

5 Reality and the circle of being

The reality of being, insofar as it is so unconfined by absoluteness or limitation (*ghayr muqayyad bi-l-iṭlāq wa-l-taqyīd*), is essential activity and manifestation (*al-fi'liyya wa-l- zuhūr*). Contingent meanings and mental qualities only attach to it [being] with respect to its degrees . . . So being becomes absolute and limited, universal and particular, one and many with the occurrence of distinction in its essence and its reality.

The reality of being (*al-ḥaqīqa al-wujūdiyya*) is the most common of things with respect to its inclusivity and its deployment among quiddities . . . Through the light of being are some privations differentiated from others in the mind since it can judge the impossibility of some of them and contingency of others.

Being encompasses everything in its essence and through it do things subsist. If being did not exist, nothing would exist either in the mind or in external reality. In fact being is the same as these [modes], and what is disclosed in its degrees and manifest by its forms and its realities in knowledge and *in re*.¹

For Ṣadrā, being is a process, a modulated reality that corresponds to the modulated semantics of the term ‘being’ and modulated nature of mental being.² Because reality is primary, being as a modulated reality entails a mental language that is modulated and semantics of modulation.³ This final chapter describes the Sadrian ‘circle of being’. First, we need to show that being has reality, that there is a mode of being that is actualised. Being must have reference for *tashkīk* since what is shared in this modulated way is an actual ipseity (*huwiyya ‘ayniyya*).⁴ Ṣadrā must espouse realism and reject the Illuminationist contention that being has neither reference nor actuality. The reality of being is ontologically primary and singular with many occurrences that are connected at differing levels of intensity.⁵

Being is fundamental in what exists and is differentiated by [scales of] perfection and imperfection, intensification and debilitation (*kamālan wa-nuqṣan wa-shiddatan wa ḍu‘fan*). More perfect and more intense being has many referents and senses, and this amelioration entails greater simplicity and singularity. And vice versa . . .⁶

This is a description of the Sadrian circle of being. Second, we describe the One,

God, in His simple relationship with the cosmos in terms of modulation and as the most intense being from which the being of the cosmos proceeds. Third, being descends from the One in a series of differing hierarchical processes including the Avicennan discourse of the modalities and a Sufi/Shi'i discussion of the 'togetherness' of the One with the many. The relationship of God and the world is complex and fluctuates between the poles of monism and pluralism. Modulation posits two hierarchical axes. The vertical (*tūlī*) hierarchy orders reality from the One through the intelligible realm and down to this sensible world, while the horizontal (*'araḍī*) hierarchy pertains to this world of generation and corruption and arranges an order within this phenomenal world of *sensibilia*. It is the former order of being that delivers to us the Sadrian ontological proof for the existence of God called the 'Proof of the truthful' (*burhān al-ṣiddīqīn*). Intensity remains the key determinant of these hierarchies and of the reality of modulation. Finally, the circle of being is completed by the reversion to the One that is mediated by *wilāya* and the Perfect Man, who is the most intense degree of being and hence closest to the One. *Wilāya* is the proximate rank to the One and the most intense level of being, while in its comprehension of all degrees of being, it is the intimate mediator between the cosmos and the One.

Process and the reality of being

Being is a flow, a procession that runs through the fabric and structure of reality.⁷ Being-process (*al-sarayān al-wujūdī*) pervades contingents like the spirit in a body.⁸ It is thus a flow from the One through reality.⁹ The unity of graded reality means that there is a continuum that does not suffer any gaps in being or knowledge.¹⁰

Ṣadrā suggests that reality comprises monadic vortices. Each reality in its manifestation intensifies to the point of revealing infinite monads.¹¹ Vortices as complexes of processes replace substances as units of reality and account for phenomenal change, contradiction and opposition that we experience.¹² An existent is a vortex, a structure of events that is an act of being.¹³ An event may be defined as a 'change in substance'.¹⁴ According to Ṣadrā, entities are in constant flux, in constant substantial motion.¹⁵ Their identity is retained through the 'structure of these events'. The 'world process' is eternal and nothing is constant.¹⁶ The key principle in determining the identity of the event is not so much that it occupies that same location and place, but the same stretch of time, significant since Ṣadrā regards time as a co-ordinate of being.¹⁷ These vortices are essentially in motion at grades of becoming.¹⁸

This procession has degrees and levels within the series from the One in layers of intensity.¹⁹ In the Proclean scheme, two series of monads proceed from the One: *per se* causation and p-series, defined in degrees of priority. One is imparticipable and the other is participable. The chain of being is a p-series in Proclean Neoplatonism in which each link is an appropriate degree of reality with a degree of participation in the One.²⁰ This is true of Sadrian process: each degree of reality is part of the chain of being insofar as it participates in being. That being, which is pure and simple, is thus all things *qua* their existence.

‘The simple reality is all things’

Critical to the relationship of the One and the many is the doctrine of the ‘simple reality’. This is central to Sadrian philosophy, drawing upon the simplicity of the prior One in *Enneads* V.4[7].1.5–15,

For there must be something prior to all things which is simple, and this must be different from all that comes after it, being by itself, not mixed with those that come after it; yet being able to be present in the others in a different way, being truly one, and not something else which is then one.²¹

In his Treatise on the union of the intellecting subject and object, Ṣadrā draws on the *Plotiniana* and states that the Active Intellect is all things (*al-‘aql al-fā‘‘āl kull al-mawjūdāt*).²² This follows from his doctrine of the primacy and logical priority of being.²³ In the *Asfār*, he quotes the following text from the tenth *mīmar* of the *Theologia*, an extract that exemplifies how the doctrine of the simple reality reconciles monism and pluralism by advocating neither.

The Pure One (*al-wāḥid al-maḥḍ*) is the cause of all things and not of all things. Rather it is the beginning (*bada’*) of everything and not all things. All things are in it and not in it. All things flow from it and subsist and are sustained by it and return to it. So if someone says: how is it possible that things are from a simple one that has no duality or multiplicity in it in any sense? I say: because a pure simple one has nothing in it, but because it is a pure one, all things flow from it. Thus when there was no existence (*huwiyya*), being flowed from it.²⁴

In his commentary, Ṣadrā espouses a form of Neoplatonic procession and doctrine of the intellect-*psuchē* that is at odds with most of his philosophical discourse in the *Asfār*. First, he accepts the standard account of the *Theologia*. *Nous* as the first existent flows immediately from the One and from it, existents proceed through the mediation of the intelligible realm. Second, the One is itself above perfection and plenitude. The first existent and the first perfect being is *nous*.²⁵ This Neoplatonic background is significant because it seems to cause a problem for modulation. Can this simple reality be modulated and if that is the case does it not entail multiplicity in the godhead? The second part of the objection is answered in the quoted objection in the passage above. But for the first, following *Enneads* VI.2.20 it is clear that being is a quasi-genus in which the whole is prior to its parts but, because of its ‘potency’, remains unaffected by any procession.²⁶ This refers to the One, *nous* and all beings.

