UNIVOCISM AND MONODOLOGY IN POST-AVICENNAN IRANIAN PHILOSOPHY
(ṢADRÂ AL-SHÎZÂZII'S ISHRÂQÎ HERMENEUTICS OF IBN AL-'ARABÎ'S GNOSIS AND HIS DISCUSSION OF AVICENNAN ONTOLOTY)

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Abstract: «One» and «Many» have been many times studied both from a theological and from an ontological viewpoint. In the realm of Eastern Islamic Philosophy and in the background of its Neoplatonic basical directives, Sadrâ al-Shîrâzî (ob. 1640) develops an ontological analysis of this traditional topic which differs from the one formerly displayed by Muslim Peripatetics. By adopting and continuing Ibn al-'Arabî's gnosis and al-Suhrawardî's Oriental wisdom he discusses Avicenna's distinction between a Necessary Being and a multiplicity of possible beings, as well as Avicenna's tendency to consider existence as accidental. Based upon the coimplication of three main concepts: iṣâlat al-wujûd (priority of being), wa dat al-wujûd (unity of being) and tashkîk (intensive differentiation of being), Sadrâ's monadological univocism, and in general Post-Avicennan Iranian philosophy may help us to revaluate some philosophical issues which nowadays attemp to appear in a new light.

Key-Words: Eastern Islamic Philosophy – Unity and Plurality of Being – Monadology – Mullâ Sadrâ Shîrâzî

First achieved in the Eastern lands of Islam by such figures as Sadr al-Dîn al-Qûnawî, Sa'îd al-Dîn al-Farghânî, Mu'ayyid al-Dîn al-Jandî, 'Abd al-Razzâq al-Kâshânî, Sharaf al-Dîn Dâwûd al-Qays.arî and 'Abd al-Karîm al-Jîlî, as well as by some outstanding shî'ite thinkers like çaydar al-Âmulî, Ibn Abî Jumhûr al-Ahṣâ'î and Sâ'in al-Dîn Turkah al-Iṣfahânî, the legacy of Ibn al-'Arabî's gnosis *('irfân)* within the Iranian culture is doubtless remarkable [1]. Nor less reliant

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[1] See for Qûnawî, Farghânî, Jandî, Kâshânî and Jîlî C.W. CHITTICK, «The School of Ibn 'Arabî», in S.ç. NASR & O. LEAMAN, (eds.), *History of Islamic Philosophy*, London, 1996,

is its rigorous philosophical reception, which must be considered mainly in the light of the Ishrâqî school founded by Shaykh al-Ishrâq [2] Shi âb al-Dîn Ya yà al-Suhrawardî. What leads us to the extraordinary synthesis undertook by Sadr al-Dîn Mu ammad al-Shîrâzî, commonly known as Mullâ Sadrâ, in the XVIth-XVIIth Centuries [3].

As S.H. Nasr indicates, *«Mullâ Sadrâ knew intimately the tradition of Persian Sufi poetry, in one of whose centers, Shîrâz, he had in fact been raised... Within the Persian cultural world it is the* Mathnawî *of Mawlânâ Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî that is quoted most often by him...* [But] *despite the significance of Rûmî and other masters, however, it is the Sufism of the school of Ibn 'Arabî that had left the most profound mark upon Sadr al-Dîn, whose works contain literally hundreds of references to the Andalusian master of Islamic gnosis...* [So much so that] *Mullâ Sadrâ would be inconceivable without Ibn 'Arabî, and one of the most important radii of influence of the teachings of Shaykh al-Akbar* [4] [as Ibn 'Arabî is known in Islam] *must be sought in Mullâ Sadrâ and his school...* [Forsooth] *few intellectual masters of Islam knew Ibn 'Arabî as well as Mullâ Sadrâ and it is mostly through his writings that the influence of Ibn 'Arabî reached later generations of Persian sages and gnostics»* [5].

Nevertheless, Mullâ Sadrâ's thought shall not be considered merely eclectic, for this would only bring a rash answer concerning its material geneaology, and thus an elliptical silence regarding what subsists beyond the confluence of the sources and disposes them within a common realm in agreement with a certain theoretical structure. Hence we may say that Sadr al-Muta'llihîn [6], as Mullâ Sadrâ is known in Iran, recieves both the influence of Ibn al-'Arabî and al-Suhrawardî (as well as the influence of their respective schools) by readjusting and developing in his own way some of their specific theoretical and spiritual contents. As someone sometime said, the power and the competence of

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vol. I, pp. 510-523; and for Âmulî, Jumhûr and Turkah Işfahânî H. CORBIN, *En Islam iranien. Aspects spirituels et philosophiques,* Paris, 1971-72, new ed. 1991, vol. III, «Les Fidèles d'amour. Shî'isme et soufisme».

