained the intellectual virtues associated with each of the learning stages.<sup>20</sup> According to him, the first step is to start learning and guide it in the right direction. The virtues of curiosity, intellectual autonomy and intellectual humility are associated with this stage. The second step is to keep the learning process on track. This stage includes the intellectual virtues of Attentiveness, intellectual carefulness, and Intellectual thoroughness. The third stage in learning is overcoming the challenges of productive learning, which includes the virtues of Open-mindedness, intellectual courage, and intellectual tenacity.

In addition to the virtues that Baer mentioned in the learning process, he also mentioned stages in his research and mentioned several intellectual virtues for each.<sup>21</sup> According to him, research also requires things that each of them are related to their own virtues. Starting research requires virtues such as curiosity, attentiveness, contemplativeness and thoughtfulness. Focusing on the subject of research requires virtues such as ongoing attentiveness, keen observation, Scrutiny, perceptiveness and Concentration. Consistency in evaluating sources requires virtues such as intellectual fairness, Consistency and objectivity. Also, to prevent self-deception, virtues such as intellectual self-awareness, self-

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<sup>18</sup> (Sosa, Knowledge in Perspective, 2003, pp. 225-227); (Sosa E. , The Raft and the Pyramid: Coherence Versus Foundations in the Theory of Knowledge, 2003, p. 23)

<sup>19</sup>. (Sosa E. , Judgment and Agency, 2015, p. 42 and 48); (Sosa, Virtue Epistemology: Character vs. Competence", Current Controversies, p. 69)

<sup>20</sup> . (Baehr, Cultivating Good Minds: A Philosophical & Practical Guide to Educating for Intellectual Virtues, 2015, pp. 57-58, 514-515)

<sup>21</sup> . (Baehr, 2011, pp. 19-21); (Baehr, Cultivating Good Minds: A Philosophical & Practical Guide to Educating for Intellectual Virtues, 2015, pp. 516-518)

scrutiny, honesty, open-mindedness, intellectual humility and intellectual courage are necessary. The result of such virtues will be a strong and powerful form of intellectual wholeness or integrity. Research requires thinking outside the box and this requires virtues such as Imaginativeness, creativity, intellectual adaptability, flexibility, agility and open-mindedness. Effort and persistence on the way to the fruition of a research also requires virtues such as intellectual courage, determination, Perseverance, patience and Diligence.

## **Character-oriented intellectual virtues**

Character-oriented intellectual virtues are said to be virtues that deal with the character and inner characteristics of a person and not with the tools and faculties of acquiring knowledge. Various thinkers have researched about this category of intellectual virtues. For example, in his works, Zagzebski has explained the instances of intellectual virtues, and instead of emphasizing the faculties, he has emphasized the Character-oriented intellectual virtues. The intellectual virtues that she has mentioned in her works include the ability to recognize salient facts, sensitivity to detail, open-mindedness in collecting and appraising evidence, fairness in evaluating the arguments of others, intellectual humility, intellectual perseverance, diligence, care, and thoroughness, adaptability of intellect, the detective's virtues: thinking of coherent explanations of the facts, being able to recognize reliable authority, insight into persons, problems, theories, and the teaching virtues: the social virtues of being communicative, including intellectual candor and knowing your audience and how they respond.<sup>22</sup>

## **Şadrā's intellectual virtues**

The words that are available from Mullā Şadrā about intellectual virtues and instances of which were mentioned under the discussion of the concept of intellectual virtues and the technical term of intellectual virtues show that from Mullā Şadrā's point of view, intellectual virtues refer to the character of people and not to their perceptive faculties and tools. Therefore, although faculties and tools can also be considered virtues in terms of their existence and every existence is considered perfection and virtue, this virtue is an existential virtue, and in fact

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<sup>22</sup>. (Zagzebski, 1996, p. 114)

it means that these are existential matters, while the term intellectual virtue which is discussed refers to a discussion beyond mere existence, and Mullā Ṣadrā's words also refer to this. Therefore, it seems that Mullā Ṣadrā's intellectual virtues are acquired virtues in order for man to achieve his true perfection, although it is possible to benefit from sensual powers and facilities necessary to achieve knowledge as far as it deals with human will and volition and it is also used in order to achieve true happiness, and from this point of view, he discussed this category of virtues as well.

