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# THE ORIGIN OF THE SOUL IN THE EMERGENTIST PERSPECTIVE OF MULLA SADRA

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## Abstract

In Christian theology, which is not alien to Islamic theology, there are traditionally three perspectives on the origin of the soul: traducianism, creationism, and pre-existence. ‘Emergent substance dualism’ is a fourth perspective recently been proposed in the philosophy of mind by some emergentists. Emergent substance dualism provides a framework for understanding the mind or soul as a product of the body’s complex organic system, emerging naturally through intricate interactions and processes, rather than being placed inside the body from the outside, and certainly not reducible to it. Still, it is a substance distinct from its physical substrates and has a causal effect on it. The philosophical theory of Mulla Sadra about the origination of the soul is that: “The human soul is bodily in its origination and spiritual in its subsistence.” In his view, the soul (or the self) emerges from a complex interplay of ontological principles, through a combination of elements and the realization of a balanced temperament, further shaped by processes of intensification and substantial movement. However, Mulla Sadra’s philosophical perspective transcends simplistic categorizations by integrating emergent substance dualism with creationist metaphysics. By addressing explanatory gaps inherent in emergent substance dualism and incorporating divine causality into his framework, he offers a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the soul’s emergence. This synthesis underscores the richness and complexity of his philosophical thought. A perspective that today is comprehensive between science, religion, and philosophy, and for this reason, it can be proposed as an option and a theory that can be expanded and paid attention to by religious philosophers and theologians under the title of Mulla Sadra’s emergent creationism.

*Keywords:* emergentism, dualism, creationism, soul, Mulla Sadra

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## 1. Introduction

Materialism in the realm of the mind is currently facing challenges and dilemmas. Cognitive sciences have confirmed that a wide array of unresolved and incomplete issues exist in understanding and explaining the human mind and mental state: The problem of qualia, the problem of intentionality, the problem of

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free will and morality, the problem of abductive reasoning, alias the epistemic frame problem, the binding problem, the unity of consciousness, the stable bits of abstract knowledge be represented by the ever-shifting flux of electrical activity that we observe in the brain.[1, p. 1-9]

- A. **The Problem of Qualia:** This is the challenge of explaining how subjective experiences, such as the perception of color or the taste of chocolate, arise from physical processes in the brain. It's difficult to bridge the gap between the objective world of neurons and the subjective world of personal experience.
- B. **The Problem of Intentionality:** Intentionality refers to the aboutness or directedness of mental states — the fact that they are 'of' or 'about' something. Explaining how the mind can represent and be about objects and states of affairs in the world poses a significant challenge.
- C. **The Problem of Free Will and Morality:** Questions surrounding free will and moral responsibility are deeply intertwined with our understanding of consciousness and decision-making. How do we reconcile our sense of agency with the deterministic processes of the brain?
- D. **The Epistemic Frame Problem/ The problem of abductive reasoning:** This problem arises in the context of artificial intelligence and concerns how an agent can focus its attention on relevant information while ignoring irrelevant details. The problem of abductive reasoning, also known as the epistemic frame problem, is a significant challenge within the realm of cognitive science and artificial intelligence. Abductive reasoning is the process of inferring the best or most likely explanation for a set of observations or evidence. Unlike deductive reasoning, which proceeds from general principles to specific conclusions, or inductive reasoning, which generalizes from particular observations to broader patterns, abductive reasoning involves forming hypotheses to explain observed phenomena. It's a fundamental issue in designing systems that can reason effectively about the world.
- E. **The Binding Problem:** This refers to the challenge of understanding how the brain integrates various sensory inputs into a coherent perceptual experience. For example, how does the brain bind the visual perception of a red apple with the tactile sensation of picking it up?
- F. **The Unity of Consciousness:** Conscious experience seems unified - we perceive the world as a single, coherent whole. However, it's unclear how the brain achieves this unity, especially given its distributed and modular organization.
- G. **Representing Abstract Knowledge:** This relates to how the brain encodes and represents abstract concepts and knowledge. Despite the dynamic and ever-shifting nature of neural activity, we possess stable and abstract knowledge about the world.

Substance dualism proposes that the self, or the essence of personal identity, is not reducible to physical processes in the brain or any other material basis. Instead, the self is seen as a non-physical entity. In Western philosophy often referred to as the soul, which serves as the substrate for one's mental life. This

perspective contrasts with materialism and physicalism, which hold that everything, including the mind and consciousness, can ultimately be explained in terms of physical matter and processes. [2, p. 238]

To unravel some of the epistemological knots of Cartesian substance dualism and physicalism, the theory of emergentism has been used. [3] Emergence entails six key aspects: synergism (the combined or cooperative effects between objects or systems), novelty, irreducibility, unpredictability, coherence, and historicity. Emergent properties arise from subsystems but cannot be fully explained or reduced to those systems alone. Emergence involves something more than but not altogether other than. [4, p. 6-8] Emergentism does not reduce the mind to the body, nor does it assert that the mind is blown into the body from the outside; instead, in this perspective, mental properties (in properties emergentism) and the mind-substance (in substance emergentism) are naturally considered to be the products of the proper physical organization and functioning of the physical body and brain. [5, p. 39] Indeed, modern scientific evidence supports this perspective, as biological and neurological research indicates a cohesive connection between the rate of bodily development and fundamental mental states. [6]