2   Literally: «the Master of Illumination».

3   Which do correspond to the Xth-XIth Islamic Centuries. Sadrâ al-Shîrâzî was born around 1570-1572, and died in 1640.

4 Literally: «the Greatest Master» *(Doctor Maximus).*

5   S.ç. NASR, *Sadr al-Dîn Shîrâzî and his Trascendent Theosophy - Background, Life and Works,* Tehran, 1978, new ed. 1997, p. 74.

6   More or less literally: «the Prince of Theosophers».

a philosophical system consists not only in its inherent ability to create new concepts and ideas, but also in the way it renews those already given [7].

Let us recall again S.Ḥ Naṣr. «*While gradually in the West the possibility of the experience of Being nearly disappeared and the vision of Being gave way   to the discussion of the concept of being and finally to the disintegration of this very concept in certain schools* -he writes-, *in the* [Eastern] *Islamic world philosophy drew even closer to the ocean of Being itself until finally it became the complement of gnosis and its extension in the direction of systematic exposition and analysis»* [8]. This is, indeed, what we would like to examine here by confronting both the concept of *wa dat al-wujûd* developed in the Akbarian school and the concept of *tashkîk* that complements and determines it in a higher degree according to Sadrâ Shîrâzî's ontology. We may translate the former by the current formula: «unity of being», and the last one by the two-dimensional notion of «intensive differentiation and gradation (of being)», as we shall see.

We will mainly remit, on the other hand, to Sadrâ al-Shîrâzî's *Kitâb al-mashâ'ir*, an ontological essay originally written in Arabic by the Persian philosopher. Most of Sadrâ's treatises are in fact written in Arabic language, despite the large number of Persian writings that are to be found in Iranian philosophy from the XIth Century onwards [9]. Some thirty six years ago, Henry Corbin, to whose memory we would like to dedicate this article, translated into French the *Kitâb al-mashâ'ir* as the *Book of Metaphysical Penetrations* [10], a title by which it has become already well known in many Western philosophical circles. It consists of eight chapters or *mashâ'ir* in which Sadr al-Muta'llihîn summarizes some of the ontological theses previously set forth by him throughout the first *safar* of his *opus magnum*, the *Kitâb al- ikmat al-muta'âliyyah fî'l-asfâr al-'aqliyyat al-arba'ah* (briefly known as *Asfâr*), discussing thoroughly the fundamental assum-

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[7]   *Cf.* G. DELEUZE, *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*, Paris, 1968, new ed. 1985, p. 299.

[8]   S.Ḥ. NASR, «Post-Avicennan Islamic Philosophy and the Study of Being», in P. MORE-WEDGE, (ed.), *Philosophies of Existence - Ancient and Medieval*, New York, 1982, p. 337.

[9]   *Cf.* S.ḤNAṢR, «The Significance of Persian Philosophical Works in the Tradition of Islamic Philosophy», in G. HOURANI, (ed.), *Essays on Islamic Philosophy and Science*, Albany, 1975, pp. 67-75.

[10]   MULLÂ SADRÂ [AL-]SHÎRÂZÎ, *Le Livre des pénétrations métaphysiques / Kitâb al-mash'ir / Ketâb-e mashâ'er*, edition of the original Arabic text and of the Persian commented version of Badî' al-Mulk Mîrzâ 'Imâd al-Dawlah, introduction, French translation and notes by H. Corbin, Tehran/Paris, 1964, new ed. 1982.

tions of Avicennan or *mashshâ'î* ontology, to whose distinction of *wujûd* (being) and *mâhiyyah* (quiddity) he oposes *iṣâlat al-wujûd* (priority of being), *wa dat al-wujûd* (unity of being [11]) and *tashkîk*.

It is true that Mullâ Sadrâ recieved, among other theoretical influences as those of Shî'ite and Sunnite theology *(kalâm)*, some of Ibn Sînâ's philosophical directives [12], both through the teachings of Mîr Dâmâd, with whom he studied in Isfahân, and through the works of such Mashshâ'î authors as Abû'l-'Abbâs al-Lûkarî, Abû'l-Barakât al-Baghdâdî, Naṣîr al-Dîn al-£ûsî, Quṭb al-Dîn al-Shîrâzî (who is also a relevant Ishrâqî), Dabîrân Kâtibî al-Qazwînî, Athîr al-Dìn al-Abharî, Sadr al-Dîn and Ghiyâth al-Dîn Manṣûr al-Dashtakî, and of course Ibn Sînâ, all of which he knew in detail. But this would be the subject of a different study. Here we shall only present their ontological discrepancies, for it is in account of his objections towards *mashshâ'î* ontology that Sadr al-Muta'llihîn reassesses and pursues Akbarian speculative mysticism (named in Persian *'irfân-i nazarî*) and Ishrâqî illuminative wisdom.

