



**Ibn Sina and Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi on the origination (*huduth*)
and the invalidation of transmigration (*ibtal al-tanasukh*) of human soul**



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Introduction

The issue concerning the temporal origin (*huduth*) and the immortality of the soul (*baqa' al-nafs ba'da fana' al-badan*) is one of the most essential issues when we discuss the nature and the reality of human soul. It indeed influences our perception on the very nature of the soul, the state of its existence, and its development and relation to the body. Moreover, this issue also touches other fundamental problems such as the problem of creation, the reality of God-soul relationship and the nature of human knowledge. Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi, who reexamines the philosophy of the earliest especially the Aristotelian and Avicennian in his *Kitab al-Mu'tabar fi al-Hikmah*, did discuss this issue where he surveyed the related arguments and ideas in order to re-evaluate them before expressing his own view. This paper tries to do a comparative study on Ibn Sina and Abu al-Barakat's view and argument on the issue.

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The main focus of this paper is on the argument and interpretation by Ibn Sina and Abu al-Barakat on two interrelated problems concerning the nature of human soul, that is, the problem of whether the soul is originated or eternal, and if it is temporally originated then how could we explain and proof the invalidity of transmigration of soul, which is one of the fundamental aspects in the idea of eternity of human soul. The purpose of this study is to see the strength of Ibn Sina and Abu al-Barakat's explanation and argumentation on these problems and in the same time to show the meeting point and the differences between both of them on the topic.

It is observable that both philosophers seem to believe in the origination of the soul and reject transmigration of human soul, although their explanation and argumentation on the topic might differ from each other. Thus, the discussion of this paper will present first the view of both Ibn Sina on the topic, followed by Abu al-Barakat's opinion and finally comes a concluding remarks where some observations on both views is presented.

1. The origination of human soul and the impossibility of its transmigration according to Ibn Sina

Ibn Sina's view on issue concerning the origination of human soul and the impossibility of its transmigration is clearly stated in his major works especially in *al-Shifa'*, *al-Najat* and *al-Risalah al-'Adhawiyyah fi al-Ma`ad*. His argument on the origination of the soul is intrinsically based on his perception on the nature and reality of human soul.

Human soul according to Ibn Sina is “the first entelechy (*kamal 'awwal*) of a natural body possessing organs (*li jism tabi'i 'ali*) in so far as it acts by rational choice and rational deduction, and in so far as it perceives universals”². It is also “an immaterial-substance independent of any material substratum” (*jawhar qa'im bi dhatihi*)³ and therefore it is something ‘spiritual’ (*ruhani*), free from any material basis⁴.

It is clear from the above presentation that the very nature of human soul is that it is an immaterial-substance which somehow connected actively to the body. On the other hand, the soul, in its relation to the body, plays the role of an ‘agent’ for all actions and perceptive activities done by human being. This notion of human soul and its role in the body is common for all individuals human being and we did understand that. However, when we try to think of the nature of human soul before the body, many questions would come to our mind; how was it, how this common and universal concept of the soul later on becomes individual and play their individual role in each body, what separates each individual from another and makes them differ to each other in their individuality?!

These are the problems that one has to deal with when he tries to understand the ontological ‘history’ of human soul. And for Ibn Sina, all these issues are actually considered as the fundamental reasons why the soul cannot pre-exist the body, but originated with the body.

² Fazlur Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952, p. 25 and Ibn Sina, *Kitab al-Najat*, Beirut: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadidah, 1985, p. 197. See detail explanation of this definition in Ibn Sina, *al-Shifa'*, Physics, Book 6 (*Kitab al-Nafs*), ed. G. Anawati and Sa'id Zayed, Cairo: al-Hay'at al-Misriyyah al-'Ammah li al-Kitab, 1975, p. 6-10, hereinafter cited as *Kitab al-Nafs of al-Shifa'*.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 22-26. Also Ibn Sina, *al-Isharat wa al-Tanbihat*, ed. Sulayman Dunya, Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 2nd. Edition, n.d., 2: 350-355.

