A Comparative Study of the Quiddity and Method of Attaining Certainty in the Thought of Descartes and Mullā Ṣadrā

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Abstract

This article presents a comparative study of the quiddity, types, and methods of achieving "certainty" (*yaqīn*) from the perspective of two prominent philosophers of the Islamic and modern philosophical traditions: **Mullā Ṣadrā** and **René Descartes**. While they share commonalities—such as the search for an unshakeable foundation, the central role of the "self," and the exclusion of doubt from the definition of certainty—the divergence between their views is rooted in their fundamentally different metaphysical principles. Employing the method of **methodical doubt**, Descartes considers certainty to be a mental and epistemic state, whose criterion is the "clarity and distinctness" of a perception. His starting point is the **"Cogito"** (*Cogito ergo sum*) as the first indubitable truth, and ultimately, he introduces God as the **extrinsic guarantor** for the veracity of clear and distinct perceptions. In contrast, Mullā Ṣadrā, within the framework of **Transcendent Philosophy** (*al-Ḥikmah al-Mutaʿāliyah*) and through foundational concepts such as **"the Primacy of Existence"** (*aṣālat al-wujūd*), **"the Unity of the Intellector and the Intellected"** (*ittiḥād al-ʿāqil waʾl-maʿqūl*), and **"Substantial Motion"** (*al-ḥarakah al-jawhariyyah*), regards certainty as an **existential** and **presential** (*ḥuḍūrī*) matter. It is attained through the **existential wayfaring** (*sulūk*) and perfection of the soul. In this view, God—as the **Bestower of Forms** (*Wāhib al-ṣuwar*)—is not an extrinsic guarantor but the **direct, bestowing source** of certainty itself. The findings of this study demonstrate that the principal distinction between these two theories stems from differences in **ontology** (knowledge as a "mode of existence" versus knowledge as "mental representation") and **methodology** (intuition and unveiling versus discursive reasoning and proof). This research thus delineates the contrast between the two intellectual paradigms of **"existence-based epistemology"** and **"mind-based epistemology."**

Keywords: Certainty (Yaqīn); Method; Descartes; Mullā Ṣadrā; Comparative Philosophy; Epistemology; Transcendent Philosophy

1. Introduction: Statement of the Problem

The concept of "certainty" (*yaqīn*) stands as one of the most pivotal notions in human epistemology, consistently regarded as the cornerstone of knowledge, ethics, and religion. Philosophers of every era have endeavored to articulate a clear account of the quiddity, scope, and acquisition of certainty. Among them, **Mullā Ṣadrā** in the tradition of Transcendent Philosophy and **René Descartes** in modern Western philosophy have each proposed influential yet profoundly distinct theories regarding its possibility and origin.

Descartes, in his quest to establish a science based on indubitable knowledge, commences with systematic, **methodical doubt** and arrives at the **"Cogito"** as the first certain truth. His conception of certainty relies on rational method, self-evidence, clarity and distinctness, and ultimately, divine guarantee. In contrast, Mullā Ṣadrā, within the metaphysical system of Transcendent Philosophy, grounds certainty not in doubt but in **the Primacy of Existence, Substantial Motion, and Presential Knowledge** (*ʿilm ḥuḍūrī*). For him, certainty is an ontological and intuitive phenomenon that arises from the unity of the knower and the known and the soul's gradational ascent toward perfection.

Although both philosophers seek certain knowledge, their paths and foundations diverge significantly: Descartes constructs certainty **through doubt and reason**, while Mullā Ṣadrā attains it **through intuition, being, and spiritual development**. This divergence not only highlights the essential differences between two great philosophical traditions but also brings to light their shared emphases—such as the role of self-evidence and the divine.

A comparative study of these perspectives is valuable not only from the standpoint of intellectual history but also for illuminating contemporary epistemological debates, including foundationalism, skepticism, intuitive knowledge, and realism. In an era where the very possibility of epistemic certainty is contested, revisiting the views of Descartes and Mullā Ṣadrā may offer fresh insights into the foundations of human knowledge. Accordingly, the central question of this research is: **What are the respective conceptions and methods of attaining certainty in the thought of Descartes and Mullā Ṣadrā, and what are the fundamental similarities and differences between their views?**

2. The Importance of Certainty

Certainty (yaqīn) holds a central position in Islamic philosophy. The Qur'an's emphasis on definitive and indubitable propositions—such as the phrase "lā rayba fīh" ("there is no doubt in it")—and its call for investigative faith (īmān taḥqīqī) underscore the special status of certainty in the Islamic worldview. Any analysis or interpretation of certainty within Islamic philosophy remains incomplete without engaging with the thought of Mullā Ṣadrā. In modern philosophy, René Descartes marks the starting point of epistemological modernity, and understanding his ideas is essential for analyzing subsequent philosophical schools. A comparative study of these two intellectual traditions offers a more comprehensive perspective on the nature, possibility, and foundations of knowledge.