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To begin with, and in order to make clear the difference between the two concepts mentioned above, we must say that whereas *wa dat al-wujûd* indicates both the reality and the divinity of being (which is percieved by *shuhûd al-uᵒûrî* or presential knowledge), *tashkîk* foreshadows its effective expression, in which ontological diversity plays a main role. Thereof we may speak, when refering to the science of being achieved throughout Sadrâ's ontological master-pieces (a science that is called in Persian *hastî shinâsî*), about a «monadological» prosecution of the ontology developed in the Akbarian gnostic school, both in the light of Ibn al-'Arabî's theory of the Divine Names and in the light of Ishrâqî wisdom. This shows up to be evident not only with regard to Mullâ Sadrâ's own thought, but also with regard to its profound theoretical and spiritual legacy, that is to be observed in the works of his disciples along the past three hundred and fifty years [13]. Yet we may also find *tashkîk*, at least to a certain extent, in Sadrâ's Persian sources.

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[11]   Which may be designed as well as *taw îd al-wujûd.*
[12]   Ibn Sînâ is Avicenna's name transliterated according to its Arabic pronunciation.
[13]   See for instance H. CORBIN & S.J. ÂSHTYÂNÎ, *Anthologie des philosophes iraniens depuis le XVIIe siècle jusqu'à nos jours,* Tehran/Paris, 1972-76, 2 vols.

If we open for instance çaydar al-Âmulî's glosses upon Ibn al-'Arabî's *Fuṣû_ al- ikam*, §§ 842-843, we will read that the *'ârif* (the gnostic) must both, according to him, «integrate and differentiate». «*Thou shallst unify both perspectives* -he writes-, *for only he who links them may be called a* muwa id aqîqî», that is, someone that afirms and practises *tawhîd*, unity, in a truthful way. «*To link them both _he goes on_ is the same as to reach* jam' al-jam' [the «integration of integration«]. *Know that to differentiate* (tafriqah) *means to contemplate the creatures* [and thus multiplicity] *without contemplating at the same time the Divine Being* [the Unique]. *And that to* [merely] *integrate means to contemplate Divine Being without contemplating at the same time the creatures. He who limits himself to this last option will never reach the vision of Divine Being within Its epiphanic forms, throughout which It manifests Itself, though in another sense they differ from It... Hence one must have at the same time both the vision of the Divine Being linked to the vision of the creatures and the vision of these linked to the vision of the former. In other words, one must be able to see multiplicity in its unity. This total vision is called* jam' al-jam'» [14]. çaydar al-Âmulî lived in the XIVth Century. Some three hundred years later a pupil of Mullâ Sadrâ, Hussayn al-Tunkâbunî, asserts that «*Unity of being goes hand by hand with the multiplicity of its theophanies* (tajalliyât), *and thus limited existences are not to be considered illusory or without consistence, as certain sufis pretend*» [15]. Finally, one of Mullâ Sadrâ's contemporary Persian interpreters, S.J. Âshtyânî, writes: «*It is according to its own limit* (bisâṭat) *and mesure* (andâzih) *how each thing comprehends the first Truth* (aqq-i   ta'âlî) » [16].

Let us now briefly refer to Shaykh al-Ishrâq Shi âb al-Dîn Ya yà al-Suhrawardî, by whose writings and teachings Sadr al-Muta'llihîn was nor less deeply influenced, inasmuch we may say that he is a true Ishrâqî philosopher despite the fact that he submits Ishrâqî wisdom to an outstanding revision by means of introducing the ontological principle concerning *iṣâlat al-wujûd* (priority of existence) there where the young Shaykh al-Ishrâq (who was murdered at the age of thirty six by some Sunnite jurists) sustains the priority of essences over

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[14]   S.Ḥ AL-ÂMULI, *Naṣ(al-Nuṣûṣ*, edited with an introduction by H. Corbin, Tehran/Paris, 1975. We follow here Corbin's translation of this passage, offered by him in *Le paradoxe du monothéisme*, Paris, 1981, pp. 34-35.

[15]   Refered by Corbin in *Philosophie iranienne et philosophie comparée*, Tehran, 1977, new ed. (Paris) 1985, p. 72.