The doctrine of the simple reality is difficult but central to Sadrian philosophy.²⁷ The argument presented in *al-Ḥikma al-‘Arshiyya* concerns the nature of God as that simple being and illustrates His knowledge of things through it.²⁸ The concept is central to resolving many theological problems relating to the nature of God. Indeed, it is an important ontological proof for the existence of God through an analysis of simplicity. ‘Every simple reality is, by virtue of its unity, all things. It is

not deprived of any of these things except by way of imperfections, privations and contingencies'.²⁹

God is simple being because He is described by being, and being is a unique, simple reality.³⁰ It is simplicity devoid of quiddity.³¹ That simplicity is uncontaminated by multiplicity, privation, imperfection or any such negative property.³² God's being is pure and unencumbered by complexity such as a quiddity that might raise questions of genera, division, composition and definition.³³

This is God without multiplicity, at the level of singularity (*ahadiyya*) that encompasses the attributes considered intrinsically and not manifested towards and manifesting the cosmos.³⁴ The concept of a thing does not entail or include either its privation or its imperfection as there is 'no alterity in being since alterity is privation'.³⁵ Thus the simple reality that is God does not include or entail imperfections or privations. An objection to this could be that negative attributes are affirmed in theology, especially in the Shi'i tradition in which one emphasises those concepts and properties that cannot be predicated of Him such as 'He is not a body', nor 'confined in a space' and so on.³⁶ The answer is that since these properties are negative, privative and imperfect, one can affirm them because 'the negation of negation is being and the negation of imperfection is perfection in being'.³⁷ Ṣadrā then proceeds to an analysis of language and signification:

Thus [taking the example] you say C is not B. In this context, if that with respect to which C is C is exactly the same as that with respect to which C is not B, so that C in itself would in its very essence be the referent for the negation, then [if this were so] the essence of C would be privative fact since everyone who intellects C would also intellect not B. But the consequent is invalid so the antecedent must be too. Thus it is established that [for every C] the subject of C-ness is a composite essence. Thus the mind distinguishes an existential meaning by which C is and a privative meaning by which C is not B or anything else negated of it.³⁸

The point being made concerns the existence–essence distinction. Everything that is not simple but complex is a composite pair of being and quiddity.³⁹ But it also illustrates how the simple reality is a being and encompasses things *qua* their being and *not* their quiddity. Even more so, the simple being has nothing to be negated because simplicity cannot be analysed into parts or components.

If anything can be negated of an existential factor, then it is not a simple reality. Every simple reality is all things with respect to their being and completeness and not with respect to their privation and incompleteness.

A simple reality cannot be predicated of anything since it is simple and unconditioned. This affirms diversity-in-unity since if nothing can be predicated of God, then it follows that the cosmos cannot be predicated of Him. Thus, it denies existential monism.

The final part of the argument then relates this to the nature of God's knowledge and His immediate presence to things such that the 'claim of the unjust' that He does not know particulars cannot arise.

It is established that His knowledge of all things is a simple knowledge and their presence in Him is a simple reality . . . Knowledge is only an expression for being on the condition that it not be mixed with matter.⁴⁰

Thus simplicity defines the nature of God's knowledge.

The doctrine of the simple reality has two further roles. First, it provides a proof for the existence of God by perfection, as the most intense limit case, given that simplicity is an attribute of perfection.⁴¹ Second, it affirms his necessity in every sense thus negating the famous doubt of Ibn Kammūna [d. 1284] of the postulation of two necessary beings.⁴² Simplicity denies any contingent facet to God, who is necessary in every sense.⁴³ God is simple being as He is uniquely necessary in and by Himself.⁴⁴

Competing hierarchies in reality

Thus far, we have considered the reality of being at the level of the One. In this section, we discuss the descent of being in phenomenal reality in competing hierarchies of descent from the One, defined in terms of intensity.

Modalities

The approach to metaphysics that divides existents into the modalities of necessity and contingency is associated with Avicenna. They are defined in his work, *al-Mabda'*.

The Necessary being is that existent for which the supposition of non-being (*farāḍ 'adamihi*) entails impossibility. The contingent being is that for which the supposition of either being or non-being does not entail impossibility. The Necessary being is logically necessary (*ḍarūrī*), and the contingent is that in which there is no necessity of any sort, either of being or privation . . .⁴⁵

Modalities provide a means for establishing a hierarchy of being and reality that places the One, the Necessary at the apex and contingents below it. All non-necessary and non-actual beings are a means of affirming his 'metaphysics of radical contingency'.⁴⁶

However, Ṣadrā concurs with Leibniz on the necessity of everything.⁴⁷ This follows a basic metaphysical maxim of Islamic philosophy: whatever is not necessary cannot exist (*mā lam yajib [bi-ghayrih] lam yūjad*).⁴⁸ Everything is a necessary outcome of divine providence (*ināya*) due to the essential goodness of God.⁴⁹ It is this providence that is the cause of being, that overflows God's being into the universe as the contents of His mind become manifest.⁵⁰ He makes their existence in His mind manifest in extra-mental reality.⁵¹ Thus the cosmos becomes necessary. Being is perfect procession so each degree of being proceeded is necessary.⁵² Unlike the mechanistic emanating One of Neoplatonism, Ṣadrā 'saves' the Qur'anic account through a volitional theory of providence that insists

upon the freedom and purpose of God.⁵³ God's self-intellection and conception of a perfect order in His mind is a cause for the procession of the cosmos, and not a desire (*al-shawq*) for the sensible that occurs in the *nous* of Neoplatonism.⁵⁴ Necessity defines existence, given the axiom that 'that thing that is not necessary, does not exist'.⁵⁵ But this does not entail a hard determinism. It is not the case that all possible outcomes are realised.⁵⁶ Rather, all contingents that are realisable and realised are necessary. It is still possible for some conceivables to be pure contingents (with respect to their quiddities) that languish in non-being.⁵⁷ Nor does it entail a violation of the uniqueness of the Necessary being.⁵⁸

Fundamental to this hierarchy of reality is the concept of dependent contingency (*imkān faqrī*) as opposed to essential contingency (*imkān māhuwī*). The former relates contingency to the being of the contingent and the latter to its quiddity that is indifferent to being or privation.⁵⁹ Conventionally, 'contingency of quiddities means the negation of the necessity of being and the privation of (being) a thing (*ma'nā l-imkān fī-l-māhiyyāt salb darūrat al-wujūd wa-l-'adam 'an al-shay'*)'.⁶⁰ But in dependent contingency, contingents are by virtue of their dependence upon the One existentially.⁶¹ Each contingent, following the existence–essence distinction, has an aspect of quidditative contingency and existential contingency.⁶² The point of dependent contingency is that the ipseity of things relates to the One, and nothing can exist if its being is not attached to the One.⁶³ The individuation of a particular contingent depends on being (through which it is necessary) and not upon a sufficient reason that will draw the quiddity out of its indifference to being and privation.⁶⁴ This dependence, this existential poverty in comparison with the True One is a source of shame for contingents to refer to themselves or be called 'existent'. Šadrā quotes a saying of the Prophet that 'Poverty is shame [darkness of the face] in this world and the next'.⁶⁵

