The Role of Imagination in the Istikmal (Perfection) of the Soul from the Perspective of Sayyid Haydar Amoli

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article type: Research Article **Article History:** Received: 09 November 2024 Revised: 07 April 2025 Accepted: 12 April 2025 Published Online: 11 June 2025 **Keywords:** Imagination, Istikmal (perfection), Soul, Hemmat (determination), Sayyid Haydar Amoli.	The human soul represents an expanded reality from earth to heaven, capable of mirroring the Divine. Imagination plays a crucial role in connecting with distinct archetypes, significantly contributing to the evolution of the soul. These distinct archetypes serve as external realities and mirrors reflecting spiritual truths, allowing individuals to perceive and engage with abstract concepts through their imagination. Sayyid Haydar Amoli is a distinguished Shiite mystic whose insights into soul perfection resonate with the revitalization of archetypes and their attainment. His perspective on imagination's role and its potential to guide the soul toward happiness or despair can be understood through an ontological lens within his writings. This study utilizes a descriptive-analytical approach alongside library-based research to examine Sayyid Haydar's views on imagination's role in perfecting the soul, underscoring its importance. Imagination serves as a philosophical bridge between both tangible and intangible realms, where abstract concepts are interpreted through sensory experience and vice versa. The perfection of the soul via interconnected imagination unfolds across three dimensions: perceptual understanding through observation and reflection on reality; emotional engagement by shaping desires, clarifying goals, and intentions, and pursuing new heights; and manifesting entities in the external world through *Hemmat* or focused imaginative effort.

Introduction

The human being represents an expanded reality that spans from earth to heaven, achieving soul perfection through a transition from physical existence to transcendence, rationality, and beyond—mirroring the Divine to reach elevated states and absolute annihilation (Hassanzadeh Amoli, 2004). The soul inherently embodies an aspect of renewal that lacks permanence or stability in its pursuit of perfection.

Imagination acts as a foundational element for connection, revelation, and witnessing abstract realities while reflecting truths and fostering creativity in both material and spiritual realms. It holds significant importance within the context of soul perfection. As beings embodying divine names, humans can witness truths within abstract realms through proper guidance, enabling them to perceive the Truth alongside its essence and ultimately attain unity. This understanding allows for a more accurate interpretation of existence (Javadi Amoli, 2007).

The separate imagination serves as a bridge between tangible and intangible worlds; it represents an external reality that reflects divine attributes. Interconnected human imagination plays a vital role in affirming certainty regarding observed realities while transforming general aspirations into specific objectives—an essential process for perfecting the soul that facilitates its elevation from lower states to higher ones.

According to Sayyid Haydar's perspective, this developmental process is both continuous and dynamic. Imagination is fundamental across three key areas: perception, inclination, and creation. Initially serving as an intermediary for focus and intent, imagination later fosters certainty within the soul through observing realities within a distinct realm. This certainty then becomes foundational for movement and aspiration. Without interconnected imagination observing what exists separately, there can be no focused intention or resolve from the soul to pursue new levels of perfection. As general goals are specified through imaginative processes, they inspire new aspirations for new achievements. Ultimately, at its most intense level—termed *Hemmat*—imagination enables individuals to create entities within the external world based on the certainty essential for maintaining steadfastness (Jili, 1975). The function of imagination in this context unfolds gradually yet continuously; just as forms from higher realms are reflected into distinct imagination, connected imagination consistently observes truths anew within archetypal realms—transforming distant goals into immediate objectives moment by moment to ensure ongoing renewal and perfection of the soul.

Materials and Methods

This study utilizes a descriptive-analytical approach alongside library-based research to examine Sayyid Haydar's views on imagination's role in perfecting the soul, underscoring its importance. Imagination serves as a philosophical bridge between both tangible and intangible realms, where abstract concepts are interpreted through sensory experience and vice versa. The perfection of the soul via interconnected imagination unfolds across three dimensions: perceptual understanding through observation and reflection on reality; emotional engagement by shaping desires, clarifying goals and intentions, and pursuing new heights; and manifesting entities in the external world through *Hemmat* or focused imaginative effort. General forms, derived from distinct archetypes, are transformed into specific manifestations driven by passion and intention, resulting in a renewed pursuit of new excellence that aligns with the concept of archetypal renewal.

