Epistemic Virtue from the Viewpoints of Mulla Sadra and Zagzebski

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This paper compares epistemic virtue from the viewpoints of Zagzebski and Mulla Sadra, aiming to determine the extent to which their viewpoints on epistemic virtue are similar. Zagzebski, the contemporary philosopher, considers epistemic virtue as the basis on which knowledge is interpreted. She sees epistemic virtue as a requirement for achieving knowledge. Mulla Sadra, the founder of Transcendent Philosophy, considers knowledge as an outcome of intellectual virtues without which there would be no knowledge. The role these two philosophers ascribe to moral and intellectual virtues and vices in forming the identity makes it possible to compare their interpretation of epistemic virtues. As a virtue responsibilist, Zagzebski sees epistemic virtue as a character trait and explains its nature by its different components. Sadra as well, sees epistemic virtue as a character trait. Evidence shows that Sadra's definition of intellectual virtues is similar to that given by Zagzebski in many respects. Examining Zagzebski's viewpoint on epistemic virtue, this paper will discuss Sadra's viewpoint on epistemic virtue as well as its contribution to knowledge. In conclusion the similarities of the two viewpoints will be delineated.

Keywords: Epistemic Virtue, Knowledge, Zagzebski, Mulla Sadra.

Introduction

Epistemic virtue is a fundamental concept underlying the justification of beliefs as well as the interpretations of knowledge given by virtue epistemologists. Virtue epistemology is defined as a set of recent approaches to epistemology, focusing on epistemic evaluation of agent rather than on that of his beliefs. Introduced in Ernest Sosa' paper "the Raft and the Pyramid" (1980) and as a theory competing with analytic epistemology, virtue epistemology was intended to solve

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the problems of epistemology. Aiming to solve Foundationalism and Coherenticism disputes as well as internalism and externalism, Sosa offered the idea of an upheaval in epistemology, shifting from the belief-centered epistemology to an agent-centered epistemology (Sosa 1980). This constitutes the basics of virtue epistemology. Endorsed by philosophers such as Greco, Lorrain Code, James Montmarquet, Zagzebski, Fairweather, and Baehr, epistemic virtue was nevertheless interpreted in different ways.

Although epistemologists unanimously endorsed the idea of epistemic virtues as a solution to problems emanating from classic and analytic epistemology, they have not given a unified and consented account of epistemic virtue. These divergent accounts led to two approaches, namely Reliabilism and Responsibilism. Virtue reliabilists define epistemic virtue as a reliable belief- producing faculty. In contrast, virtue responsibilitists define epistemic virtue as a character trait.

As a virtue reliabilist, Sosa conceives of intellectual virtues as reliable cognitive faculties or powers and describes an intellectual virtue as "a quality bound to help maximize one's surplus of truth over error" (Sosa 1991, 225).

To Sosa, memory, introspection, sense perception, and the like are the properties required for meeting this condition. In his view, the beliefs of a person who uses his faculties aptly in appropriate conditions are true and justified, and he can be said to have gained knowledge (Sosa 1991, 271).[2]

In the same way, Greco finds intellectual virtues as a reliable cognitive power that contributes to truth achievement. According to him, intellectual virtues are "innate faculties or acquired habits, leading the individual to truth and to keep away from the false" (Greco 2002, 287). Greco names perception, reliable memory, and various good reasoning as intellectual virtues. He gives an account of knowledge based on which one knows a given proposition only when one's belief in the truth of that proposition is based on an intellectual virtue (Greco 2002, 311).

Zagzebski gives the most effective neo-Aristotle interpretation of intellectual virtue. She believes it is not of any use to interpret the nature of virtue in terms of a power to endorse having the proper knowledge as well as to justify its value over true belief.[3] Thus, she

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2. Also see Sosa (2007).
3. See, for instance, Zagzebski (1996), (2000), (2003), and (2004).

introduced an approach to epistemology that is intended to justify the believer's responsibility concerning intellectual virtue and its resulting beliefs. She introduced the first systematic theoretical approach to virtue with regard to epistemology, laying the grounds for the so-called virtue epistemology, which she believes to be based on Aristotle's approach to virtue.[4]

This paper aims to explore the nature of epistemic virtue from Zagzebski's view, followed by an examination of Sadra's approach to the nature and contributions of intellectual virtue.

The author aims to determine the extent to which the interpretations of epistemic virtue given by the two philosophers are similar.