⁴ See the argumentation on how human soul is free from any material basis Ibn Sina, *Kitab al-Nafs of al-Shifa'*, p.187-196. See on the definition and nature of human soul in Ibn Sina philosophy Ibrahim Madkur, ‘Introduction’, in Ibn Sina, *Kitab al-Nafs of al-Shifa'*, p. viii-ix. Also Ibrahim Madkur, *Fi al-Falsafah al-Islamiyyah manhaj wa tatbiqih*, Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 2nd. Edition, 1968, 1: 154-169, Yahya Huwaydi, *Muhadarat fi al-Falsafah al-Islamiyyah*, Cairo: Maktabah al-Nahdah al-Misriyyah, 1965, p. 207-8, Mahmud Qasim, *Dirasat fi al-Falsafah al-Islamiyyah*, Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 2nd. Edition, 1967, p. 43-4, A. Nasri Nader, *al-Nafs al-Bashariyyah 'inda Ibn Sina*, Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 1968, p. 15

Ibn Sina in his argument on the origination of human soul⁵ stresses the idea that the soul cannot either be one single entity or multiple entities before it exists in the body, and something which is neither single nor multiple entities is non-existent. Therefore, the soul does not exist before the body.

The reason why the soul cannot exist as one single entity, before the body, is because; it is unperceivable how could one single soul be multiplied into individuals and be in different bodies later on. It is impossible for the soul to be multiplied when attaching to the bodies for something immaterial, which is free from any bodily or materialistic element, is indivisible. Furthermore, if it continues to be numerically one and attaches to different bodies, then there would be one single soul attached to many individual bodies and this is absolutely absurd because, as Ibn Sina explains in *al-Shifa*⁶ and in *Risalah al-‘Adhawiyyah*⁷, this implies that all individuals are similar in all aspects including knowledge. Thus, if all souls of those bodies are numerically one, then every single person or individual will know and acquire the same knowledge as the others.

Similarly, the soul cannot be multiple before the body for the numerical multiplicity of the soul at this state necessitates certain element and matter or accidents (*‘awarid*) or inseparable attributes (*lawazim*) in the soul. This is because “the multiplicity of the species of those things whose essences are pure concept is only due to the substrata which receive them and to what is affected by them or due only to their times”⁸. And since all these accidental elements exist only with material body, while the soul at this

⁵ See his argument in Ibn Sina, *al-Najat*, p. 222-3, F. Rahman, *Avicenna’s Psychology*, p. 56-8 and p. 105-6, *Idem.*, *Kitab al-Nafs of al-Shifa*, p. 198-201 and *Idem.*, *al-Adhawiyyah fi al-Ma’ad*, ed. Hasan ‘Asi, Beirut; al-Muassasah al-Jami’iyyah li al-Dirasat wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’, 2nd. Edition, 1987, p. 115-6. Cf. Y. Huwaydi, *Muhadarat*, p. 238-9 and Muhammad Husayni Abu Sa’dah, *al-Wujud wa al-khulud fi falsafah Abi al-Barakat al-Baghdadi*, Cairo: Maktabah Nahdah al-Misriyyah, 1st. Edition, 1993, p. 215-7.

⁶ Ibn Sina, *Kitab al-Nafs of al-Shifa*, p. 200.

⁷ Ibn Sina, *Risalah al-Adhawiyyah*, p. 123.

⁸ F. Rahman, *Avicenna’s Psychology*, p. 57.

stage is free from any material basis, then, the soul is indivisible. On the other hand, the numerical multiplicity of the soul cannot be ascribed to its very quiddity (*al-mahiyyah*) and form (*al-surah*) for its form is one and therefore the multiplicity of the soul will be possible only when there is recipient of the quiddity (*qabil al-mahiyyah*) or the body.