## Characteristics of intellectual virtues

According to Mullā Ṣadrā's intellectual foundations and the analysis of his statements, as well as the topics that have been mentioned so far, we can point to components that help us to understand the nature of these virtues more precisely. These components include existentiality, gradationality, optionality, advantage, rationality, stability, necessity and priority, which we will elaborate on in the following.

### Existentiality

As mentioned earlier, intellectual virtue is first and foremost a virtue. From Mullā Ṣadrā's point of view, virtue is an existential matter, and everything that does not exist will not be a virtue.<sup>23</sup> The existence of virtue is completely understandable based on the fundamentality of existence and the realistic foundations of Mullā Ṣadrā. Based on this, having an intellectual virtue means existential benefit, and a person who has an intellectual virtue has more existential benefit compared to a person who lacks that virtue, and the more a person's intellectual virtues are added, the stronger his existence will be. According to the basis of the substantial motion, a person endowed with intellectual virtues is more perfect than someone who does not benefit from these virtues or has less benefits. This issue is also related to the skepticism of rational virtues, which we will explain further.

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<sup>23</sup> (Shīrāzī, *Al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi-l-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]7, 1981, p. 111); (Shīrāzī, *Tafsir al-Quran al-Karim* 1, 1366, pp. 249-250)

## Gradationality

According to Mullā Ṣadrā's ontological foundations, virtue is an existential matter and according to existence, it has ranks and stages. In the same way, intellectual virtue is also an existential matter and accordingly it has different levels. To explain the gradational nature of intellectual virtue, we can pay attention to different levels of intellect from Mullā Ṣadrā's point of view. As mentioned before, intellectual virtues are related to intellectual faculty. Regarding the kinds of knowledge, the intellectual faculty is also divided into two types of practical and theoretical reason. Each of these two has levels and stages. Perfection of every practical and theoretical reason are related to each other and the evolution of each has an effect on the function of the other and helps to promote and evolve it. The levels of practical reason include correction of the appearance by obeying the divine commandments, refinement of the inward and purification the heart from moral vices, attributing to the scientific forms and God's pleased attributes, and annihilating the soul from its own essence and paying attention only to God Almighty.<sup>24</sup> Each of these levels helps to achieve a higher level. In addition to this, the realization of each of these stages also requires understanding and knowledge related to that stage. Also, these levels help to realize or improve the levels of theoretical reason.

The levels of theoretical reason are also the intellect in potency, the dispositional intellect, the actual intellect and the acquired intellect.<sup>25</sup> As it was mentioned before in the second section (foundations), what has intrinsic value is the achievement of the highest level of theoretical reason, i.e. the acquired intellect, and the levels of practical reason and other levels of theoretical reason are tools for the realization of acquired intellect.

Therefore, whether the intellectual virtue is applied to the faculties or the characters, both of them have levels, because according to the basis of gradation in the existence, each of the faculties refers to a level of existence. Achieving the true perfection of man will also be achieved by passing from the lower levels of intellectual faculties to the higher levels and achieving the acquired intellect. In

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<sup>24</sup> . (Shīrāzī, *Mafatih al-ghayb* [Keys to the Unseen], 1363, p. 523); (Shīrāzī, *Shavahed al-Robubiyyah*, p. 207)

<sup>25</sup> . (Shīrāzī, *Al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi-l-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a* [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]8, 1981, pp. 130-131); (Shīrāzī, *al-Mabda' wal-Ma'ad*, 1354, p. 261); (Shīrāzī, *Sharh Usul Kafi*1, 1370, p. 226); (Shīrāzī, *Mafatih al-ghayb* [Keys to the Unseen], 1363, pp. 407-408)

addition, with the growth of human dimensions, rational virtues in the sense of character-based virtues will also grow and evolve, and a perfect human being will benefit from more perfect intellectual virtues.

## **Optionality**

It was mentioned before that Mullā Ṣadrā's words indicate that intellectual virtues are optional. The optionality of intellectual virtues means the possibility of creating, removing, strengthening or weakening them. Based on this, human will be effective in intellectual virtues in such a way that it can lead to the creation or elimination of intellectual virtues, promote a virtue or weaken it. A person who is careful in understanding the argument, tries to understand the truth of the facts, or spends his time finding sufficient reasons or opposing evidence, is acquiring an intellectual virtue or intensifying and strengthening it, and in contrary, A person who judges without carefulness, effort, and attention to counter evidences and arguments is weakening intellectual virtue, acquiring intellectual vice, or strengthening existing ones.