Emergentism encompasses various spectra, ranging from materialism, which regards mental emergent properties as material (and extends matter to include mental attributes) [7 - 15] to panpsychism [16 - 19] which considers all physical substances and objects as possessing hierarchical levels of mental properties. However, most emergentists fall within the middle of this spectrum, asserting the emergence of mental properties and states from the physical while denying the emergence of the mind-substance/soul from the physical. The claim of properties emergentism is that through evolutionary processes, certain specific material components are arranged in such a way at a particular stage of life's evolution that it does not lead to the emergence of new individuals but "Rather the organism at issue acquires qualitatively new properties, consciousness properties. The emergentist believes that this change occurs as a result of physical conditions satisfied by the biological system." [20, p. 270] "According to property dualism, mental properties are distinct from physical properties, even though they are properties of one substance." [21, p. 38]

Richard Campbell argues that the concept of 'the mind' should be rejected, as there are no fundamental entities corresponding to it. While the term is commonly used in everyday language, psychology, and philosophy, much of this usage simply refers generically to mental activity. However, it is a mistake to conceive of this activity as occurring within a distinct mental entity, a fundamental postulate of Cartesian dualism. Campbell suggests that entities are formed when lower-level processes are organized in a way that generates bonds, uniting them into relatively independent, coherent, cohesive, and integral systems that manifest new properties and causal powers. While human beings are such entities, 'minds' are not. [22, p. 262-263]

However, several emergentists contend that although the mind and conscious agent arise from physical processes, they are qualitatively distinct from pure matter or mere bodily existence. [23 - 25] William Hasker [23, 26] proposed

the novel concept of emergent substance dualism. In Hasker's opinion, the mind emerges as a simple substance at a particular stage of growth and development. This view explains how a person's brain and mental substance have a continuous and stable connection. [27, p. 177-178]

Hasker [23, p. 176-190] argues that consciousness cannot be simply regarded as a phenomenon of physical matter due to two main reasons: the unity of consciousness and the existence of free will. Firstly, since physical entities constantly change and comprise separated and spatially distributed atoms, they cannot account for the unified experience of consciousness. Secondly, free will cannot arise from deterministic movements of physics, suggesting that it transcends mere physical processes. Therefore, Hasker concludes that there must be an immaterial and unified subject for experience:

"A conscious experience simply is a unity, and to decompose it into a collection of separate parts is to falsify it. So, it is not enough to say that there are emergent properties here; what is needed is an emergent individual, a new individual entity which comes into existence as a result of a certain functional configuration of the material constituents of the brain and nervous system. Endowed, as we take it to be, with libertarian freedom, this individual is able, in Searle's words, to cause things that could not be explained by the causal behavior of the neurons." [23, p. 190]

He firmly rejects Cartesian substance dualism and "implicitly affirm[s] that the human mind is produced by the human brain and is not a separate element" added to "the brain from outside". [23, p. 189]

In explaining the origin and nature of the 'field of consciousness', Hasker offers the following analogy:

"A magnetic field, for example, is a real, existing, concrete entity, distinct from the magnet which produces it. ... The field is 'generated' by the magnet in virtue of the fact that the magnet's material constituents are arranged in a certain way. ... But once generated, the field exerts a causality of its own, on the magnet itself as well as on other objects in the vicinity. ... Keeping all this in mind, we can say that as a magnet generates its magnetic field, so the brain generates its field of consciousness." [23, p. 190]

According to Hasker, the brain produces the mind-substance or soul (the conscious self), which is something distinct from the brain but depends on it for both its origin and its continuance. His analogy in this connection is that "arrange an assemblage of iron molecules in the right way, and something new appears: a magnetic field. Arrange an assemblage of neurons in the right way, and another new thing appears: consciousness, a mind" [28, p. 215]. Just as a magnetic field possesses its own distinct causal powers despite being dependent on the arrangement of iron molecules, the mind or soul, according to Hasker, has its own unique causal powers separate from the physical brain. In this way, it offers a middle ground between the purely materialist view that reduces consciousness to physical processes and the dualist view that posits the mind or soul as entirely separate from the body. [23, p. 190-193; 28, p. 215-216]

First, we present the three traditional theories regarding the origin of the soul: traducianism, creationism, and pre-existence. Following this, we evaluate

the theory of emergent substance dualism. Finally, we introduce Mulla Sadra's theory of emergent substance creationism as a more theologically and rationally robust perspective. Mulla Sadra's emergent substance creationism offers a theological and rational alternative. Furthermore, Sadra's creationism accommodates scientific insights by acknowledging the emergence of the soul within the framework of divine creation. It avoids the pitfalls of dualism by affirming the unity of the human being while recognizing the soul's transcendence. This perspective integrates theological principles with philosophical reasoning, offering a comprehensive understanding of the soul's origin that is both intellectually satisfying and consistent with religious beliefs.

## **2. The origin of the soul and emergent substance dualism**

Within Christian theological discussions, there are various perspectives on the origin of the soul, some of which align with those found in Islamic theological discourse. Traditionally, three main views have been prominent:

- A. Pre-existence: The doctrine of psychic pre-existence, as developed by Plato and later by Plotinus, posits the existence of the immortal soul prior to its embodiment in a physical form. This concept is often illustrated metaphorically as the soul being encased in a tomb (with 'soma' interpreted as 'sema' or tomb). In the Christianized version of soul pre-existence, theologians had to reconcile this idea with the scriptural narrative of the fall of man.