We also cannot assume that the multiplicity of the soul is due to other body before this body because this will lead to the idea of transmigration of the soul and transmigration of the soul is impossible⁹. Ibn Sina's stand on the impossibility of transmigration of the soul is perceivable especially when we think of his doctrine of soul resurrection in the hereafter. Since he believes that only soul is resurrected in the hereafter, where at that stage the existent of the soul does not need any body to be with, then, he does not have to defend the idea of transmigration, however it is. This however does not mean to accuse Ibn Sina as someone who merely rejects the idea of transmigration just because it does not oppose any of his idea. Indeed, he did demonstrate special argument to refute the idea of transmigration apart from his argument on the immortality of the soul¹⁰. Moreover, he is aware of the opinions and arguments by those

⁹ Cf. Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi, *al-Mu`tabar fi al-hikmah*, Hyderabad: Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Uthmaniyyah, 1358 H., 2: 371. It is observed that Ibn Sina discusses the problem of transmigration of the soul in relation to his discussion on the immortality of the soul as in *Kitab al-Nafs of al-Shifa'*, p. 202-7 and *al-Najat*, p. 223-7, or on the hereafter (*al-ma`ad*) as in *Risalah al-Adhawiyyah*, p. 114-26. This is understood because Ibn Sina believes in the origination of the soul and since he has proven and established that the soul exists with the existent of the body, therefore there would not be any necessity to discuss the impossibility of transmigration of the soul before the body. However, when he claims that the soul is immortal and there is life after the death of the body, then he has to explain whether or not the soul is possibly transmigrated. His explanation on the impossibility of transmigration of the soul after the death of the body then, in his mind, implies necessarily that the transmigration is impossible in whatsoever situation, before or after the body. However, this is quite different in the case of Abu al-Barakat. He sees all these issues, i.e. the problem whether the soul is eternal or originated and the idea of transmigration of the soul, especially before the body, as two interrelated issues and they have to be reconsidered all together in the same time. Therefore, in that three continuous chapters of *Kitab al-Nafs* from *al-Mu`tabar*, that is in the sixteenth, the seventeenth and the eighteenth chapter, he covers all these issues all together and shows us how those issues are interrelated.

¹⁰ See his argument on the immortality of the soul for instance in *Kitab al-Nafs of al-Shifa'*, p. 202-7, *al-Najat*, 223-7, F. Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology*, p. 58-63 and p. 109, Ibn Sina, *Risalah al-Adhawiyyah*, p. 143-4. Also Ibrahim Madkur, *Fi al-Falsafah al-Islamiyyah*, 1: 177-90, Mahmud Qasim, *Dirasat fi al-*

who believed in transmigration of the soul, before it attaches to the body and after the death of the body, and he did present their point of views and explain the absurdity of their argumentation in his *Risalah al-Adhawiyyah*¹¹. By all these facts, we believe that Ibn Sina really thinks that the idea of transmigration is truly impossible in itself and should be rejected.

Now let us see how Ibn Sina argues on the impossibility of transmigration. Basically there are several principles that we have to realize when dealing with Ibn Sina's argument on the impossibility of transmigration.

Ibn Sina has established, from the above presentation, the fact that the soul is not eternal, but it comes into being when the body is suitable and prepared to receive it. This is to say that the readiness of the body could be considered as among the essential requisites for the emanation of the soul from its cause. All this process, i.e. the readiness of the body to receive the soul and the emanation of the soul from its cause, according to Ibn Sina, cannot just occur by chance or incident because this implies that there would be possible for the body, which is the element of the multiplicity of the soul, to exist first alone without any soul attached to it. If this is the case, then the multiplicity of the soul is not necessarily due to the essential cause (*al-`illah al-dhatiyyah*), which is the soul in this case, but due to the accidental cause (*al-`illah al-`aradiyyah*), which is the body. This is not true since the essential cause is prior compared to the accidental one. On the other hand, we cannot assume that there are varieties of individual bodies where some are ready to receive the coming soul and some are not because "the individuals of species do

Falsafah al-Islamiyyah, p. 44-6, *idem.*, *Fi al-Nafs wa al-`Aql li Falasifah al-Ighriq wa al-Islam*, Cairo: Maktabah al-Anglo al-Misriyyah, 4th Edition, 1969, p. 168-74 and Lenn E. Goodman, *Avicenna*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992, p. 163 ff.