3. The Quiddity of Certainty

"Certainty" is a property that can be ascribed both to beliefs and to persons. One may say that person A is certain, or that proposition B is certain. These two usages can be linked in a single formulation: person A is justified in being certain when proposition B is sufficiently warranted.

The term "certainty" is used both in an absolute and a relative sense. A proposition is said to be absolutely certain only when no other proposition exists that is more justified than it. However, when we say that one proposition is more certain than another, it implies that while both may be certain, one

possesses a higher degree of certainty than the other (Klein, "Certainty," in A Companion to Epistemology, 1993).

3.1 Lexical and Technical Definitions

The Arabic root yaqana (يَقَنَ) conveys meanings of stability and firmness. Ibn Fāris defines it as "settling and fixity" (Maqāyīs al-Lugha, vol. 6, p. 136, root: yaqana). The Arabs say: "yaqana al-māʾ fī al-ḥawḍ"—"the water settled in the basin." Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī defines yaqīn as "knowledge accompanied by tranquility of the soul and firmness of judgment" (al-Mufradāt, 1404 AH, p. 552). In the terminology of theologians and philosophers, certainty is defined as "a firm belief that corresponds to reality and admits no possibility of error."

3.2 Certainty in Descartes' Thought

Descartes conceives of certainty as a mental state in which "no possibility of doubt" remains. The criterion for this state is the "clarity" and "distinctness" of perception. For Descartes, clarity refers to the evidentness of a proposition to the attentive mind, while distinctness implies its separation from other ideas and its immunity from confusion with doubtful representations. The certainty Descartes seeks is absolute, indubitable, and foundational—prior to all other forms of knowledge.

3.3 Certainty in Mullā Ṣadrā's Thought

In Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy, certainty (*yaqīn*) is an **ontological reality** and a mode of knowledge. Knowledge itself is a form of existence that is united with the known—following the doctrine of **"the Unity of the Intellector and the Intellected"** (*ittiḥād al-ʿāqil wa'l-maʿqūl*). Based on this ontological understanding, true faith and genuine knowledge are defined as certain belief (*iʿtiqād yaqīnī*) derived from **demonstrative proof** (*burhān*)—a proof composed of necessary and imperishable premises, valid both in this world and the hereafter (Ṣadrā, *al-Asfār*, 1366 SH, vol. 2, p. 176).

Elsewhere, however, Mullā Ṣadrā identifies the ultimate source of certainty not as proof, but as the **Bestower of Forms** (*Wāhib al-ṣuwar*). In this view, rational proof merely serves as a **preparatory condition** (*muʿidd*) for attaining certainty. Accordingly, just as he considers the arguments of rationalists to be preparatory, he also regards the discourses of theosophers and mystics as conducive to the realization of certainty (Ṣadrā, 1417 AH, vol. 1, p. 221).

This raises a fundamental epistemological question: **What renders a belief or proposition absolutely certain?** Several perspectives have been proposed in response:

1. **Bertrand Russell** argues that a belief is certain only if there is absolutely no logical possibility of its falsity. On this basis, propositions concerning empirical or natural phenomena cannot be deemed certain.
2. **Ludwig Wittgenstein** maintains that a belief is certain when it can serve as a foundation for justifying other beliefs, without itself requiring justification.
3. **Roderick Chisholm** contends that a belief is certain when no other belief is more justified than it.
4. **René Descartes** holds that a proposition is certain for a person when they are justified in believing it and there exists absolutely no reason for doubt.
5. **Mullā Ṣadrā**, rather than offering a formal logical definition, identifies its essential components based on his metaphysical principles: belief and affirmation, correspondence with reality, stability, and imperishability.

An analysis of these definitions reveals that Russell's account is excessively stringent, as it precludes certainty in the natural sciences and renders even self-evident truths difficult to affirm.

