

# Free Will as the Fundamental Basis of Moral Action According to Mulla Sadra and Kant

Batoul Yarali<sup>1</sup>, Mohsen Fahim<sup>2\*</sup>, Mojtaba Jafari<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ph.D. Student in Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Department of Theology and Islamic Studies, Najaf Abad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najaf Abad, Iran

<sup>2</sup> Department of Theology and Islamic Studies, Najaf Abad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najaf Abad, Iran

<sup>3</sup> Department of Theology and Islamic Studies, Khomeini Shahr Branch, Islamic Azad University, Khomeini Shahr, Iran

**Corresponding Author:** Mohsen Fahim, Department of Theology and Islamic Studies, Najaf Abad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Najaf Abad, Iran. E-mail: [m.fahim@phu.iaun.ac.ir](mailto:m.fahim@phu.iaun.ac.ir)

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** In this comparative research, while discussing free will as the basis of moral action, Mulla Sadra's and Kant's views were examined. In examining Mulla Sadra's view, his fundamental approach in relation to free will and the fruit of practical reason has been considered as the main paradigm.

**Material and Methods:** The research method is logical analysis on the use of library texts.

**Conclusions:** By comparing these two theories, it can be concluded that Kant's theory has led to humanist ethics due to benefiting from the essence of human knowledge and using elements such as independence of will. Because man has a true identity and is free from all external and transcendental factors. According to him, independence of will is the highest principle of morality. Mulla Sadra's theory is an epistemological-divine theory and his epistemological basis is also rooted in the beyond. From his point of view, although man is a creator, but he is really the same as belonging, needing, and connecting with the origin of existence, that is, God, and Mulla Sadra's upward course is based on the movement of his essence, the originality of his existence, its skepticism, and the connection of man with the holy intellect and the active intellect, and finally it shows communication with God; that man has no independence from himself and his whole existence is mortal in the existence of the Almighty. Kant considered will and free will as the most fundamental bases, while Mulla Sadra considered theoretical reason to be the basis of human knowledge.

**Keywords:** Free will, Ethics, Practical Reason, Happiness, Mulla Sadra, Kant

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## INTRODUCTION

Ethics is a science about virtues and the process by which the human soul can acquire a character in which all of its actions and situations are beautiful and pleasing through its will [1]. Kant has an absolutist opinion about ethics. He considers moral values to be absolute, which cannot be changed under any circumstances and there are no exceptions. Good verbs such as "telling the truth" and "keeping the promise" etc. are good everywhere and always. He considers the present moral to be done out of free will and duty; Secondly, the intention of doing the duty should be actualized, and such action is the same for all people and in all conditions. He considers this behavior as absolute and says: behave in such a way that your behavior is according to your will, one of the general laws of nature. He considers the origin of this absolute order to be the self-evident rule of practical reason and

considers it to be one of the prior rules, which practical reason deems obligatory without the need for experience. As a result, it can be said that according to Kant, all moral duties and obligations should be an absolute law and should not belong to a private individual or society. For example, according to Kant, truthfulness is absolutely good even if it has negative consequences [2]. Mulla Sadra clearly considers the ultimate goal of divine wisdom to be monotheistic ethics and creation to God's ethics, and his divine thought states that he should look at ethics from the perspective of transcendental ethics; Because ethics in his school originates from his worldview. Mulla Sadra's epistemological view is a top-down view. He knows everything from God and then reaches the highest of his creations, man, and then morals. He considers morality to be the manifestation of

humanity, and man's attention to the names and attributes of the Almighty in a mystical journey, the same as attaining morality. The center of ethics in the Sadra school is monotheism, because the truth of monotheism and its attainment has a preventive aspect for humans, and in fact, they can identify and control moral vices from within and keep them away from themselves. In fact, ethics is based on monotheism, a divine and Quranic thinking, and divine knowledge and its manifestations guarantee the health of ethics and its stability. He believes that the way to achieve monotheistic ethics is to follow Sharia, and as a result, the focus of all ethics and moral traits will be monotheism and following Sharia's commands [3].