[16]   S.J. ÂSHTYÂNÎ, *Hastî az nazar-i falsafih wa 'irfân*, Mashhad, 1380 l.H., new ed. 1376 s.H., p. 36; our own translation (OT, onwards).

being. Both Ibn al-'Arabî and al-Suhrawardî had been meanwhile, as well as Ibn Sînâ though in a complete different way, the most determinant figures upon Iranian philosophy from the XIIth to the XVIth Centuries. Shaykh al-Shahîd Shi âb al-Dîn reinterpretates Plato's Ideas both in an active way, refusing to consider them as mere concepts, and by adding a «latitudinal» order of Immaterial Lights to Ibn Sînâ's «longitudinal» one, an issue on which he recalls Zoroastrian noetical angelology, revaluating hence intelligible multiplicity [17]. According to al-Suhrawardî's *ikmat al-ishrâq*, each thing tends towards and expresses its own Intelligible Light, which is to be considered as a specific grade of Divine Light [18]. Once again we are forced to carefully observe, therefore, what in Arabic is called *al-kathrah fi'l-wa dah wa'l-wa dah fi'l-kathrah*, «multiplicity in unity and unity in multiplicity» [19]. And we are forced to observe the terms of such a relationship as non-external to the relationship itself, that is, in a rigorous «synchronic» mode. In other words, none of them has an existential priority over the other, although unity is axiologically prior to multiplicity, for every multiplicity participates of, tends towards and expresses in some way unity.

Of course we may say that the One is the trascendent efficient cause of multiplicity by adopting either a creationist or an emanationist derivative approach which would present its unity and reality as being radically (in the first case) or at least partially (in the second one) separated [20], but we would then remain in the view that according to the school of Ibn al-'Arabî caracterizes merely -as Corbin points out with vigour[21]- *taw îd al-ulûhî*, that is, «theological» or exoteric *taw îd*, which places God above all comparison. Although necessary, this procedure may nevertheless become, if applied in an unilateral way, the premise of what Ibn 'Arabî himself calls «spiritual indisposition», and even the rudiment of a more or less explicit «dualism». Thus we may by contrast assert[22] that the One is underneath multiplicity, in the sense of Greek

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[17]   See on Zoroastrian angelology and its influence on Persian Islamic thought H. CORBIN's *Corps spirituele et Terre céleste. De l'Iran mazdéen à l'Iran shî'ite*, Paris, 1979.

[18]   See for al-Suhrawardî's metaphysics H. CORBIN, *En Islam iranien*, vol. 2, «Sohrawardî et les Platoniciens de Perse», as well as S.H. NASR, *The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persia*, Richmond, 1996, pp. 125-153.

[19]   See for the application of this crucial principle in the realm of Muslim art T. BURCKHARDT, *The Art of Islam*, London, 1976, chapter IV, § 3.

[20]   As Muslim theologians and Muslim peripatetic philosophers do.

[21]   *Cf.* among other texts *Le paradoxe du monothéisme*, pp. 11-49.

[22]   As many Sufis have done.

hypokeímenon or Latin *substratum,* by adopting a reductive approach which would identify its unity as a «substantial» (and therefore as a material) unity, but here again we may ask if by doing such we would not deny *al-kathrah fi'l-wa dah wa'l-wa dah fi'l-kathrah,* at least in the above mentioned «synchronic» form, which, by contrast, does not consider ontological differences to be merely accidental. And so we may at last suggest, recognizing both its «immanence» and its «trascendence», that the One multiplies itself without dividing itself throughout multiplicity by adopting a «monadological» or «pluri-seriealized» approach that would positively preserve both terms of the structure as being complementary [23]. The same task goes for being, being it unique.

Certainly the three hypotheses, of which the two initial ones are the most extended in both Islamic and non-Islamic thought, differ. And it must be said that Mullâ Sadrâ al-Shîrâzî adopts the third one, which as the second one has to do with *taw îd al-wujûdî* or «ontological» *taw îd* rather than with *taw îd al-ulûhî.* Inasfar as *tashkîk* is for him the necessary complement of *wa dat al-wujûd.*

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And now we may finally draw our attention towards Sadrâ's *Kitâb al-mashâ'ir.* We will only examine here an excerpt of its four initial chapters, which correspond to §§ 5-68. And we will do so by dividing some of its contents into three short Sections throughout which we will intend to show out how Sadr al-Muta'llihîn discusses Avicennan metaphysics and settles the context in which the three ontological principles formerly refered (*isâlat al-wujûd, wa dat al-wujûd* and *tashkîk*), to which he does not however explicitly refer as such, become intelligible. We have named these Sections as follows:

— On being's reality, knowledge and self-determination (Section I, §§ 5, 6, 10, 16 & 30).

— On how being is not, with regard to its effective reality, accidental, nor it merely updates logical possibility (Section II, §§ 10, 13, & 19)

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[23]   «Monadology» may be defined as *«a metaphysical system that interprets the world as a harmonious unity encompassing a plurality of such self-determining simple entities»* (L.E. LOEMKER, «Monad and Monadology», in P. EDWARDS, (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* New York, 1967, vol. V, p. 362) which are to be considered as different expressive modes of the One (*cf.* LEIBNIZ's *Discours de métaphysique,* § 9).

— And, finally, on being's unity and multiplicity as well as on the reciprocity
between being and essence (Section III, §§ 12, 14, 24, 51-52, 53 & 55).