Of course, it is necessary to pay attention to the point that if the circle of intellectual virtues is imagined to be wider to include abilities and faculties, it should be noted that the role of volition in this category of virtues is weaker and some intellectual virtues such as possessing intellectual strength is not necessarily optional.

## **Advantage**

Intellectual virtues are firstly virtues. Virtue in its general meaning refers to the superiority and advantage of the possessor over people who lack that virtue. Based on this, the one who pays attention to the opposing evidences and proofs in understanding a problem, or pays more attention to the evidences and arguments, is superior to the one who makes one-sided judgments or is less careful about the evidences and arguments.

This advantage regarding optional intellectual virtues - which is what Mullā Ṣadrā means by Intellectual virtues - is a value and moral advantage in the sense that a person possessing these virtues can be considered morally superior to

others, but regarding non-optional intellectual virtues it is an existential advantage and superiority and not moral; In the sense that although the person who has a higher IQ is superior to the person who is lower, assuming that the IQ is non-optional, the former cannot be considered morally better than the latter. In other words, although he has a higher perfection, this perfection is existential and not moral.

## **Rationality**

The intellectual virtues deal with the intellectual and cognitive faculties of a human being and shape human cognition and knowledge about reality. For this reason, just as the intellectual faculty has a higher dignity than other animal or vegetable faculties, intellectual virtues also have a higher rank than other virtues such as moral virtues- resulting from controlling the faculties of lust and anger. Also, as rationality is an essential element of human being according to the well-known view, possessing intellectual virtues has a great effect on the flourishing of human) potentiality and helps to preserve human dignity.

## **Stability**

The characteristic of stability of intellectual virtues can be proposed about both categories of intellectual virtues related to theoretical and practical reason. Some intellectual virtues related to theoretical reason can be fixed and unchangeable, because in the evolution of theoretical reason, if a person achieves the level of actual intellect, he might be able to access to the truth. This stage happens when the human soul is separated from physical interests. Therefore, the fulfillment of this stage will be after death. According to Mullā Ṣadrā, the human soul is present with the intellect after the intellect has become actual, and the soul does not need to make new efforts to acquire knowledge anymore, because he has a permanent state to connection to the active intellect and the source of information. Therefore, according to the active intellect, the desired information is obtained for him. According to him, due to the intensity of perceptual faculty and the deterioration of barriers, knowledge turns into observation at this time.<sup>26</sup> It is necessary to pay attention to this point that the virtues that are obtained before

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<sup>26</sup> (Shīrāzī, Sharh al-Hedayat Al-Nasiriyah, p. 454)

connecting to the active intellect and are considered a prelude to it are not considered disposition and are constantly changing and transforming.

Also, another part of the intellectual virtues, i.e. the intellectual virtues related to the practical intellect, are also part of the psychological dispositions and hence are considered fixed and unchangeable. The practical wisdom that is obtained as a result of the moderation of the intellectual faculty and also the secondary virtues under it are among the psychological dispositions that arise as a result of the moderation in the practical reason.<sup>27</sup>

## **Necessity**

From Mullā Ṣadrā's point of view, the divine closeness or the presential knowledge of God Almighty is the true happiness of man. In addition to the fact that the true happiness of man is an instance of intellectual virtues due to his epistemological aspect, the realization of this goal requires attribution to intellectual virtues. It is clear that nearness to God requires detailed and deep knowledge about facts, especially about the intellectual world and their connection with the material one. Therefore, attribution to intellectual virtues is necessary to achieve true happiness, although it cannot be considered sufficient, because in addition to the epistemological aspect, it is also necessary to accept knowledge by the heart.

## **Priority**

Contrary to the popular belief that the practical control of lust and anger is considered very important, according to the principles of Mullā Ṣadrā, intellectual virtues are prioritized over other virtues. If we want to analyze this issue more precisely, you should pay attention to the issue of priority according to the separation of theoretical and practical reason from each other. As mentioned in the discussion of the foundations of Mullā Ṣadrā's point of view, practical reason is the servant of theoretical reason, and the perfection of practical reason is a prelude to the perfection of theoretical reason. Therefore, the perfection of theoretical reason is superior to the perfection of practical reason. As a result, the