In the present research, by presenting the explanation and analysis of the foundations and components of transcendental moral philosophy in transcendental wisdom and Kant's moral philosophy, an effort will be made to explain the fundamental issue of free will in the moral act of explanation and the commonalities and differences of these two approaches.

#### **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

To compile the present research, the aforementioned sources have been studied and the related points have been extracted and transferred to the body of the article appropriately. The research method is logical analysis on the use of library texts.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Free will as the fundamental basis of moral action according to Mulla Sadra

Man's voluntary and freedom is one of the most important topics in philosophy, which is also paid attention to in Islamic philosophy. Since the theory of free will has a prominent place in Islamic philosophy and especially in transcendental wisdom, and because free will is the main basis for the realization of moral action, and no moral action can be considered without considering free will [4].

According to Mulla Sadra, the soul has two dimensions, theoretical and practical. Will is also considered as one of the sensual qualities in the animal and it has emerged in him to achieve the desire and then to achieve the purpose. It can be said that will includes: consensus and determination. Because sometimes a person desires something that he does not will, and sometimes he does not desire something, but he must will, because it is useful for his health or the expediency of his affairs. As a result, the desire is voluntary and the passion of desire is natural. Delegating power to the God, it means that his will causes the action to be performed and his lack of will

causes the action not to be performed. In the presence of the Almighty, knowledge, power and will to truth are one, pure simplicity, and there is no multiplicity. Because God is mere existence and mere existence is perfection. Human action benefits from existence depending on the perfection of its creation. According to Mulla Sadra, great system which is constantly moving, will face minor ups and downs, but in the end, it will reach the highest level and kingdom of God. Humans will reach the goal of creation by establishing harmony between the small world, which is the human soul, with the overall system of the great world, and this will not find meaning except through free will. But "the example of our will is that: when we will something, we yearn for it, because we need it. But Wajib al-Wujud wills it in the way we said, but does not desire it because it does not need it. So, the purpose and goal are nothing but enthusiasm. Because it is said, why did you ask for this, because I was asking for it, but I asked for it, and if there is no passion, there is no intention and purpose, and..." [5].

So, we know that the sovereign is the one whose action is performed by his own will, but it cannot be said that his will is his own will, otherwise we must accept that his will is not the same as his essence, and the one who is capable is the one who, when he wills the action, the action is issued by him by himself. It has been issued, otherwise it can no longer be said that it is capable.

A free and independent man cannot escape from his will. That is, it is forced to choose. In fact, human action is done or left through his division, will and choice. But free will is exemplified where a person must decide on two or more ways.

"One of the basic conditions of responsibility is the existence of free will" [6]. And free will means the ability to choose; And everyone knows the presence of knowledge that has authority. The independent subject gives its verb an imperative and is not subject to its verb. Every act is both the act of God and the act of man. Of course, longitudinally, not transversely. That is, there is no obstacle to citing a verb to both subjects that are in the same length. Man's voluntary act is God's known optional clause. Therefore, there is no contradiction between the eternal and absolute knowledge of Almighty and the will of man.

#### **Mulla Sadra's Theory about Authority**

Mulla Sadra considers man to be the manifestation of eternal God. He considers the possibility of poverty to be his attribute and considers his existence to be all related and necessary. Such a being does not have independence, nor his will, nor the current that originates from his will.

It means that man is also forced to be independent and his will is limited to his own will; The stopping of his will on the soul also ultimately ends in divine action. But the human soul is the cause of all will and not something outside of human being. The soul creates the will in itself, with the will of God. That is, the will of man is not independent from himself, like all his actions, his existence is dependent on the existence of the Almighty. Based on the principle of originality of existence and personal unity of existence and the possibility of poverty, it requires that the will of man originates from the will of the Almighty [7].

Mulla Sadra's theory about free will is known as Raskhan's theory in science. According to this theory, due to the flow of divine light in all dimensions of existence, no particle in the universe is deprived of divine light and grace, and wherever in every moment of existence, the grace of the God is flowing, and in fact, the act of the soul can be attributed to God at the same time. As a result, man is free and free will surrounds his whole existence [8].