Notice that Section I deals mainly with being's self-evidence and simplicity, its
active immanence within the realm of plurality and its unity. Section II deals basi-
cally, meanwhile, with being's priority over the quiddities, and, inasfar as these are
not to be taken as accidental secondary characters with regard to being itself,
whith being's internal differentiation. Section III deals altogether with the three
above mentioned notions: *iṣâlat al-wujûd, wa dat al-wujûd* and *tashkîk*; the last
one may be as well deduced from the union of being and essence thus quoted.

Section I. On being's reality, knowledge and self-determination

«The reality (anniyya) *of being*-writes Mullâ Sadrâ- *is the most evident* (ajlà) *of
all things with regard to its presence* (ḥuḍûr) *and discovery* (kashf)*»* (§ 5), *«none of
which may be understood but through presential knowledge»* (§ 30). Here we find
an essential topic of Ishrâqî wisdom [24]. On the other hand, he says too, *«being
consists in the* [effective] *determination* (taʿayyᵘⁿ) *and individuation* (tashakhk-
haṣᵃⁿ) *[of all there is]..., being self-individuation and self-determination by means
of its essence* (dhât)*»* (§ 5). Thus its reality cannot be expounded by description,
for there is no other thing as manifest or notorious as being itself is and by which
it could be then described (*cf* § 6). At last, he notices, *«being is* [to be conside-
red] *simple* (basîṭ)*»* (§ 10) or indivisible, and hence one and unique.

«The reality of a certain thing-he explains further on- *consists in nothing but
its specific act of being, from within which it follow its effects* (âthârah) *and vir-
tues* (a kâmah)*... Being is therefore the reality* (aqîqah) *of all those things that do
possess reality, not needing of any other reality»* (§ 16).

Let us recall that Ibn Sînâ had distinguished *wujûd* and *mâhiyyah* (being
and quiddity), and that he had regarded the former as being almost acciden-
tal, or in other words as a so to say idle atribute [25]. Yet such a dangerous deva-

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[24]   Al-Suhrawardî's distinction between a presential knowledge (*'ilm al-ḥuḍûrî*, which may
also be called *kashf, shuhûd al-ḥuḍûrî* and *'ilm al-ishrâqî*) and a merely representative knowled-
ge (*'ilm al-ṣûrî*).
[25]   Ibn Sînâ considers being to be a non-necessary concomitant *(lawâ iq)* of the quiddity,
although not explicitly an accident *('araḍ)*. A subtil but somehow insatisfactory remark, at least

luation of being into what simply updates a certain logical possibility (what something may be according to its quiddity) obscures the reliant conection that is to be found between being's activity and its determination *in concreto,* what leads us to the next Section.

Section II. On how being is not, with regard to its effective reality, accidental, nor it merely updates logical possibility

«Being which is said to be accidental ('araḍî) *with regard to the existent beings* -writes Sadr al-Muta'llihîn- *is an abstraction* (intizâ') *attained by the mind, and thus not real being»* (§ 10), which being as we have seen the principle of every concrete determination cannot be therefore accidental.

«How can it be one (itta adah) *with the quiddities, and how can they be true with regard to it* [if we consider them both] *externally* (fî'l-khârij) -he adds-, *whereas for the mind* (fî'l-dhihn) *that abstracts* (ta lîl) *its concept* (mafhûm) *being is* [on the contrary percieved as] *accidental?»* (§ 13). Hence we may infer that *«upon that which only in addition accompanies the quiddities as something added to them* (inḍimân) *or as a way of considering them* (i'tibâr) [in the Mashshâ'î perspective] *depends by contrast their reality»* (§ 19), and thus speak of the priority of being over the quiddities.

Ibn Sînâ had introduced the difference between *wujûd* and *mâhiyyah* in order to explain the gap that he believed to be existent between the Necessary *(wâjib)* Being: God, and the possible *(munkin)* beings: the creatures. Within the former they both coincide, whereas within the possible beings they differ. Mullâ Sadrâ does not accept the «delay» thus settled between the two. And this may show us why *iṣâlat al-wujûd* and *wa dat al-wujûd* are deeply connected for him.

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if he was not only thinking logically but also in an ontological manner (as the ulterior Mashshâ'î tradition does in Sadrâ's view), which on the other hand is as an issue quite difficult to precise. *Cf.* M. CRUZ HERNÁNDEZ, «La distinción aviceniana de la esencia y de la existencia y su interpretación por la filosofía occidental», in AA.VV., *Homenaje a Millás Vallicrosa,* Barcelona, 1954, vol. I, pp. 331-347, where Avicenna's distinction is also regarded from the Western historical viewpoint; and, on Avicennan metaphysics in general, R. RAMÓN GUERRERO's very complete essay «Sobre el objeto de la metafísica según Avicena», in *Cuadernos de Pensamiento de la Fundación Universitaria Española,* no. 10, pp. 59-75.