Conceptual Analysis

In linguistic terms, imagination encompasses concepts such as examples, apparitions, representations, shadows, etc. (Isma'il Sini, 1993). Al-Raghib (1991) in his *Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran* defines imagination as an abstract form—similar to images that emerge in a person's mind after a brief separation from a tangible object, as experienced in dreams or reflections in mirrors. This definition extends to any matter or represented shape and applies to any precise form that manifests as imagination (Murtada al-Zabidi, 2004).

In technical terminology, while preserving its semantic connection to its linguistic meaning, imagination is identified as a faculty responsible for retaining and storing everything perceived by common sense from tangible forms once its material presence has faded. In this context, the faculty of imagination signifies the exemplary level of the rational soul in its transcendent state, encompassing

all internal perceptions—both forms and meanings—excluding intellect itself, thus underscoring its significance.[1]

From the viewpoint of Peripatetic philosophers (masha'iyyah), imagination is regarded as a pictorial faculty and one of the internal powers of the animal soul that merely retains perceived forms without comprehending them. In this framework, both the faculty of imagination and its associated forms are considered material (Ibn Sina, 1983). Conversely, Suhrawardi views this faculty as material while asserting that imaginary forms are exemplary and abstract entities (Suhrawardi, 1996). Mulla Sadra argues that, according to the unity of the soul and its faculties, the faculty of imagination constitutes a level of the abstract soul; furthermore, imaginary forms are also abstract when unified with it (Mulla Sadra, 1981). Nevertheless, this abstraction exists alongside physical members and bodily faculties that fulfill numerical functions (Javadi Amoli, 2017).

Imagination: It serves as an intermediary state and a distinguishing factor between two entities, neither of which it truly embodies, yet it retains aspects of both without fully possessing their characteristics. It functions as an intelligible barrier that prevents the conflation of two matters, acting as a separator between what is known and unknown, existent and nonexistent, as well as intelligible and sensible (Amoli, 2006). For instance, when a person sees their reflection in a mirror, they recognize that they are perceiving an aspect of their image while simultaneously understanding that what appears in the mirror is not their actual face. In this sense, imagination exists in a manner that renders it neither existent nor nonexistent. Consequently, individuals struggle to comprehend its true essence to such an extent that they cannot ascertain whether it possesses an essence; it is not absolute nonexistence—since something has been perceived—nor absolute existence—because this image does not represent the actual object present—and it does not represent pure possibility either (Amoli, 2006). Thus, human imagination relates to the realm of archetypes and acts as a portal for the rational soul toward that domain. Through the connection established by the rational soul via the abstraction of imagination to the world of archetypes, revelations of forms and genuine visions manifest alongside insights into hidden meanings.

Soul: In Ibn Sina's view, the soul represents the initial perfection of the body, with its inherent potential being realized through the acceptance of various forms (Ibn Sina, 2006). This definition emphasizes the soul's intrinsic relationship with the body. Sadra posits that while the soul originates from physicality, it possesses a spiritual essence that allows it to achieve substantial perfection and abstraction via substantial motion (Mulla Sadra, 2004). He argues that the faculties of the soul are interconnected aspects that maintain unity, thereby establishing a genuine union between the soul and the body. In this sense, the essence of the soul exists independently yet is also relationally defined, with the body serving as one of its hierarchical manifestations (Mulla Sadra, 2004).

The soul itself is a complex entity with multiple levels, acquiring specific forms through imaginative faculties at one level and grasping universal concepts through intellectual reasoning at a higher tier.

Istikmal (Perfection): The term "perfection" signifies completion, the quest for excellence, and the granting of perfection (Azarnoosh, 2001). More specifically, it refers to both finalizing and enhancing an entity (Bustani, 1996). Furthermore, it involves a being that, upon completing its necessary existential and physical structure, receives additional perfections for its adornment and embellishment based on its merits (Motahhari, 2006).

