ESSENCE OF MEANING FOCUSING ON THE VIEWS OF MUSLIM SCHOLARS OF PRINCIPLES OF JURISPRUDENCE

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ABSTRACT

Background. Each theory in semantics and the method of understanding meaning is essentially based on semantic realities. It is for explication of these realities that various theories have been proposed as to the essence of meaning. Due to the importance of the problem of meaning for scholars of principles of Islamic jurisprudence, they have discussed the essence of meaning with specific care. The current article seeks to analyze some of the significant views of Muslim jurists concerning the theory of meaning. The method of this study is based on philosophical and linguistic description and analysis. The findings of this research show that Muslim jurists have studied the problem of meaning in various social, linguistic, philosophical, psychological and applied areas. Thus they have offered ideal, essential, conceptual and noumenal theories of meaning. But the present study via an extensive analysis of noumenal realities including true and mentally posited, external and mental, necessary and contingent existence and even impossible nothingness and possible nothingness, and the material and essential realities, philosophical secondary intelligibles, (existential relations), logical secondary intelligibles (mental realities), moral and legal, relative, nominal and linguistic realities as well as aspects of human understanding (existence, reference, referred) of noumenal realities has proven that meaning is an aspect of the "referred" of understanding of realities and the "essence of noumenal realities".

Keywords: Meaning, Semantics, Semantic Theory, Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, Word, Noumen (Thing-In-Itself), Reality, Aspect, Understanding, the Referred

INTRODUCTION

Semantics of texts particularly philosophical, legal and religious texts deals with the problem of "meaning". But here there is an essential question: what is meaning? Where should we find it? Any theory that seeks to explain the mechanism of understanding of meaning is essentially based on semantic realities. These realities tell that linguistic signs have meaning and by language one can speak of external world. However, what are semantic reality and the world of meaning versus the world of word and extension? The effort for explanation of this problem has been the objective of many philosophers.

Various traditional theories of meaning ranging from representational theory (Lycan, 2000: 78) and propositional theory of meaning (Russell, 1919; Moore, 1953) which believe in objective existence for meaning to applied theories like Wittgenstein's theory of language games (Wittgenstein, 1953), Austin's speech acts (Austin, 1976) and Searl (Searl, 1969) or psychological theories which sought for the natural context of the meaning of each statement in the mind of speaker and the generator of the statement like Grice's notion of speaker's

meaning (Ziff, 1967) to Davidson's theory of truth (Davidson and Harman, 1970) and Kripke, 1980) all show the significance of meaning and the effort for its discovering and explanation. Question of essence of meaning belongs to the domain of linguistic sciences and is closely related to rational and philosophical approach. This problem is studied today by various branches of human knowledge such as linguistics and philosophy of language, hermeneutics, semiotics, literary criticism, psychology and philosophy. As to the problem of essence of meaning our vision is concerned once with the source of emergence of meaning in human mind and thought once with existential nature of "meaning" versus "word" and "extension". Philosophical essence of meaning and its linguistic nature are concerned with this angle. This article analytically studies the essence of meaning in the intellectual system of Muslim scholars of principles of jurisprudence. Muslim jurists have studied the problem of meaning in two domains of "adoption" and "application. They believe that meaning as a linguistic reality is a result of understanding realities and adoption of a linguistic sign for referring to them and the basis of all semantic aspects (Sadr, 1978, 1: 89). In the science of principles of Islamic jurisprudence various definitions have been offered of linguistic conceptualization or adoption. Here we just suffice to the definition of one of the jurists who insists on two aspects of allocation of word and its application (Akhund Khurasani, 1978, 1: 26).

Pragmatic meaning and audience meaning are lesser degrees of meaning and concerned with application and adoption of a certain word for a determinate meaning. Of course, this has not been neglected by the jurists. Thus, Muslim jurists have paid earnest attention to the psychological and philosophical domain of meaning, i.e. the essence taken form pf realities in human uniderstanding as the middle point between noumenal realities and linguistic signs. By the same token, they have been mindful of the social nature of meaning and linguistic conceptualization from meanings understood from the realities.

Science of Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence and Referent of Words

Science of principles of Islamic jurisprudence is one those scienes which have been established within the sphere of Islamic culture for acquisition of logic and method of inference of Shiah from religious texts. Muslim jurists based on their need have touched upon various linguistic issues in the introduction and discussion of words in principles of jurisprudence which are more like philosophy of language. "Referent" of words in the science of principles of Islamic jurisprudence has numerous similarities with the debate of theory of meaning in analytic philosophy. Referent in the principles of jurisprudence is comparable with the essence of meaning. The discussion of referent is concerned with the entity to which a certain adopted word is supposed to refer. The question of essence of meaning is also concerned with the explanation of the reality that when a meaningful word is said with which entity does it develop a semantic relationship. The studies conducted by Muslim jurists in this regard contain ideas of the essence of referent as follows: referent of words is the external beings or mental notions, nature (or concept) without taking their external or mental existence into account, concept in view of its reference to extensions, universal words for nature and particular words (proper nouns) for external beings, or those words that have extensions for external beings and extension-less words (like nothing) for mental ideas.