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<sup>27</sup> . (Shīrāzī, *Al-Hikma al-muta‘aliya fi-l-asfar al-‘aqliyya al-arba‘a* [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]4, 1981, p. 115)



intellectual virtues related to theoretical reason are superior to the intellectual virtues related to practical reason.<sup>28</sup> For this reason, he is contrary to the literalists who consider performing actions such as prayer and fasting to be superior to psychological attributes and sciences, he believes in the superiority and priority of science over psychological attributes and actions, because the philosophy of performing actions is the realization of psychological attributes, and the philosophy of psychological attributes is the acquisition of true knowledge.<sup>29</sup>

## Intellectual and moral virtues

The relationship between intellectual and moral virtues was briefly discussed before, but it seems that a detailed investigation about it is useful for understanding what intellectual virtues are. A detailed examination of the mentioned relationship requires answers to questions such as whether intellectual virtues and moral virtues are essentially the same or are they fundamentally different from each other. If they differ in substance, what exactly is their difference? And if they do not differ in essence, are they the same or are they different? And if they are different, what is their difference? Can intellectual virtues be moral or can moral virtues be considered intellectual? Can each of these two help to realize the other in the sense that intellectual virtue helps to realize moral virtues and moral virtue helps to realize intellectual virtue? Do they have precedence and posteriority in relation to each other or not, and if there is such a relationship, which is the first and which is the last? Do they have priority over each other and if yes, which one has priority over the other? Can intellectual virtues be valued morally?

Examining all these above issues requires a detailed discussion about moral virtues and then comparing it with the characteristics of intellectual virtues, and this is not possible during the current research, but with the information that has been raised so far about each of these two, it is possible to discuss Mullā Ṣadrā's answers to the above questions briefly.

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<sup>28</sup> . (Shīrāzī, Al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi-l-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]1, 1981, p. 21); (Shīrāzī, Al-Hikma al-muta'aliya fi-l-asfar al-'aqliyya al-arba'a [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]9, 1981, pp. 127, 131 and 139); (Shīrāzī, Shavahed al-Robubiyah, pp. 201-202); (Shīrāzī, al-Mabda' wal-Ma'ad, 1354, p. 261 and 366); (Shīrāzī, Mafatih al-ghayb [Keys to the Unseen], 1363, pp. 644-645); (Shīrāzī, arshiyeh, 1341, pp. 48-49); (Shīrāzī, Risala-yi Sih asl, 1340, p. 74); (Shīrāzī, al-khalseh dibacheye 'arsh al-Taqdis, 1375, p. 266); (Shīrāzī, al-Mazahir al-ilahiyya, 1339, p. 61)

<sup>29</sup> . (Shīrāzī, Kasr asnam al-jahiliyya, 1343, pp. 71-74)

It seems that according to Mullā Ṣadrā, these two types of virtues are common in terms of being existential, being gradational, being optional, being advantageous, and being necessary, although they differ in some characteristics such as being rational or not, having stability or not, and the amount of importance, because some moral virtues such as courage and chastity are not considered intellectual. Also, all moral virtues are psychical dispositions and have permanent state and are fixed and established in the soul, but only some intellectual virtues have the permanent state, and that is specific to the final stage of the perfection of the theoretical reason, in which man is connected to the active intellect and separates from the body. In terms of importance, intellectual virtues are superior to moral virtues and are in priority, and for this reason, the perfection of practical reason is considered a prelude to the realization of the perfection of theoretical reason. Nevertheless, in Mullā Ṣadrā's view, some moral virtues, such as practical wisdom and secondary virtues derived from it, are part of intellectual virtues.<sup>30</sup>

Also, each of the levels of theoretical and practical reason help to evolve each other so that the true perfection of man, which has a theoretical and cognitive aspect, is finally achieved. Therefore, the realization of true knowledge, which is considered true perfection, is the last of the other levels of knowledge and also the last of the moral virtues. From another point of view, the realization of moral virtues requires knowledge of those virtues, and without knowledge of moral virtues, their realization is not possible. Therefore, the first level of perfection is knowledge. Therefore, one level of theoretical knowledge precedes moral virtues, and another level is the last of them, and moral virtues are in between as mediators of securing human perfection.

Another point is that due to the commonality of these two categories of virtues in the feature of being advantageous, one can praise people who are characterized by intellectual virtues as well as people who are characterized by moral virtues, because attribution to intellectual virtues in Mullā Ṣadrā's view is a step towards the realization of true perfection. Man has been raised, although this step alone is not considered sufficient to realize the final goal.

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<sup>30</sup> . (Shīrāzī, *Al-Hikma al-muta‘aliya fi-l-asfar al-‘aqliyya al-arba‘a* [The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect]9, 1981, p. 91)