Avoiding detailed description of all the elements of Zagzebski's or Sadra's epistemological theory, this paper focuses on the nature of epistemic virtue and its contributions to the materialization and interpretation of knowledge. To this end, chapter one explores epistemic virtue from the viewpoint of Zagzebski and chapter two deals with Sadra's definition of epistemic virtue. This study examines the relationship between moral virtues and epistemic virtues, as well as the contributions of virtues and vices to knowledge acquisition. There is evidence that Sadra's interpretation of epistemic virtue is in keeping with responsibilism and though apparently he endorses a foundationalist approach in epistemology, his view has the potential to offer a virtue epistemology.

Zagzebski's View on Epistemic Virtue

In her book *Virtues of the Mind*, Zagzebski prefers Aristotle's happiness-based approach and Slote's agent-based approach over other forms of virtue ethics. She believes, thanks to end-orientation in Aristotle's interpretation as well as the centrality of motives found in agent-based interpretation given by Slote (2001), her theory has the potential to delineate the various elements, including epistemic virtues incorporated in her theory. Aristotle sees moral and intellectual virtues as requirements for achieving *eudaimonia* (happiness), believing that happiness underlies the virtues both conceptually and existentially. In Slote's theory, motive plays the essential part in the definition of virtue. That is why some components given by Zagzebski for virtues make sense in terms of motivation-based theory and the others in terms of happiness-based theory (Zagzebski 1996, 82).

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4. She claims that other versions of virtue epistemology are not based on a carefully developed virtue ethics but rather they have structural similarities with act-based ethics; that is, consequentialism and deontologism (Zagzebski 1996, ch. 1)

Aristotle's happiness-based approach takes virtues as either constituents of good life or the means for achieving happiness. Thus, Zagzebski considers virtues as character traits which are required for self-accomplishment or living a good life (Zagzebski 1996, 216).

Zagzebski, like Aristotle, defines moral virtue as a state of soul that is acquired and derived from habits.[5] On the other hand, like Slote, Zagzebski believes that virtues are connected to motives and are innately valuable (Zagzebski 1996, 82-84). Here is the final definition Zagzebski gives of the components of virtue: "A virtue, then, can be defined as a deep and enduring acquired excellence of a person, involving a characteristic motivation to produce a certain desired end and reliable success in bringing about that end" (Zagzebski 1996, 135).

This definition consists of several important elements: enduring and continuous excellence, being acquirable, motives, success, reliability, and end or goal. Zagzebski has borrowed some of these components from Aristotle and some from Slote. Yet, this is Aristotle's theory that underlies her theory. As a result, most components have been modeled on the basis of Aristotle's theory. As Zagzebski takes epistemic virtues as a form of moral virtues (Zagzebski 1996, 82), the qualities characterizing epistemic virtue are similar to those characterizing moral virtues.

Virtue is a sort of soul habit that is not characterized by emotions and feelings, nor by power, skill, or flair (natural ability); it is not deed or habit either. Though all these elements contribute to the materialization of virtue and one needs them in practice, none of them amounts to virtues.

Virtue is an acquired excellence of soul, achieved through incessant efforts; that is, character traits result from habit, turning into a part of our identity through practicing them (Zagzebski 1996, 116) and "that in part defines a person's identity and that leads us to think of her as responsible for it" (Zagzebski 1996, 135) . To Zagzebski, moral virtues and epistemic virtues are important mainly due to the role they have in developing the identity.

Zagzebski substantiates each quality, giving a set of reasons similar to those given by Aristotle.

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5. Battaly asks five questions answering to which makes the difference between responsiblism and reliabilism clear: (1) Are the virtues natural or acquired? (2) Are they skills? (3) Are they instrumentally, constitutively, or intrinsically valuable? And (4) what relation do they bear to truth? (Battaly 2008).

Virtue differs from natural ability in that we are not considered as good or bad because of our nature and we are not praised for having power, while we are praised for having virtues. This is the argument shared by Aristotle in Nicomachean ethics (1105a, 1106b). However, considering moral virtues as powers, reliabilists such as Greco and Sosa must take virtues (at least some of them) as natural. Zagzebski, on the one hand, finds this argument right. This is because considering virtue as an excellence requires one to consider all excellences as virtue. This includes not only good faculties such as good eyesight but also properly functioning, natural, cognitive processes such as valid, deductive reasoning and natural capacities such as native intelligence and skills (Zagzebski 1996, 102). On the other hand, Aristotle believes that virtue is acquired, rendering acquisition and naturalness of virtue vague. This is because if virtue is considered a power, it is natural. To take account of this vagueness, Zagzebski considers only those acquired excellences for which we bear responsibility as virtue (Zagzebski 1996, 103, 116, 136). Consequently, natural powers are not subsumed in perimeter of virtue.