¹¹ Ibn Sina, *Risalah al-Adhawiyyah*, p.114-26.

not differ concerning matters which constitute their essence”¹². In sum, it is clear here that whenever there is a body, it is surely ready to receive the soul who will govern the body.

Having all these principles clarified, he then expresses his argument on the impossibility of transmigration. He says that if the transmigration is possible, then there will be two souls attach to the same body; a soul which transmigrated from the previous body and another soul which exists with this new body. Having two souls in a single body is evidently not possible¹³.

In order to explain this, we have to understand that the soul-body relationship is of an active relationship where the soul plays the role of governing the body and the body is influenced by its actions. Thus, there is actually a conscious relationship between the soul and the body where each of them is aware of the presence of each other. Therefore, if we suppose that there are two souls, then, we should be aware of the presence of both of them, and since we do not feel and realize except only a unique soul who governs and occupies our body, then, there would not be a second coming transmigrated soul into our body. On the other hand, it is absurd to imagine that there is an unrealized additional soul in the body because this means that this additional soul does not have any relationship with the body and therefore it is not the soul that we are talking about here. Hence, the transmigration is impossible in whatsoever sense¹⁴.

¹² Ibn Sina, *Kitab al-Nafs of al-Shifa'*, p. 207, *Idem., al-Najat*, p.227 and F. Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology*, p. 63-4.

¹³ Compare this idea, i.e. the idea that a soul can have only one particular body with Aristotle, *De Anima*, ii. 3. 407b:13-26 and ii. 2. 414a: 19-29. Also F. Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology*, p. 109.

¹⁴ See Ibn Sina argument on the impossibility of transmigration in *Kitab al-Nafs of al-Shifa'*, p. 207, *al-Najat*, p.227, *Risalah al-Adhawiyyah*, 124-5 and F. Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology*, p. 63-4 and p. 109. Cf. Abu al-Barakat, *al-Mu'tabar*, 2: 371.

This is all what Ibn Sina has to say concerning his stand on the topic. All the above presentations have established, in Ibn Sina view, the origination of human soul and the impossibility of its transmigration. The soul according to Ibn Sina does not pre-exist the body but exists with the existence of a suitable body, where the soul governs and uses the body as its instrument. “This mutual suitability of the body-soul couplement gives to the soul its particular character, which constitutes its proper individuality”, and therefore “after the death of the body, the soul preserves its individuality and survives as such”¹⁵.

This is how Ibn Sina understood about the origination of the soul and how he elaborated and related the idea with his stand on the impossibility of transmigration of the soul. The way he dealt and discussed the idea of transmigration, especially in *Risalah al-Adhawiyyah*¹⁶, indicates that there is a clear interrelation between the origination of the soul and the impossibility of its transmigration and it seems that Ibn Sina has used the argument for both ideas to support each other; meaning that he uses the proof for the origination of the soul to establish the impossibility of transmigration and *vice versa* he rejects the transmigration based on the establishment of the origination of the soul¹⁷, an aspect which Abu al-Barakat’s later on criticizes Ibn Sina and accuses him as involved in a *vicious circle*. In the following discussion we will see what is Abu al-Barakat’s point of view on this topic, his comment on Ibn Sina as well as his approach in dealing with the subject.

¹⁵ F. Rahman, *Avicenna’s Psychology*, p. 106.

¹⁶ Ibn Sina, *Risalah al-Adhawiyyah*, p. 121.

¹⁷ Ibn Sina in his *Risalah al-Adhawiyyah* stresses that among the main confusion of those who believed in transmigration of the soul is because they think that the soul exists before the body, p. 121. Therefore, instead of answering each argument posed by them, he just works on establishing that the soul is not pre-exist the body, believing that by establishing this, then, necessarily the whole argument which based on this preposition is invalid.

2. The origination of human soul and the impossibility of its transmigration according to Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi

Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi had left us, as described by Professor Ahmad al-Tayyib, some works which he considered them as small in numbers and quantity compared to others philosophers like al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. This is because his writing is focusing more on re-examining thoughts and ideas and not on presenting an interpretation them. Therefore, his writings, especially his philosophical works, appear in the form of compressing major ideas and discussions in a very objective way¹⁸.