Before Sadra's time, philosophers regarded changes in the soul's condition as contingent rather than intrinsic. In contrast, Mulla Sadra argues that the soul perpetually attains actualization and a broader existence while experiencing essential and intrinsic change and perfection (Mulla Sadra, 2004). The intrinsic perfection of the soul—considered a multi-layered and fluid reality—requires a foundational understanding of the primacy of existence along with its gradation. It is crucial to recognize that substantial motion is viewed by Sadra, Sabzevari, and Tabatabai as merely intensifying (Mulla Sadra, 2004). However, according to Misbah's perspective, it may also encompass a descending nature (Misbah, 2012). Sayyid Haydar maintains that the perfection of the soul extends to all beings across

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1. However, it is necessary to differentiate between the faculty of imagination and the imaginative or   thinking aspect. The faculty is an abstract entity distinct from the material organ (Sajjadi, 2000).

different realms, whereby the grace of existence is intricately woven into these beings moment by moment, renewing their perfections in alignment with their continuous renewal (Amoli, 2006).

Literature Review

This research is grounded in existing literature exploring themes related to imagination and purification, as well as their roles in religious education, without confining itself to any particular viewpoint or focusing solely on the perspectives of notable scholars such as Mulla Sadra and Tabatabai. Notably, there is a lack of scholarly work addressing this topic from the viewpoint of Sayyid Haydar Amoli, especially concerning the Istikmal (perfection) of the soul.

The published articles include titles such as "The Process of Istikmal of the Soul According to Ibn Sina" (As'adi, 2012), "Explaining the Role and Function of the Imaginative Faculty in Generating Rational Behaviors and Actions in Humans, Emphasizing Mulla Sadra's Psychological Foundations" (Vafaeian, 2016), "Investigating the States and Attributes of the Soul about Imagination and Its Implications in Transcendent Wisdom" (Mortezaei, 2012), "The Role of Imagination in Formative Revelations from Suhrawardi and Mulla Sadra's Perspectives" (Nataj, 2014), and "The Role of Purifying Imagination in Achieving Divine Unity from Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai's and Javadi-Amoli's Perspectives" (Gorjian Arabi, 2019).

Necessity

Investigating Shia philosophy, as well as Islamic philosophy broadly, could not be feasible without acknowledging the contributions of Sayyid Haydar Amoli (Amoli, 2004; Mansouri Larijani, 2002). The critical importance of imagination within mysticism, along with its relationship to movement and the Istikmal (perfection) of the soul, highlights a gap in existing literature regarding Amoli's mystical viewpoints. This gap underscores the necessity to examine this dimension of human existence and its implications for eternal happiness or suffering.

Moreover, discussions surrounding imagination have frequently adopted a negative perspective, emphasizing the disruptions and barriers that imaginative forms can create on the proper path of life. Consequently, purifying imagination is essential for achieving a true representation of reality and for approaching the Divine. This study, however, presents an ontological perspective on imagination and its potentialities, which is crucial for revealing its role in enhancing the well-being of the soul. The study aims to investigate how imagination contributes to the Istikmal of the soul by analyzing both connected and disconnected forms of imagination, their relationship with renewal processes, and how controlling and purifying imagination influences the growth and perfection of the soul.

The Connection of Interconnected and Disconnected Imagination

Ibn Arabi categorizes the imaginal realm into two types: constrained and absolute. The constrained imagination is identified with the realm of imagination, which acts like a mirror reflecting forms from the absolute imaginal world within human intellect. Consequently, this imaginative faculty facilitates a connection to the imaginal realm[1] and possesses the capability to generate forms lacking actual existence across the five realms. This faculty remains in constant activity during both sleep and wakefulness. However, if influenced by sensory perceptions or any other faculties, it becomes disturbed in its true function, resulting in forms that diverge from their original exemplars. Thus, by liberating itself from sensory influences and psychological faculties, it attains its fullest vitality, allowing it to present the imaginal world as it genuinely exists—an occurrence that takes place during sleep, leading to authentic visions (Ibn Arabi, 1991). Sayyid Haydar further explicates Ibn Arabi's classification by asserting that the absolute *barzakh* signifies the imagination of the greater cosmos, while constrained imagination pertains to human imagination or the lesser cosmos. These two forms of