- ### Referent or Meaning, Concept in View of Its Reference to an Extension

This idea has been propounded by Mirza Mohammad Taqi Razi Isfahani (1832). He is one of the jurists who have studied the issue of adoption and referent in more detailed and deeper

fashion. He first delineates four hypotheses and after providing a critical review of them he elaborates this issue.

Firstly, adoption (coining a word) for external creatures is interpreted in four alternative ways: A) external being as part of the referent; B) external being as the condition of referent; C) adoption of words for concepts in view of their realization in the outside world; D) referent of the words being the concepts in view of their reference to extensions (Razi Esfahani, 1999, 1: 334).

He denies the first theory because ordinary language contains meaningful words that do not have any external extension, e.g. Simorgh. It is clear that we cannot say that these words have been coined for external beings (ibid: 342). Secondly, we have the theory of adoption for mental affairs. He also discusses and criticizes the interpretation and readings of this hypothesis as well as the arguments related to it (ibid: 353-345). Thirdly, there is the idea that suggests that adoption is for nature. This represents the common stance in the science of principles of Islamic jurisprudence. Its reason is the association of every word [with meaning in the mind] as well as the goal of conveying the meaning.

Fourthly, the adoption is for concept in view of its reference to extensions. This is the very theory suggested by Razi Isfahani as regards the referent of words. Accordingly, meaning is carried with the concepts in view of their being titles for extension regardless of whether there is any extension or not (ibid: 334). In other words, words have been coined (adopted) for concepts in view of their proper realization though there is no objective realization around. He prefers this hypothesis because it covers all words the status of whose extensions is menetal realization, e.g. "species" and "whole" as words which have mental extensions; or "parity" which has external extension; or such words which are just posited with reason like "nothing". According to Razi, when we coin a word for a concept we consider the concept in the way that we consider the subject in a hypothetical proposition. When the word "man" is adopted to refer to the concept of "rational animal" the referent is neither the metnal extensions of this concept (metnal forms) nor the concept in general that also refers to the mental extensions rather the referent is the concept in view of its realization in the outside world without having mentioned the external realization as the prerequisite of the referent (ibid: 337).

He uses a common sense belief in this regard as the evidence for his own theory. This common sense belief is that the predication of existence and nothingness to the meanings of words does not require repetition and contradiction. This common sense belief shows that external or mental existence has not been presupposed in the subject of referent. Moreover, this common sense belief also suggests that we can delete the meaning of words from the mental notions; for example, one can say that "human concept is not a man". Then, the referent of words is not the metnal forms. Moreover, words have not been coined for the essence itself; because if the referent is the essence without any condition its negation from mental extensions will not be correct. As a result, words have been adopted for neither the external beings nor the mental entities or the essence itself rather the referent is concept in view of its reference to the extensions even if it does not have any objective externsion (ibid: 340).

Of course, the above mentioned theory has been criticized by the scholars of principles of jurisprudence (Rashti, nd.: 184). This view has also been evaluated to be insufficient by the contemporary researchers. It is true that we can negate the meaning of words from the mental forms but from this we cannot conclude that words have not been coined for the essence itself;

because words can be negated from the mental existence but they cannot be negated from the essence that exists in the sphere of the mind.

- ### *Referent or Meaning, Nature*

Most of the scholars of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence believe that referent in general names and concepets referring to universal and comprehensive nature is the essence – unconditional nature or essence. They do not accept the referential or extensional theory; because the latter theory causes the proposition "man exists" turn to a tautology. Then, external existence has not been taken for granted in the meaning of words. Gharavi Isfahani (1942) argues that in words, the subject is part of the essence of word and the referent is part of the essence of meaning not their mental or external existence; because adoption (coining) is for conveying of meaning which is of a type of perceptual existence (Gharavi Isfahani, 1986: 24). The prevalent theory in the science of principles of jurisprudence is that the referent of words is the nature (or essence or concept) itself without presupposing the external or mental existence. The three terms (essence), (nature) and (concept) in this theory almost refer to the same thing and reprenent three aspects of it.

The main reason used by the jurists to demonstrate this theory is association. What is associated by every word is the essence itself and the condition of external or mental existence is not included in the associated meaning (Rashti, nd: 184). Perhaps the most important analysis of this approach is that the goal of linguistic adoption and conceptualization is conveying a meaning to the mind of the audience and meaning conveyance implies the realization of meaning in the form of epistemic existence in the aduience's mind; but external and mental entities are not possible to exist in mind. Then, meaning is the nature itself that can have a mental existence in the mind of the audience.