Since virtues and vices are acquired, individual is held responsible for his traits. Zagzebski gives a tenable argument, explaining how it is possible for an expansive virtue or vice to infiltrate one's trait and to become somehow his second nature and an indicator of his identity (Zagzebski 1996, 116).

She explicates that traits constitute the individual's identity and that we are responsible for things shaping our identity. In the same vein, she explains the permanence or endurance of virtue, saying that "[t]he fact that a trait is among the more permanent of a person's qualities means that she bears a fuller responsibly for it than she does for qualities that are more fleeing. So a person's responsibility for her virtues and vices is connected with the fact that they are gradually acquired and are relatively permanent, and these two properties of permanence and gradual acquisition are not independent" (Zagzebski 1996, 117).

Moral virtues are not the only factors contributing to identity shaping. Intellectual virtues also play a part in developing identity. Thus, we are responsible for them. A worthwhile point raised by Zagzebski is that the free will causes us to be held responsible for what we do. Going beyond external deeds, she considers belief as a kind of deed, and hence subject to our control and will. Consequently, we are responsible for our convictions. Since convictions are controllable, we are held responsible for how they are shaped.

She examines how epistemic evaluation depends on human agency in a paper entitled "Should Believers Be Agents?" (2001). Zagzebski elaborates on how and why are we responsible for our beliefs in this paper and in her book *Virtues of the Mind*.

An argument given by Zagzebski to justify why we are responsible for our beliefs is that knowledge is not merely something that happens to us but is something to which we contribute through our own efforts and skills,[6] and this leads us to think, like Zagzebski, of ourselves as being responsible for having or not having knowledge (Zagzebski 2001, 261).The following remark made by Zagzebski are very valuable in this regard: "It seems to me that the concept of the self constitutes as much by what we know as by what we do" (Zagzebski 2001, 261).

Given the above-mentioned, the responsibility we bear for knowledge is as important as the responsibility we bear for what we do. Consequently, we are praised or blamed for what we do. We also deserve to take credit or blame for our knowledge.

As such, Zagzebski prefers responsibilism over reliabilism with respect to epistemic virtue.

Epistemic virtues are not skills, as moral virtues are not skills either. Verbal skills, logical skills, mathematical skills, and explanatory skills are not virtues (Zagzebski 2001, 114). Yet these skills contribute to one's performance. Virtues and skills are mutually exclusive.

It is obvious that Zagzebski does not take virtue as a sort of emotion (Zagzebski 2001, 104). However, as motive is a component of virtue, and motive is a sort of directing emotion, it follows that these virtues are related to emotions, though the former is not a sort of the latter (Zagzebski 2001, 126).

However, in effect, virtue and emotions cannot be separated. This is because virtue implies overcoming emotions, so there will be no virtue as long as there is no emotion.

Thus, if motives, as Zagzebski says, are considered as a sort of emotion directing the activities, then, all virtues include a motivational component.

Though, motive existentially is the willing to do a characteristic

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6. She defines knowledge as a state of cognitive contact with reality arising out of acts of intellectual virtues (1996, 271).

deed, it is not merely a willing, having a quality relatable to character traits (Zagzebski 2003, 146). It is important to note that according to Zagzebski, motive is not the end to which actions are directed, but it is a sort of emotion or feeling that excites and directs action toward an end (Zagzebski 1996, 130-31).

Moreover, each virtue is driven by a goal which an individual tries to achieve. Thus, a virtue includes two elements: intentional and emotional. The same holds true for epistemic virtues. Inspired by a desire to discover facts and truth, an open-minded person is encouraged by enlightening thinking. These feelings and emotions are strong enough to rid him of old beliefs, leading him to explore the previously forgotten probabilities. To this end, he is motivated by the desire to form more true beliefs or at least to approach the truth (Zagzebski 1996, 131).

The last component is the element of success and accomplishment, which differs from motive component yet is connected to it. The relation between motive and success varies by the virtue. To Zagzebski, having virtue requires one to have reliable success in attaining the ends of the motivational component of the virtue; that is, the agent should succeed in employing the skills and cognitive activities associated with the application of the virtue in his circumstances. To this end, a virtuous man should understand some aspects of the world, among other things, very well (Zagzebski 1996, 134).

As the difference between moral virtue and intellectual virtues are reduced to the difference between two moral virtues, and intellectual virtues are best viewed as forms of moral virtue, this definition of epistemic virtue is similar to that of moral virtue (Zagzebski 1996, 139).Thus, the components she suggests as constituting the virtue are the same. Both are acquired by habituation; "both also involve handling certain feelings and acquiring the ability to *like* acting virtuously" (Zagzebski 1996, 158); and both are voluntary and we bear responsibility for them.