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1. Imaginative Faculty: The imaginative faculty is distinct from the faculty of imagination, as it utilizes the images stored in the imagination and the meanings retained in memory to analyze and combine images and meanings. In contrast, the faculty of imagination is one of the inner faculties of the animal soul, which preserves the forms obtained from the senses and perceived in the common sense, serving as a repository for the common sense (Shirāni, 2009). Philosophers consider the function of imagination to be both the preservation of forms and the formation of meanings (which are formless), whereby both general and particular meanings are apprehended through imagination, and based on its innate capacity for representation, appropriate forms corresponding to those meanings are generated (Hassanzadeh Amoli, 2006).

imagination are also designated as "mabda'i" (originating) and "manhā'i" (terminating). He differentiates between a kind of *barzakh* situated between corporeal and spiritual realms and one positioned between this world and the afterlife; "*manhā'i*" denotes the *barzakh* connecting this world with the afterlife, whereas "*mabda'i*" refers to that linking spirituality with corporeality (Amoli, 2015).

Disconnected Imagination

Disconnected imagination, also referred to as the imaginal realm, constitutes one of the five presences and exists in an ascending journey following the sensory world (Jāmī, 1991); it is constructed upon spiritual forms and their corresponding shadows (Farghani, 2000).

This type of imagination represents a reality external to humans that does not depend on their perceptions nor can it be manipulated by them. The connection between the material realm and disconnected imagination serves as a foundational aspect of revelation that facilitates embodiment (Amoli, 2015). The embodiment of meanings and spirits, along with the refinement of tangible objects and bodies, manifests actions and reveals meanings at this level of existence within corporeal shadows—this is where visions occur. In essence, within this realm, individuals can attain rational meanings or represent rational concepts while witnessing them; they may also derive general meanings from the intellectual domain without representation. Consequently, anything observed within this world will hold truth. True visions and revelations transpire at this level of existence, characterized by luminosity aligned with truth. It is within these realms that divine teachings are imparted to prophets, along with the granting of sacred texts encompassing both form and meaning (Amoli, 2015).

Every possible entity possesses an existence across all three realms: materiality, disconnected imagination, and intellect (Ibn Arabi, 1991). For each being within the material realm exists a constrained example in the imaginative domain (Amoli, 2015). Notably, imagination does not comprehend meaning; otherwise, as illustrated in the narrative involving Moses and the magicians, those engaged in sorcery did not perceive their ropes as "a serpent moving," rather recognized them as mere illusions devoid of truth (Amoli, 2006). Imagination exists to enable its possessor to reason concerning both absolute and disconnected imagination. Despite its extensive knowledge derived from both sensory experiences and intelligible concepts, the imagination struggles to accept abstract meanings as they exist intrinsically; thus, it perceives every reality through forms similar to how knowledge might be represented as milk or honey (Amoli, 2006).

As such, disconnected imagination functions as a conduit linking abstract intellectual realities with spiritual truths; without it, connections between matter or sensory perception with meaning would be severed—resulting in all perceptions being confined solely to material understanding devoid of any genuine truth or significance from physical forms while failing to provide pathways for rational concepts to become tangible or comprehensible. Disconnected imagination operates under remembrance's influence while also being governed by thought and intellect; it acts as a lens for illuminating the intellect's lamp and offering guidance. Should connected imagination engage with form or create combinations between meaning and its representations within meaning itself, it transcends mere remembrance (Amoli, 2004)—thus allowing for an illumination that guides intellect's light along one's journey toward perfection while potentially leading astray along that path (Amoli, 2005).

