

# Philosophers, mystics, and conflicting considerations

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In terms of procedural logic, any systematic scientific department should be appraised through disciplined mental considerations, although the reality is witnessing another different picture, with many cognitive circles are afflicted with the malady of ‘uncontrolled mental considerations’. Perhaps the ontological system is one of the most prominent of these circles in which discipline and indiscipline overlap to the extent that cognitive considerations become justificatory considerations.

appears in the (الإعتبارات) The term “considerations” (al-i’atibaraat expressions of philosophers, including their saying: “If it were not for considerations, wisdom would be invalid” (Lawla al-i’atibaraat la It usually means inferring (لولا الاعتبارات لبطلت الحكمة). batulat al-hikmah the justification for the existence of real things through the influence of things that do not exist, so the considerations take on the meaning of nihilistic matters, as in the theory of emanation. The reason why philosophers rely on considerations is that, in their view, they eliminate many problems from philosophizing, and without them, the process leads to invalidity, as is clearly stated by some knowledgeable philosophers<sup>[1]</sup>.

was also (الإعتبار) al-i’atibaar The term “consideration” (singular: mentioned as a mystical principle that controls the method of dealing with understanding the text, which is the passage from the apparent to the hidden. The situation in the two principles [considerations, plural/consideration, singular] is the same, which is the transition and passage from the premises to the results, or from the apparent to the hidden. Therefore, considerations are made to justify cognitive

production through external existence, and consideration (singular) is made to justify inner understanding through religious text.

But what we mean by 'mental' considerations is something different. For us, they represent the methods used to generate results through their established premises. We know that some methods have a logical and necessary linkage, and some may lack this necessity despite being precise and strongly indicative of results, and some methods are characterized by flimsy and weak linkages. The purpose of the latter is usually to justify the results, and therefore it is far from the claimed proof. Rather, it is a source for generating conflicting justifications. This situation applies to both the principle of considerations in its philosophical concept applied to the existential vision, and to the principle of consideration in its mystical concept applied to understanding the text. If the mystical meaning of consideration is the crossing from the apparent to the hidden, then we have noticed how weak this crossing is, as it is a type of justification that defends the existential results and their projection onto the text. The situation is not much different from the principle of considerations, as it also means crossing from the premises to the results, no matter how flimsy and weak they are.

In summary, the difference between disciplined considerations and undisciplined ones is that, in the first, the results are linked tightly and precisely to the premises. While the second involves jumping to conclusions for the slightest reason and occasion. There is no doubt that both of these types are found in the ontological system, despite what it claims that its method is ratiocinative or is the product of correct revelation. For example, the rule ('only one emanates from the one' - 'al-Wahid la yasdur 'anhu illa al-wahid')

falls within the scope of knowledge with (الواحد لا يصدر عنه الا الواحد) disciplined considerations, because it is a remnant of the homogeneity logic and its implications. However, other results (السنخية) (al-Sankhiya) that relate to the manner of emanation according to mental

considerations, such as justifying the emanation of the intellect, soul, and planets according to aspects of perception or various other considerations, all fall within the scope of knowledge with undisciplined considerations, as there is no close connection between the inferential premises and their cognitive results.

Therefore, the logic of undisciplined considerations expresses justificatory reasons, and therefore it is susceptible to conflicting rulings due to different reasons and justifications. This is what made philosophers and mystics fall into a large number of hesitations, differences and conflicts of opinions, and even led them to many inconsistencies and fabrications, which contradicts their evidential and revelatory claims. We will mention examples of these conflicts based on varying considerations, then follow them with a number of contradictions and fabrications:

Among the conflicts that occur, we mention the following:

Sometimes they deny union with Allah when they speak with philosophical reason, and at other times they confirm it when they speak with the logic of mysticism, as Ibn Sina did.

Sometimes they consider knowledge of God to be possible only through knowledge of things, and at other times they consider knowledge of things to be only in terms of knowledge of God.

Sometimes they believe that God cannot be perceived at all, and at other times they believe that He can be perceived while He is manifest in everything, and that it is even possible to annihilate and unite with Him.