This concept of existential poverty is found in the Avicennan formulation where the cause and sustenance of the contingent is existential.⁶⁶ It suggests a monistic intent on the part of our author.⁶⁷ In fact, on this point as Šadrā quotes him, Avicenna seems to affirm intensification in modalities.⁶⁸ Existential poverty has strong Neoplatonic roots. The One of the *Enneads* preserves all things in existence, and is 'that on which everything depends'.⁶⁹ He is the existential cause of everything.⁷⁰ His being establishes and sustains all other.⁷¹

A traditional Avicennan approach to modalities depends upon the concept of sufficient reason (*tarjīh*), a preponderating agent that brings a privative quiddity out of its indifference to being and quiddity and existentiates it. This view can then function like a cosmological proof for the existence of God.⁷² Although Šadrā allows for the possibility of cosmological proofs, he prefers ontological ones since the cosmos as degrees of the same reality of being concerns the apriority of being, then arguments about its nature and origin are ontological. Modulation is thus neither incompatible with modalities nor with emanationist monorealism.⁷³

Another feature of the Sadrian approach to modalities is that the vertical hierarchy of being is regulated by noble contingency (*al-imkān al-ashraf*).⁷⁴ Suhrawardī explains this principle in *Hikmat al-ishrāq*:

If a baser contingent exists, a nobler contingent must already have existed . . . The dominating light – that which is entirely incorporeal – is nobler than the managing light; being further from connections with darkness, it is thus nobler. Thus its being must be prior.⁷⁵

The Illuminationist roots of the doctrine are significant.⁷⁶ Noble contingency posits co-dependence; whatever is higher in the hierarchy of contingent being depends on that which is lower for its manifestation, and that which is lower depends on what is higher for its realisation. This affirms the existence–essence distinction. Noble contingency describes reality as a continuum that as a totality is contingent and dependent upon the One, the apex of the modulated scale of being:

The rule of noble contingency requires that there be between the First Principle and what is supposed to be the closest of existents to it an essential connection and similarly between any existent and what is proximate to it and so forth until the culmination of pure entities and lights. So the totality is like a single essence and a single connection differentiated in degrees of intensity of illumination and perfection of being (*shiddat al-ishrāq wa-kamāliyyat al-wujūd*) and it possesses an ascending aspect that is infinite in intensity and a descending aspect that is finite in intensity.⁷⁷

Modulation defines noble contingency: the higher contingent is more intense than the lower.⁷⁸ This follows from Ṭūsī, for whom modalities are different degrees of being by modulation, entailing a hierarchy of being defined by intensification.⁷⁹

Intensification

Existents have degrees in existentiality, and being has different domains, some of which are more perfect and noble and other more imperfect and more base.⁸⁰

Modulation by intensity occurs within the circle of being, from the arc of descent (*qaws al-nuzūl*) from the One to the arc of ascent (*qaws al-ṣu'ūd*) back to the One.⁸¹ As Ṣadrā's student, Fayḍ says,

Being descends from the heaven of absoluteness (*samā' al-iṭlāq*) to the earth of limitation (*arḍ al-taqyīd*) in *degrees*. It starts from the most noble and ends with the basest. Thus a descending path (*silsilat al-nuzūl*) makes its way in it [being]. Then it [being] takes an ascent (*ṣu'ūd*), and it continues to progress from the lowest to the most excellent, until it ends with the most excellent in this ascending order.

Whatever is closer to its Originator, Glorified may He be, is closer to simplicity, unity and independence, and further from differentiation, complexity and dependence.⁸²

God is the limit case of absolute perfection, intensity and the point of origin and return in the circle of being.⁸³

The beatific and ecstatic experience of the ‘doffing metaphor’ of *Enneads* IV.8.1 is associated in the Illuminationist tradition with veils and degrees of light in a vertical hierarchy ascending up to the One. Ṣadrā in his *scholia* on the *Sharḥ Hikmat al-ishrāq* of Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī [d. 1311] uses this to explain modulation:

Know that the reality of being is graded in levels, one above the other and the higher comprehends all under it in a real sense (*ma‘nawī*) . . . So everything that is more potent, is more intense in its comprehension and its rank is more enveloping. Everything that is less potent inclines towards what is more perfect than it. All levels of being are veils that prevent one from noticing the most perfect, the highest being that comprehends everything (*al-wujūd al-atamm al-a‘lā al-muḥīt ‘alā kulli shay’*). All being is light except that it is differentiated in its luminosity that becomes physical and corporeal forms, forms that are tenebrous in comparison to the higher [incorporeal] intellects and souls, since they are contaminated with privation.⁸⁴

Veils of light are degrees of contingent being graded in intensities from the One, a translunary hierarchy that traverses the division between the sensible and intelligible realms.⁸⁵ The closer that a degree of being is to the One, the more intense it is, and the more distant it is, the weaker in intensity. Perfection in the scale of being is what tends towards simplicity and unity (and indeed the One) and what is most removed from complexity.⁸⁶ Every being thus has two aspects: one is a veil that hides the divine by confusing the perceiver into accepting what appears phenomenally before him, but the other is a manifestation of the divine. The former is its quidditative aspect and the latter its existential aspect. This is why beings that are devoid of quidditative features are purer lights that indicate the divine through their existence.

Intensification posits degrees of being that constitute modulation in degrees of perfection and participation.⁸⁷ The latter dynamic is significant for the Neoplatonic roots of the problem. Damascius affirmed that being *qua* soul constantly changes because the forms within it differ through differing levels of participation (*metexis*).⁸⁸ Perfect participation is perfect being, that is God who is the Agent of this hierarchy.⁸⁹ Beings participate in the general ‘pool of being’ sharing in the very roots of being, and differing in their degrees of participation by perfection and imperfection, independence and dependence, and priority and posteriority.⁹⁰ The concept of intensification is taken from the Illuminationist tradition’s vision of the hierarchy of lights. The Illuminationist tradition considers quiddities as universals to undergo intensification as well, a concept that Ṣadrā then applies to being.⁹¹ Ṣadrā explicitly tells us that he is reversing the Illuminationist position.⁹² Modulation only applies to being since different intensities of being still permit causality but if modulation were to occur in quiddity, one quiddity of a different intensity could not be a cause for another.⁹³ Quiddity cannot undergo modulation

because a quiddity defines a certain nature with essential and accidental properties that are true of all its portions and individuals. If it could be more intense, then all those individuals would be so, and so for debilitation. So quiddity cannot undergo modulation. What defines a quiddity is thus quite strict and what marks out a being is more ‘fuzzy’ and naturally open to modulation. The law of Indiscernibles does not apply equally to both quiddity and being.⁹⁴

Şadrā affirms intensity in substances with three degrees in each substance, a logical, an intelligible and a material and the whole thing is a manifestation of the divine essence through its sustaining agency.⁹⁵ Substantial motion is a concomitant of being. Just as God’s agency brings things into being so does it bring about substantial motion.⁹⁶ The relationship between being and motion is described as follows.