<div dir="rtl">

«و عقلی مصباح و مشکاته الحسّ   فروحی زیتی و الخیال زجاجتی»[1]

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Interconnected Imagination

Interconnected imagination represents a dimension of our soul that relies on human perceptions. It engages with the disconnected realm through an individual's thoughts, contemplative styles, and perspectives, enabling narration from that realm. If a person's interconnected imagination remains pure and untainted by earthly inclinations, it can discern the truths of this world and achieve accurate observations and revelations. Conversely, if it is influenced by personal constructs, it will distort and manipulate the shadows and meanings associated with disconnected imagination, leading to chaotic dreams (false dreams) and erroneous perceptions.

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1. "My spirit is the oil, and my imagination is the glass; my intellect is the lamp, and the common sense is its holder" (Amoli, 2005, p.270)

The constrained imaginal world or interconnected imagination serves merely as a mirror reflecting forms from the absolute imaginal world within human intellect (Ibn Arabi, 1991). The imaginative faculty facilitates an individual's passage into this imaginal realm. Additionally, manifestations of essence within imagination necessitate interpretation and transformation based on dominant attributes (Amoli, 2015). Revelations initially occur within constrained imagination but gradually lead to mastery that allows seekers to transition into absolute imagination (Amoli, 2005). In this absolute realm, seekers perceive realities as they exist in alignment with intellectual forms found in the preserved tablet; thus, serving as a reflection of divine reality (Amoli, 2015).

The observer sees what is conveyed by their fixed essence (Amoli, 2015). Furthermore, truth manifests in each individual's fixed essence (which possesses distinct characteristics and potentials) as that person's essence reflected in absolute existence—akin to external light from a specific angle (whatever I am is what I see reflected) (Amoli, 2015). The stages of revelation and levels of witnessing span from luminous to imaginal, spiritual, intellectual, sensory, and natural realms... In this context, fixed essence refers to an essence devoid of personal *Hemmat* so that one may perceive truth as it genuinely exists (Amoli, 2015). Consequently, manifestations become precisely what they are meant to be: "When my beloved reveals himself, through which eye do I behold him? With His eye—not my own" (Amoli, 2015).[1] Thus, truth becomes manifest and experienced directly.

The Role of the Connection Between Connected and Disconnected Imagination in the Istikmal of the Soul

The realm of imagination establishes the foundation for our identity and our afterlife form; everything experienced by an individual in *barzakh* is contingent upon their actions and confined within the manifestations of their deeds (Amoli, 2015). For its Istikmal (perfection), the soul necessitates a complete model or exemplar of perfection. Perfection can be approached from several perspectives:

Cognitive Perfection

To comprehend truths as they exist, the soul must connect with the realm of meanings and realities, where imagination assumes a vital and distinctive role. An individual cannot effectively intertwine sensory experiences with intellectual concepts without utilizing imagination, which refines tangible experiences while allowing meanings to take form (Amoli, 2015). The essence of matters becomes represented through imagination; thus, the heart must perceive this essence and bring it into representation within this corporeal realm—whether during sleep or wakefulness. This representation functions as a direct observation facilitated by the intellect that illustrates abstract concepts; however, one might perceive their essence as animalistic. Conversely, illusion delivers an image shaped by perception and tangible realities, even if one perceives their essence as radiant.

Aspirational Perfection

From an affirmative standpoint, imagination serves as the source for reforming foundational desires while deriving nourishment from intelligible concepts. The human imaginative faculty resembles a dual-faced mirror—one side is directed towards the unseen realm while the other faces this world. When intellect governs this mirror, it absorbs hidden truths alongside abstract intelligible, shaping representations within the heart—the locus for desires and foundational inclinations. Until imagination successfully depicts rational truths in exemplary forms that are perceived by the heart, inclinations towards those truths will not re-emerge. In this manner, imagination renders the unseen God both visible and desirable within one's heart, as stated by Imam Ali, "I do not worship a Lord whom I do not see." Sayyid Haydar emphasizes that imagination plays an essential role in intensifying desires so that with each illumination of insight or new attainment of perfection, anew longings, pleasures, and volitions arise within the soul. It is through imagination that new desires are generated by particularizing forms associated with longing, pleasure, and volition—thereby facilitating spiritual perfection for the soul (Amoli, 2015).