Sometimes they consider this world to be completely unlike the first, and at other times they consider it to be apparently the same, or they establish some resemblance between them.

Sometimes they deny the existence of the correspondence between the

First Truth and essences, and at other times they prove it by making essences represent mirrors of the Truth and demonstrations of its reality.

Sometimes they declare that the world is contingent and at other times it is ancient and present for eternity and ever.

Sometimes they say that from God only the one emanates and at other times they say that many things emanate from Him.

Sometimes they consider God to be the One without many, and at other times they say that He is the One and the Many.

Sometimes they see things moving according to their love for their causes and being perfected in this way, and at other times they depict their movement as being accomplished through the causes bestowing upon them existence and perfection.

Sometimes they justify the descent according to the causal relationship, and that the existence of the cause requires the creation of the effect, and at other times they justify it according to the high paying attention to the low by accident, which is that the high is not in relation to the low, but rather the opposite is what is happening.

And sometimes they consider God's action never because of another, but only for Himself, and others they admit that His doing for another is as a matter of mercy and kindness.

Sometimes they attribute everything that happens in our earthly world to the heavenly abstract minds, and then to the first principle, and others explain the cause of contingents in this world based on its own imperfect nature.

) meaning of الكوني Sometimes they rely on the formative (al-kawni existence to justify some philosophical issues, and others rely on its meaning to justify other philosophical (الذاتي quintessential (al-dthati

issues.

Sometimes they see that the soul, before its descent into the body, is considered complete and fixed, and at other times they justify its descent with considerations of guilt and sin, or with considerations of its need for completion, even though in the upper world it is the source of abundance and generosity over the lower world below it, so how does it need this imperfect world?

Sometimes they believe that seers and mystics can advance according to the theory of union from one position to another until the matter ends in the last position, and at other times they deny that man and other beings have more than one position other than the perfect human being.

Sometimes they deny the occurrence of change and transformation to the abstract minds, and at other times they acknowledge their subjection - like other beings - to death and perfection, or the transformation from one status to something more perfect according to the union.

Sometimes they deny eternity in torment, and at other times they confirm it.

Sometimes they consider the unity of being to be personal, and at other times they see it as speciated.

Sometimes they consider the divine knowledge of things to exist in the sacred self, and at other times beyond it.

Sometimes they exalt God from the likeness and the epitome (al- and at other times they limit Him to exaltation from the (المثال mithaal likeness and not the epitome.

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As for the inconsistencies and fabrications, we mention the following:

**1** - Combining the originality of determinism and necessity in the First Cause on the one hand, and considering it to have wisdom, will and purpose on the other hand, (مشيئة) (mashi'a), إرادة) (iradeh), volition even though they are not compatible. Even the lead illuminationist philosopher Suhrawardi admitted that the wise [the philosophers] do not believe in creating things based on His will; this will only exists when one side is preponderant over the other. Thus, it requires the purpose either for Himself or for another and He Almighty is beyond the latter, since His self is a necessary existence<sup>[2]</sup>. This is another expression of the originality of determinism in the causality of the First Principle (المبدأ الأول) (al-mabda'a al-Awwal). This meaning does not contradict what this philosopher intended with regard to will, as he considered it to be no different from natural inclination except by increasing feeling. With knowledge and feeling, it is sufficient for him that the action be willed and therefore chosen without the need for subjective or temporal precedence<sup>[3]</sup>. Thus, he departed from the meaning of preponderance and acknowledged the authenticity of necessity and determinism.

**2**- Combining the consideration of the First

as pure existence on the (المبدأ الأول) Principle (al-Mabda'a al-Awwal) one hand, and considering it as a divine body and light, in the form of which all other types of bodies and lights came according to the logic of on the other hand; such as what was (السنخية) (al-Sankhiya) homogeneity stated by Sadr al-Muta'allihin.

**3**- Combining the fact that the True Principle (al-Mabda'a al-Haqq) (المبدأ الحق) represents a (حيثية واحدة) haythiyyah wahidah singular entity to justify the non issue of multiplicity from Him, the Almighty, on the one hand, and the fact that He is exalted and resembled on the other hand, like that which came from Sadr al-Muta'allihin. He (Sadr al-Muta'allihin) did not address what the last statement entails regarding the permissibility of multiplicity issuing from Him, taking into account

these two considerations, based on philosophical rules and their postulates.