Being permits intensification and debilitation (*al-ishtidād wa-l-taḍa‘uf*) meaning that it permits intensifying motion. Substance in its substantiality, that is its substantial being, allows for essential change. The parts of motion are continuous but they are not in actuality distinct, but rather exist in a single being . . . The quiddities that correspond to them do not exist in actuality as distinct . . .⁹⁷

In the Sadrian doctrine substance undergoes intensification and modulation because it is in motion.⁹⁸ Two examples are given for this. First, water when boiled turns into steam not by changing from a definite substance water to a definite substance steam through a shifting intensity in its substantiality. Rather, the being intensifies and the substance undergoes a change and modulation.⁹⁹ The vortex of events of that being that is watery remains the substrate of that change. The other famous example is that of the sperm in the womb that develops and becomes an embryo. Substantial motion occurs in bodily substances through the flux of being and the constant layering of ipseities with forms one after another.¹⁰⁰ It is constant renewal of forms since hylomorphism demands that matter never be free of form.¹⁰¹ The ipseity that undergoes the change remains a constant vortex.¹⁰² The question of substantial motion was raised in Neoplatonism, as Şadrā knew well. Motion and being are identical concepts in Plotinus with the same reference in reality as properties of intellect.¹⁰³ But they are mentally distinct as intentional objects and cognitive activity. Both Iamblichus [d. c. 326] and Damascius [d. after 529] held that the soul in its descent into the body and then its ascending reversion undergoes substantial change without violating its unity and identity because it changed itself.¹⁰⁴ All the ‘lives’ of the human soul are so many faculties or manifestations of the same substance.¹⁰⁵ What is also useful for us is the ‘architectonic’ approach of later Neoplatonism to the hierarchy of being, shunning the monistic tendencies of both Plotinus and Porphyry.¹⁰⁶

However, in the Aristotelian and mainstream Neoplatonic tradition, *ousia qua* substance does not admit of more or less.¹⁰⁷ Avicenna denies intensity in being or more specifically substance.¹⁰⁸ ‘Being *qua* being does not differ in intensity or allow of more or less. It only differs in priority, posteriority, independence and dependence, necessity and contingency’.

The primary sense of being is substance.¹⁰⁹ Substance cannot undergo intensification and debilitation because it has no opposite and intensity requires opposition and contrariness.

Substance does not allow of more intense and weaker. Intensification and debilitation is negated with the negation of opposition in which it is not possible to change from one to another through motion . . . Rather opposition in substance occurs simultaneously and not through motion. Motion does not occur in substances and it is unlike the change from blackness to whiteness.¹¹⁰

Bahmanyār makes the link between the denial of intensity and the denial of substantial motion that is critical for intensification. Intensification and debilitation occur where there is motion but one substance cannot be more intense than another nor weaker than another. This does not mean that a substance cannot be prior in substantiality to another. First substance is prior in substantiality to second but is not more intense. Priority is attached to the being of substantiality and intensity to the quiddity of substantiality.¹¹¹ Although substances are divided into primary (that is, individuals) and secondary ('man'), this distinction in their substantiality is not by grades of intensity or modulation since the distinction is not essential.¹¹² Substance cannot undergo motion.¹¹³

The Sadrian counter-argument runs as follows. Substance is extra-mental self-sufficient being. It is not a genus and like being undergoes modulation. Being is more primary than substance.¹¹⁴ Things exist in grades of intensity and existential priority and posteriority. For example, 'father' does not precede 'son' either causally or in humanity, but rather existentially.¹¹⁵ The distinction in substances and substantiality is not through the modulation of substantiality as the Illuminationists suggest.¹¹⁶ Rather, substantiality is a singular undifferentiated concept, but it is the being of the substance that is modulated in grades of intensity.¹¹⁷ This pertains to the horizontal hierarchy as well. Humans are prior and more intense than beasts in being and not by virtue of 'greater substantiality'.¹¹⁸

The Peripatetics held that being cannot remain single with grades of intensity (and hence must be multiple in reality) because intensity does not differentiate one from the other and it leads to two problems within the metaphysics of radical contingency.¹¹⁹ First, there can be no causality, because there is no greater or lesser in potency and a cause must be present with its effect but also more potent than its effect through essential priority and not greater intensity.¹²⁰ Causality functions with other scales of prior and posterior but not with intensity.¹²¹ As Bahmanyār says,

It works for priority and posteriority because the cause exists in the first instance and the effect in the second. [It works for] independence and dependence because the cause does not depend for its being on the effect but rather exists in itself or through another cause. The effect depends on the cause . . . [It works for] necessity and contingency because the being of the effect in itself is not necessary since if it were, then it would be necessary without

a self-sufficient cause. So its essence is contingent being and only necessary through its cause.¹²²

Second, there can be no sufficient cause or preponderance as no one side of a potential contingent, whether existence or non-existence, dominates.¹²³

The Illuminationist response is to deny causality altogether since the hierarchy of lights is not causally related, and concepts such as substances and being are merely intentional.¹²⁴ For Ṣadrā, being has no cause since it must be necessary to exist.¹²⁵

Being exists by itself. It is the determination of itself and the being of its essence. With respect to itself, it is not attached to anything; rather [it is attached to other things] with respect to its accidental determinations and developments following it. So being *qua* being does not have an agent by which it is established, nor does it have matter which is impossible for it, and no substrate in which it is found, nor any form in which it is clothed, nor does it have any *telos*.

Being is too great to be attached to any cause since it has been disclosed that it has no cause at all, nor any cause by which it is, nor any cause from which (*minhu*) it is . . . nor any cause in which it is, nor any cause which it has.¹²⁶

Thus the hierarchy of being is not a causal hierarchy. Hence there is no sufficient cause or preponderance.¹²⁷ Contingents exist not through such agency but because they exist by virtue of the Necessary. They cannot be non-existent or indifferent and then emerge as existents.¹²⁸ The cause of being is the One but there is no causality within the realm of being.¹²⁹

Furthermore, degrees of intensity for the Peripatetics entail different species.¹³⁰ But intensification is not differentiated in actual being since if it were it would entail composition in motion of momentary entities that are infinite and that is impossible.¹³¹ The Peripatetic mistakes distinctions as occurrent in essences; thus he posits different species. But in fact being is what is considered.¹³² The Peripatetic argument is rejected as follows:

The nature of being accepts intensity and debilitation in its simple essence. There is no difference between individuals by an essential differential distinction (*mumayyiz faṣlī dhātī*) or by an accidental type (*muṣannif ʿaraḍī*) or by a feature of species (*mushakhkhiṣ*) that is additional to the ground of its nature. Their individuals and units only differ by essential intensity and debilitation (*al-shidda wa-l-ḍuʿf*), priority and posteriority, nobility and baseness (*al-sharaf wa-l-khissa*). Universal concepts that are true of them [referents] . . . are called quiddities that differ in essence by genus or species or accident. Because of this it is said that being differs in species and that the degrees of more intense and weaker are different species.¹³³