Figures such as Origen of Alexandria, Didymus the Blind, Hilary of Poitiers, Cyril of Alexandria, Nemesius of Emesa, and Boethius all engaged with this concept. They proposed that the fall of each soul occurred in a premundane phase of being before embodiment. According to this interpretation, souls underwent a fall partly as punishment and partly for purification, perfection, and restoration to their pre-lapsarian state.

This perspective allowed Christian theologians to incorporate elements of Platonic and Neoplatonic thought into Christian doctrine while still maintaining the theological significance of the fall of man as depicted in scripture. It provided a framework for understanding the nature of the soul, its relationship to the divine, and the process of redemption and restoration. [29, p. 14-15]

This view holds that there is some sort of 'soul storehouse' in heaven where God stores souls awaiting a human body to join. This view has no biblical support and is usually advanced by those who hold a 'New Age' or reincarnation view.

- B. Traducianism: The doctrine of traducianism is associated with the belief that both the soul and body of each person originate from their parents, thus being transmitted through the generative process from one generation to the next. This concept was influenced by Stoic and Aristotelian ideas about the nature of the soul and its relationship to the body.

Tertullian is credited with fully formulating the doctrine of traducianism within Christian theology in his work 'De anima' (On the Soul). He proposed that the soul is ethereally corporeal and intimately intertwined with the body, echoing Stoic and Aristotelian concepts. According to traducianism, the soul and body are

considered a single entity, existing seminally in the loins of Adam. As a result, both are implicated in the consequences of Adam's disobedience and expulsion from Paradise.

This doctrine garnered support among early Christian theologians such as Arnobius the Elder, Gregory of Nyssa, and Rufinus, who further developed and advocated for its acceptance. In early Latin Christendom, traducianism was modified and became a dominant belief regarding the soul's origin and its propagation through generations.

traducianism provided a theological framework for understanding the transmission of original sin and the interconnectedness of humanity's spiritual and physical nature. It explained how the consequences of Adam's fall could be inherited by all subsequent generations, emphasizing the unity of the human race in both its spiritual and physical aspects. [29, p. 15]

Some points raised from the Bible in support of traducianism offer an interpretation that suggests human souls are propagated through physical means, namely through the generative process, rather than individually created by God *ex nihilo*:

Genesis 2:7: "then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being." This verse mentions God breathing into Adam the breath of life, interpreted as the origin of human life. The Bible does not explicitly mention God repeating the act of breathing the breath of life into other humans or creatures after Adam. So, traducianists argue that this act signifies the beginning of human life and that subsequent generations inherit this life through the natural reproduction process.

Genesis 5:3: "When Adam had lived one hundred thirty years, he became the father of a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth." This verse states that Adam had a son in his likeness, implying a continuity of life and existence from Adam to his descendants. That is a key point raised in support of traducianism. The idea is that Adam's descendants, including subsequent generations of humans, inherit their 'living souls' through the natural reproduction process without direct intervention from God. This interpretation suggests that the transmission of life, including the spiritual aspect of human existence, occurs through the physical processes of procreation.

Genesis 2:2-3: "And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So, God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation." These verses describe God resting from his work of creation after completing the world's creation and everything in it. Traducianists may see this as indicating that the creation process, including the propagation of human life, was completed and does not require ongoing divine intervention for each new individual.

The concept of original sin, which affects all human beings, is often cited as supporting traducianism. If both the physical body and the soul originate from parents, then the transmission of original sin through generations becomes more coherent, as it affects the entirety of human nature, both physical and spiritual.

However, traducianism faces challenges explaining how an immaterial soul can be produced through purely physical processes. This view may undermine the distinctiveness and spiritual nature of the soul. Additionally, traducianism does not have explicit biblical support and is a matter of theological interpretation rather than explicit doctrine.

C. Creationism: Creationism, as understood in Christian theology, was cultivated by the majority of the Greek Fathers, as well as by figures like Jerome, and eventually became prevalent in Latin Scholastic Christendom. This doctrine posits that the soul is created *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) by God and then infused into the embryo at a particular stage of its development.

The precise timing of the soul's infusion varied among philosophical and theological traditions. For example, the Pythagoreans believed that the soul was infused at conception, while the Stoics believed it occurred at the moment of the first breath.

In Christian creationism, the doctrine was further refined to incorporate the scriptural narrative of the fall of mankind in Adam. Like traducianism, creationism presupposed a once-for-all creation of bodily substance from Adam, with propagation occurring through subsequent generations. However, creationism held that individual souls were created *ad hoc*, meaning they were individually differentiated in time as needed.

This perspective allowed Christian theologians to reconcile the doctrine of the fall of humankind with the belief in the individual creation of souls by God. It emphasized the direct involvement of God in the creation of each soul separate from the physical processes of reproduction and affirmed the uniqueness of each individual's spiritual essence. Additionally, creationism provided theological coherence by integrating scriptural teachings with philosophical and theological reflections on the nature of the soul and its relationship to the body. [29, p.15-16]

Indeed, the creationist view does find some biblical support, particularly in the differentiation between the origin of the soul and the origin of the body. For example:

Ecclesiastes 7:12 states, "For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money, and the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to the one who possesses it." This verse implies that wisdom is associated with preserving the life or soul of a person and so there is a difference between the origin of the soul and the origin of the body.

Isaiah 42:5 reads, "Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it." Here, God is portrayed as the giver of breath and life.

Zechariah, 12:1, says, "The word of the Lord concerning Israel: Thus says the Lord, who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the human spirit within."

