



Philosophy, Logic and Theosophy

Mahmud Hedayatafza

Rank: Commendable in the Adult Section

Degree: Ph.D

Research Title: Meaningfulness of Essential Divine Attributes in Light of Conceptual Synonymy of Attributes (Focusing on the Ideas of Ibn Sina and Ahmad Ahsaei)

Kind of Research Work: Doctoral Dissertation



About Researcher

Mahmoud Hedayatafza was born in 1975 in Tehran. He is the last child of his family, so during his childhood and adolescence, he faced his parents' illness and death. After getting a diploma in mathematics and physics he was accepted in Physics at Shahroud University. After his enlistment, in 2003 he started teaching Mathematics and published some Mathematic books. Hedayatafza had studied Theology, commentary, philosophy, and mysticism and benefited from the presence of prominent scholars of Tehran from 1996 to 2006. In 2006, he took the entrance exam to the university again and he was accepted in Islamic philosophy at Shahed University in Tehran. After that in 2009 by passing the Masters entrance exam he went to the Kharazmi University in Tehran. In 2013, he was accepted as the first person at the Tehran University for PhD degree. In 2017, he defended his doctoral thesis with an excellent grade. In total, Mahmud Hedayatafza has published about 45 research and specialized articles. In December 2016, at the Research Festival of the University of Tehran, he was selected as the top researcher among the doctoral students of the faculty of Theology. One of his articles was also honored at the National Book Criticism Festival in December 2017. But so far he hasn't become one of the science committee members of any university. Recently, his postdoctoral project, which was submitted to the Deputy Minister of science and technology (Researcher Support Fund) in the fall of 2018, was approved and he is doing the last phase of his research.

Abstract

In most of the modern theological works, an outline of the claims of Ashaereh, Kiramyeh, and Mutazileh, is given and then it is argued that Shia thinkers have always insisted on the identity and union of the attributes and the Essence of divinity; yet with more reflection on their works, we find out that there are at least four different theories in this regard: denial of attributes from the Essence, extensional unity and conceptual difference, co-orientation of essential attributes, and extensional unity and conceptual synonymy. The latter view which is more special than the second and third views is the rarest view on this issue. Upon closer research, it was found that Ibn Sina and Sheikh Ahsaei share the same view on the acceptance of the idea of conceptual synonymy of essential attributes of Divine Presence. Theoretical principles of both thinkers in their defense of the theory of synonymy are very similar to each other. The most important ones of these principles consist of "generality of the concept of the attribute as compared to the accident" and "impossibility of abstraction of different notions from the real simple". Current research seeks to explain and analyze the semantic aspect of essential attributes of Divine Essence in light of their conceptual synonymy because both thinkers - as the proponents of this theory - have paid attention to the conceptual function of synonymous essential attributes in theological propositions. Ibn Sina introduces existence as the first attribute of Divine Essence and argues that an exact understanding of every essential attribute is hinged on considering Divine Existence with a negative or an appended notion or with a combined one; but Ahsaei explains the meanings of essential attribute upon an affirmative object and two negative aspects: denial of essence's emptiness of perfections, purification of Divine Essence of adversity of attributes, and denial of identification of divine attributes and natural attributes. Of course, he believed in the existence of corresponding actual attributes along with God's essential perfections, and in his view, Muhammadian Truth is the bearer of these actual attributes and the place where Divine Providence reveals itself. Moreover, among the interpretations regarding the end of the idea of synonymy, what is more coherent with the words of Bu Ali, refers to the absolute denial of attributes from the Simple Essence of Divinity. Likewise, Ahsaei also considers the theory of conceptual synonymy a view that is more appropriate for mediocre minds. Accordingly, he believes that denial of attributes is the climax of knowledge and true monotheism. To put it otherwise, the ideas of coextension and synonymy are respectively mediating circles between two renowned theories and there is a bright path for the men of knowledge from the first to the second.