But the Peripatetic tradition is not unified on the issue of intensity. Avicenna's commentator, Ṭūsī, in his commentary on *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* remarks that modulation occurs in being, not only in terms of priority and precedence but also in

terms of intensity.¹³⁴ In concession to Avicenna, he does not permit intensity within causality but does within other divisions of being including Necessary and contingent.¹³⁵ He argues that since quiddity cannot undergo intensity yet occurs in different modes, this suggests that the differences are existential instances of quiddity that differ in intensity. It is not quiddity that intensifies.¹³⁶ The Peripatetic doctrine holds that distinction by intensity occurs in quiddities through their differentiae. But this is rejected because differentiae are not grades of intensity and quiddity does not undergo intensification.¹³⁷ Being is not distinguished by differentiae since it is not a universal.¹³⁸ Tūsī is already part of a processist turn in Islamic philosophy because he does not automatically consider substance to be the primary referent and sense of being, unlike the other Peripatetics.

In the *Asfār*, Ṣadrā adjudicates at length between the Peripatetics and Illuminationists on intensity and modulation. The first issue is how things differ: do they differ by the whole of their quiddities, by parts of their quiddities, by extrinsic properties or by their existence? The Illuminationists pick the first option and the Peripatetics a mixture of the second and third. But the correct position is to assert that beings differ by intensity in their being.¹³⁹

The second issue deals with varieties of 'more or less'. The first argument considers essences and individuals. The Peripatetics deny any modulation by precedence, priority or perfection within an essence. The Illuminationists permit such distinction. Ṣadrā takes the Illuminationist position and provides the example of light that is graded, intensifies and affects other by itself.¹⁴⁰ The individuation of beings and essences is precisely in such a hierarchy of intensity, precedence, excellence and perfection.¹⁴¹ Against the Illuminationists he makes the point that the distinction between two black bodies is not that one is a more intensely black species than the other but rather that one's being is more intense, which manifests itself in being more black.¹⁴² The unity of the thing is not compromised in intensifying motion since substance is not the primary ontic unit.¹⁴³

The second argument of the Peripatetics is that intensity and modulation in being entails species distinction between individuals. This is a logical impossibility. The Illuminationists deny distinction by species or differentia. This is then related to the third argument that intensity and motion only occur in the categories of quantity and quality that are distinct types of modulation. Peripatetics deny intensity or motion in substance.¹⁴⁴ Ṣadrā broadly agreeing with the Illuminationists makes three objections. First, the Peripatetic argument on the distinction of scales of quantity and quality refers to ordinary and conventional language use. But these recourses do not amount to a philosophical proof. The Peripatetics distinguish between the two in a circular fashion entailing a *petitio principii*. In fact, both intensity and more or less are the same *process*.¹⁴⁵ Second, motion occurs not only to these two categories but also in substances. He uses the example of the colour spectrum to illustrate this point.¹⁴⁶ Third, intensity occurs in reality given that there is a vertical hierarchy of being. The higher intelligible world is more intense than this one since Platonic forms undergo modulation by intensity. The intelligible realm allows such gradation but not the *doxa*-ridden realm of *sensibilia*.¹⁴⁷ However, the sensible reflections of forms are of a lower ontological class and indeed 'less real'.¹⁴⁸ Ultimately,

the Necessary is more intense than contingents.¹⁴⁹ One final point though not an argument that Ṣadrā makes is to accuse Avicenna of inconsistency since the latter affirms that some existents are more puissant and more intense than others and within being, both time and motion are scales of intensity.¹⁵⁰

Does intensification entail composition in the divine? Two objections to modulation can be raised in this context. If we take God as the highest degree who is the Necessary and is equal to His attributes, then that entails composition in God. Second, if the actual supposition of modulation is applied to God as the highest and contingents below, then God is limited by the contingents. Since all share being and identity-in-difference, God is confined and bounded by the highest contingent degree. This is a problem, as we know that the being of God is pure and undetermined.¹⁵¹ These objections are resolved in the following manner. First,

The chain of existents (*silsilat al-mawjūdāt*) in degrees of being with the supposition of modulation do not have accidental being such that each degree has a border with the other . . . Each higher degree is not distinguished from the lower by boundaries that are fixed. Rather the chain of degrees is vertical and causal. Each higher degree is the cause of the lower and the lower the effect of the higher . . . The being of all the modular degrees in the chain contains all the perfections below it but not vice versa.¹⁵²

Second,

The essence of the Necessary who is the highest degree in the chain has all the perfections of the degrees below it *in actu* existing in him . . . For the philosophers all contingent degrees exist truly and are effects of higher degrees, ultimately of God and they indicate the greatness and glory of God. But for the mystics, being is exclusive to the essence of the Truth and all contingents are merely shadows and manifestations of him. The attribution of being to them [contingents] is thus figurative.¹⁵³

The final point about modulation by intensification is that there are two axes of intensification, a vertical hierarchy that traverses the domains of being, intelligible, sensible and intermediary, and a horizontal hierarchy that organises this sublunary world of *sensibilia*. The horizontal hierarchy of being also undergoes intensification.¹⁵⁴ There is a gradual intensifying scale from the lowest being that is a mineral through the vegetable and animal until one arrives at the human, the most intense type of natural being, of which the most intense is the Perfect Man, the holder and deployer of *wilāya* (sanctified rank and proximity to the One).¹⁵⁵ The unity of the structure of reality is expressed using a common Neoplatonic and Hermetic metaphor of referring to the macrocosm as a ‘living animal’.¹⁵⁶ But this animal is not a contiguous, atomic composed organism.

The truth is that the circle of being (*dawr al-wujūd*) is one.¹⁵⁷ The whole cosmos is a single living great animal, whose limbs are connected one to the other,

not in the sense of being quantitatively contiguous in surface and extension but in the sense that every perfect degree of being must be contiguous to a degree adjacent to it in existential perfection, either above it in intensity or below it in debilitation, without any other degree mediating between the two.¹⁵⁸

The metaphor of the macrocosm is then reintegrated to the metaphor of the microcosm, man.

Man . . . is a single existent possessing many faculties, some of which are intellectual, some psychic and some physical. All these [faculties] are degrees differing in excellence within their class. But the whole is still one essence.¹⁵⁹

The vertical hierarchy moves from the basest most passive level of sensibility through the intelligibles to God in a scale of gradation of perfection and modulation of intensity.¹⁶⁰ This is a unified multiplicity in which each level of being is connected and ultimately dependent upon God.¹⁶¹ The vertical scale also cuts across the modes of being: the concept and word are the least intense, mental being is higher but the reality of being is most intense.¹⁶² The scale intensifies from pure privation to Pure Being. This is the 'limit case' proof for the existence of God as well.¹⁶³ This hierarchy also traverses time and the 'domains of being' across the distinction between this world and the afterlife. The beings of the afterlife are 'more permanent, more intense and more perfect'.¹⁶⁴ People also possess levels of being of which their being in the afterlife is more intense. Of such people, the person who is most intense in his being across all modes of being and all worlds and times is the Perfect Man.