This verse is often interpreted as emphasizing God's role as the creator of the human spirit or soul. It highlights the divine origin of the spiritual aspect of human existence, suggesting that God is directly involved in forming the human

spirit within each person. This interpretation aligns with the creationist perspective, which posits that God individually creates each soul.

Hebrews 12:9 states, “Moreover, we had human parents to discipline us, and we respected them. Should we not be even more willing to be subject to the Father of spirits and live?” This passage emphasizes God as the Father of spirits, implying a distinct spiritual aspect of human existence.

If God creates each soul at the moment of conception or birth, then there would be a perpetual separation between the soul and the body. This posits that God individually creates each soul and then unites it with a physical body.

These biblical passages and interpretations support the creationist perspective by highlighting the distinctiveness of the soul, its relationship to God as its creator, and its eventual union with a physical body. But the weakness of the creationist view in Christianity is that God continues to create new human beings, while Genesis 2:2-3 describe God resting from his work of creation after completing the creation of the world and everything in it. Some interpret this as implying that God ceased to create new things after the initial act of creation. Also, If God creates each new life individually, it raises questions about how sin, which affects the entirety of human existence (body, soul, and spirit), is transmitted to each new individual.

Whether the view of traducianism or creationism is correct, both views agree that life does not exist before conception. This seems to be the clear teaching of the Bible. Whether God has created a new human life at the moment of conception, or designed the process of human reproduction in such a way as to reproduce the soul, ultimately it is God who is responsible for the creation of all human lives.

In contemporary philosophy of religion and discussions within the literature of the mind, William Hasker’s emergent substance dualism has been proposed as an alternative viewpoint. This perspective posits a philosophical concept wherein the soul is not a pre-existing entity but instead emerges from the intricate interactions and organization of physical elements. Here are some critical points about emergent substance dualism:

1. Potential existence in physical matter: Emergent substance dualism proposes that the soul has the potential to arise from physical matter. This means the soul is not separate from the physical world but emerges from it based on specific material changes or configurations.
2. Novel and distinct nature: The soul that emerges from physical matter is considered unique in nature and distinct from the material components from which it arises. It is not simply reducible to the sum of its parts or the relationships between them.
3. Emergence through evolutionary processes: According to emergent substance dualism, the emergence of the soul is a result of evolutionary processes, hierarchical systems, and systemic and network relations among physical elements. These processes lead to the emergence of novel forms of existence, such as the soul, which cannot be fully explained by reduction to their parts or systemic and network relations among physical elements.

4. Physics as the driving force: In this view, physics is seen as the driving force behind the emergence of the soul, with the power or potential to elevate and create the soul independently of divine intervention. [23, 24]

In emergent substance dualism, the emergence of the soul is understood to arise from the complex interactions and organization of physical elements rather than from direct divine intervention. While some proponents of this view may acknowledge the possibility of God's involvement in setting in motion the physical processes that lead to the emergence of the soul, they often emphasize that God's causality may be indirect or remote.

This perspective contrasts with traditional religious views that attribute the soul's creation solely to divine action. Creationism underscores the belief in God's direct involvement in the creation of souls, emphasizing the divine sovereignty and authority over the origin of human life. This perspective contrasts with views that attribute the origin of souls to natural processes, emergent properties, or other non-divine causes.

But as a critique, "Without discussing causality, emergence has a magical quality, with higher-level properties popping into existence without explanation". [30, p. 212]

This critique highlights what is commonly referred to as the 'explanatory gap' in emergent theories, particularly concerning the transition from lower-level physical processes to higher-level phenomena such as consciousness or mind/soul. The argument suggests that for emergent properties like the mind to arise from lower-level neurological events, there must be a gap in explanatory power, as the effect (mind/soul) appears to be superior in quality to its cause (neurological events). This challenge raises questions about whether emergent properties can be adequately explained by the interactions of lower-level components or if there is a fundamental gap in our understanding of how higher-level phenomena emerge from lower-level processes. While The principle often attributed to Thomas Aquinas asserts that an effect cannot be more complete in quality than its cause or the sum of its causes.

In the context of emergent substance dualism, this principle suggests that emergent properties like consciousness, mind or soul cannot be fully explained by the interactions of lower-level neurological events alone. There must be some additional factor or mechanism at play to account for the emergence of these higher-level phenomena from lower-level physical processes.

If the cause (the lower-level physical processes) lacks the perfection or complexity of the effect (the emergent property), it seems as though the effect has emerged from 'nothing'. While lower-level entities can indeed produce systemic properties through interactions and organization, these properties should not exceed the perfection or existential rank of their constituent parts.

Materialism encounters a critical challenge commonly known as the explanatory gap. As articulated by Levine. [31] This gap underscores the difficulty in bridging the divide between subjective experiences—such as thoughts, emotions, and perceptions—and the objective, scientific description of the physical processes underlying these experiences. The problem arises from the fundamental distinction between mind and matter, which are perceived as two

inherently different categories, each possessing its own distinct properties and characteristics. How do subjective experiences arise from non-experiential matter, such as neural networks in the brain or interactions between organisms and their environment? [32]

In short, Emergentism like naturalism, asserts that nature is self-sufficient and capable of producing all the complexities observed in the universe, including the evolution from simpler to more complex forms, culminating in humans. While emergentism posits that higher levels of organization can arise from lower levels without the need for external causes, it often lacks a detailed account of the mechanisms or processes underlying these transitions. Simply asserting that higher levels emerge from lower levels as a ‘factual law’ does not provide a satisfactory philosophical explanation. Without a robust account of the causal mechanisms at play, emergentism may face challenges in fully addressing the nature of causality, sufficient reason, and the relationship between parts and wholes in complex systems.