Mulla Sadra stands against Ash'ari determinism and Mu'tazili delegation in the issue of predestination and free will and presents a different theory. In which there is no contradiction between divine absolute power and human discretion. By using his existential principles, including establishing existence and proving existence, he has been able to attribute human actions to himself and to God, without committing any kind of virtuality! In defense of man's freedom and voluntary in his actions, he believes that man creates his actions as God created the world. That is, between man and his creators, which is achieved through his will, there is a rule of illuminance. This means that actions resulting from the will and discretion of man are from the source of existence, just as God's actions are from the source of existence.

According to Mulla Sadra, the criterion of a voluntary action in a human being is the existence of the will before that action that comes from the human being. As a result, the existence of free will in man is the fundamental basis of moral action in him, and every act that a man does, whether moral or immoral, originates from his will and free will, which he cannot deny and attribute to others or abdicate from himself [9].

### **Free Will as the Fundamental Basis of Moral Action according to Kant**

Kant believes that the origin of free will is the determination of the moral law. Kant states that there is both a substance and a legislative form in the law, and "the legislative form in the order can be the source of the

requirement of [autonomous] will." [10]. According to Kant, the moral law is the first thing that presents itself to humans and directly leads to the concept of free will. And reason also presents it as an independent, demanding source, which should not be subjected to tangible conditions and factors. According to Kant, the freedom of our will is nothing but psychological and relative freedom. In addition to being a transcendental freedom, it is also not absolute; Because a free rational being is constantly making decisions.

It is necessary to remind that "the necessity of nature, which cannot be compatible with the free will of the agent, is reserved only for the attributes of the object that exists under the temporal conditions, therefore only for the attributes of the agent acting as a phenomenon." [10] As a result, for this reason, the basis of every action, the subject, is in something that belongs to the past and is no longer possible for him, and its past actions and even the character of those actions should be considered as part of those principles. But the subject himself, considering that the existence is not subject to time conditions, and also as a being that has been determined by the laws through his own intellect should be taken into consideration, and with this validity, nothing in his existence that it does not exist before the determination of its will.

That wonderful power in our nature is called conscience, because man is constantly trying to do an act against the law and to acquit himself and justify his act, but at the same time, he will see in disbelief that there is a defense within himself from his action defends and this justification provides the field for the root of his destructive thoughts to the point where a person thinks his mistake is a natural thing, but every time he repeats his action, he feels remorse, and remorse is a painful feeling that emerges through a moral feeling and this feeling is a useless feeling because it cannot affect the abandonment of the done action.

This feeling of remorse is legitimate because the law can punish the perpetrator of the said act in time, even if it has been a long time since the time and type of the act. Therefore, the intuition of the intellect provides the causes of the moral law in such a way that all of the chain of manifestations of a subject, hand in hand, has been able to cause a good action or a bad action and create an intuition in the subject that has been able to bring about the existence of the moral law of the subject of the act of martyrdom.

Another problem is the union between free will and the mechanism of nature. This means that "even if we accept that the above-mentioned agent can be free with regard to an assumed action, even if the same agent is subject to

mechanical conditions in terms of the same action, due to the fact that it also belongs to the world of senses; But as soon as we accept God as the primary cause of all existence, it is also the cause of the existence of substance (a point that can never be abandoned unless at the same time the concept of God as the absolute existence of all beings, and with it from its absolute exclusion, on which everything in theology depends), then it seems as if we must accept that the principle that dictates a person's actions lies in something that is completely outside of his power. That is, in the causality of a supreme being that is distinct from himself and the existence and all determination of his causality is absolutely dependent on it [10].

In fact, man is like a puppet that has already been tuned to do things automatically without any will, but because of his self-awareness, he will be a thinking robot.