But what would happen if we were now to regard, once stablished that *wujûd* is not accidental, that essences deserve an analogous accidental treatment? Briefly, we would remain in the view of *wa dat al-wujûd*, and we would be right enough to comprehend in such a way the reality of being, which is undoubtedly unique, but we would nevertheless ignore its effective expression *in concreto* within multiplicity. Sadrâ rebuffs this too much indifferentiated «monistic» view by setting forth the principle of *tashkîk*.

Being is not an accident, nor the essences mere concepts or logical quiddities. As we have already indicated, «univocity» explains the reality of being, whereas its intensive differentiation explains its effective (or in other words its active and intensive) expression [26]. There is an intensive «gradation» of being (as there is an intensive gradation of light) inasmuch as being's activity is sometimes reached and expressed either in a higher degree or, by contrast, in a lower one. And there is an intensive «differentiation» of being (as there is an intensive differentiation of light) inasmuch as here and there being is not equally unified, reached and expressed. *Tashkîk* (literally «oscillation», *dubitatio*) and thus «monadology» have to do with such complex meaning, both «longitudinal» and «latitudinal», so to say. *«According to Sadrâ* -writes hence Âshtyânî-, *being is the one and only truth* [of existence], *but it presents numerous divisions and grades* (marâtib-i moti'adidi-yi motikathir) *in the light of* tashkîk» [27].

«Tashkîk is interpreted in the school of Mullâ Sadrâ to mean that a single universal is predicable in different degrees and grades of its particulars —writes S.H. Nasr—... *If we ponder the concept of* tashkîk *we will discover, however, that there is not one but two kinds of gradation: the first one is one in which what causes the difference... in various degrees of something partaking of gradation is the same as that which these degrees or grades share in common..., for example numbers or light. Both the number two and three are grades of the 'universal' number. Moreover, what they have in common is numerality and what separates them is also numerality. The same holds true for light. This type of gradation is called* tashkîk khâssî *or particular gradation. The second is one in which what various*

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[26]   Being is to be regarded as intensive for the very simply reason that it is here approached despite any extensional or quantitative paradigm, which means that it is comprehended as being active and thus pure activity according to its essence. Light's intensive reflection model may help us once again to clarify this and other similar questions.

[27]   S.J. ÂSHTYÂNÎ, *op. cit.,* p. 26 (OT).

grades share in common is not what separates them from each other, such as the existence of Abraham and Moses. What these two prophets share in common is existence but what separates them is their separation in time as well as other factors. This second type of tashkîk *is called* tashkîk 'âmmî *or general gradation. When this analysis is applied to existence* -he adds-, *it becomes clear that the notion of existence partakes of general gradation whereas the reality of existence partakes of particular gradation. When we think of the existence of A and the existence of B in our mind, the notion of the existence of A and the notion of the existence of B share the notion of existence in common, but they are separated by other factors. Yet the reality of existence is a single reality partaking of grades* -he concludes-, *so that what distinguishes the existence of A from the existence of B is the reality of existence and what unites them is also the reality of existence. This is the basis of the doctrine of the 'trascendent unity of being'... which crowns Mullâ Sadrâ's metaphysics»* [28].

Section III. On being's unity and multiplicity as well as on the reciprocity between being and essence

«The reality of being -writes Sadr al-Muta'llihîn- *does not include all things in the way the universal concept* (ma'nî al-kullî) *comprises particular cases»* (§ 12). In other terms: *«The reality of being involves differentiated realities* (mukhtalafat al- aqâ'iq) *by means of the differentiation of quiddities, each one being one* (mutta idah) *and linked to a certain grade* (martabah) *and to a certain plan* (darajah) *of being»* (§ 14).

«Unless the quiddity is initially considered to be reciprocal to the act of being (mutta idat bi-l-wujûd), *as we sustain; unless it is considered to be non-accidental* [i.e. the subject to which being is added as such], *as Mashshâ'î philosophers defend; or unless it is added to being itself, as certain Sufis proclaim* -argues Sadrâ-, *it is not possible for it to be existent»* (§ 24). But *«if being* [simply] *qualifies the quiddity, this one would be* [regarded as] *its receptacle. And inasmuch as the receptacle must exist before its fulfilment, we would be then forced to admitt that the quiddity exists before being* [which is certainly absurd]. *Although being cannot occur without a quiddity, this does not allow us to see in the quiddity a receptacle,*

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²⁸   S.Ḥ NASR, *Sadr al-Dîn Shîrâzî and his Trascendent Theosophy,* pp. 107-108.

since their reciprocity expresses an union (itti âdiyyah) *and not a copulation* (irtibâṭiyyah)» between the two (§§ 51-52).