It is said that in emergentism, the principle of causality is not violated, as the emergent properties can be understood as arising from the causal interactions of the simpler components. While the emergent properties may represent qualitative leaps, they are still grounded in the causal processes of the system as a whole. So, the mind and mental properties exist in the components of the lower level, and the complex network of interactions between these components and the resulting connections in the components cause the appearance of the substance of the mind. [16, p. 9; 17 - 19]

But in criticizing this point of view, it should also be said that it is not sufficient for the big jumps to qualitatively higher properties in the world of living beings, i.e., from non-life to cellular life, from non-cognitive plant life to cognitive animal life, and especially not from animal to rational human life. “For if what emerges is clearly on a qualitatively higher level of being, then the surplus of new being over what was contained in the previously existing causes would have to derive from nothing, thus violating the principle of sufficient reason.” [33, p. 249]

On one hand, if they argue that the next level is not inherently superior to the previous level but is merely a more intricate arrangement of the same components, they run the risk of embracing reductionism. This reductionist perspective undermines the idea of true qualitative leaps in ontological perfection and suggests that emergent properties are reducible to the properties of their constituent parts. On the other hand, if naturalists and emergentists believe that there is a higher level of existence with distinct properties that emerge from the interactions of lower-level components, they face challenges reconciling this perspective with the principle of causality. If the emergent properties represent a surplus of new beings over what was contained in the previously existing causes, it may seem as though they violate the principle of sufficient reason, which asserts that every event or phenomenon must have a sufficient explanation or cause.

The reader should be aware that when emergent properties arise but do not qualitatively differ from the properties of their underlying components, the explanatory gap may be less pronounced. In such cases, both levels of organization remain within the realm of the physical, and the emergent properties

can be understood as the result of complex interactions and arrangements of physical components. However, the explanatory gap becomes more pronounced when the emergent entity at a higher level is existentially distinct from its lower-level substratum. In these cases, the emergent properties represent qualitative leaps in ontological status or characteristics, which raises questions about how such properties can arise from the interactions of lower-level components without violating principles of causality or sufficient reason.

The emergence of rational and self-aware human life raises profound metaphysical questions, particularly concerning the nature and origin of the human soul. The human soul is often conceived as immaterial and beyond the constraints of material properties such as time, space, and specific material contexts. It possesses qualities such as understanding values, self-awareness, and spirituality.

Given the immaterial nature of the soul, which lacks material components and is conceived as a simple and discontinuous centre of spiritual energy, the question arises: what can be the cause of its origin? From this viewpoint, the soul is not the product of material causes or components but is instead a creation of a higher, non-material reality.

### **3. Mulla Sadra, emergent creationist substance dualist**

By acknowledging the substantiality of the soul and its status as a non-material entity, emergentism faces a challenge in explaining the origin and nature of the intellectual soul. The efficient and emanating cause responsible for the emergence of the intellectual soul is understood to be a necessarily non-material entity that transcends and surpasses the material realm.

The reasonable approach could be outlined here emphasizes two main aspects in examining the relationship between science and religion or the narratives of evolution and creation, particularly concerning the interaction of the soul and the body:

- a) **Hierarchy of Being:** This aspect emphasizes that there are different qualitative levels of perfection of being, from lower to higher, rather than just different quantitative expressions of matter on the same ontological level. In other words, the universe is not a flattened-out continuum but rather a hierarchical structure where higher levels of existence possess qualitatively higher degrees of perfection. This perspective recognizes the inherently immaterial nature of the human soul and its distinct capacities, such as intellect and will, which cannot be fully elucidated by purely materialistic explanations.
- b) **Sufficient Reason and Higher Causes:** This aspect highlights that causes on a qualitatively lower level cannot fully account for the emergence of something qualitatively higher. In other words, lower-level causes cannot give what they do not possess in some equivalent way. Therefore, the collaboration of some higher cause on the same or higher level as the surplus of a higher being in the effects must be introduced into the metaphysical account. While scientific explanations may focus on lower-level causes and

processes, the metaphysical account requires consideration of higher causes to fully make sense of the universe and the emergence of higher-level phenomena. [33, p. 285]

By integrating these aspects into examining the relationship between science and religion, or the narratives of evolution and creation, one can develop a more comprehensive understanding that acknowledges both the empirical findings of science and the metaphysical insights of religious and philosophical traditions.

So, it is reasonable to provide an approach acknowledging both divine agency and natural processes in the emergence of the human soul. It reconciles the idea of divine creation with the concept of emergence, which posits that higher-level phenomena can arise from the interactions of lower-level components. It acknowledges the role of God as the real creator of the soul while recognizing the role of natural processes and physical evolution in shaping the conditions for the soul's instantiation.

In this view, the human soul is understood to be directly created by God. Still, its realization or instantiation occurs at a specific moment in time when the brain reaches a particular stage of complexity and evolution to host the soul. [34, p. 327-328]

Overall, this perspective offers a nuanced understanding of the relationship between the spiritual and physical dimensions of human existence, acknowledging both divine agency and natural processes in the emergence of the human soul. It highlights the complex interplay between metaphysical principles and empirical observations in grappling with questions of human origins and the nature of consciousness.