The contradiction here is that: "God is the cause of this existence, but it cannot be the cause of time or (space) itself, because time or space must be assumed as a necessary precondition for the existence of objects. As a result, God's causality regarding these beings must subject to conditions and even subject to the condition of time; And this is what certainly makes his concepts of non-infinity and independence contradictory. On the other hand, it is easy to distinguish between the attribute of divine existence as something independent of all temporal conditions and the existence of a being belonging to the sense world, a distinction that is actually between the existence of a being in itself and the existence of an object is an expression [10].

### **The Role of Civilization in Man's Freedom and Man's Adornment with Reasonableness from Kant's Point of View**

Kant says that a practical order whose content is a material condition and obtained through experience can never be a practical law. Because the law creates the will in a space different from the space of experience, and every article of practical rules is always formed according to the mental conditions of human beings; that the mental conditions provide a kind of conditional school to the rules and then determine individual happiness. But we know that every desire is associated with a subject and a substance. Because this dependence on matter is found only in experimental conditions, it cannot be the basis of a general necessary rule. For example, if the happiness of others is the subject of the will of a finite rational being, and this happiness is the origin of an order, we must assume that this need exists in every rational being, and at the same time, we must know that

such an assumption is impossible in the case of an infinite rational being (God).

Therefore, article one of the order may remain, but the terms of the law are not "otherwise, that order will never have the authority to become a law." [10]

Let's assume that the happiness of others and its improvement is considered. This assumption is derived from the fact that such a matter can be the subject of anyone's choice. Rather, it is due to the fact that the form of the school of reason is the starting point of the will. Therefore, this matter was not the same will that caused the pure will, but it was the form of the law, which caused the will, and through it I was able to limit my order that I had a desire for in such a way that I was able to follow that school. To give the law and therefore make it proportional to pure practical reason, and this process of limiting the concept of obligation, has been able to spread my command about self-love to the happiness of others.

Note: The instructions of the principle of happiness are not qualified to be the law of the will because the knowledge of the principle of happiness is based on empirical data and since people's experiences are variable, therefore these instructions cannot provide general rules. Rather, they can only create a general consensus. It means to provide correct rules, not rules that must be true permanently and necessarily. Therefore, no practical law is based on this principle.

Kant believes that human well-being and righteousness can only be ensured by matching the inner nature of man with moral principles. According to Kant, the moral religion is the negation of miracles, so that the validity of the obligatory rules is the essence of the mandatory rules, and the religion is based on worship rituals and rituals, and its validity is based on miracles [11].

He does not consider miracles as a necessity of religion. From Kant's point of view, miracles are events that are covered by the law of the influence of reason on us and should remain covered, and again, from his point of view, miracles are not the standard and basis of human behavior.

Kant says, "The faith of every person who has the moral talent (merit) to achieve eternal happiness is called a blissful faith. This is a single faith [and lacks diversity], the purpose of which is to realize pure religious faith in dealing with various church faiths, it is a practical faith. [12]).

"Blessing faith implies the hope of happiness under two conditions: one is what man himself is not able to do, i.e. correcting the actions he did unjustly (in front of God) in the past." That is, the interpretation of one's life path

in the direction of compliance with the assignment; The first condition is a compensatory condition (atonement for sin, redemption, reconciliation with God), but the second condition is a condition that cannot be loved by God in the future through good behavior and good character. [12]

Christ considered himself the ambassador of heaven and considered himself worthy of this mission and believed that the faith of servitude has no value. But its opposite means that moral faith is the only factor of human sanctity. "Just as his father is holy in heaven." And good manners as the only factor of happiness can preserve human dignity. The factor that has caused him to cultivate this merit through learning and endurance until death, so that he conforms to the model of a God-loving humanity and returns to the sky as a result of this principle.

Kant believes that true religion is a religion where we know what we should do to deserve happiness, but we should not think about what God does to ensure our happiness.

He says about the distribution of happiness among people: the distribution of happiness among people is related to their moral behavior, as expected from the principle of human nature, especially happiness should be sacrificed for moral behavior and he is promised a reward in the afterlife in this case. Is.

"Ethical law behaving in good manners. Moreover, such knowledge automatically leads us to believe in God, or at least in the concept of God as a moral lawgiver, and thus leads to a pure religious belief that not only every human being understands, but also holiness is located in the highest degree of reverence and respect [12].