«*Being must be either placed before the quiddity or after it* -he explains further on-; *alternatively, they may be considered to be at the same time* [as said and discussed above]. *The first hypothesis takes for granted that being is independent from the quiddity. The second one presumes that the quiddity is before properly being. The third one settles, finally, that they are both at the very same time, but being the quiddity not by means of being itself, what finally leads us towards the second hypothesis. Being such consequences clearly false, the premise must also be so... To consider that being is accidental has only some sense if the quiddity is abstracted from within the act of being that corresponds to it. An this is the same as to say that being is extrinsic* (khârij) *with regard to the quiddity... Whereas their effective reciprocity is intended to mean, on the one hand, that being is essentially not separated from its specific determination, and, on the other hand, that the quiddity is linked to it and that it is on account of it*» (§§ 53, 55).

<p align="center">* * *</p>

One and Many are thus for Sadrâ two different names that name a single thing according to the process by which it becomes manifest. Hereby and as Corbin quotes, «*determination shows up to be* [for him] *the law of being*» [29]. The same goes for Ibn al-ʿArabî if we examine the role that Divine Names play in his gnosis: «*They all remit to an unique Named* -precises Corbin-, *but each one refers to an essential determination, thus different from other possible ones... To merely stop in front of the unity of the One* [differently] *Named would mean to stop in front of the Divine Being as a Self* (dhât) *independently from the world and from the relations that are to be found between its Names and the Names of the world,... forgetting therefore that the Divine Being is only revealed to us throughout...* [its specific] *configurations... And this would mean not to percieve unity in multiplicity*» [30]. And the same goes too for al-Suhrawardî's Light ontological *complicatio*.

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[29]   H. CORBIN, notes on Sadrâ's *taʿalîqât* upon al-SUHRAWARDÎ's *Kitâb ikmat al-ishrâq*, translated by H. Corbin altogether with Sadrâ's and Quṭb al-Dîn al-Shîrâzî's glosses and edited by Ch. Jambet, Lagrase, 1986, p. 447, note a (OT).

[30]   H. CORBIN, *L'imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn ʿArabî*, Paris, 1958, new ed. 1977, Part II, chapter 1, § 2, pp. 224-225 of the Spanish version by A. López Tobajas and M. Tabuyo, Barcelona, 1993 (OT).

Now and to end with, let us suggest that Sadrâ's *monadological univocism* continues a certain Ancient Neoplatonic tradition, as well as Akbarian and Ishrâqî theories do. But Neoplatonic does not necessarily mean Plotinian. Indeed, Sadr al-Muta'llihîn's «henology» is much closer to Proclus' thought than to Plotinus' one [31]. A brief explanation will be perhaps useful.

As the French specialist in Neoplatonic thought J. Trouillard expounds, *«whereas for Plotinus reality is divided in hierarchical orders, going from the One down to matter, in Proclus' works a different tendency is outlined as far as it compells us to consider all orders, even the inferior ones, as radii immediately born from within the universal center. Thus they all become, although not equally, direct modes of the One. In other words, whereas for Plotinus their division is either trascendent or descendent, for Proclus it is compensated by a circular distribution. No other shows up to be the meaning of his serial theory, which introduces each being or character in a chain whose principle is* [each time] *a self-determination of Unity. Being full expression of the One»*, which communicates its oneness and its simplicity each time in a different way, *«and thus capable of self-determining itself... on account of its own law, this principle is called by Proclus after Syrianus* henad (henás). *According to this specific viewpoint everything is submerged in the One and comes out of it in its own and proper mode,... since the One does not establish but* [different] *'henads' (or* henádes*), that is, simple* [or indivisible] *unities that place those serial characters which constitute the infinite variety of things. Hereof Proclus 'henads' must be said to be* -says Trouillard- *not productions but 'manifestations'* (hekphánseis) *of the One»* [32].

1 x 1(a) x 1(b) x 1(c)... x 1(n) may be settled as a possible formula to express it [33]. Notice however that we are not only saying, for this would mean to still say very little indeed, that the center of the circomference is to be found in each concrete point of its peryphery (or that *«Deus est sphaera infinita cuius*

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[31]   Yet his ontology is somehow Porphyrian _we follow here P. HADOT's remarks in «Dieu comme acte d'être dans le néoplatonisme» (an article to be find in *Dieu et l'Être*, Paris, 1978,pp. 57-ss.), for the One is for him nothing but Being itself (*esse*, not *ens*).

[32]   J. TROUILLARD, «Le neoplatonisme», § «Proclus», in B. PARAIN, (ed.), *Encyclopédie de la Pléiade. Histoire de la philosophie*, Paris, 1969, vol. 1, pp. 126-127, 134 of the Spanish version, México, Siglo XXI, 1972 (OT). See also, from the same author, «La monadologie de Proclus», in *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, 1959.