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١. إذا تجلّى حبيبى بأىّ عين أراه بـعـيـنـه لا بعينى

The Perfection of Creation

Human beings represent the comprehensive manifestation of God. One key function of the imaginative faculty is creation and innovation; it can generate entities that do not exist externally—even though realizing these entities within one's imagination or that of others may be achievable through magical means. Through spiritual journeys, the soul gains strength and can connect with higher idealistic and intellectual principles via the convergence of its faculties. When *Hemmat* in the soul emerges, it can receive blessings from these elevated principles and attain miraculous abilities (Amininejad, 2011).

In linguistic terms, "*Hemmat*" (determination) signifies strong (Isma'il Sini, 1993, p. 113) resolve (Fayyūmī, 1993, p. 641) and aspiration (Bustanₒ, 1996, p. 963). In this context, it refers to the will of the soul which, when consolidating its faculties, turns towards God while preparing to receive His grace (Ibn Arabi, 1991). Thus, human creation requires an aggregation of *Hemmat*—implying a complete focus on one's spiritual faculties at their highest purity for creating or transforming an object—an occurrence typically reserved for mystics or perfected individuals (Ibn Arabi, 1991). A mystic possesses the ability to create objects not only within the realm of their imagination or that of others but also within external reality.

The distinction between divine creation and human creation lies in God's creations emerging from non-existence—a notion deemed irrational and impossible for humans. For mystics, "*Hemmat*" serves as their tool for creation; theologians refer to it as "sincerity," while Sufis call it "presence." This represents an unknown power whose essence cannot be comprehended by the intellect; nonetheless, this power enables mystics to dominate over an object's existence or effect they wish to create while manifesting that existence or effect into reality (Ibn Arabi, 1991).

Indeed, when a mystic creates something externally, there exists a corresponding reality in higher realms (Ibn Arabi, 1991). Every entity within lower realms reflects an existence from superior realms. Therefore, each object within external reality has corresponding existences within higher dimensions. When stating that a mystic has created something through their *Hemmat*, it implies they have brought forth an entity into sensory perception that possesses an existence within a higher realm—not that it was entirely devoid of existence in any realm prior to its emergence from non-existence. Additionally, following the principle "the persistence of an effect necessitates the persistence of its cause," forms are preserved in higher realms through *Hemmat* while maintaining their representations within lower realms (Ibn Arabi, 1991).

A mystic's presence within one particular realm materializes through gathering all spiritual faculties while concentrating on specific forms from that realm. Once this presence becomes fully realized and perfected, such a realm serves as a mirror reflecting everything present across other dimensions—both potentialities and actualities (Ibn Arabi, 1991). *Hemmat* embodies an intense level of imagination capable not only of mental creations but also of tangible manifestations within external reality (Jili, 1975). The steadfastness associated with *Hemmat* necessitates two conditions: severance from distractions and certainty regarding intention. Until interconnected imagination perceives reality within disconnected realms to narrate authentic experiences, genuine focus or intention cannot materialize for *Hemmat* to take shape. Consequently, both observation and certainty—as well as attention directed towards specific objectives—require the active role of imagination.

Sayyid Haydar cites Qaysari's interpretation concerning Ibn Arabi's faculties: "Creation through *Hemmat* signifies that a mystic aims to create forms externally using spiritual strength. Here, 'mystic' denotes a perfected individual who exercises control over existence—not merely acknowledging truths and forms without possessing influence over them" (Amoli, 2003, p. 513).

The Role of Imagination in Movement and Tajaddud al-Amthāl

The concept of renewing examples (Tajaddud al-Amthāl) signifies the destruction of a prior existence, followed by the emergence of a new one. This new existence is not identical to its predecessor; thus, it does not represent a mere restoration from non-existence that would make its transformation clear. Instead, while resembling its predecessor, it remains distinct. Due to their strong resemblance, however, this new existence may be perceived as identical to the former (Javadi-Amoli, 2014).