In this context, emergentism may struggle to provide a satisfactory account of how a purely material process, such as the evolution of the brain or the complexity of physical systems, could give rise to the immaterial and transcendent qualities of the intellectual soul. The emergence of the soul as a distinct substance, particularly one with intellectual capacities and spiritual attributes, requires a cause immaterial and beyond the realm of material causality.

This challenge underscores the limitations of emergentism in adequately addressing the metaphysical aspects of consciousness and the soul, particularly in reconciling naturalistic explanations with the transcendent dimensions of human existence. It underscores the need for a comprehensive metaphysical framework that accommodates both the material and immaterial aspects of reality, while also acknowledging the role of transcendent causes in shaping the nature of consciousness and the soul.

Sadr-Aldin Alshirazi's (Mulla Sadra) (1596-1650) a prominent Persian philosopher of the Islamic Golden Age, developed a unique metaphysical system known as 'transcendent philosophy'. Within this framework, Mulla Sadra proposed an innovative understanding of the human soul and its relationship to the physical world, which can be characterized as an emergent creationist substance dualism. He argues that the human soul is "bodily in its origination and spiritual in its subsistence". [35, p. 135]

In Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi's emergentism, the soul is understood to undergo a hierarchical emergence from the body, evolving and developing through different levels or stages. This view posits that the human soul begins as a material power closely linked to the body, gradually intensifying and developing into higher forms of existence through substantial motions and natural systemic constitution.

At the outset, the soul is closely associated with the material body and functions as the form of the body at lower levels. However, as it undergoes substantial motions and progresses through various stages of natural development, it evolves into increasingly intense and sophisticated forms of existence.

These stages include:

1. Organismal and vegetative life: Initially, the soul functions at a rudimentary level, overseeing the essential functions of the organism and facilitating vegetative life processes.
2. Sensitive soul: As the soul progresses, it acquires sensory capabilities, allowing for perception and interaction with the external world.
3. Cogitative and recollective animal soul: The soul further develops cognitive faculties, enabling reasoning, memory, and other higher mental functions characteristic of animals. Until Spiritual self-subsistent substance (autonomous rational soul): Finally, the soul reaches its highest level of development, transcending the material realm to become a spiritual, self-subsistent entity capable of rational thought and self-awareness.

Notably, despite the various levels or stations of the soul's development, they are all considered metaphysically the same essence or substance. In other words, the soul undergoes a process of evolution and refinement, gradually unfolding its inherent potentialities and reaching higher levels of being. Still, it remains fundamentally unified throughout its journey.

This perspective offers a nuanced understanding of the soul's emergence, emphasizing its dynamic and evolving nature while acknowledging its ultimate unity and continuity across different levels of existence.

However, Mulla Sadra's emergentist understanding of the soul maintains a belief in divine creativity for two main reasons:

First, In the Qur'anic monotheistic and Mulla Sadra's philosophical view, divine reflection is central to understanding the relationship between God and His creation. According to this perspective, everything in existence is ultimately a reflection of the infinite existence of God. In other words, creatures do not possess independent existence but instead derive their existence from the divine source.

The relationship between the creature and the Creator is likened to the relationship between moonlight and sunlight. Just as the moon reflects sun's light, creatures reflect the pure perfection of God's existence. If water seems to irrigate, but it is God who really irrigates, or a doctor appears to heal, it is ultimately God who is the true source of all creative and healing power. This understanding emphasizes the transcendence of God as the ultimate agent behind all phenomena in the universe.

In this context, the soul originates from matter in apparent terms, as it emerges and develops within the material world. However, in reality, the soul is

understood to be given by God Himself. Therefore, even if we consider matter as the apparent generator and creator of the soul, according to Mulla Sadra's philosophy, this creative process is ultimately a reflection of divine creativity, with God being the true agent behind all creation. [36]

This perspective underscores the profound interconnectedness between the material and spiritual dimensions of existence, highlighting the transcendent nature of God's creative power and the reflective relationship between the created and the Creator. It invites contemplation on the deeper metaphysical truths underlying the fabric of reality and the role of divine agency in shaping the destiny of all beings.

Secondly, in Mulla Sadra's view, the body does not possess even reflective efficiency or causal agency for the existence of the human soul. Instead, the body is seen as capable of admitting or accommodating the soul. This perspective contrasts with the views of evolutionists and emergent substance dualists, who may attribute a more active role to the physical body in the emergence or creation of the immaterial soul substance. According to Mulla Sadra, the earthly body is not considered the creator of the immaterial soul substance. Instead, the body is viewed as a receptacle that allows for the manifestation and expression of the soul within the material world. The soul, being immaterial and transcendent, is not generated or created by the physical processes of the body. It transcends the material realm and is bestowed upon the individual by divine grace.

According to Mulla Sadra's philosophy, the different levels of systemic evolution and development of the body correspond to the different degrees and levels of the soul that belong to the body. This concept is often expressed in terms of a hierarchy of souls, ranging from the vegetative or plant soul to the human soul. [35, p. 315]

At the lowest level, the vegetative or plant soul governs basic life functions such as growth, nutrition, and reproduction. As the body evolves and develops, higher levels of the soul, such as the animal soul, come into play, enabling sensory perception, mobility, and instinctual behaviour.