According to Kant, happiness is one of the non-supreme prerequisites and goodness does not exist without any conditions. Another prerequisite for supreme good and the only thing that does not have any conditions is the good will.

Kant says that in order for our actions to have moral value, we must do it with a right and correct motive, and the only motive that gives moral value to human actions is the motive that Kant calls duty.

He says that we should do the right thing because it is right and it is the motivation that makes our action a moral and valuable action. He considers those who act for the purpose of doing duty as people who have good will; Because they do the right thing because it is right. They may not even be successful on the way to the goal, but what is morally important is the motivation, not the definite achievement of the goal.

In addition, according to Kant, the will to good is the only thing that is unconditionally good in itself. Even if the good will does not achieve its goals and even if no one knows about its existence.

He says that instead of knowing what is the guarantee of correct actions, we should know what is the obligation. In order to know what is the definition of duty according to Kant, we must pay attention to rationality according to Kant. We know that happiness is somewhat out of our control. Kant believes that the concept of happiness cannot be the basis of morality. Because we cannot know for sure what the result of our actions is?

According to Kant, "happiness is one of the components of the supreme good, good is not unconditional." The other element of supreme good is the only thing that is unconditionally good, it is called the good will [13].

In order to be sure what is right and what is wrong, we cannot base ethics on the foundation of human nature or guarantee the experimental results of behavior and actions; Because morality is based on reason and rationality.

A rational being always tells the truth, keeps his promises, does not cheat, treats others benevolently, and generally avoids some actions, and strives to do others. Therefore, a rational being follows the performance of actions and abandoning some actions based on reason and consideration.

According to Kant, the theory of happiness (well-being) is based on empirical principles, but the moral theory is not. Kant says: "Practical reason does not completely negate the desires, but brings them under its law, as long as they do not conflict with the law and they can be generalized from the law, they are accepted, and when they conflict with the law, they are rejected." [14]. Freedom of will is equal to following the laws assuming free will, and the ethics and principle of that will of analysis is obtained by analyzing the concept, because we are bound by our freedom. Kant says that true freedom is only influenced by free thought and able to act; He also says that if we want to consider a speaking being as having free will, we must assume free thought. Kant considers moral character as a foundation within the mind which is the only gem and is generally divorced from the entire application of free will. But this trait must necessarily be chosen through free selection; Otherwise, it cannot be considered moral and it is the human who has to choose. What is meant by human is the whole type of moral human being.

"Ethical character as the intra-mental foundation of adopting moral principles is the only gem and is generally referred to the entire application of free will;

But this trait itself must have been chosen through free selection, otherwise it could not be considered in moral considerations." [10]. In the civil stage, if the reasonableness of desires has been realized, a person wants the same thing that others want. The will of an event may not happen by itself, it does not happen by accident, but it is a result of free will in a special way.

### Differences and Similarities

According to Kant, man is a creature of religion itself, and the truth of this creature finds meaning in relation to itself, not in relation to the supernatural. He considers man to be a conscious, free and independent being.

But Mulla Sadra considers man to be meaningful in relation to God. Because, according to the rule of the possibility of poverty, man is extremely poor in existence and has a relational existence that only becomes meaningful by connecting to an independent existence such as God.

Sadra's attitude towards man and the path he has drawn for him is a divine moral attitude. While Kant's attitude is non-existent and materialistic. Mulla Sadra adorns man in his evolutionary course during God's creation with the effort of existence. But Kant considers him a passive creator based on the principle of the ultimate soul of man. It means that no one (even God) can ever use it as a tool.

He presupposes thematic principles such as "immortality of the soul" and "choice" and "the existence of the supreme good" i.e. God in theoretical reason. That is, theoretical reason can only think about it and then release it as a transcendental ideal. But the reality of having them is possible through practical reason.