The progressions experienced by the soul during this renewal reflect divine manifestations. The soul perpetually evolves from deficiency toward perfection (Hassanzadeh Amoli, 1999) in a

continuous flow that encompasses all material and immaterial entities across various realms (Amoli, 2006). In essence, divine grace and bestowal from God's abundant source renew themselves constantly across all beings—whether they exist independently from matter or alongside it (Homaei, 1983) —resulting in renewed perfections for each entity at every moment (Amoli, 2006).

Thus, renewing examples embodies an ascending movement (Hassanzadeh Amoli, 2005) characterized by progress toward perfection. In every instant, perfections are refreshed within these entities (Amoli, 2006). This pursuit of perfection permeates all realms, both tangible and intangible, indicating that all beings inherently possess perfections while striving for them (Amoli, 1998).

Additionally, renewing examples can be articulated through a love-driven movement. Consequently, love for divine names directed toward their essence serves as the foundation for movement throughout existence—a phenomenon referred to as loving movement. Certain manifestations such as humans embody all attributes associated with divine names. They constantly manifest these attributes at each moment. This represents both existential motion and renewal; however, due to various veils obscuring our perception, we often overlook these transformations (Mansouri Larijani, 2001).

As previously noted, enhancing one's soul occurs alongside both movement and renewal. Each movement generates a novel state for its mover that embodies an intellectual form representing its perfection. This radiant illumination fosters fresh pleasures alongside new aspirations for further perfection and intentions (Amoli, 2015). General forms within the imagination imprint themselves as specific forms accompanied by particular pleasures that incite renewed desires directed toward those specific states defined by overarching intentions. Following this descent from general forms into the realms of spirit and heart leads to their manifestation within imagination as distinct entities; thus, specifying through imagination enables intention and external action to occur effectively (Amoli, 2015).

Aggregation or Control of Imagination

Upon understanding the existential role of imagination, one should not disregard its capabilities within a negative framework. When attention toward worldly matters intensifies within the imagination, the soul becomes ensnared by satanic illusions. Consequently, the heart begins to lean towards wrongdoing, *Hemmat* succumbs to fantasies, and actions take on a diabolical character. The imaginative faculty acts as a domain for Satan and is among the most potent instruments that Iblis employs to mislead individuals—even during their acts of worship. Numerous sins arise from permitting imagination to become ensnared in materialistic and personal attachments; thus, ensuring the purity of imagination is paramount so that it does not become confined within the branches and foliage of worldly matters. Therefore, in its practical application and transformation process, the soul necessitates that its imagination be cleansed from love or hatred, as well as personal interests or losses, to avoid descending into a base state of humanity.

Indeed, imagination serves as a foundational tool for Satan's legions. He exerts control over it to obscure love and reason behind inclinations toward sin while fostering neglect for eternity. This leads to the nurturing of desires alongside despair, depression, anxiety, and mental disorders, ultimately culminating in eternal anguish and loss. The primary function of imagination involves depicting intelligible concepts; however, should it fall prey to sensory experiences without engaging reason, it devolves into satanic delusion. By this means, Satan asserts dominance while propagating fallacies within connected imagination concerning thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

The core principle in Islamic mysticism revolves around refining the soul while transforming base characteristics into divine qualities. This very process invites divine favor while facilitating blessings from elevated sources. When an individual's soul detaches from animalistic distractions and material preoccupations, it attains greater comprehension of knowledge and enhanced strength (Mulla-Sadra, 1981).

Consequently, noble souls acquire power through their servitude to God while liberating themselves from desires' shackles. They begin to reflect higher principles while gaining influence within their respective realms. In essence, approaching God along with these elevated principles results in attaining a position of divine authority—enabling intervention within the realm of possibilities through God's will and power (Al-Hurr al-Amili, 2001).

The Role of Imagination in Intention and Attention

Sayyid Haydar's expressions reveal that intention and attention—elements that precede movement or transitions toward growth and perfection—are facilitated through imagination. The Lawgiver instructs individuals engaged in prayer or worship to approach their devotion as if they were seeing God. Without such imaginative engagement, this directive would be logically invalidated since sight is limited to perceiving only what is directly in front. Therefore, individuals are encouraged to direct their imaginative faculties toward the Qiblah while intending toward God, suggesting that intention necessitates possessing a form.