The problem of soul is among the major problems that Abu al-Barakat dealt with in his philosophical project. It has taken place in various parts of his writings especially in his major work *al-Mu`tabar fi al-Hikmah*¹⁹. In addition, he also discusses the problem in his other smaller separate treatises like in *Kitab sahih `adillat al-naql fi mahiyyat al-`aql*²⁰ and his *Kitab fi `ilm al-nafs*²¹. This is concerning the problem of soul in general. However, as for the topic that we are dealing with, Abu al-Barakat presents the

¹⁸ See Ahmad al-Tayyib, *Mawqif `Abi al-Barakat al-Baghdadi min al-Falsafah al-Masha`iyyah*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis at Faculty of Usuluddin, al-Azhar University, Cairo, 1977, p. 29. On his contribution and works see for instance article by Sulayman al-Nadwi entitled: 'Kitab al-Mu`tabar wa sahibih', printed at the end of Hyderabad edition of *al-Mu`tabar*, 3: 230-52, Shlomo Pines, *Studies in Abu'l-Barakat al-Baghdadi physics and metaphysics*, Jerusalem : The Magnes Press and Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979 and Ahmad al-Tayyib, *Mawqif*, p. 12-36. Also Jamal Rajab Saidabi, *Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi wa falsafatihi al-Ilahiyyah*, Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1996, p. 24-5 and Wan Suhaimi Wan Abdullah, 'A Biography of Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi' (in Malay) in *Jurnal Usuluddin* (Journal of Usuluddin), Kuala Lumpur: Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, no. 9 (July 1999), p. 73-96.

¹⁹ The psychological part of *al-Mu`tabar* is the longest part of the six books of second volume of *al-Mu`tabar*.

²⁰ Edited and published by Professor Ahmad al-Tayyib in his article entitled: 'Un traité d'Abu l-Barakat al-Baghdadi sur l'intellect' in *Annales Islamologiques*, by L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale in Cairo, t. xvi, 1980, p. 128-47.

²¹ Unedited in Aya Sofia, 4855 in seven folios, hereinafter cited as *Kitab fi `ilm al-nafs*.

discussion on it in length in his *al-Mu`tabar*²², while in *Kitab fi `ilm al-nafs* he mentions the idea in brief²³.

Abu al-Barakat starts his discussion on the topic in chapter sixteen “On the state of the soul before its connection to the body and on what has been said on its eternity and originality”, followed by the chapter “On re-examining the arguments [concerning the origination and the eternity of the soul]” and finally he ends up with a chapter “On clarifying the origination of the soul and invalidating the eternity and the transmigration of the soul”. This paper focuses only on his stand and argument on the topic as well as his opinion on that related argument and view by Ibn Sina.

As an introductory overview, Abu al-Barakat stated that most of those who claims the eternity of the soul and its existence before the body thinks that it is an immaterial-substance and on the contrary those who believes that the soul is originated and that it exists with the existing of the body asserts that it is an accident²⁴. After listing all arguments by those who believes in the eternity of the soul, he mentions several arguments on the origination of the soul. Among these arguments is the above argument by Ibn Sina, which he quotes it without mentioning Ibn Sina by name²⁵. Then, in the following chapter he re-examines all arguments of both parties, not just to criticize the view which opposes his own but to evaluate all arguments in order to remind of any weak aspect of the arguments. This is why Abu al-Barakat expresses first his opinion on every argument, even that which related to the origination of the soul, before he ends up with his own view and argument. Since our focus here is to compare between Ibn Sina and

²² In 3 chapters; chapter 16-18, from p. 368-79 of Hyderabad edition.

²³ In folio 5 of the manuscript.

²⁴ Abu al-Barakat, *al-Mu`tabar*, 2: 368.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2: 370-1.

Abu al-Barakat on the topic, then we will select only Abu al-Barakat's view on Ibn Sina's stand and argument on the origination of the soul and the impossibility of its transmigration.