In addition, Zagzebski, sees a sort of logical and causal connection between the two sets, reinforcing the relationship between the two. This means intellectual virtue is a requirement for moral virtues. For example, being honest (as a moral virtue) does not require one to say what he believes to be true, but he needs intellectual virtue so as to determine what to say, what the truth is, and how to express it in such a way that the listener believes it in a justifiable way (Zagzebski 1996, 158).

Overall, all virtues, whether moral or intellectual, require phronesis, which is very important to Zagzebski, elaborating on the contribution of phronesis to intellectual virtue.

Moral virtue can influence the intellectual virtue, inspiring one to put the latter into action. The same is true for a moral vice. That is, a moral vice can influence the intellectual virtues and make them ineffective. For example, an egoist researcher, seeks to get access to those materials that support his ideas and are in keeping with his interests.

The two sets of virtues are essentially different in that all intellectual virtues are inspired by the same motive (i.e., knowledge), while moral virtues are inspired by different motives. All intellectual virtues are aimed at one goal (i.e., knowledge). Yet, each virtue is driven by a specific motive as each moral virtue has its specific goal. For example, the motive for charity is different from the motive for bravery. This difference distinguishes the two virtues. Ultimately, she concludes that "a wide range of intellectual virtues arise out of the same *general* motivation, the motivation for knowledge, and have the same general aim, knowledge" (Zagzebski 1996, 176).

Zagzebski believes that motivation for knowledge is more dominant than the desire for truth. She argues that "the goodness of the motivation for knowledge is not derived from its connection with any other good, not even the good of knowledge." Since she had already mentioned that "the motivational components of the various intellectual virtues arise out of the motivation for knowledge and are specifications of it," she concludes that "the value of the motivational components of the intellectual virtues are also independent of any good outside the agent" (Zagzebski 1996, 203).

The intellectual virtues are useful as they lead the agent to guide her belief-forming processes in certain ways. The accomplishment of such a goal (i.e., the agent's knowledge) requires the reliability of the process that will be acquired through intellectual virtues.

Up to now, we have discussed the nature of epistemic virtues from the viewpoint of Zagzebski. Epistemic virtues are important because (1) they lead us to explain knowledge and (2) they lead us to gain knowledge. The question is whether all types of knowledge require epistemic virtues, and whether it is necessary to have epistemic virtues for acquiring knowledge of all types. Zagzebski categorizes knowledge into two kinds: (1) low-grade knowledge (2) high-grade knowledge. By high-grade knowledge, she means the reflective knowledge and by low-grade knowledge, she means perceptive knowledge. Sosa also

categorizes knowledge into two groups. However, to him, both levels of knowledge share intellectual virtue when knowledge signifies intellectual power. But, through this categorization, Zagzebski has confined low-grade knowledge to the knowledge gained through cognitive ability and has based the high-grade knowledge (reflective knowledge) on traits or intellectual properties such as open-mindedness, intellectual carefulness, intellectual courage, and so forth.

The individuals lacking intellectual virtues (such as youths and animals) can also have sensory knowledge. In contrast, only the individuals having intellectual qualities can have reflective knowledge, including understanding and wisdom (Zagzebski 1996, 274). This is why Zagzebski says that individuals lacking intellectual virtues can also have sensory knowledge, doing what the individuals enjoying intellectual virtue can do. This inspires Zagzebski to suggest that we label perceptual and memory beliefs as low-grade knowledge as long as they satisfy certain conditions. (Zagzebski 1996, 280). For example, the statement "this paper is white" is correct under certain perceptive conditions. Only the individual believing so should have virtually intellectual motive so as to be inclined to the truth. The way in which belief is formed should be such that the individual having intellectual virtue can form his belief in this way (Zagzebski 1996, 281).

Mulla Sadra's Perspective on Epistemic Virtue

As one of the most famous Iranian Muslim philosopher, Sadr al-Muta'allihin known as Mulla Sadra (or simply Sadra) was the founder of transcendent philosophy. Mulla Sadra's works such as *al-Hikmat al-muta'aliyah fi l-asfar al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah*, known simply as *Asfar*, and in *al-Shawahid al-rububiyyah*, *al-Mabda' wa al-ma'ad*, *Mafatih al-ghayb*, and *Rasa'il-i falsafi* include his invaluable theories in areas of epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, philosophy of mind, and philosophical theology. This study aims to explore Mulla Sadra's views on the nature of epistemic virtue and its contribution to knowledge. The aim is to determine whether Sadra's interpretation is in keeping with responsibilsm or with reliabilism and that what contributions can epistemic virtue make to defining and gaining knowledge. How does Sadra see the relation between moral virtues and intellectual virtues, and to what extent does he find the two as necessary for happy life? Sadra's epistemological theory and the philosophical fundamentals on which Sadra has established his theory will not be discussed in details. The reference will be made only when required.