While Mulla Sadra considers theoretical reason to be superior to practical reason, and prioritizes the ability of theoretical reason to understand and understand human beings, and considers practical reason to be subordinate to theoretical reason in acquiring knowledge. Because he considers theoretical reason to be the basis of human knowledge. Kant believes that: "Rationality is nothing but the manifestation of divinity in human life."

But according to the foundation itself that Kant draws, human will in the field of ethics, being divine, does not have a transcendental meaning. While according to Mulla Sadra, the more a person progresses in the upward path, the more he unites with the existence of the Supreme Being, and his sense of dependence and need increases. But Kant says that the more creative a person is, the more independence he receives. Kant considers the human personality to have a force that has freedom and independence and originates from pure practical

laws, and he considers the human being to be a being belonging to the world of the senses, which is subordinate to his personality and dependent on the rational world. He believes that transcendental authority works independently and without authority no moral law and no moral responsibility based on this law is possible.

Mulla Sadra's theory is an epistemological-divine theory and his epistemological basis is also rooted in the beyond. From his point of view, although man is a creator, but he is really the same as belonging, needing, and connecting with the origin of existence, that is, God, and Mullah Sadra's upward course is based on the movement of his essence, the originality of his existence, its skepticism, and the connection of man with the holy intellect and the active intellect, and finally It shows the relationship with God; that man has no independence from himself and his whole existence is mortal in the existence of the Almighty. Kant considered will and free will as the most fundamental bases, while Mulla Sadra considered theoretical reason to be the basis of human knowledge. In the course of perfection and moral movement, Kantian man considers himself to be God. While a Sadrai person finds himself in absolute need and poverty of God in his moral course. Mulla Sadra proves in his anthropology that before entering the world of matter, man had only a scientific and intellectual existence, which happened with the creation of the body, and with the identity of the fluid he has, he begins his evolutionary course through material movement, and this evolution It leads him to the realm of reason. Kant considers the soul's "physicality of occurrence and spirituality of existence" to be necessary and necessary to prove essential movement. He says that after perfection, the soul reaches the spiritual position and then connects to the intellectual world. The human soul reaches completeness when it is connected to the active divine intellect and unites with him. According to Sadra, the criterion of a human's voluntary action is that the will precedes the action. As a result, the existence of free will in man is the fundamental basis of moral action in him. In the case of achieving the transcendence of the soul over the body, the field of moral actions is developed and natural human actions such as eating, giving birth, and reproduction can be indirectly considered moral actions. According to Kant, reason with its immediate practical laws makes the will valid. Because pure reason as practical reason is possible for it to legislate. Kant considers the moral law to be the findings of pure reason, which man is aware of in advance and acknowledges its certainty without any empirical understanding.

## CONCLUSION

In the present study, the topic of free will in transcendental wisdom was compared with Kant's philosophy of ethics, and its basis for moral action was investigated.

Kant considers the absolute to be the self-ritual expression of the will. He does not deal with the nature and essence of the soul and its evolution in both theoretical and practical areas. In Kant's practical criticism, he uses the word transcendence as an adverb or attribute of free will, this word means the complete independence of the will or free will from the law of causality. In other words, transcendental will is a will that is independent of any empirical matter. The most fundamental approach of Mulla Sadra is related to the use of practical reason through which a person can achieve a transcendent intellectual body. This means that the fruit of practical reason in performing moral action is the study of the transcendence of the soul over the body. Moral qualities that have a material existence are transformed into a rational existence through the passage of material movement, and this means that the

study of the intellectual body of the transcendence of the soul over the body is the same as the realization of the rule of reason (theoretical and practical) over human actions. This transcendental intellectual body is a state that leads to the exaltation of man and brings the soul to moderation and then to happiness. From the comparison of these two theories, we can conclude that Kant's theory has led to humanistic ethics due to benefiting from human epistemic essence and using elements such as independence of will. Because according to Kant, man has a true identity and is free from all external and transcendental factors. According to him, independence of will is the highest principle of morality.

## Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues (such as plagiarism, conscious satisfaction, misleading, making and or forging data, publishing or sending to two places, redundancy and etc.) have been fully considered by the writers.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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