Concerning Ibn Sina's argument on the origination of the soul which based on the idea that something which is immaterial is indivisible, and therefore the soul cannot pre-exist the body, Abu al-Barakat argues that this is not the case here because it is not proven that all immaterial is indivisible. If we say that something material is divisible because of its physical dimensions (*aqtab*) and therefore anything attached to it, including the immaterial one, is also divisible, then we can say the same concerning the divisibility of the soul here²⁶. And in terms of the claim that the soul is unique in its quiddity (*al-mahiyyah*) and form (*al-surah*) and therefore the multiplicity of the soul is possible only when there is recipient of the quiddity (*qabil al-mahiyyah*) or the body, Abu al-Barakat seems not to accept the idea and claims that it is not case here²⁷.

Then, as far as his observation on Ibn Sina's argument on the impossibility of transmigration of the soul is concerned, Abu al-Barakat accuses Ibn Sina as being involved in a kind of a polemical argument. This is because Ibn Sina, according to Abu al-Barakat, seems to base his argument on the origination of the soul on his refutation of transmigration, and *vice versa* when he tries to establish the impossibility of transmigration he stresses on the idea that the soul does not pre-exist the body and therefore there is no transmigration²⁸.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2: 375

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 2: 376. Cf. Yahya Huwaydi, *Muhadarat*, p. 242, Ahmad al-Tayyib, *Mawqif*, p. 296-7 and Jamal Rajab Saidabi, *Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi*, p. 192-8.

²⁸ Abu al-Barakat, *al-Mu'tabar*, 2: 376. Cf. Yahya Huwaydi, *Muhadarat*, p. 242-3 and Abu Sa'dah, *al-Wujud wa al-khulud*, p. 216-7.

As we had mentioned before, when Abu al-Barakat criticized the argument on the origination of the soul and the impossibility of its transmigration, he does not mean to oppose their stand on the issue. As a thinker, Abu al-Barakat, as well as other thinkers before and after him, always seeks for the truth as truth. To accept any view or to reject it, it must be based on a clear understanding and a strong argument. Therefore, when he re-examines any idea that reached him, he will look at it from various angles before making any stand on the subject. Referring to the subject that we are looking at now, it seems that Abu al-Barakat does not happy with the arguments and explanations presented by the earlier thinkers. Now after stating what Abu al-Barakat has to say about that, we will see how Abu al-Barakat himself views the topic and how he defends his idea.

Abu al-Barakat, as stated earlier, has clarified his stand on the origination of the soul and the impossibility of its transmigration in a particular chapter of his *Kitab al-Nafs* from *al-Mu`tabar*. His argument is basically based on the idea that the soul is always active and effective (*fa`alah mutasarrifah*) and among the essential activities of the soul is that which related to perception. Thus, he believes that to establish the pre-existing of the soul before the body is to establish our perception and memory concerning the situation and the state of the soul before its being in this body, meaning that if we can perceive how we are before being into the body, then we can claim that we was there before the body. But, since nobody could prove this reality then the soul cannot pre-exist the body²⁹.

As far as acquiring knowledge is concerned, we know that human soul develops from ignorant towards knowledge. This development will not be possible if there is no

²⁹ Abu al-Barakat, *al-Mu`tabar*, 2: 377-9 and *Idem.*, *Kitab fi `ilm al-nafs*, folio 5a-b. Also Yahya Huwaydi, *Muhadarat*, p. 234.

'instruments' involved. Knowing this fact, we say; if this single soul of ours, which is in every individual body of us, existed before this body, then it was either in other body or in itself free from any body (*mufariqat li al-`abdan kulliha*), in other word it was either active and effective (*fa`alah mutasarrifah*) or inactive from any action or affection (*mu`attal `an al-fi`l wa al-infi`al*). And since the latter is not possible because the existing natures (*al-tiba` al-wujudiyyah*) cannot be inactive, then, the soul at that stage must be active and effective.