Wittgenstein's view, while emphasizing foundational beliefs, lacks a clear rationale for limiting certainty to such axioms. Chisholm's account aligns more with relative certainty than absolute certainty, since the comparative notion of "more justified" implies degrees of justification, which contradicts the absoluteness of certainty. Among these, Descartes' definition appears more reasonable, as it preserves both the accessibility and rational plausibility of certainty.

A comparison between Mullā Ṣadrā's and Descartes' definitions reveals both convergences and divergences. Both philosophers agree on the necessity of belief and justification: the possessor of certainty must have a justified belief free from doubt. However, Mullā Ṣadrā adds another essential element—correspondence with reality (muṭābaqat maʿa al-wāqiʿ)—which Descartes does not explicitly emphasize.

This divergence stems from their differing epistemological frameworks. For Mullā Ṣadrā, existence (wujūd) and knowledge are not distinct; rather, they are interwoven. Existence, through its manifestation, makes knowledge possible (Ṣadrā, al-Asfār, 1981, vol. 1, p. 290). If certainty is a mode of existence, then—by virtue of the Gradation of Existence (tashkīk al-wujūd)—certainty itself will also admit of degrees. Based on this ontological vision, Mullā Ṣadrā interprets the three Qur'anic levels of certainty— ʿilm al-yaqīn (knowledge of certainty), ʿayn al-yaqīn (eye of certainty), and ḥaqq al-yaqīn (truth of certainty)—as three degrees of a single ontological reality.

The certainty Descartes seeks and attempts to attain through doubt differs fundamentally from Ṣadrian certainty. Cartesian doubt is not directed at the existence of things, but at our knowledge of them. His skepticism about the being of things is a methodological tool for attaining epistemic certainty. Descartes' commitment to the self-evidence of mathematical demonstrations and the certainty of mathematical concepts stems from the fact that mathematics deals solely with concepts, not with concrete external objects. His adherence to the certainty of the Cogito is rooted in his attempt to move from mental concepts to external objects—not the reverse. This direction is precisely opposite to Mullā Ṣadrā's approach. For a mathematician, the "real" circle is the ideal, mental definition—not any external instantiation. Mathematical concepts are certain because they possess clarity and distinctness, and the Cogito is certain because it is characterized by these same attributes. Thus, it becomes clear that Descartes' pursuit is not of reality as such (nafs al-amr), but of epistemic certainty. He does not affirm the independent existence of external realities as a starting point; rather, he views objects primarily as mental representations. Naturally, such certainty is attained through the clarity and distinctness of conceptual content (Pazouki, 1371 SH, Farhang, no. 11).

4. Types of Certainty

Another key question concerns the types of certainty: Do Descartes and Mullā Ṣadrā speak of the same kind of certainty, or do they refer to fundamentally different kinds? Their divergent conceptions of the nature of certainty naturally lead to differing typologies.

4.1 Types of Certainty in Descartes

In Western epistemology, three types of certainty are commonly discussed:

- **Epistemic/Propositional Certainty:** certainty attributed to propositions.
- **Psychological Certainty:** certainty attributed to the knowing subject.
- **Moral Certainty:** certainty related to practical life and decision-making. When certainty is ascribed to propositions, it is epistemic; when to the subject, it is psychological; and when it pertains to life management, it is moral (Klein, 1998; Reed, 2011; cf. Ṣalawātī, 1398 SH).

Descartes distinguishes between two main types:

- **Moral (Practical) Certainty:** sufficient for the conduct of daily life, where the possibility of error is minimal (Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 1376 SH, p. 31).
- **Epistemic (Theoretical) Certainty:** achieved when one believes that it is absolutely impossible for things to be otherwise than as one judges them to be (Descartes, 1376 SH, p. 311; Cottingham, 1390 SH, p. 55).

Theoretical certainty itself is divided into two subtypes:

- **Absolute Certainty:** immediate, non-inferential certainty attained through intuition, such as the certainty of the *Cogito*.
- **Non-Absolute Certainty:** inferential certainty derived through reasoning and dependent on premises beyond itself (Descartes, *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, 1376 SH, pp. 109–114).