[33]   See H. CORBIN's *Le paradoxe du monothéisme, loc. cit.*, where he writes 1 x 1 x 1, etc., in order to differentiate the non-arithmetic multiplication of the «One», that by multiplying itself does not become divided, from the multiplicity of the «many» (1 + 1 + 1, etc.)

centrum est ubique, circumferentia nusquam», as the second proposition of the *Liber viginti quattuor philosphorum* stablishes) [34], but that from within each point a new circumference may be drawn, and this *ad infinitum* (since *«Deus est sphaera cuius tot sunt circumferentiae quot puncta»*) [35].

We have indicated above that the One communicates its oneness and its simplicity each time in a different way. But of course it does not communicate its Uniqueness, and this is the reason for which we must distinguish, as Ibn al-'Arabî does, between Divine *a adiyyah* and Divine *wâ idiyya,* or, in other words, between Divine «Uniqueness» and Divine «Oneness», inverting therefore -as P. Beneito, the relevant Spanish specialist in Ibn al-'Arabî has both lucidly seen and explained- the usual translation of both terms [36]. With regard to the former one we may only say, as Mullâ Sadrâ notices in his *Kitâb al-mashâ'ir* reminding us of a Qu'rânic verse, that *«faces bow themselves in front of the Eternally Living, the Subsistent* (al-çayy, al-Qayyûm)*»* (*Qu'rân,* 20:111). For «negative» theology *(tanzîh)* begins there and only there where «positive» theology *(tashbîh)* necessarily ends; and both are, as well as in another sense «one» and «many», the two different aspects of a single truth and a of single reality.

Thus we may say that Sadrâ distinguishes four different but deeply related orders: *a main asimetrical difference in being's unity, its univocity* (which is not in contradiction with the former), *the multiplicity of its different expressions* (i.e. a second realm of difference within its unity) *and the difference of each difference.* Or in other words, that he considers «asimetry», «univocity» and «analogy» (that we often think separately by thinking that asimetry means equivocity and by opposing the concepts of univocity and analogy) as its three definitory characters [37]. Yet the question of Divine *a adiyya* held by the first cate-

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[34]   Haydar al-Âmulî gives a few examples of this model in his *Naṣ(al-nuṣûṣ,* where he studies the reflection of the One upon the mirror of the many.

[35]   *Cf.* A. BAUSANI's «Note su alcuni aspetti 'scientifici' delle *Futû ât* di Ibn 'Arabî», in *Revista degli Studi Orientale,* 1978, no. 52, pp. 199-215. See on the *Liber* P. Lucentini's edition and translation (Milano, 1999) and his remarks on Eckhart's hermeneutics of both sentences.

[36]   *Cf.* IBN AL-'ARABI's *Kitâb kashf al-ma'nà 'an sirr asmâ' Allâh al- usnà,* edited and translated by P. Beneito, Murcia, 1996, p. 354.

[37]   Let E be existence, U Unity as being's supreme principle, D Difference as a second ontological principle, u any concrete unity thus reached by any particular being and d any concrete difference thus simultaniously expressed. From within the general principle $E(x) = \Lambda x$ $(x \in U \wedge x \in D)$, which may be considered as a variant of the platonic principle $E(x) = \Lambda x$ $(x \in U$ $\wedge x \in \ddot{U})$ (*cf.* H. KRÄMER, *Platone e i fondamenti della metafisica,* Milano, 1982, III, 1, D, where

gory was not thoroughly explored, in the realm of Post-Avicennan Iranian philosophy, by Sadr al-Muta'llihîn's *muta'âlî* philosophy (although he spoke of it too [38]), but by the school of another extraordinary relevant figure: Rajab 'Alî al-Tabrîzî, who died between 1669-1670, the very same years in which Spinoza published his *Tractatus theologico-politicus* and in which appeared Pascal's postume *Pensées sur la religion et sur quelques autres sujets*.

Ú represents Multiplicity as a principle and $\in$ each being's $= x$ *méthexis* both in Unity and Multiplicity), four principles can be hereof settled according to Sadrâ's view: 1) Λu ($u \in U \wedge u \neq U$), i.e. $U > u$; 2) $\Lambda d = d(U)$; 3) $\Lambda u = d(U)$; and 4) Λx [$x = d(D(U))$]. Of course we are not here infront of Plato's thesis concerning the coimplicatiomn of the One *(hén)* and of the Indefinite Dualitude *(aóristos duás)* as two original principles, for Neoplatonic thought develops Hermodorus' view, that tends to place the One as the single principle of reality. But we are closer to it than in any other form of Neoplatonism.

[38] *Cf.* the three distinctions that he observes within «absolute being» *(wujûd al-muṭlaq): lâ bi-shart* (without condition), *bi-sharti-lâ* (with negative condition) and *munbasit* (disclosed). Let us simply recall it.