If this is the case, he further adds, we do know that the activity and the effectiveness of human soul is of two categories; a rational perception (*idrak `aqli*) and a physical dynamic movement (*tahrik jismani*) which includes sense perception (*idrak hissi*). When there is perception then necessarily there must be also memorization and this memory cannot be in any physical part like the body or part of it because they are limited compared to the memorized object. Therefore, the memory must be in the soul; either in its very self or in other faculty attached to the soul. If we assume that the memory is in this attached faculty, one will ask further; on what condition it is related to the body and the soul? Does its attachment to the soul makes it somehow related with the body or the other way round, that is, its relationship with the body leads the faculty to attach to the soul? It cannot be related to the body because this implies that its relation to the body is either as the permanent accidents (*al-a`rad al-qarah*); which is impossible for the accident is too limited to bear a huge 'stock' of our perception, or as an effective agent just like soul-body relationship; which is also not possible because the faculty then will act like the soul as if there are two souls in a body. This is evidently not true since we do feel that there is only one soul in our body and even if we would assume that this

faculty is actually that very soul of ours then it is not worthy to contemplate all those possibilities thus far, instead, we can simply say that that memorization is in the soul. And if the faculty is attached to the soul and then somehow related to the body, then it must all the time be with the soul, whether before or after being in the body, and this necessarily means that this faculty will remember and memorize all its experiences and knowledge, before the attachment of the soul to the body, as similar as it memorizes all facts now, i.e. when the soul is in the body. And since we certainly do not have any knowledge or memory of that particular realm, i.e. the realm where we assume that the soul was not attach to the body yet, then we can establish that the soul, before being in the body, has neither perception nor memorization, therefore it cannot pre-exist the body but originated by the origination of its attachment to the body (*hadithah bi huduth ta`alluqiha bihi*)³⁰.

This is Abu al-Barakat's argument on the origination of the soul. This argument which he himself considers it as like 'the first principle in the minds' (*al-awwaliyyah fi al-adhhan*) and as something which all human being aware and conscious of it. Furthermore, he does believe that this is also the argument and the way how we should reject the transmigration of the soul with, that is to say; if we exist before this existent, then we must remember and perceive something from that time. But when we realize that no one ever perceives that, therefore the idea that the soul existed before and then transmigrated into this body is impossible³¹.

³⁰ Abu al-Barakat, *al-Mu`tabar*, 2: 377-9 and *Idem.*, *Kitab fi `ilm al-nafs*, folio 5a-b. Also Abu Sa`dah, *al-Wujud wa al-khulud*, p.217-9.

³¹ Abu al-Barakat, *al-Mu`tabar*, 2: 379. Cf. Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi, *al-Hikmah al-Muta`aliyah fi al-Asfar al-Aqliyyah al-Arba`ah*, Beirut: Dar al-Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1st. Edition, 2002, 8: 296-7.

3. Concluding remarks

It is evident from the above presentation that both Ibn Sina and Abu al-Barakat believe in the origination of the soul and the impossibility of its transmigration and had tried to demonstrate their arguments to support the idea. However, it seems that the way they defend the idea is not similar, but to some extent it is fundamentally different from each other. In this following paragraph we will see some observations on both views. It is not to judge any of those great philosophers, but it is merely some personal remarks from my limited survey.

It is observed that Ibn Sina, as far as his stand on the origination of the soul is concerned, has some problems. It seems that he is not consistent in his view for some of his work like the *Qasidah al-`ayniyyah* clearly inclines towards the idea that the soul did exist before attaches to the body and that the soul was emanated from the Active Intellect³². Whereas in the case of Abu al-Barakat, he is safe at least from any of this related inconsistency since he totally rejects the doctrine of emanation and Active Intellect³³.

As for Abu al-Barakat's argument on the origination of the soul, one would question on whether it is an 'absolute' argument on the problem, meaning that is it absolutely applicable for this argumentation without any certain exception? Do we have the proof that every single human being is free from any knowledge and perception of that realm which pre-exists the body and therefore all souls are originated by the

³² Cf. Yahya Huwaydi, *Muhadarat*, p. 238-9 and Ahmad al-Tayyib, *Mawqif*, p. 295.