An analysis of the *Cogito* reveals that Descartes, in addition to propositional and inferential certainty, also attains a kind of **intuitive certainty**. This form of certainty, achieved through the *Cogito*, is not merely propositional but involves a direct awareness akin to what Mullā Ṣadrā terms **'ayn al-yaqīn**, wherein the known manifests itself directly in consciousness.

4.2 Types of Certainty in Mullā Ṣadrā's Thought

In Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy, given the diversity and gradation of existence, certainty too manifests in various forms. He identifies three principal, ontologically-grounded modes of certainty, derived from the Qur'an:

- *'Ilm al-Yaqīn* (**Knowledge of Certainty**): A discursive or conceptual form of certainty, associated with rational or inferential knowledge (*'ilm ḥuṣūlī*).
- *'Ayn al-Yaqīn* (**Eye of Certainty**): A direct, intuitive, or experiential form of certainty, wherein the object of knowledge is witnessed or unveiled rather than merely inferred. It belongs to the realm of Presential Knowledge (*'ilm ḥuḍūrī*).
- *Ḥaqq al-Yaqīn* (**Truth of Certainty**): The highest and most profound level, in which the knower becomes existentially united with the known reality, achieving a state of ontological communion.

Ṣadrā elaborates: "Ḥaqq al-yaqīn is the possession of divine and cosmic truths within the divine essence through spiritual taste (dhawq) and inner witnessing (wijdān). 'Ayn al-yaqīn is the witnessing of divine and cosmic realities through the eye of inner insight (baṣīrah). 'Ilm al-yaqīn is the conception and apprehension of divine and cosmic truths in accordance with their objective reality (nafs al-amr)" (Ṣadrā, n.d., p. 58). Thus, 'ilm al-yaqīn is associated with firmly grounded scholars, 'ayn al-yaqīn with perfected saints (awliyāʾ), and ḥaqq al-yaqīn with prophets and the most consummate saints.

From the Sadrian corpus, it is evident that ḥaqq al-yaqīn is intimately tied to the existential wayfaring (sulūk wujūdī) of the spiritual wayfarer. Due to the doctrine of the unity of the intellector and the intellected, even 'ilm al-yaqīn and 'ayn al-yaqīn are inseparable from existential progression. However, since presential knowledge is often translated into conceptual form, all three types, to qualify as genuine certainty within the framework of acquired knowledge, must possess stability and imperishability.

Mullā Ṣadrā's spectrum of certainty, parallel to the gradation of being, encompasses:

- **Moral and psychological certainty**, which deeply influences the soul's ethical disposition.
- **Epistemological certainty**, grounded in rational demonstration.
- **Foundational certainty**, derived from axiomatic propositions and intuitive truths.
- **Infused certainty**, bestowed directly by the Bestower of Forms (*Wāhib al-ṣuwar*).

He considers the transformative effect of moral and psychological certainty on the human soul to be deeper than that of mere rational certainty. The discourses of theosophers (*muta'allihūn*), he writes, evoke a subtle stirring in pure hearts, especially when accompanied by melodious tones, and are more effective in inspiring ethical action and drawing the soul nearer to God than some rational demonstrations (Ṣadrā, n.d., p. 55).

Regarding epistemic certainty, Ṣadrā maintains that if a syllogism's form is not necessary and the conclusion does not follow necessarily from the premises, then no certainty arises for the knower. Without certainty, there is no true knowledge; and in the absence of knowledge, there can be no trust or assurance. Without certainty, the entire endeavor of religion becomes futile (Ṣadrā, 1981, vol. 7, p. 301).

Mullā Ṣadrā regards intuitive certainty—corresponding to the highest level of *'ayn al-yaqīn*—as superior to theoretical sciences. He states: "The knowledge of most people in this world, compared to their knowledge in the hereafter, is like conjecture compared to true knowledge. True knowledge in this world is reserved only for prophets and the truthful ones" (Ṣadrā, 1363 SH, p. 140). He considers knowledge of metaphysical truths like the reality of the *ṣirāṭ* (the path) to be exclusive to those endowed with unveiling (*mukāshafah*) and witnessing (*mushāhadah*), while others merely affirm and believe without the insight born of the light of certainty (Ṣadrā, 1366 SH, vol. 1, p. 101).