Naeini (1936) believes that "meaning" refers to "rational incorporeal affairs" which have been separated from matter and its requirements; no matter if any word has been coined for it or not or the intended word has been used in that sense or not (Naeini, nd., 1: 13). Although Khoei (1992) who is one of the pupils of Naeini has critized the aforementioned interpretation and stated: we describe a certain object as a meaning because the latter object is what has been intended by the word; otherwise intelligible perceptions regardless of their verbal use are not meaning; in the same way these perceptions are not considered to be a concept and referent (Naeini, Khoei, 1973, 1: 13). It seems that this criticism could not be justified because it has its origin in a type of confusion between philosophical meaning and linguistic meaning because the meaning which is preceded by word is linguistic meaning but the meaning as a reality that is the source of linguistic adoption and conceptualization is prior to the word. Perhaps by intelligible incorporeal affairs Naeini refers to the known-by-itself before being expressed through the words.

According to Khoei, the meaning and referent of the word, regardless of its being particular or universal, is a concept that as such and in the stage of speech can be present in the mind of audience. Then, in the same way that words have not been coined for external entities (because they are not capable of being present in the mind), they have not also been adopted for mental entities; because mental entity cannot accept mental existence; rather words have been coined for the essences of meanings which accept both types of existence, and these essences of meaning not as such rather in view of their correspondence and agreement with the external world are described as particular or universal (Khoei, 1979, 1: 52). Khomeini has also

underlined this theory in his views and works that the referent of the words is the absolute realities and general meanings and he has referred to it as "spirits of meanings" and truths (Musavi Khomeini, 1994, 1: 55). However, this point requires further contemplation. As we know some concepts like existence, nothingness, logical secondary intelligibles, meanings of letters, mentally posited concepts and so on and so forth, are not essential concepts. If so then what is the referent of such words as "being", "nothing", "species" and the like? This is the main challenge of the nature or essence theory of meaning.

- *Referent or Meaning, Concept*

If such concepts as existence, nothingness, logical secondary intelligibles, meanings of letters, mentally-posited concepts and the like are not essential concepts, then what will be the referent of such words as "being" and "nothing"? Some scholars believe that such words have been coined for concepts not for essences. Accordingly, the referent of every word is a concept though the concept at issue is not a specific word. Larijani (1961) has chosen such an approach and considers this theory to be applicable to forged and mentally posited essences like "prayer" and "house". Having reviewed the theory of Razi Isfahani, he believes that the more correct reading of his third theory is that the referent of every word is a "concept" though this concept is not an essence in the proper sense of the word. According to Larijani, this perspective is more intelligible and feasible than all other theories (both in analytic philosophy and the science of principles of Islamic jurisprudence (Larijani, nd., Lectures of Advanced Jurisprudence, session 239: 2).

Of course, this idea is not something new and some of the key figures in logic and philosophy have endorsed that meaning is identical with concept (Qutb al-Din Razi, 2005: 124-126; Fazil Tuni, 2007: 366). However, we need still to contemplate of the idea of taking concept as the referent. It is needless to say that wherever we speak of meaning there is also a concept around as we do not have any meaning without concept; but concept refelects the referential nature of meaning not the latter itself. Meaning is the "referred" and the visible aspect of noumenal realities but concept represents the referential aspect of meaning in human mind. Distinguishing between these two aspects is a very exact and delicate point. Then, concept is not co-extensional with meaning though it is annihilated in its meaning and the reference. This is also the case with the word which is partially annihilated in its meaning insofar as some words seem ugly and some others beautiful while the ugliness and beauty is a matter of meaning not the word.

- *Referent or Meaning, the Noumen*

The aforementioned title represents the view of one of the contemporary professors of philosophy. He believes that meaning is something of which we have knowledge and understanding. The truth of meaning should be sought for in the reality itself or noumen. Noumen represents reality in itself that includes existence, nothingness and the mentally posited entities. This latter category refers to a sphere where exist the entities whose realities are outside the domain of true existence and nothingness (Fayyazi et al., 2013, 16: 128). To put it otherwise, noumen or reality in itself is of various diverse levels. Reality in general is divided into true and mentally posited and the true reality is divided in turn to existence and nothingness and existence in turn is divided into external and mental and the external in turn is divided into the necessary and the contingent and the latter in turn is divided into reason, idea and matter and the mental is divided into the sensory, the imaginary, the illusive and the

rationa; also the nothingness is divided into the impossible and possible and by the way the mentally posited is divided into rational and intellectual. Then, meaning refers to something more than existence (ibid: 131).

The main challenge of this view is its notion of reality that describes the latter as co-extensional with meaning regardless of human mind. Nevertheless, attribution of meaning to reality or noumen of anything in all its levels without presupposing human understanding is difficult. Attribution of meaning is correct when a reality among noumenal realities is perceived by man. It is in this moment that one can say that this perceptual form is the meaning or identity of that reality. Meaning is always relational in the sense that it is always attributed to something and an unidentified reality's meaning is nonsense. In other words, the meaning of everything becomes realized when we have an understanding of it.