³³ See Abu al-Barakat, *al-Mu`tabar*, 3: 145 ff. Cf. Yahya Huwaydi, *Muhadarat*, 239-40, Ahmad al-Tayyib, *Mawqif*, p. 374-91, Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroes on intellect*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 154 ff., p. Abu Sa'dah, *al-Wujud wa al-khulud*, 168-173, Jamal Rajab Saidabi, *Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi*, p. 101-10.

origination of its attachment to the body? This is because there is a statement by Abu al-Barakat himself saying that if we would like to ask for a proof to establish that all or every single soul does not memorize any of its action before the body, we will not find any concrete evident. What we have is merely that which revealed by our very self or what we heard from others experiences. This, according to Abu al-Barakat, cannot be taken as something general and we should not assume that all human being inclusively realize the same because we do not know what is there in other's memory. We also cannot just make a generalization on this matter, thinking that what is there in our memory must also be in other's memory since we know that there are differences among soul's substances and quiddities. All we can say, as far as memorizing the condition of the soul before the body is concerned, is that the majority of human being, and not all of them, do not have that memory³⁴.

We cannot affirm what is in Abu al-Barakat's mind when he said this. Does he mean that there is certain special soul who does have the memory and therefore it is not as 'originated' as the other soul? If this is the case, how will he explain the state of this particular soul before it exists in the body? What about the problem of transmigration then? Is it possible for certain soul to transmigrate and not for the others?

On the other hand, one could think of, as Plato did before, how the soul has had all the knowledge and perception before, but when it comes and attaches with the body the situation then changes and the soul forgets all the knowledge. Therefore, the forgetfulness of all these knowledge by this soul does not necessarily means that it did not have that knowledge before because, as Plato explained, the soul when it came into

³⁴ Abu al-Barakat, *al-Mu'tabar*, 2: 379 and *idem.*, *Kitab fi 'ilm al-nafs*, folio 5b-6a.

being in this material world, it was occupied by this material world and forgot that state where it was before.

Moreover, it is also possible to oppose Abu al-Barakat statement concerning the idea of “inactive from any action or affection (*mu`attal`an al-fi`l wa al-infi`al*)” since “the existing natures (*al-tiba`al-wujudiyyah*) cannot be inactive”, because one will argue why we cannot say that the soul, as an immaterial substance, while pre-existing the body was active and effective? Can we say the other way round that the body instead is the one who makes the soul forgets all knowledge it acquired before? Thus, since it is also possible to think that the soul could possibly active and has knowledge before the body, and the reason of its forgetfulness is not because it does not exist before, but due to the occupation of the body, then it is not appropriate for Abu al-Barakat to based his argument on the origination of the soul on these facts³⁵.

All these weaknesses lead Fakhr al-Din al-Razi³⁶ and attract Mulla Sadra³⁷ after him, to criticize his argument later on especially on the aspect related to the idea of memorization of the soul before its attachment to the body and to the idea that the soul is inactive without this body. And, as for the argument on the impossibility of transmigration, we find that Fakhr al-Din al-Razi accepts and supports Ibn Sina and Abu al-Barakat’s argument³⁸ whereas Sadra accepts the former but criticizes the latter³⁹.

³⁵ See Abu Sa`dah, *al-Wujud wa al-khulud*, p. 219-20.

³⁶ See *Ibid.*, p. 220-1 and Abu Sa`dah, *al-Nafs wa khuludiha`inda Fakhr al-Din al-Razi*, Cairo: Sharikat al-Safa li al-Tiba`ah wa al-Tarjamah wa al-Nashr, 1st. Edition, 1989, p. 248-9.

³⁷ See Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi, *al-Hikmah al-Muta`aliyah*, 8: 296-8.

³⁸ See Abu Sa`dah, *al-Nafs wa khuludiha`inda Fakhr al-Din al-Razi*, p. 258-61.

³⁹ See Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi, *al-Hikmah al-Muta`aliyah*, 8: 297 and Fazlur Rahman, *The philosophy of Mulla Sadra*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975, p. 247.