In several passages, Mullā Ṣadrā emphasizes that the **origin of certainty is the Bestower of Forms, not rational demonstration**. Demonstration merely serves as a preparatory condition (*mu'idd*). Accordingly, just as rational arguments are preparatory, so too are the discourses of mystics and theosophers conducive to realizing certainty (Ṣadrā, 1417 AH, vol. 1, p. 221; Ṣadrā, 1354 SH, p. 304; Ṣadrā, 1422 AH, p. 251).

Based on this, one may conclude that concepts, propositions, and demonstrations—components of acquired knowledge—do not constitute the essential foundation for the emergence of certainty. Therefore, certainty—as an **ontological event** and **divine effusion** (*fayḍ*)—precedes propositions. More profoundly, the origin of certainty is the Bestower of Forms, and even intuitive witnessing (*shuhūd*) plays only a preparatory role. This model of infused certainty serves as the foundational paradigm in Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy: without this ontological ground, no other certainty can be fully realized.

5. The Method of Attaining Certainty

5.1 Descartes' Method: Methodical Doubt

Descartes' method for attaining absolute certainty is famously known as **methodical doubt**. Through systematic skepticism—doubting sensory perceptions, rational inferences, mathematical truths, and even positing the hypothesis of a **deceptive demon**—he subjects all forms of cognition to radical doubt. He believed that, as a preliminary step toward seeking absolute certainty, one must suspend judgment on anything that can be doubted and temporarily regard all such beliefs as false (Copleston, 2009, vol. 4, p. 110).

He writes in the *Meditations*:

"But because I then desired to devote myself solely to the search for truth, I thought it necessary to adopt a completely contrary method: to reject as absolutely false everything in which I could imagine the least doubt, so as to see whether anything remained in my mind that was entirely certain... Since our senses sometimes deceive us, I resolved to suppose that nothing is as it appears through the senses... Furthermore, since the experiences of waking life are often indistinguishable from those of dreams, I decided to treat all my thoughts as illusions, like those that occur in dreams." (Descartes, *Meditations*, First Meditation)

Descartes' generalization of doubt proceeds in stages, from doubting the senses (due to their deceptiveness) to doubting even mathematical truths via the dream argument and the evil demon hypothesis. His aim is to find an **Archimedean point**—one indubitable truth upon which all knowledge can be rebuilt.

Despite radical doubt, one truth remains immune: the ***Cogito ergo sum***. He writes: "But immediately I noticed that while I was trying to think everything false, it must necessarily be the case that I, who was thinking this, existed. And observing that this truth—*I think, therefore I am*—was so firm and so certain that all the most extravagant suppositions of the skeptics could not shake it, I concluded that I could accept it as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking." (Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, Part Four)

Having discovered the *Cogito*, Descartes formulates a general criterion: **whatever is perceived clearly and distinctly is true**. He then proceeds to prove the existence of a non-deceptive God to guarantee the reliability of this criterion, and from there extends certainty to mathematics, the nature of the soul, and the external world.

Thus, Descartes' method unfolds in five stages:

1. **Suspension of all doubtful beliefs** (methodical doubt).
2. **Discovery of the first indubitable truth** (*Cogito ergo sum*).
3. **Establishment of the criterion of clarity and distinctness**.
4. **Validation of this criterion through the proof of God's existence and veracity**.
5. **Extension of certainty to other domains** (mathematics, the self, God, and the external world).

5.2 Mullā Ṣadrā's Method: Existential Wayfaring and Purification

To understand Mullā Ṣadrā's method, one must first consider his ontological and anthropological foundations. Ṣadrā views knowledge as a **mode of existence**—an immaterial reality. The human soul, through its intrinsic **Substantial Motion** toward immateriality, gradually transcends sensory and imaginative levels and ascends through intellectual stages. In this system, the mind possesses the creative capacity to generate representations because the soul belongs to the **Realm of Dominion** (*malakūt*) (Ṣadrā, *al-Asfār*, 1981, vol. 9, p. 95).

Ṣadrā maintains: "The truth is that the human soul originates in corporeality and activity, but persists and attains intellection in spirituality." (Ṣadrā, 1918, vol. 8, p. 302) Thus, the stages of knowledge and certainty correspond to the levels of being and the soul's existential journey. Since knowledge is a form of existence, each level of knowledge corresponds to a level of existence (Ṣadrā, 2004, p. 272).