Moreover, imagination cannot fully grasp sensory experiences or comprehend the divine majesty and essence of God without employing forms. Any understanding devoid of form results in mere illusion rather than true comprehension of an object. Consequently, imagination does not abstract meanings from material entities; instead, it derives forms from sensory experiences to manifest meanings within those forms. By utilizing imagination alongside a conceptualization of God that transcends all else, one can direct their intentions toward Him and develop awareness (Amoli, 2006).

It is crucial to emphasize that these statements relate specifically to directing attention and intention toward God Almighty—not to comprehending Him! The Divine cannot be fully understood in any context as He is free from all forms and representations (Amoli, 2015). Comprehension only occurs through inherently limited manifestations. However, what is sought is an unrestricted understanding not a confined one (Amoli, 2015); thus, one must rise above the limitations imposed by their finite self to truly perceive Him. As stated by Imam Ali (peace be upon him): "The obliteration of illusions coincides with the realization of truths" (Amoli, 2006).

Conclusion

The role of human imagination is fundamental in achieving perfection within the soul from both an existential and affirmative standpoint.

1. The importance of this level within human existence is underscored by its function as an intermediary between what is tangible and what is intelligible. The relationship between every sensory being and its ideal or intellectual status is mediated by this imagination; thus, intelligible are articulated through tangibles while tangibles derive meaning from intelligibles. Therefore, understanding existence—whether intelligible or tangible—is contingent upon having an ideal or connected form of imagination.
2. Within the realm of perception, imagination remains linked to observing reality while narrating it. This allows the soul to distinguish between paths leading to truth versus those clouded by doubt or fantasy.
3. Imagination acts as both a conduit to intelligible realities as well as a revealer, witness, and narrator of their truths. This reflection on reality provides essential certainty for the soul's journey toward genuine objectives. Thus, initial steps toward growth and advancement are grounded in certainty regarding a real goal that relies upon both imagination and observations.
4. Regarding inclination toward goals, having an imaginative framework is crucial for directing focus toward genuine objectives. Every act of worship requires conceptualizing a deity who is not only the Creator of this material world but also alive, omnipotent, and indeed, "unlike anything else." The imaginative representation derived from this divine attribute forms the basis for attention and intention during worship; without such imaginative constructs, perceptions become mere illusions rather than authentic representations of reality. Essentially, imagination gives form to meanings associated with divine attributes while establishing a foundation for attention toward that ultimate perfection.
5. Similarly, desire and movement depend on active engagement with connected imagination. By converting broad or distant aspirations into specific or immediate goals, particular desires emerge that incite movement toward them. New desires arise based on fresh forms generated by imagination. These contribute to an ongoing process of perfection that aligns with renewing examples while illustrating humanity's progression toward completeness across various existential levels.
6. Regarding creation itself, human imagination possesses the capacity to generate influences within external realities by consolidating various faculties within the soul. This requires

attaining a specific level characterized by intensified imaginative power known as "*Hemmat*," which manifests distinctly among mystics or perfected individuals. *Hemmat* enables creation not only within mental constructs but also within tangible realities.

Moreover, maintaining purity within one's imaginative faculties, especially when approaching negative aspects, is vital for achieving spiritual perfection. Divine grace bestowed upon human imagination necessitates freedom from all attachments or material distractions. The enhancement of one's soul relies upon influences derived from higher principles due to affinities established post-purification between one's essence and these elevated sources.

Therefore, directing attention towards higher principles alongside embodying divine attributes, which involves serving God while liberating oneself from base desires, requires maintaining a connection with imaginative faculties that foster certainty through comprehensible observations. By transforming overarching objectives into specific targets via imagination, one ignites the desire for particular aims while simultaneously enhancing movement towards those aspirations, ultimately embodying divine qualities within external manifestations.

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