

Mulla Sadra's Ontological Critic to the Absurdity of Life (Nihilism)

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Abstract

Meaningfulness of life is one of the main topics in contemporary philosophies. Although early philosophers did not address it by this title in their works, they discussed similar concepts. Through a review of the perspective of Mulla Sadra, also known as Şadr ad-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī, we can conclude that he is among those philosophers who argued for supernaturalism when discussing the concept of life meaningfulness and argued against absurdity and meaninglessness of life in their works. From the perspective of ontology, the belief in origin and resurrection and the existing persuasive and reasonable arguments in the two mentioned areas are indicative of the meaningfulness of human life. The question of the existence of God, monotheism, and then resurrection is considered as the main basis of ontology. Adopting a descriptive and analytical approach, the present study focused on Sadra's perspective on the meaningfulness of life in the light of belief in origin and resurrection. The study also included analyzing, reviewing, and even retrieving his arguments against absurdity and meaninglessness of life. The main finding is that Sadra believes that absurdity is nothing but a mental illusion that the Creation is causeless. The main components of absurdity are denial of God, resurrection, life, and human's existential dimensions, whereas life meaningfulness includes the belief in God, resurrection, death, and human dignity.

Keywords: Meaning of Life, Nihilism, Meaninglessness of Life, Mulla Sadra, Ontology, God, Resurrection.

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Problem Statement

The question on the purpose and value of life has been raised since the past for human beings, and today, due to the change of life style from traditional to modern, the meaningfulness of life is still a serious concern for most individuals, in a way that involved many minds. However, in opposition to many who believe in meaningfulness of life, there are some people who, reject any value for life and admitted that life is absurd. The meaningfulness of life, in contrast to absurdity, is defended by its proponents in terms of "value", "objective" or "function".

Mulla Sadra is one of the intellectuals who, in addition to believing the meaningfulness of life, denies absurdity, on the basis of ontological insight.

Re-considering Sadra's ideas displays that his view on the meaning of life is a supernatural view, for he considers human life, and even all existence, with regard to its fountainhead, namely, God as his acceptance of the meaningfulness of life is based on the belief in God and resurrection.

Therefore, this paper seeks to answer the following question: how the absurdity and the meaninglessness of life will be denied according to Sadra's ontological approach? Due to answering this main question, there are several sub-questions, which are answered by provided analysis. The questions are: what are the ontological components of life meaningfulness based on Mulla Sadra? What are the absurdity components in the field of ontology? And finally, according to Sadra's ontology, what critiques could be states on absurdist theory and meaningless components of life?

Method

The present research, through a descriptive-analytical method, tries to analyze Sadra's viewpoints on the meaningfulness of life due to believing the origin and the return.

Findings and Results

Considering and interpreting Sadr-ol-Mote'allehin Shīrāzī viewpoint, we conclude that he is one of the intellectuals who defend the supernaturalistic theory in the field of life meaning, and denies the absurdity and meaninglessness of life in his works. From the ontological perspective, believing in God and resurrection and rational arguments given in support of belief in God and resurrection, reveals that human life is meaningful and also lead to its meaningfulness. The basic ontological foundation in this regard is seen on the existence of God and its unification, which followed by the afterlife and resurrection.

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