On the other hand, we need also to note that there is an undeniable interrelation between three elements of philosophical essence of meaning, understanding and linguistic essence of meaning. Wherever an understanding of an object occurs its one side is "meaning" and its other side is linguistic sign. Every perceptual or propositional understanding is automatically with a linguistic tag and we have no understanding free from linguistic coding. By the same token, understanding without meaning is tantamount to absence of object of understanding. We should not forget that one of the roles of language is its being "a means of thinking". Even human presential conscious knowledge is always associated with acquired perception and linguistic coding; moreover, language has a social identity and its basic role is "explanation and mutual understanding" and scientific findings cannot be science without linguistic sign.

Meaning, Essential Identity, Noumenal Realities

Muslim intellectuals' scholarly efforts in the domain of philosophical and jurisprudential reflections of the problem of meaning part of which was reported above are valuable. The ideas presented regardless of their scientific criticisms show the precision and deep understanding of Muslims as regards the studies of meaning. As we saw, each one of the presented ideas is associated with some difficulties. The authors believe that the referent of the words – or meaning – is the "essential identity of noumenal realities". In other words, meaning is "mental perception of the identity of noumenal realities". To clarify the latter view as regards the philosophical essence of meaning we need to take a number of points into account. These points reflect the elements of this theory.

- ## Meaning Preceded by Noumenal Realities

As it was mentioned earlier, meaning is human notion of the essential identity of various objects and realities which are capable of linguistic understanding and conceptualization. When the identity of a reality is understood by man, a linguistic sign is adopted or coined for it in order to convey it to others. Language (speech not linguistic capability) is one of human exclusive attributes. Human language is a combination of two elements of word and meaning, or the signifier and the signified. The reason of emergence of linguistic signs is the meanings that have taken form in human existence. But what is the source of emergence of the meanings themselves? What are the objects of meanings and where do they reside? Meaning before evolution is preceded by certain realities whose origin is human thought. We refer to these realities as "noumenal realities". Noumenal reality represents the reality of everything in view of the conditions of that thing and its specific truth not in the sense of existential reality and external objectivity. Reality in its general sense (not in the sense of external objective existence

or realization of the thing or its particular and specific extension) is of a wide extent and includes true and mentally posited (rational and intellectual) existence, external and mental existence (sensory, imaginary, illusive and rational), necessary and contingent existence (material, ideal and rational existence) and even impssible nothingness (like simultaneous existence of contradictories), and contingent nothing (like the nothingness of Simorgh). The reality of proposition "man exists" can be found in human existentce in the outside world and it is a true, existential, external and contingent reality. The reality of proposition "universal exists" is the existence of universal in the mind which is a true, existential, mental and contingent reality. The reality of proposition "simultaneous existence of contradictories is impossible" is the necessary impossible in the outside world. The reality of the proposition "Simorgh is impossible" is contingent nothingness or true negative contingent reality.

In other words, noumen in this context refers to the thing in itself or the essence of the thing. The noument of everything is its reality which is sometimes external some other time mental and even sometimes impssible (Motahari, 1987, 2: 314; Mesbah Yazdi, 1986: 73).

- *Scope of World of Realities*

According to what we said earlier, it becomes clear that the domain of meanings and concepts as well as the object of meanings besides the particular things and affairs also includes essential concepts, philosophical secondary intelligibles, logical secondary intelligibles, moral mentally posited concepts, legal concepts, relative concepts, and names. Thus, all these meanings and concepts have their own specific realities that can be the source of emergence of our determinate notion of various objects. Accordingly, the essence of meaning should be basically a type of reality that covers all domains. Then, one can state that meaning is the essential identity of noumenal realities that includes all levels of existence from the highest to the lowest as well as the objective, the mental and the hypothetical.

- *Modes of Realities, Types of Concepts*

Words in view of their intellectual status are the mirror of meanings and the latter are contingent upon realities. The formal patterns of language are a rendition of our mental notions and understanding of external realities from language. Mind reflects the reality as it stands. The study of meaning of words shows that some of the words signify certain and limited meanings: e.g. proper names of individuals and places (specific referent), some others have comprehensive and unrestricted meaning (universal referent). By the same token, from another point of view, a group of words have independent meanings and objects and clearly refer to their referent, e.g. man, animal, stone (nominal meanings); but another group of words have relative and dependent meanings and are meaningful merely in the light of relationship with other words and being settled in the context of a meaningful sentence, e.g. from, every, if and etc (meaning of letters).