The Akbarian and Shi'i concepts of God's 'togetherness' (ma'iyya) with creatures

An alternative hierarchy of reality is conditioned by 'togetherness'. The concept of 'togetherness' (*ma'iyya*) is a significant meditation in the school of Ibn 'Arabī on the Qur'ānic verse 57:4, 'God is with you wherever you are'.¹⁶⁵ There are three central features of this concept. First, this relationship is existential. God existentially sustains all things based on a reading of the *ḥadīth*, 'God was and there was nothing with Him'.¹⁶⁶ The relationship between God and man is one of 'sustaining togetherness' (*ma'iyya qayyūmiyya*).¹⁶⁷ This relationship is at all levels of being-time, since God, to complete the *ḥadīth*, 'is as He was'.¹⁶⁸ God is with things and they are not with Him; the relationship is not equivalent.¹⁶⁹ This nearness is graded. Degrees of being are arranged according to their proximity to the One.¹⁷⁰ God bestows this togetherness on beings as a grace or revelation.¹⁷¹ But it can also be petitioned through worship.¹⁷² This type of sustaining togetherness is causal, thus the togetherness of God with creation is more potent and more excellent than vice versa since the cause is greater than the effect.¹⁷³

Second, it is a principle of unity and inter-relationship.¹⁷⁴ Togetherness affirms 'hypostatic unity' (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) along with a recognition of plurality of each level of 'togetherness'.

God is with all things. Nothing is prior to Him and nothing is posterior to Him. This property does not belong to other-than-God. That is why He has a specific face toward each thing, for He is the occasion of each existent thing. Each existent thing is one and cannot be two. He is also One so nothing proceeds from Him but one, for He is in the unity of every one thing. If multiplicity is found, this is in respect to the unity of time, which is the container. After all, in this multiplicity the *wujūd* of the Real is in the unity of every one.¹⁷⁵

This illustrates the intimacy of man and God, given that God is qualified by His relationship with His creatures.¹⁷⁶ It reveals the paradox of He/not He explained by Chittick.¹⁷⁷ The cosmos is He, insofar as it cannot be if He did not sustain. But it is also not He because it is not identical to Him nor is it a pantheist reality. Our philosopher expresses this in the following way.

The necessary Being is necessary in every sense and orientation . . . It is with every existent in every sense without [entailing] delimitation and multiplicity. He is in everything and not in everything. He is every moment and not in every moment. He is every place and not in every place. Rather He is all things and not all things.¹⁷⁸

Third, paradoxically, it is a principle of God's transcendence. Togetherness is determined by God and not us. It does not mean that the being of the world or our being in any way delimits True being.¹⁷⁹ One cannot be together with the divine essence that is utterly ineffable.¹⁸⁰ Fourth, the relationship is sustaining like a flow or like light illuminating creatures, since following Qur'ān 24: 35, 'God is the light of the heavens and the earth'.¹⁸¹ On this verse, Ṣadrā comments: 'The togetherness of the True One (*al-wāḥid al-ḥaqq*) to all existents – a sustaining togetherness – is through the comprehension of the light of being through all things'.¹⁸² It is through God's togetherness that things become manifest from His awareness and presence with them when they were not manifest.¹⁸³

Ṣadrā uses the fourth verse from *Sūrat al-Ḥadīd* to discuss togetherness. First, in an Akbarian vein, he shows how it suggests that divine causality underlies and is the reality behind all causality that occurs. As God is omnipresent, then the agency of Zayd is not a figurative agency but in reality is divine agency because 'there is no power or might save God's'.¹⁸⁴ Second, his stress on omnipresence provides a proof for the existence of God, which is 'obvious and needs no proof' because 'He is with you wherever you are'.¹⁸⁵ Third, he relates this verse to the proof of God as the simple reality. In this mode, God is the 'plenitude of all things' (*tamām al-ashyā'*) since He is with all things.¹⁸⁶ Fourth, it brings out his monist tendency. In his commentary on the verse, he affirms that the togetherness of God with the cosmos does not fall under any of the Aristotelian categories, nor is it existential as such. Rather it is through the manifestation and disclosure of the divine in the cosmos wherever and whatever it is.¹⁸⁷

The Shi'i concept of togetherness that is cosmological in intent is based on two famous sayings of Imam 'Alī.¹⁸⁸ This tradition of discussing togetherness is

prefigured in the work of the thirteenth-century Sufi ‘Azīz-i Nasafī, who puts it to monist use and uses it to illustrate a hierarchy of being sustained by (with) God, arranged in order of priority and posteriority.¹⁸⁹ The intensity of each entity is different and hence its togetherness is qualitatively different. The first text is ‘I did not see anything except that I saw Allah before it and with it and in it’.¹⁹⁰ This text is discussed by Ṣadrā as critical to his cosmology and view of a modulated reality.¹⁹¹ It also provides a cosmological proof for the existence of God because no one can deny that they ‘see’ God because He is omnipresent.¹⁹² It also shows how togetherness is epistemic.¹⁹³ God knows things presentially so they are with them and exist.¹⁹⁴ The fact that it is the Imam enunciating this shows that he is the proof of God and indicator of Him. It is he who is the key to understanding God, the world and the text that is revealed, the key (*ta’wīl*) that unlocks the codes immanent in these ‘texts’ through a hermeneutic of being and togetherness.¹⁹⁵

The second saying comes from the very first sermon in the collection of the Imam’s discourse, *Nahj al-balāgha* (Peak of eloquence) compiled by Sayyid Raḍī [d. 1015], that plays such a critical role in Shi‘i thought. The context is an affirmation of God by *via negativa* that safeguards His alterity.

He is without being originated. He exists without being brought into being from non-being. He is with everything without being joined with them (*lā bi-muqāranatin*) and not everything without being separate from them (*lā bi-muzāyalatin*).¹⁹⁶

Maytham Baḥrānī [d. 1300] in his commentary makes two points about this.¹⁹⁷ First, that it emphasises God’s utter transcendence and immanence, balancing monism and pluralism in our terms. His own monism stresses that in fact things are merely His effects and acts and cannot thus be separated from His because the effect is not existentially separate from the cause.¹⁹⁸ For Ṣadrā, togetherness shows that the hierarchy of being and its order of priority is ultimately not one of causality, but rather one thing is related to another as relations of togetherness (ultimately with God) as modulating modes and emanating circles of being.¹⁹⁹ Togetherness is existential and not temporal and refers to the existential poverty and dependence of creation upon God, and in this sense it is top-down.²⁰⁰ Divine being is with the cosmos and sustains it. It is not a universal in which cosmic particulars share.²⁰¹ It is like light that flows through beings without being identical to them through the Law of Indiscernibles.²⁰² But the ontological distinction through this report remains paradoxical.²⁰³ There is no complete separation in the longitudinal hierarchy of being. As the Imam says, ‘To make Him unique is to distinguish Him from His creatures. The basis of the distinction is a difference of attributes (*baynūnat ṣifatin*) and not a difference of complete separation (*baynūnat ‘uzlatin*)’.²⁰⁴

Second, it shows His sustaining relationship with all others that is equal, though not all things are equal in their existential ‘togetherness’ with Him.²⁰⁵ As such it keeps the True One transcendent above the cosmos.²⁰⁶ It stresses both His omnipresence and not His omnipresence, a theme that is Plotinian.²⁰⁷

Modulation and Akbarian hypostatic monism (waḥdat al-wujūd al-shakhṣiyya): critique or assimilation?