**4-** Combining the philosophical rule that states that change is a sign of the imperfection of existence, so the more a thing changes, the less perfect it is; combining this with the mystical saying that man possesses transformations and motions that make him more perfect than other constants, like angels or abstract minds that are immutable and free from the taint of change. For example, Sadr al-Muta'allihin, from the position of being a philosopher, acknowledged that change, composition, and opposition are signs of the weakness of existence and privation and for this reason he considered - like other philosophers - that motion and time are the weakest of existences after the hyle, and that is in contrast to what characterizes abstract minds<sup>[4]</sup> (الهولى) of the intensity of existence and perfection due to their stability and simplicity. However, despite this, this philosopher, from his position of mysticism, worked to overcome this rule and recognized that the rank of man exceeds the rank of all other beings, including minds and essences, due to his characteristic transformations and fluctuations in the stages of imperfection and perfection<sup>[5]</sup>. In this way, he conveys the picture drawn by Ibn Arabi by saying:

“Colouring transforms the servant in his conditions, and according to most he is an imperfect state, and according to us he is the most sublime of states and the most perfect of stations.

The condition the servant in is as God Almighty says: (Every day He ) (Al-Rahman:29) and 'كل يوم هو في شأن' matter to bring forth '.. has a mastery with us is mastery in colouring”<sup>[6]</sup>.

**5-** Combining the philosophical consideration that matter is the origin of evil according to the rule, “Whatever is more innocent than matter is less evil and harmful,” and the religious consideration that Satan and the devils are the origin of evil and delusion, despite the fact that their existential rank is greater than the rank and density of matter.

**6** - Combining the philosophical consideration that the more abstract existences are, the more perfect and complete they are, and the religious consideration that a person may descend to a level where he is set back on his heels by a degree lower than cattle, or he may transform and become at the level of apes and pigs. The discrepancy is clear, as how can we combine the philosophical claim that considers humans superior to other animals due to their possession of rational and logical powers, and the religious claim that confirms that humans may degrade to the point where they are meaner than cattle or animals?!

**7** - Combining ontological considerations that prove God Almighty's will for all His effects and His love for them as His actions, and religious considerations that confirm His hatred and curse for some of them. Some, as is the case with Sadr al-Muta'allihin, tried to remove this contradiction and considered the causes of cursing and hatred to be due to existential considerations represented by nothingness. He considered that when things are tinged with nothingness, they become hated and expelled from Allah's special mercy<sup>[7]</sup>. However, this consideration cannot be applied to individual human beings when comparing them to beings that are beneath them and [therefore] more non-existent, such as animals and plants, considering that they are not objects of curse and hatred compared to evil people.

**8** - Combining the consideration of death as something perfect, on the one hand, and acknowledging the torment that befalls unbelievers after death, to the point where they wish they were dust, on the other hand.

**9** - Combining the consideration of torment

as one of the actual necessities of heinous acts according to the existential point of view, and the normative consideration in denying permanent torment of the deterministic doctrine.

**10** - Combining the philosophical considerations that affirm the and its (الفيض) necessity of the eternity of effusion (al-faydh



infiniteness, and the impossibility of non-existence of beings or their creation from nothing according to the logic of homogeneity (al-, with religious considerations that acknowledge (السنخية) Sankhiyyah that God is able to create the heavens and the earth in a single moment, just as He has the ability to annihilate them whenever He wishes at any moment, and that the world will perish with the coming of the Great Hour.

**11** - The mystics combined the principle of not interpreting religious texts, with denial, by some of them, of the symbolic practices of esotericism, as it is considered lacking controls; they combined this with the practice of applying both, namely interpretation and esotericism. For example, although Sadr al-Muta'allihin strongly criticized the direction of the philosophers who believed in the theory of representation, namely that religious texts were metaphorical similes that do not lead to the truth - as is the case in demonstrative philosophical discourse - considering their method misleading and destructive, he nevertheless sometimes exercised a similar role to that practised by those philosophers, as he carried some texts on contingency and symbolism. Also, he sometimes acknowledged that the texts are not definitive in meaning, which is the same approach taken by traditional philosophers, not to mention his many symbolic and esoteric practices.