Having taken these distinct realities as well as their relevant meaning into account, Muslim thinkers, particularly in philosophy, have divided concepts and intelligibles into various groups and in the science of principles of jurisprudence the nominal and literal meanings have been distinguished. They have stipulated that the origin of these divisions is "meanings" and the words are divided following them. To put it differently, the independence of nominal meaning and the relationality of literal meaning are firstly related to the reality itself and the meaning not the verbal sign. Before a word is coined for a meaning, if the notion was particular its

specific word is taken to be particular and if the meaning was universal its relevant word will be also taken to be universal.

On the other hand, in the linguistic system and scientific culture of a society we find some living words each one of which carry a certain meaning and relate a reality. These realities are of various types and constitute different meanings and become the source of a mass of linguistic categories and concepts.

1. Material realities: sensory meanings; the most tangible realities with which man is engaged are material and physical realities and the experience of these realities has caused the emergence of meaning in mind. As a result, the simplest concepts and ideas with which man gets used to them by his nature are the meanings related to material realities and the sensory and empirical affairs (Tabatabaei, nd, 1: 17).

2. Realities of essences; since man owns the capacity for perception and intellectual creativity, then the circle of his knowledge concerning meanings and concepts has not remained restricted to the primary sensory and particular concepts. Man's intellectual encounter with various realities in the universe and their analysis has led to the emergence of a variety of meanings and the construction of other concepts. By abstraction and elimination of personal features of beings and generalization of the shared attributes man abstracts comprehensive and universal meanings that are of various extensions, e.g. the concepts of man, white and tree. This group of concepts shows the essence of objects and they are called primary essences or intelligibles and are correspondent to the sensible world and the reason has abstracted them in an indirect way through abstraction and generalization of sensory meanings. This kind of meanings refers also to objective phenomena whose essence is analyzed by the reason. The noumenal reality of primary intelligibles or essential concepts exists in a level of human mind. The concept of substance, accident, animal (genus) and man (species), body, quantity, quality and the like, are universal concepts in human mind and can be compared with each one of their external extensions.

3. Universal realities of existential relations or secondary philosophical intelligibles; another part of the concepts has not entered the mind directly through senses, rather the mind after acquiring sensory forms abstracts these concepts from those forms through a particular activity (Tabatabaei, 1985, 2: 14). This group of concepts which is called secondary philosophical intelligibles or universal concepts can be attributed to all entities in "either…or proposition", i.e. existence and nothingness, cause and effect, necessity and contingency, unity and diversity, potentiality and actuality, external and metnal and so on and so forth. These concepts do not have any extension in the outside world but they are attributed to external objects and they are explaining the relations and existential modes of beings in the outside world. When we say that "fire is the cause of heat", we cannot see any third reality called "causality" other than fire and heat, but the reason by analyzing the relationship of fire and heat can abstract the notion of causality.

Of course, here another analysis can be presented by some of Muslim philosophers that would trace the origin of these concepts back to the presential knowledge. According to Tabatabaei (1981), most of philosophical concepts have their origin in intuitive knowledge and our primary familiarity with these concepts is acquired through reflection on the soul and its aspects; e.g. causality, existence, unity and so on and so forth; according to this interpretation,

mind reaches various types of notions and judgments via refelection on internal developments of the soul. Accordingly, many of philosophical and metaphysical concepts find rational interpretation. This philosophical strategy in ontology opens a window towards the knowledge of metaphysical truths, Origin, Return, and sphere of incorporeal entities. In the light of this type of knowledge of these truths, human mind makes sense of the percepts of these affairs and in the light of a God-given talent the ground is paved for categorization and conceptualization of these meanings for man. The noumenal reality of these truths is also proportionate to the type of their existence. The reality of incorporeal being lies in the world of incorporeality in the same way that the reality of the concept of causality is the objective relationship between the cause and effect.

4. Mental realities and logical secondary realities; there is another group of linguistic concepts that is not preceded by sensory perception. These realities do not refer to the beings inside the external world or inside human existence. The role and function of these concepts are the assessment of mental data and their relevant judgements and relations. In other words, these are the attributes and natural signs of other signs and the object of these is another group of mental concepts. This is why it is said that the sphere of their existence and attribution is mind and they are acquired merely through reflection upon mental concepts. All logical concepts or logical secondary intelligibles like notion, judgment, proposition, universality, and particularity and so on and so forth belong to this group of concepts. When we say that "animal is a universal concept", universality in this context is a mental concept (Motahari, 1987, 2: 66-70; Fanaei, 1996: 196). Then, noumenal reality of logical secondary intelligibles is a level of mind itself.

This triple division of universal concepts that is one of the innovations of Islamic philosophers has numerous fruits and their confusion can also cause many difficulties. The basis of this classification is that the universal concept is predicated either to objective affairs like the concept of man; or is not predicated to objective affairs and instead is predicated merely to mental concepts and forms, like universal and particular concept. The second group is called logical concepts or logical secondary intelligibles (Mesbah Yazdi, 1989, 1: 176-177).