It is obvious that no Muslim philosopher has proposed an epistemological theory on virtue, though they have given full accounts of the contributions of intellectual virtue to the intellectual life. However, Sadra, as other Muslim philosophers (Ibn Sina, Khwajah Nasir, Ibn Miskawayh, Ghazali, etc.), has supported virtue ethics and elaborated on the role of virtues in happy life. Yet, their point of view is not the same as that of Aristotle.

Like Aristotle, Sadra divides virtue into two categories: moral, and rational. Sadra maintains that both moral virtue and rational virtue are necessary for a happy life, with intellectual virtue playing the main part in achieving happiness.

Muslim philosophers see virtue or settled inner disposition as a habit of soul, leading the individual to do the action in line with that virtue.

> Disposition is a habit of the soul, necessarily effecting the easy procession of an action therefrom, without need of any reflection or deliberation. (Mulla Sadra 1981, 4:114; Khwajah Nasir 1373, 101; Wickens 1964, 74; Naraqi n.d., 1:55; Kashani 1339, 5:95)
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> Virtue is both a habit of soul, and, at the same time, it falls between the two extremes. (Aristotle 1378; 1107a; Mulla Sadra 1981, 9:127)

This definition is characterized by several elements that should be taken into account for a better understanding of Sadra's stance on intellectual virtues. The term "habit of soul" makes it clear that firstly, virtue is not a sort of temporary emotion but an enduring and constant state, empowering one to make immediate decision followed by his/her quick action. Secondly, unlike Socrates' view, virtue does not signify knowledge though the former is not void of the latter and that the virtuous individuals should be knowledgeable for what they are going to do. Moreover, it is implied that virtue is considered as neither the ability to act nor the action itself (Mulla Sadra 1981, 4:114). However, it leads to action and the action void of virtue is not considered a virtuous action. Thus, if one's good deeds are driven by temporary emotions, such as benevolence or generosity, the deed is not considered a virtuous one in Islamic ethics. Yet it is proper and motivated by good temporary motives.

If virtue is to be considered as a quality that brings about honor and acclaim, then it has to be acquired rather than a natural trait shared by all human beings. All Muslim philosophers, including Sadra, have emphasized that virtue is acquired through habit and practice (Khwajah Nasir 1373; Miskawayh n.d.; Naraqi n.d.). In their viewpoint, the agent is acclaimed for a quality he has gained through endeavors and efforts.

It was mentioned that virtue is an enduring quality which is different from temporary states or emotions. However this does not imply that they are not connected. Considering virtue as a balance of anger and passion (from which emotions originate) sheds light on how these habits are related to emotions. Without such emotions, no virtue would be necessary. That is why a virtuous agent should strike a balance between his emotions. The balance of pleasure is called temperance, and the balance of fear is called courage. Aristotle has categorized moral virtuous similarly.

The motives inspired by moral virtues for doing moral actions are also emphasized by Zagzebski. Due to its emotional component, moral virtues inspire one as an agent to do an action. By saying that virtues lead one to do an action easily and impulsively, Sadra means that virtue inspires an individual to do an action he needs to do impulsively and easily. Without this motive, the individual would not do the action quickly, and if there were no virtue, the individual would not have this motive. In fact, the motive component shared by virtue inspires the virtuous individual to properly do the action. As long as the virtue is existent, the requirements for the accomplishment of deeds are met. Consequently, bravery inspires one to bravely do an action. The same holds true for chastity.

Intellectual Virtues

Sadra divides virtues into two categories: moral and intellectual. He categorizes intellectual virtues into theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom. As moral virtues are derived from striking a balance between emotional powers, intellectual virtues are derived from striking a balance between rational powers.

Theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom are not of power sort. Being balanced, rational power can be interpreted as wisdom. Sadra calls such a wisdom as "the head of virtues," which is gained through efforts and practice. Thus, it is called acquired wisdom (Mulla Sadra 1981, 9:89; 1363, 180). Therefore, Sadra does not see intellectual virtues as reliable truth-producing powers. He takes them to be character traits, leading one "to perceive the difference between truth and falsehood in speech, between real and futile in convictions, between beauty and ugliness in deeds" (Mulla Sadra 1981, 9:89; 2008, 420). Like moral virtues, intellectual virtues fall between two extremes (Mulla Sadra 1981, 9:127, 4:114; Khwajah Nasir n.d., 119; Miskawayh n.d., 46-47).