Finally, at the pinnacle of this hierarchy is the human soul, which possesses rationality, self-awareness, and moral agency. The human soul represents the highest expression of spiritual and intellectual potential within the material world, allowing individuals to engage in abstract thought, ethical reasoning, and spiritual reflection. This perfect form (the intellectual soul), which is no longer physical, but spiritual, emanated by non-material existence, and from the non-material world. [36, vol.2 p. 213-214]

Each level of the soul is intricately connected to the corresponding level of bodily development, with the soul serving as the animating force that imbues the body with life and consciousness. This hierarchical perspective emphasizes the interplay between the material and spiritual realms of existence, illuminating the dynamic interdependence between the body and the soul within Mulla Sadra's metaphysical framework.

Indeed, according to Mulla Sadra, while the body and its temperament may play a role in the manifestation and expression of the soul within the material world, they are not the essential or fundamental cause of the soul's substance or

essence. Instead, they play a causal role in the soul's integration and connection to the specific body. This implies that the body and its temperament contribute to the circumstances and context in which the soul becomes associated with the body. However, they do not dictate the essence or existence of the soul itself. [35, p. 314] In other words, the causality of the body in bringing about the soul is merely preparatory, facilitating the connection of a specific soul to a specific body based on its susceptibility or disposition. It is not the cause of the soul's creation. [36, vol.9 p. 4; vol.8, p. 398]

The body holds the role of a substrate and a facilitator in relation to the soul; it is within the domain of the body that the soul develops, but it does not give birth to the soul. The body merely sets the stage for the manifestation of the soul. The soul is a unique entity that requires a material foundation for its emergence and manifestation, yet it is independent of matter and material conditions for its existence and perpetuity.

In other words, while a material background provides the conditions for the emergence of the soul, once created, the soul becomes a spiritual entity that can be independent of matter. This underscores the distinction between the soul and other material attributes. Heat, softness, hardness, combustibility, and magnetism are inherently linked to matter. Their emergence and continuity rely on material objects, ceasing to exist once the material is destroyed. However, the soul's emergence relies on a material background, but it does not require a material carrier for its continued existence. [37, p. 74-75]

The soul is the first grade of actuality of a natural body having life potentially in it. The realization of the soul is a gradual process intricately linked with the growth and development of the body, brain, and nervous system. Initially, at the plant and many animal stages of development, the soul is entirely dependent on the physical body, even though its properties are not material [36, vol.8, p. 347-348]. These early stages are characterized by a lack of autonomy. As development progresses to the human level, the soul exhibits qualities such as self-determination, self-awareness, and conscious innovation and creativity. These advanced attributes suggest that the soul is not merely a collection of immaterial properties but an immaterial substance. This substance, unlike its earlier dependent stages, possesses the potential for autonomy and can sustain its existence independently of the body. Thus, it possesses the capacity for life beyond the physical collapse of the body.

When the body becomes mortal, the soul, intrinsically attached to the body, also experiences mortality. However, the soul, beyond its existence for the body (existence for something else), transforms substantial movement. This process allows the soul to become an existence in itself, for itself, thus no longer requiring the body for its substance. The corruption of the body leads to the demise of the soul's attachment to the body, but not the essence of the soul itself. This essential part of the soul remains unharmed by the body's decay, achieving independence through substantial movement and continuing its existence autonomously [35, p. 349].

From Mulla Sadra's perspective, the concept of the soul's corporal origination does not imply that the body creates the soul or that the body itself is

the generator of the soul. Instead, Sadra posits that the soul evolves from potentiality to full actualization through a process guided by divine influence. God grants the soul in accordance with the body's capacity at various stages of development. This means that while the soul's manifestation is closely linked to the body's condition and development, its origin is directly attributed to God, not the body itself.

Mulla Sadra's theory, wherein the soul originates in a bodily state but endures in a spiritual state, entails a process of substantial motion. Through its association with the body, the soul evolves and perfects itself. However, this evolution is underpinned by divine intervention, as God imparts the soul's characteristics in alignment with the body's readiness and capacity. Therefore, the soul's existence and development are viewed as contingent on both the body's condition and divine provision, rather than the body being the source of the soul's creation.

Mulla Sadra's philosophy provides a nuanced perspective on the soul's origin, distinct from instantaneous creationism, traducianism, pre-existence, and Hasker's emergentism. Instead, Sadra's perspective amalgamates the strengths of these theories, while also yielding scientific, intellectual, and religious benefits.

In biology, we observe a spectrum of life and consciousness, ranging from single-celled organisms to complex beings like humans. This diversity aligns with Sadra's idea that the soul's emergence and development are gradual and dependent on the body's capacity, but ultimately governed by divine intervention. According to Sadra, the soul's origination is not an instantaneous act tied directly to the body's creation. Nor is it a mere transmission from parents (traducianism) or a pre-existing entity that inhabits the body. Unlike Hasker's emergentism, which sees the soul arising from complex physical processes, Sadra's view emphasizes a more dynamic interplay between the physical and the divine.

Sadra's perspective allows for a continuous and dynamic divine activity within the natural order, suggesting that God's involvement in the soul's development is ongoing and responsive to the physical and spiritual capacities of the body. This view acknowledges a metaphysical space where divine action and natural processes coexist and interact, providing a more comprehensive understanding that harmonizes with scientific observations and religious beliefs.