Anyway, as we metioned earlier, logical secondary intelligibles are also another type of realities which are conceived by man and after that is linguistically conceptualized. Accordingly, their existential mode and existential sphere are proportionate to each other.

5. Moral and legal realities; there is still another group of concepts that constitute propositions whose subject and predicate are mentally posited. These include the concepts that are used as part of the predicate of moral and legal propositions, e.g. ought not, ought, required and so on and so forth. Regardless of their use (either in imperative form like "you must do it" or "you must not do it" or in the form of an independent concept "you are obliged to do it") we need to study their relation with objective realities. Whether these concepts are the inventions of human mental faculty or they have no relation whatsoever with external realities? Or they are in some way related with the outside world? Some of the thinkers believe that the content of these concepts is an expression of the causal relation that exists between the action and end in ethics and law. In other words, when we say that "the trusted thing should be returned to its owner" this proposition is indeed seeking to express the relationship of this action with the end of ethics like human

ultimate perfection or eternal prosperity; therefore, the conept of moral and legal ought and obligation is a philosophical secondary intelligible.

But those concepts that are used as the subject of moral and legal propositions like justice, oppression, ownership, and parity have been borrowed from essential and philosophical notions and are used in conventional meanings proportionate to the practical needs in various individual and social contexts. For example, given the necessity of restriction of human ownership over properties which have been acquired through certain ways this ownership has been modified through a set of conventions. Anyway, although these concepts are conventional they are not independent of external realities and do not lie outside the domain of causality law rather their validity depends on the needs that man identifies for achievement of prosperity and perfection and are regarded as a symbol for objective relations between human actions and their related results. In fact, those generic relations and true expediencies are the basis of these conventional concepts (ibid: 180-183).

6. Relative concepts; when we think of coining single words for certain meanings two groups of meanings can be deemed: independent or nominal meaning and dependent or literal meaning. Independent meanings are those meanings which we can understand them independent of the sentence, e.g. names and materials of verbs and their derivative roots. Dependent meanings are those meanings which cannot be understood in an independent way outside the sentence rather they are relational meanings that ensure the combination of sentences like prepositions and some of pronouns. Think of "Hossein came from Tehran"; here Hossein or Tehran are nominal meanings regardless of their presence in the sentence have their own independent meaning. Then they signify their meaning as such. Then some jurists refer to them as alerting meanings (Eraqi, 1991, 1: 60). While "from" in the latter sentence is a literal meaning because it does not have any independent meaning outside the context of the sentence (Naeini, 1987, 1: 22). Then, a meaning which cannot be deemed independently outside the sentence is a literal meaning. In other words, literal meanings and concepts are external relations which do not have independency.

7. Linguistic mentally posited meanings or the nouns of nouns; one of the key points in the semantic and linguistic studies of the Muslim thinkers is the issue of referent and meaning of words which are other words. To put it differently, sometimes words (including noun, verb or letter) are considered in view of their reference to something beyond themselves. This type of consideration of a word which is first degree knowledge is the main objective of language and one of the aspects of linguistic sciences. To state the matter according to the terminology of Muslim jurists, it is the application of word in meaning. But sometimes word is not used as a sign to refer to something beyond it rather it is studied in view of its essence. This type of study is second degree knowledge and through it we are after issuing a judgement of these words. In this case the referent of these words is another word not the external objects and such words are the nouns of nouns and the referent of these second degree words is the first degree words, e.g. the words "noun", "pronoun", "verb", "preposition" and other types of words according to syntax (Fanaei, 1996: 124-127).

The abovementioned categories are the most fundamental issues which were studied as the comprehensive network which covers the majority of these concepts. As we saw, the basis of all these meanings and concepts which are in turn essential part of numerous scientific and cultural propositions in the system of language is the noumen or reality in itself.

- ### *Realization of Meaning after Understanding Realities*

Noumenal realities regardless of their type when are understood by man they turn to meaning; because it is human understanding and language that identify and reveal the unknown world of realities. These indices represent indeed the essential identity and schematic character of noumenal realities. Meaning is the essential identity of every reality in view of the reality itself. Noumenal realities cannot be created or owned. Human understanding and knowledge are contingent upon them. Whole is larger than its parts, simultaneous existence of contradictories is impossible, man is contingent by nature, triangle has three corners; these are examples of realities exist in their specific sphere (outside world, mind or hypothesis) and knowledge addresses them. Then, human knowledge and understanding and the referential aspect of his knowledge is contingent upon every reality and its mirror.

- ### *Aspects of Human Understanding and Situation of Meaning*

Meaning qua meaning is the character and identity of objects and realities which is understood by man but it is neither mental nor objective rather an abstract entity that is concerned with the identity of realities in the same way that essence is an analytic affair which is abstracted from the definition of the contingent beings. Meaning is beyond being mental or objective. The meaning of "Rose" is the identity and character of this flower that distinguishes it from other flowers. When a reality of noumenal realities is understood by man here we can distinguish through an exact rational analysis between five aspects:

A. Human understanding of a reality and human mental form of an object has its own specific existential sphere and aspect in view of its own essence. Mental form is a mental quality and like other existential phenomena has its own specifications.