The soul's substantial motion is its very essence. As it liberates itself from material constraints, its existential intensification enables it to ascend intellectually and attain the capacity for direct witnessing. In both acquired (*ḥuṣūlī*) and presential (*ḥuḍūrī*) cognition, Ṣadrā emphasizes the role of human volition

alongside external reality. Encountering external reality merely prepares the soul for the **volitional generation** of knowledge (Ṣadrā, 1981, vol. 1, p. 287). In presential cognition, the clarity and intensity of the soul's presence to reality depends on its **existential breadth** and voluntary perfection (ibid., p. 198).

Accordingly, in Ṣadrā's philosophy, certainty is the result of the soul's **existential perfection**. Through substantial motion, the soul is a being-in-becoming; the more complete its existence, the stronger its knowledge and certainty. Perfect certainty is attained through **Presential Knowledge**—the existential presence of the known to the knower.

Thus, the method of attaining certainty in Mullā Ṣadrā's thought involves:

1. **Removal of imaginative and illusory veils** that obscure truth.
2. **Strengthening the soul** through true knowledge and ethical purification (*tazkiyah*).
3. **Attainment of Presential Knowledge** and direct witnessing of truth (*mushāhadah*).
4. **Realization of the ontological unity** between knower and known (*ittiḥād*).

6. Comparative Analysis

6.1 Points of Convergence

1. **Foundational Quest for Certainty:** Both seek an indubitable foundation for knowledge. Descartes finds it in the *Cogito*; Ṣadrā in presential knowledge and demonstrative proof.
2. **Centrality of the Self:** Both begin with the self. Descartes identifies the "I" as a thinking substance (*res cogitans*). Ṣadrā views the soul (*nafs*) as the locus of epistemic and existential ascent, echoing the maxim: "He who knows himself knows his Lord."
3. **Emphasis on Justification:** Both reject inherited or imitative beliefs (*taqlīd*) in favor of self-evident or demonstrative knowledge.
4. **Rejection of Doubt:** Both insist that genuine certainty must be free from doubt and the possibility of error.
5. **Foundational Role of Primary Certainty:** Both build their epistemologies on a primary certainty—Descartes on the *Cogito*, Ṣadrā on presential knowledge and proof.
6. **Role of God as Guarantor/Source:** Descartes invokes God as the guarantor of clear and distinct perceptions. Ṣadrā views God (*Wāhib al-ṣuwar*) as the direct, ontological source of certainty.

6.2 Points of Divergence

1. **Starting Point: Methodical Doubt vs. Ontological Faith:** Descartes begins with radical, hyperbolic doubt, temporarily denying the external world. Ṣadrā begins with the **Primacy of Existence** and the belief that the cosmos is a manifestation of divine presence. His approach is purgative, not skeptical—removing inner veils to perceive present truth.
2. **Quiddity of Certainty: Mental State vs. Ontological Reality:** Descartes treats certainty as a psychological-epistemic state (clear and distinct belief). Ṣadrā sees it as an **existential quality** that manifests through union with the known and ascent through levels of being, admitting of degrees (*tashkīk*).
3. **Method: Rational Analysis vs. Existential Journey:** Descartes' method is rational-deductive, building a logical structure from the *Cogito*. Ṣadrā's method is **holistic**, integrating reason, intuition (*kashf*), and spiritual practice (*'amal*). Demonstration is merely preparatory; true certainty arises from purification and existential wayfaring.
4. **Role of God: Extrinsic Guarantor vs. Ontological Source:** In Descartes, God appears at the **end** of a rational chain to validate the mind's operations. In Ṣadrā, God is present **throughout** as the direct source of knowledge and existence. Certainty is a divine gift bestowed in proportion to the soul's existential readiness.

7. Conclusion

In summary, Descartes seeks to establish a **science of certainty** grounded in the autonomous human mind and its rational criteria. His project is foundationalist and representational. Mullā Ṣadrā, in contrast, aims to chart the **existential path** of the soul toward the realization of ultimate truth. His project is transformational and ontological.

For Descartes, certainty is **"a fixed state discovered by the mind."** For Mullā Ṣadrā, certainty is **"a transformative condition into which the soul evolves."**

This contrast encapsulates the core divergence between two major philosophical paradigms: an **epistemology rooted in mental representation and rational deduction** versus an **epistemology grounded in ontological realization and spiritual wayfaring**. This comparative study not only clarifies these historical positions but also enriches contemporary discourse by presenting two comprehensive, yet radically different, responses to the perennial human quest for indubitable knowledge.

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