To Sadra, wisdom has two senses: (1) rational power, which is a character trait considered by Sadra as the head of virtues, and (2)

knowledge, which is derived from the wisdom of the first sense (Mulla Sadra 1981, 9, 89). That is to say, having wisdom amounts to having a sort of knowledge that can be divided into practical and theoretical. This is similar to the categorization of virtue into practical and theoretical. Theoretical knowledge—namely, philosophy which is derived from theoretical wisdom—is interpreted as knowledge concerning the true nature of objects as they are. Practical wisdom is interpreted as knowledge concerning human deeds. By saying that one having wisdom can perceive the difference between truth and falsehood, Sadra is referring to the virtue of wisdom, which brings knowledge to the individual. The understanding coming from the application of such a virtue is, in fact, the knowledge gained through intellectual virtues. Therefore, a balanced rational power has two qualities called practical wisdom and theoretical wisdom. This is because rational power has two functions: (1) knowing the true nature of objects and (2) perceiving beautiful deeds and ugly deeds. Theoretical wisdom is only responsible for perceiving the true nature of objects. However, practical wisdom has two functions: perceiving the details and controlling the emotions. Sadra assigns these two functions to practical wisdom, even though some philosophers do not share this view.

If intellectual or epistemic virtues are confined to such wisdom, it follows that Sadra considers them as a character trait falling between two extremes. Being too much, rational power is considered as smartness or cunning. Being two low (the other extreme), rational power is considered foolishness (Mulla Sadra 1981, 9:91; 2008, 421; Khwajah Nasir 1373, 87; Miskawayh n.d., 46). However, intellectual and moral virtues are not confined to these four characteristics. Muslim philosophers have subsumed a group of virtues in each of the above-mentioned main virtues. Vices have been categorized similarly (e.g., Khwajah Nasir 1373, 108-09; Miskawayh n.d., 46-47; Farabi 1405, 30; Mulla Sadra 1981, 4:116).

Sadra has subsumed the following in the virtue category: beautiful justice and management, quick wit, sagacity, correct opinion, and astuteness for minute details of actions and hidden calamites of the soul (Mulla Sadra 1981, 9; 2008, 421).

Being too much, Intellectual power takes on the following forms: craftiness, cheating, cunning, swindling. Being too low, intellectual power takes on the following forms: dull witness, foolishness, stupidity (Mulla Sadra 1981, vol.9; 2008, 421).

Below, some virtues are defined:

Quick-wittedness: the individual can derive the results from the premises immediately.

Clarity of mind: the individual is not anxious or mentally agitated while making decision. In other words, the individual's understanding is not deterred by illogical dilemma.

Ease of learning: the individual avoids the unrelated issues and concentrates on what he needs to by not letting his mind getting distracted.

Excellence of intellection: the individual identifies all the relevant facts and anything irrelevant is excluded from his mind (Khwajah Nasir 1373, 112; Miskawayh n.d., 41).

Explaining about the factors contributing to proper thinking, Sadra elaborates on the qualities one needs in order to know the truth. Prejudice, fanaticism, being in rush, being materialistic, and predominance of lust and improper emotions are the main obstacles in the way of proper thinking. Carefulness, fairness, patience, and authenticity are the virtues required for acquiring knowledge (e.g., Mulla Sadra 1981, 9:91).

Sadra's Responsibilism

As implied by the foregoing definitions, virtues fall somewhere between the two extremes. For example, excellence of learning requires one to be moderate while learning the facts and not to be distracted by irrelevant issues. This shows that unlike reliabilists, Sadra does not see epistemic virtues as a sort of faculty. Sadra considers these virtues as character traits, and thus one is responsible for having or lacking them. These traits can be understood by drawing on Sadra's principles. Though many philosophers have elaborated on human responsibilities, Sadra's philosophical remarks on soul and ethics can better do justice to explaining these concepts. Overall, since behaviors and knowledge are acquired, the individual is responsible for them. In turn, one can acquire these virtues because he has free will. These virtues are important as they contribute to identity development.

Like Zagzebski, Sadra does not confine the responsibility to the deeds. He includes convictions as well. Interestingly, Sadra believes that one's responsibility for his beliefs is more important than his responsibility for his deeds. Sadra's interpretations of one's identity as well as the elements contributing to identity formation show the extent to which he attaches importance to knowledge as a constitutive element of identity. It is not unreasonable to claim that knowledge is

the most essential element contributing to identity development. This is made clearer by exploring his view on the role of knowledge in achieving happiness. Thus, Sadra attaches enormous importance to knowledge, the proper type of which requires one to be virtuous.