B. Besides this aspect the existential type of mental form is of reflective nature and shows the picture of other realities. Referentiality is the essential and generic character of mental form, e.g. soil, stone, and the like do not reflect anything but glass and mirror essentially reflect things. Mental form and human understanding are also like glass and mirror in view of their existential type regardless of its matter and form.

C. Understanding and mental form of a reality not only reflects a reality it has also a referent and contains the identity and its reality in itself. When we focus on the character and identity of objects our mental form turns to meaning. One's picture is not the person in reality but it reflects the identity of the owner of the picture. When we seen the picture of Jamshid Mashayekhi on a tableau and we say: Mr. Mashayekhi! This is what we refer to as meaning. Then our knowledge and understanding has its own object and the known. Mental form and concept of an object is not the meaning of the object but it shows it. The understanding and concept of contradictories is not the contradictories themselves but it reveals its identity for us. This is also the case with the understanding and notion of nothingness. Monster is an imaginary reality which has been created by our mind. Our understanding of monster is not itself a monster but it uncovers the identity and meaning of monster for us. Then, meaning is the mental form which is reflecting the identity and essence of realities.

D. The fourth aspect of understanding of every reality is its association with a linguistic sign. Human knowledge is of various levels. Some levels of human knowledge are not noticed by him and remain unconscious; e.g. human primordial knowledge of God which is not conscious. But common forms of intentional understandings including presential and

acquired knowledge are associated with linguistic codes. Understanding and thinking of realities are associated with language and verbal sign. Then, another aspect of mental form and understanding of realities is its association with linguistic sign. Therefore, word also refers to the object but this reference is conventional.

E. In addition to the aforementioned aspects, existential realities and objects (including true or mentally posited, objective or subjective existences) have their specific extension and reality. Extension in its specific sense is the conditionality of the object or conditioning meaning which is objectified by the reality in specific sense. Of course, it is needless to say that the circle of meaning is richer than reality in specific sense and all realities (including nothingness, coexistence of contradictories, Simorgh, chance, sea of gold and so on and so forth) have meaning but they do not have reality in specific sense as well as objective and determinate extension.

As we saw, from these quintuple aspects the third aspect is that of meaning, i.e. understandable realities which have been fathomed by man. Then, perceived realiteis and the known in itself in human soul and the referent of realiteis in human understanding is the meaning and we call it "essential identity" and "character of objects". In the same way that essence determines the definition and domain of contingent beings like "man", identity also depicts the essential character of various objects and realities like existence, necessary, mentally posited beings, rational realities, intellectual positions, contingent nothing. Identity represents the modes of noumenal realities; but noumenal realities or truths are noumenal before being understood by man but we hardly can refer to them as meaning. The conept of meaning is closely intertwined with human understanding and the revelation of the identity of objects. The realities from which man does not have any knowledge are realities but not meaning.

- *Meaning, Mental Notion of Identity of Noumenal Realities*

The main and philosophical sense of meaning lies in its depiction as "our mental notion of the noumenal realities". In other words, meaning is the conceptual aspect of the objects that exists in our mind and reflects the identity and essence of the object. Explanation of a number of points can cast more light on our intention:

First, it needs to be reminded that in the same way that the referentiality of mental form is not separated from the existential aspect of the mental form the referent of the mental forms is not separable from the forms themselves.

Second, when we conceive mental form in an unconditional way without taking its referentiality or externality into consideration it turns to meaning. In the concept of "man" the condition of referentiality (signification) and externality is hidden; in the external extension of man the condition of externality is taken for granted; but when "man" is conceived without taking both conditions of mentality and externality this is the "meaning"; we intend by meaning what philosophers refer to it as the known by itself not the known via something else or the extension which is understood via the known by itself and the mental concept.

Third, according to the feature of significant of the mental form certain relations appear between various elements and pillars: 1- the signifier and mirror which is itself the mental form; 2- reference (signification) and discovery of another thing which is a feature of mental form; 3- referent/meaning/signified; if the signification takes place and the signifier exists the signified (referent) should exist in the sphere of signification because the signifier and the signified are two sides of the same coin and are inseparable. Then the referent of the mental

form also exists and it is what these mental forms reflect in the spehere of the signification. Referent is the extention in an unconditional form without taking its existence and nothingness into account. Mental forms signify their own referents. In other words, when we have these forms inside our mind by them something is discovered; 4- extension in general sense; the signifying aspect of the mental forms is having a referent or meaning. These forms in all noumenal realities have extension in general sense (reality of everything in view of itself and proportionate to it). Of course, this status is not a guarantee for realization of objective extension or extension in specific sense for these forms in the outside world. Mental form of "eagle" refers to eagle. In other words, by this mental form we make our way to the reality of eagle – without taking its existence or nothingness into account. But this mental form does not suggest that an eagle exists or does not exist in the real world. Then, what come to our mind via mental form is the identity of objects, the referent and meaning. But extension in its specific sense or having objective existence of these forms are mutually contingent in the sense that in some cases it would exist in the outside world and in some cases not.