Akbarian monism is a strong influence upon the thought of Mullā Ṣadrā.²⁰⁸ The latter accepts the Akbarian threefold division of being into pure, determined and deployable.²⁰⁹ The same three levels of being, high, lower and intermediate are posited in a variety of Neoplatonic works and can be found in Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Kitāb al-azal* (On preternity).²¹⁰ Monism in the Akbarian tradition is implied by Qur’ān 28:88 which indicates ontological *tawḥīd* in opposition to the generally understood theological notion of the unity of the divine.²¹¹ In the Akbarian tradition, there is no modulation in the reality of being that is identical to God, but rather modulation occurs in the manifestation of being.²¹² Modulation and shared semantic content of being are not rejected outright.²¹³ Essentially there are two types of being: real and correlational (*idāfī*), the former is God and the latter all else.²¹⁴

Pure being is God considered in Himself, determined being is God considered through the cosmos, and deployable being is an isthmus of concepts and means and divine names through which to reach God.²¹⁵ It is merely through different considerations and through a language of manifestations and divine self-disclosures that one can conceive of multiplicity in a metaphorical sense. Ṣadrā quotes ‘Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī [d. 1336] as a source for the threefold division of being in the monist tradition. ‘True being (*al-wujūd al-ḥaqq*) is God, and absolute being (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*) is His action and limited being (*al-wujūd al-muqayyad*) His effects’.²¹⁶

The first level of being is pure uniqueness, negative conditionality (*bi-sharṭ lā*), in which being is neither conditioned by a quiddity, nor by a certain mode of existence. This is the level of the divine.²¹⁷ It is what the Sufis call Pure Being or God.²¹⁸

The first is the existent whose being is not attached to another, and the being, which is not limited by any delimitation. It is called by the mystics the ‘Unseen ipseity’ (*al-huwiyya al-ghaybiyya*) and the unseen aspect of Ipseity (*ghayb al-huwiyya*), and the absolute Unseen (*al-ghayb al-muṭlaq*) and the Singular Essence (*al-dhāt al-aḥadiyya*). It is the essence of the Most High Truth considered without any determination (*al-lāta‘ayyun*), and this level is marked by pure transcendence (*al-tanzīh al-ṣarf*). He has no name, has no attribute and is not available to cognition or perception. Everything that has a name, a description or an attribute, or is available to cognition and perception is a concept existing in the mind or in the estimative faculty, and He is not like that, since He is Unseen, Absolute and Unknown . . .

The concomitants of His essence are conditions of His manifestation, and not causes of His being, which would entail imperfection and shortcoming and dependence upon another, utterly transcendent is He above what the unjust and the deniers say . . .²¹⁹

This level of being is totally devoid of any attribute, quality or characterisation. In fact, even its ‘effects’ are not causal results but manifestations since causality would place God within the world process and entail imperfection.²²⁰

The second level is conditioned and limited being (*bi-shart al-shay'*), that is, contingent being that occurs *in re* that are identified with divine effects.²²¹

The second degree is the existent that is attached to another, which is delimited being (*al-wujūd al-muqayyad*), and includes intellects, souls, spheres, elements, composites among humans, insects, trees, minerals and all other specific existents.²²²

This degree of being encompasses both supra-lunary and sub-lunary worlds.

The third level is the first thing emanating from Him and the true ground of being that is all-encompassing. This is unconditioned being (*lā bi-shart*) that is identified with divine acts.²²³ It is this level which is deployed in manifestations and theophanies of the One that undergo modulation.²²⁴ It is the same as the primordial cloud '*amā*' that is the source of phenomenal being in the Akbarian tradition.²²⁵ This is the pure relation that is the cosmos.²²⁶

The third degree is absolute being that is deployable (*al-wujūd al-munbasit al-muṭlaq*), whose generality is not a universality . . . Deployable being is not confined to a specific characterisation or determined quality . . . Rather with respect to itself, it is not associated with anything . . . Extra-mental realities spring from its level and are modes of its determinations . . . It is the ground of the cosmos. It is called the reality by which one creates (*al-ḥaqq al-makhlūq bihi*) in the language of the Sufis and the reality of realities . . .

It should be clear that [this mode of] being is not the common abstracted notion of being that is *a priori* and conceived in the mind as a secondary intelligible and an intentional concept.²²⁷

An important corollary of monism is an affirmation of the unreality of quiddities.²²⁸ What exists is merely a manifestation of the Real.

The Necessary True being's theophanies (*tajalliyyāt al-wujūd al-ḥaqq al-wājibi*) are the forms of entities of the cosmos in itself, and the first of its manifestations is its theophany in the singular substance and the singular reality described in the form of all the 'permanent archetypes' (*a'yān thābita*). They have no being except through it . . . So He is manifest in the form of the cosmos, and hidden in the forms of His entities.²²⁹

Ṣadrā also affirms this position on unreality.²³⁰ Because quiddities are contingents, they are unreal and remain non-existent.²³¹ The Akbarian tradition extrapolates this from Qur'ān 88:28, 'everything perishes except His countenance'.²³² They interpret it to mean that God alone is being and all else, all contingents, all quiddities are purely privative. It is a conceit to suggest that contingent quiddities exist as such as opposed to being merely manifestations and reflections of True Being and Unitive Light.²³³ Quiddities are merely mentally posited senses for predicates that have reference in the being of the thing predicated.²³⁴ Being is affirmation but quiddities are privation.²³⁵

But the problem is that one needs to start by considering quiddities. Metaphysics is defined as the study of the essential accidents of being *qua* being. 'Quiddities are among the primary essential accidents of the reality of being (*al-a'rād al-awwaliyya al-dhātiyya li-ḥaqīqat al-wujūd*)'.²³⁶ Multiplicity is still affirmed in the Sadrian approach and pure monism is not acceptable. Hypostatic unity is rejected while affirming ontological *tawḥīd*.²³⁷ The Sadrian critique of monorealism in the Akbarian sense is encouraged by the Illuminationist rejection of it.²³⁸

The tension between monism and pluralism

Rahman notices a tension between monism and pluralism at the heart of Sadrian philosophy.²³⁹ Monistic tendencies are clearly manifest in his work especially the *Asfār*.²⁴⁰