Thus, the sources of imbalance in the ontological system are revealed according to the uncontrolled path of considerations, due to which we have witnessed many hesitations, inconsistencies, and fabrications. We do not have before us a decisive demonstrative vision, nor a clear revelationist vision. Rather, we find ourselves faced with considerations in which discipline and indiscipline overlap, just as the ontological and the religious overlap. One of the results of this confusion was the fabrication and inconsistency that appears to us, such as what we

In it, we revealed in the book (النظام الوجودي) 'The Ontological System' indicated that it is not our intention to undermine the cognitive approaches to philosophy and mysticism in general. Everything we

have detailed is considered a revelation of the nature of the cognitive heritage of these systems, and we found in it many inconsistencies and allegations that are not armed with sufficient evidence.

It can be said that we are not against mystical contemplation and moral behavior as the mystics intend them to be, nor against rational and philosophical thinking in general. On the contrary, we recognize the necessity of the two approaches and see in human reality evidence of both, as it is not possible for a person to isolate himself from intuition. Also, the basic innate principles upon which one acts are nothing but mystical principles, and this includes the acceptance of general reality as an objective truth even though there is no evidence for it in the light of reason and inference, as well as the acceptance that this reality is devoid of objective internal contradictions, namely that the ongoing relationships in it are built on the principle of general causality. All of that which cannot be explained in light of logical necessities, in addition to the fact that it did not come about through rational evidence and its considerations. In addition, the human experience is full of manifestations of intuition and affective revelations, which are also something that cannot be justified according to the logic of rational evidence.

So we are with the mystical approach in such principles and starting points, but we fault the mystics for not exposing the revelation cases to criticism and scrutiny, and for not distinguishing in their discourse between what is related to revelation as a subjective experience and what is mostly based on a theoretical formulation. Revelation cases are one thing, and their interpretation is another thing, and mystics are not ignorant of this distinction in principle, but what they lack is criticism and scrutiny.

Therefore, they took more of the claims and theories and drew to tradition, and they fell into many inconsistencies and contradictions, and the outcome of their approach was not radically different from the outcome of the philosophical vision presented, which was also affected

by much imitation and claim and was not spared the inconsistencies, because of the multiplicity of considerations on which they relied, including undisciplined considerations; whether in terms of cognitive generation or at the level of religious understanding.

Therefore, we call for the need to return the ‘philosophical-mystical’ school to its basic origins, refine it and purify it from the errors of inconsistency, fabrication and contradiction, that are due to interaction with religious understanding, and even arming it with contemporary theories of physics.

We have already pointed out in the ‘Method of Science and Religious Comprehension’ (Manhaj al-Ilm wa al-Fahm al-Deeni

that the philosophical system could have kept pace (منهج العلم والفهم الديني) with the developments of the era and made a great intellectual shift if its sponsors had introduced with it the modern ideas of physics, side by side, and then had done away with the old scientific thought, while only retaining the [old] theoretical material. In this case, the modern thought of the physical science will meet the ancient philosophical system face to face, and the controversy between them will lead not only to revealing the similarities between the two systems of thought, but more importantly developing them within a new system prepared to be universal and modern par excellence.

**Translated by Dr Adil Hashim**

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[1] صدر المتألهين الشيرازي: ايقاظ النائمين، ص31.

[2] السهروردي: رسالة في اعتقاد الحكماء، ضمن مجموعة في الحكمة الإلهية من مصنفات السهروردي، ص266.

[3] صدر المتألهين: المبدأ والمعاد، ص115.

[4] صدر المتألهين: الأسفار، ج1، ص339، ج3، ص151 و175. والفارابي: اراء أهل المدينة الفاضلة، ص33.

[5] صدر المتألهين: ايقاظ النائمين، ص48. وأسرار الآيات، ص160.161-

[6] الجندي: شرح فصوص الحكم لابن عربي، ص468.472-

[7] صدر المتألهين: مفاتيح الغيب، ص271.