Fourth, meaning is equal to identity, referent and the known by itself versus concept (signifier) and extension (the known by something else). As we know, the spehere of meaning is mind and we cannot think of a third sphere between the world of mind and objective world and describe it as the sphere of meaning. However, the basic point is that meaning despite its mental essence is not seen as something mental and this point separates meaning from concept or reference. In other words, human understanding and mind is capable of rationally analyzing its mental knowledge. When man acquires a mental form of a noumenal reality (including true, mentally posited or even imaginary) this form is analyzed into several aspects. It is a phenomenon (mental quality), it is of a referential aspect and it signifies something and this constitutes its conceptuality. It is also associated with this form of the referent like looking at the mirror and seeing just one's picture and not the mirror itself. This is what we call meaning. Then, if we look at the mental form from the point of view of its signification it becomes "concept" and if we look at the form and the known by itself without taking the signifier into account it becomes "meaning".

Fifth, the basic difference between meaning and concept in the sphere of mind is a matter rational analysis but in the objective world meaning and concept are existentially correspondent. When we are focused on the identity and essence of realities the mental forms are called "meaning"; however, when we approach it as a vehicle of signification it turns to "concept". In other words, mental form is called "concept" in view of its mentality and referentiality and when it is seen in view of of its "visible nature" and its being the "referent" it is called "meaning".

Sixth, contrary to the subjectivist notion of meaning which considers meaning to be a subjective identity in the mind of the speaker and audience we believe that that meaning has an abstract and independent identity which is not restricted to mental or objective existence and is referring to all noumenal realiteis. Linguistic signs for "essential identity of realities" regardless of their being mental or external have been adopted. We believe that the term "nature" as used by the scholars of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence as the referent of words (Gharawi Isfahani, 1986, 1: 23) refers to this "essential identity" in all realities in view of their own existence.

Seventh, in the light of the adopted basis, it becomes clear that one cannot believe in any specific different between the referent, general sense or general names and essences and specific meaning or particular names. When we said that meaning is the visible essence, referent and essential identity of noumenal realities, and we didn't restrict the domain of realities merely to realiteis that have objective references and existential independence, this criterion is applied to all types of true, objective, mental realities as well as the rational positions an even the imaginary realities. Then, all types of realities are equal in view of having meaning and referent though some of them may hae no extension in proper sense or some of them may have one extension.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we discussed the most important views of Muslim scholars of principles of jurisprudence after providing an outline of key theories as regards meaning. The researches of Muslim jurists of the nature of meaning range from taking meaning as mental notion, nature or essence, concept without taking the external or mental existence into account, concept in view of its reference to the extensions, and the noumen. However, this article's main message was focused on two points: first, meaning before evolution is preceded by realiteis whose origin is in human thought. We referred to those realities as "noumenal realities". Noumenal reality refers to the reality of everything in view of its essence without taking its objective existence into account. Reality in its general sense (not in the specific sense of the word/ external objective existence/ realization of object/ particular and determinate extension) is of wide extent and contains true and mentally posited existence (rational and intellectual), external and mental existence (sensory, imaginary, illusive and rational), necessary and contingent existence (material, ideal and rational existence), and even impossible nothingness (like the coexistence of contradictories), and possible nothingness (like the nothingness of Simorgh). Accordingly, realities in this context refer to material realities, essential realities, general realiteis, existential relations or philosophical secondary intelligibles, mental realities and logical secondary intelligibles, moral and legal realiteis, relational and relative realities, linguistic mentally posited realities or the nouns of nouns. Thus, every theory of meaning should be able to cover all of these realities.

Second, the other axis of this research is focused on the analysis of various aspects of human understanding of realities. Accordingly, human mental form of realiteis has its own existential sphere in view of its essence. The seoncd aspect of human understanding is its signification of the perceived reality. Third aspect of human understanding of reality is that it includes a referent along with its referentiality. When we focus on the character and identity of the perceived reality we are thinking of the meaning. The fourth aspect of understanding reality is its association with a linguistic sign and the word is also referring to a reality but this referentiality is conventional. In addition to these quadruple aspects, noumenal realities have their own proper extensions. Among the aforementioned quintuple aspects, the third aspect is meaning. As regards the mental form when we focus on the character and identity of objects and realities we think of meaning. Then, perceived truths and the known by itself in human soul and the referent of the realities in human understanding is meaning and we call it "essential identity" and "character of objects". Then, the referent of words or meaning is the "essential identity of noumenal realities" which are understood by man.

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