Mulla Sadra's view on the soul's creation apparently involves a form of mediation, but it is distinct from the mediation described in traducianism or Hasker's emergentism. In Sadra's framework, mediation refers to a process where God's act of creating the soul is realized at a particular time, dependent on the development and capacity of a specific physical system. While the body's development provides the conditions necessary for the soul's emergence and growth, the actual creation and imparting of the soul are acts of divine intervention. God creates and perfects the soul in alignment with the body's readiness, ensuring that the soul's characteristics are suited to the body's capacities.

Unlike instantaneous creationism, where the soul is created fully in a single moment, Sadra's view suggests a gradual and progressive actualization of the soul by God. This approach incorporates elements of growth and development, akin to

biological processes observed in nature. God's continuous and dynamic involvement is crucial, and the physical system's readiness plays a significant role.

Mulla Sadra's perspective aligns with the principle that a cause must possess the perfection it imparts to its effect. This philosophical notion is rooted in the idea that the cause must embody the existence it bestows upon its effect. If the cause did not possess this existence, it could not impart it, as a giver cannot give what it does not have [38, vol.2 p. 66].

In emergentism, it is often argued that the interaction and communication among a system's components lead to the emergence of novel phenomena that transcend the sum of the parts. However, from Mulla Sadra's perspective, due to the lack of cognation between mind (or soul) and matter, these systemic interactions serve only as a preparatory cause. They are not the effective cause or the source of the soul or mind-substance.

The effective cause of the soul, according to Sadra, is divine emanation. God, possessing the fullness of existence, imparts the soul to the body once the body is suitably prepared. This aligns with the principle that the giver of existence must itself possess the existence it imparts. God, as the ultimate cause, inherently possesses the perfection of existence. This complete and perfect existence allows God to emanate existence to all created beings, including the soul. Thus, the soul's existence is a direct result of divine emanation, grounded in the perfect existence of God.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Sadra's perspective on the origin of the soul or mind-substance can be viewed as both emergent substance dualism and creationist. A perspective that addresses the criticisms of emergent substance dualism concerning Cartesian dualism and Hasker's version, while also distinguishing itself from instantaneous creationism, traducianism, pre-existence, and Hasker's emergentism. Instead, Sadra's perspective represents an emergent creationist substance dualism, which integrates the merits of these theories while also providing scientific, intellectual, and religious advantages.

In his philosophy, the principles of intensification and substantial motion, along with the concept of gradational existence, are central to comprehending the creation and evolution of the soul. All beings undergo a process of substantial motion (*al-harakat al-jawhariyyah*), progressing from potentiality to actuality. This process involves intensifying of existence, wherein entities move towards their full realization and perfection. The soul, as a fundamental aspect of existence, is subject to this process of intensifying movement.

According to Sadra, the soul is not a static entity but one that comes into existence through the body's evolutionary process. Through a process of substantial motion, the body achieves a level of perfection that facilitates the emergence of the soul. The soul emerges and evolves through substantial motion, gradually actualizing its potentiality towards higher levels of existence, from material, organismal and vegetative life, sensitive soul, cogitative and recollective

animal soul until autonomous rational soul. While the soul begins its journey closely tied to the body, it is not bound by material constraints and can achieve a state of separability, reflecting its higher, spiritual nature.

Sadra employs the principle that a cause must possess the qualities it imparts, encapsulated in the rule: If the cause did not possess this existence, it could not impart it, as a giver cannot give what it does not have. This principle asserts that the physical world, being material, lacks the immaterial existence necessary to generate the soul.

Given that the physical world cannot create the soul, Sadra argues that the soul must originate from a divine source. God, characterized by pure perfection and possessing attributes such as creativity and emanation, imparts the soul to the body. God's perfect nature allows Him to bestow existence upon the soul, aligning with the principle that the giver must possess what it imparts.

When you say, "the emergence of water with a distinct property than the composition of gases with a ratio of one oxygen and two hydrogens", you are referring to the phenomenon of emergence in which new properties or behaviours arise from a system that is not evident in the individual components. Water (H<sub>2</sub>O) exhibits properties such as liquidity at room temperature, surface tension, and solvent capabilities that are absent in its constituent gases (hydrogen and oxygen). This is a classic example of emergent properties, where the whole is different from the sum of its parts. Both the emergent property (water) and its components (hydrogen and oxygen atoms) exist materially and can be observed and studied within the same physical realm. The cause (the chemical bonding of hydrogen and oxygen) and the effect (the properties of water) are on the same level of bodily existence, making them 'cognate'.

However, when it comes to the human mind or soul, the complexity deepens even further. The mind or human soul is an emergent property that is not merely material but exists on a different or higher level of existence compared to its physical constituents (neurons, brain chemistry, etc.).

The idea that cause and effect are 'cognate' in material emergence but not in the emergence of the mind or soul suggests a potential dualism in causality. In material phenomena like water, cause and effect are directly linked and operate within the same ontological framework. However, if the mind or soul operates on a different level of existence, the causality might not be as 'cognate'. The emergence of consciousness from brain activity might involve processes not fully explainable by physical laws alone, potentially requiring a different kind of causation.

Now that it is distinct in existence and does not have an existential identity with its sub-layers, and the sub-layers lack this order of existence, the existence of the soul cannot be attributed to the sub-layers. Therefore, Sadra's interpretation of the body's preparatory causality for the soul is correct. The direct, efficient and complete cause is God. As a simple substance, the soul divinely belongs to a body that has reached perfection and unity through evolutionary and systematic processes. This integrated perspective harmonizes metaphysical principles with theological insights, presenting a coherent understanding of the origin, nature, and development of the soul.

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