To better understand the status of epistemic virtue in Sadra's works, two very important issues will be discussed briefly:

Unlike famous philosophers such as Avicenna, Sadra believes that human beings do not have a constant identity (Mulla Sadra 1382, 128; 1981, 8:343; 1373, 7:181). In other words, human beings make their own identity. The definition given by philosophers of human identity as a rational animal is used in logics and is applied to all humans (Mulla Sadra 1382, 223).

However, existentially, each individual has a unique identity, to which no one has made any contribution (Mulla Sadra 1382, 223). Making the individual distinct, such an identity is the specific existence of that individual (Mulla Sadra 1382, 128, 262; 1981, 9:185-88; 1363a, 596; 1380, 479).

The factors contributing to one's identity development include thoughts, habits, and deeds, which are sometimes interpreted by Sadra as intents, habits, and deeds (Mulla Sadra 1981, vol.9). As the individual has free will, he can acquire them. Given the free will, one can be said to have built his own identity and is responsible for it. As a matter of fact, an agent is responsible for the factors contributing to the development of his identity. Knowledge, deed, habit, and intent show that all internal and external factors somehow influence the individual, making him responsible. Sadra never states in his works that one should be held responsible and therefore acclaimed or blamed for having or lacking the perception faculty. However, he believes that perception faculties are necessary for creating perceptional forms and how these faculties are used. Moreover, the characteristics of the agent willing to acquire these sensory perceptions make him responsible for the beliefs he has gained. On the other hand, the agent's perception powers should be sound and the conditions should be met so that the forms can be perceived correctly. (To Sadra, perception powers are tools, and it is the soul that creates the forms of the known object. However, the creation requires the tools to be sound and the conditions to be met. One needs them to perceive correctly. However, Sadra does not present them as epistemic virtues).

This paper focuses on the traits making considerable contributions to knowledge acquisition and hence one's identity development. These are called intellectual virtues.

Sadra interprets identity development based on his philosophical principles such as trans-substantial motion and the unity of the intelligent and the intelligible. Sadra's philosophy of mind and philosophical theology maintains that in the other world, one is responsible for what he has created.

Given the triple components discussed above, one can observe that Sadra, like Zagzebski, has incorporated all the factors contributing to human's identity development in evaluation, punishment, and rewards. All moral virtues and thoughts and hence intellectual virtues have a part to play in this process. Thus, intellectual virtues cannot be evaluated separately from moral virtues. However, the following points need to be clarified: the relation between moral virtues and intellectual virtues, and the contributions of these virtues to the epistemological, material and other-worldly life. Sadra opted for an end-oriented approach involved in both his moral view and epistemological view. To Sadra, all human activities are aimed at achieving happiness. This is an end that is valuable by itself. If one interprets happiness in terms of moral and intellectual life, living a moral life is not on par with having real felicity, even though living a moral life is a requirement for living an intellectual life. Sadra considers one's knowledge as his real felicity and believes that though moral life, sometimes interpreted as justice, is valuable, it is not to be taken as real human perfection. He maintains that moral life results in being saved from hell, but it does not guarantee heaven. Real felicity is dependent on the knowledge gained by the agent. Having more knowledge and knowing higher beings lead to more happiness. To have such knowledge, the agent needs to have intellectual virtues. However, Sadra does not take sensory knowledge as real knowledge, and does not explicitly mention the requirement of intellectual virtues for acquiring such knowledge. Yet, given the interpretation Sadra gives about sensory knowledge (Mulla Sadra 1981, 25-26; 1382, 25-26), it follows that virtues are required in this case as well.

I do not intend to discuss the types of happiness or knowledge from Sadra's perspective. The reference will only be made to evidence showing the extent to which Sadra attaches importance to epistemic virtues. This following evidence needs to be given attention: (1) virtues are a requirement for achieving felicity, and (2) non-epistemological elements and improper epistemological elements can be obstacles in the way of knowledge acquisition. As moral and intellectual virtues are required for acquiring knowledge and achieving real happiness, moral and intellectual vices are the obstacles in the way of knowledge acquisition. Sadra names the following vices as instances of obstacles in the way of knowledge acquisition:

meanness, fear, arrogance, and immoral deeds such as murder, back-biting, and gossip (Mulla Sadra 1981, 9:139, 7:61). He sees mental accuracy and being realistic as requirements for being immune from fault and refraining from sins (Mulla Sadra 1380, 249) and being immune from pleasures and lust as requirements for believing and having faith in God (Mulla Sadra 1981, 7:24). Those committing these sins cannot perceive the facts in the intellectual world (Mulla Sadra 1981, 1:362, 9:28, 136, 303; 1382, 336; 1380, 480, 478; 1360, 1:95-97). Not only does Sadra see vices as obstacles in the way of perceiving intellectual thoughts (1363b, 210), but he also considers the failure to perceive the minor issues as a result of moral vices and sins (Mulla Sadra 1981, 2:228), claiming that the achievement of all sciences entails the piety of the soul (Mulla Sadra 1363a, 143). This evidence is adequate to conclude that to Sadra, intellectual knowledge is not be acquired without intellectual and moral virtues. In other words, Sadra has based knowledge on the existence of virtues, considering vices as obstacles in the way of knowledge acquisition. It should be made clear to what extent the properness of sensory knowledge depends on virtues.

Given the foregoing discussion, it can be well deduced that, in Sadra's viewpoint, having knowledge requires one to have intellectual virtues. To Sadra, it is not important to merely have convictions, but how an agent turns out to be is also important. This is important with respect to two aspects: the kinds of convictions one gains and the way in which one gains the convictions. Having moral and intellectual virtues, one can have convictions that are morally and mentally true and justified.

Conclusion

This study sought to compare Sadra's view on the nature of epistemic virtue with that of Zagzebski. The aim was to determine if Sadra's approach is consistent with responsibilism or with reliabilism and that to what extent these two philosophers' approaches can be similar.

What is important in Zagzebski's definition of epistemic virtues is that she seeks to identify the main components of epistemic virtues in terms of the elements constituting the nature of moral virtue. Zagzebski considers epistemic virtues as forms of moral virtue. She does not categorize the soul into two distinct parts—namely, knowledge-related part and deed-related part. Zagzebski believes that knowledge and deed are so intertwined and interdependent that one cannot evaluate them separately. Obviously, by saying that intellectual virtues are forms of moral virtues, Zagzebski does not mean them to

be the same or to consider intellectual virtues as a type of moral virtues,[7] but she means that we should not consider knowledge and deed as separate from each other. This is because both of them mutually influence each other and the same time equally contribute to the development of identity.

Sadra has given a more accurate explanation of this fact. Elaborating on the dynamic nature of humans, and taking knowledge, deeds, motives, and moral dispositions as constituent elements of identity, Sadra sheds light on the extent to which knowledge and deed contribute to one's development of identity. Elsewhere, delineating the effects of virtues, vices, morally right deeds, and morally wrong deeds on knowledge, Sadra highlights the relation between knowledge and action more emphatically than Zagzebski.

The qualities Zagzebski draws on to interpret the nature of epistemic virtue are the same as the qualities Sadra draws on. Sadra considers epistemic virtue as a character trait falling between two extremes. Such virtue is acquired and motivational. Moreover, if one's awareness of something is motivated by a motive apart from knowledge, he lacks real knowledge (i.e., wisdom).

To Sadra, knowledge is aimed at a final end—namely, God. That is to say, if knowledge of any sort is valuable, it should be aimed at approaching God; otherwise, the knowledge would not be real. Inspired by this motive, one's knowledge of God or knowledge of another creature is valuable; otherwise, one can be said to be unknowledgeable.[8]

The foregoing discussion elaborated on the contribution epistemic virtue makes to knowledge achievement. Both Sadra and Zagzebski believe that only the knowledge originating from intellectual virtue is valuable. To put it in another way, as Sadra maintains that as knowledge and happiness are the same and that real knowledge is dependent on intellectual virtues, it follows that the conviction will be considered knowledge provided it is be based on intellectual virtues.

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7. In this regard see Pouivet (2010).

8. Khwajah Nasir discusses the external motives that are worthless and render the agent's deeds non-virtuous. He takes these qualities as pseudo-virtue. It follows that if one's knowledge is motivated by motives apart from wisdom (e.g., fame or snobbishness), he is not wise and his knowledge is not real knowledge (Khwajah Nasir 1373, 122-23; Wickens 1964, 89).

Khwajah interprets this person's deeds as pseudo-wisdom. In the same vein, if one's chastity or bravery are motivated by an external motive such as fame or self-interest, he is not virtuous. This shows that being virtuous requires one to have right motive; that is, the motive which complies to the virtue.

That Sadra considers knowledge as an outcome of wisdom indicates that he does not deem the set of beliefs one gains as knowledge. To him, knowledge is more valuable than beliefs, though the latter are required for knowledge acquisition.

In conclusion, it seems that not only do these two philosophers' accounts of the nature and role of epistemic virtue are similar, but Sadra's epistemological theory has many potentials, enabling us to base an epistemological theory on epistemic virtues.

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