His being is the being of all existents as it is the pure reality of being . . . He is the ground and reality in existentiality, and all else are His affairs and modes. He is the essence, and all else are His names, and His self-disclosures and manifestations. He is light and all else are his shadows and rays. He is the truth and all else apart from His gracious countenance is unreal.²⁴¹

The idea that the totality of existence is the divine names and that God is identical with His creatures is a Hermetic ideal.²⁴² But it had been suggested that this affirmation only applies to the concept of being and not its reality.²⁴³

Everything perishes in the Unity of the True Divine Being (*aḥadiyyat al-wujūd al-ḥaqq al-ilāhī*) . . . He is the Necessary Being, the Subsistent in Himself and by Whom others subsist. He is described by the divine names, qualified by lordly qualities, and called upon the tongues of the Prophets and the saints, guides of His creation to His essence. He reveals through their tongues His identity with everything without entering in it or being separate from it and through His reality there is nothing separate. His creation of things is His concealment in them while manifesting them. His making them privative in the Greater resurrection is His manifestation in His oneness and his wrath to them through the effacement of their determinations and their marks and their making.²⁴⁴

Determination and distinction in being occurs by its ipseities coinciding in the very essence of reality, some prior to others essentially and in reality, and by degrees of modulated differentiation, by precedence, by priority and posteriority, by intensification and debilitation. So being that has no cause has precedence in its existentiality over others and is prior to all existents by essential priority. In fact all existents are like reflections and rays of the light of its being.²⁴⁵

Ṣadrā discusses four different positions on unity, which are then glossed perceptively by Sabzawārī. 'Beings are multiple and distinguished only as degrees of the determinations of the True One, and manifestations of His light and affairs of His essence. [They are] not independent things and divisible essences'.²⁴⁶ This

is his doctrine, the first view that there is a unity of being and existents in their very diversity. This was the position, he claims as do his followers, of the ‘ancient Persian sages’ (*Fahlawiyyūn*).²⁴⁷ He then criticises an important view prevalent in his time associated with a theosist philosophical approach (*dhawq al-ta'alluh*) of Davānī.

Some people have come to the conclusion that real being is one individual that is the Essence of the Creator the Most High, and quiddities are real things whose existentiality is an expression for their relation to necessary Being and their connection to Him the Most High. So being . . . is a universal, possessing numerous individuals that are existents. They relate this doctrine to the direct experience of the theosist philosophers (*dhawq al-muta'allihīn*).²⁴⁸

According to this view, the Necessary is the true referent of being but the particulars share in that being as ‘portions’ (*hiṣaṣ*).²⁴⁹ This view undergoes a thorough criticism in three parts.

First, he criticises the notion of being as a universal whilst retaining its unity by arguing that being cannot be like a universal and can only be differentiated *whilst retaining its unity* through modulation.²⁵⁰

[To say that] the entity of the essence of the Necessary in itself is a being for all quiddities, both substances and accidents, is not correct . . . Some individual existents are undifferentiated with respect to their quiddity while some are prior to others through being. The priority of some over others cannot be intellected with the being of being in everything as one, being real oneness related to all. If an excuse is given that distinction, with respect to priority and posteriority, is not in real being, instead it is in their connection and relation to it, such that the relation of some to real existence is more prior than others, we say that relation *qua* relation is an intentional factor that does not occur and is not differentiated in itself, but only with respect to one of the two things related. Thus, if what is related to it is a unitive essence, the related [thing] is a quiddity that with respect to itself cannot be necessary by priority or posteriority or causality, nor the priority of one of their individuals with analogy to another due to the lack of their occurrence and their actuality in themselves and with respect to their quiddity. So how can any distinction occur between the individuals of one reality through priority and posteriority in relation to the Necessary and posteriority in it?²⁵¹

This is a thoroughly anti-pantheistic statement. Beings therefore, the cosmos and all that there is, does not exist *in* God as parts of God.

Second, the relationship between being and existents cannot be through an illuminative correlation since that would entail that being is other than what it is correlated to.²⁵²

Their relation to the Creator is either unitive (*ittiḥādiyyatan*) necessitating that the being of the Necessary, the Most High, possesses quiddities . . . that

are multiple and differentiated . . . Or the relation between them [quiddities] and the Necessary the Most High is by an attachment – the attachment of one thing to another is subordinate to their existence and their realisation – which necessitates that every quiddity possesses a specific being prior to their relation and attachment. As there is no doubt that their realities are not expressed by attachment to other-than-them, then however many quiddities we conceive and we doubt their connection to the First Truth, its attachment by it will differ through beings. Hence it is possible for it to be said that their connection and attachment do not differ since contentment is not possible by a mode of being except in the sense of knowledge of the reality of its cause and its Maker.²⁵³

This is an anti-essentialist statement ranged against the Illuminationist position on the cosmos as a collectivity of quiddities correlated to God.

Third, being is the very locus of existentiality and such is the relationship of existents.²⁵⁴

Beings are multiple like existents. Existents are real things and some beings are real such as the existence of the Necessary, and some are intentional such as the existence of contingents. There is no difference between this doctrine and the famous doctrine of the later scholars who claim that the existence of contingents is intentional, and the existence of the Necessary is concrete/actual. [This is] because He the Most High in Himself is the [only] referent predicated by existent, in opposition to contingents. Except that the abstracted thing called the being of the contingents is expressed by relation, attachment and copulation (*bi-l-intisāb aw al-ta'alluq aw al-rabṭ*). So the argument is that being in this way is one real individual and existent is a universal multiple apart from another method that has no face apparently. Instead, we claim that that there is difference between these two doctrines such that the existentiality of things and their being is an intentional meaning and a universal concept that includes all existents . . . If one applies being in the other sense, that is the Truth subsisting in itself, then it is so through commonality [of meaning].²⁵⁵

Returning to our fourfold division, the third view is commonly associated with the Peripatetics: the multiplicity of being *and* existents. Sabzawārī describes this as a view of the common people, of the masses for whom unity (of God) is something accepted on the tongue and not fully recognised.²⁵⁶ The problem with this view is that they still consider being to be a unified and common notion. But how can it be if there is no actual unity to justify the semantic unity?²⁵⁷

The fourth view is the 'vulgar' Sufī doctrine of hypostatic unity that considers our phenomenal experience of multiplicity to be illusory.²⁵⁸ Being is one person and that is God.²⁵⁹ It cannot be modulated nor synonymous since synonymy and modulation are logical concepts predicated of universals along in a logical (and nominalist) sense.²⁶⁰ 'Abd al-Ghanī Nābulusī [d. 1731], Ibn 'Arabī's

commentator, also clarifies that the univocal application of being to God does not mean that all existents are God but rather that only God is true being.²⁶¹ The Akbarian tradition qualifies this monism by distinguishing two senses of unity.²⁶² The first is the absolute sense that is predicated of God, the divine essence alone who is the True One. This is henadic unity (*aḥadiyya*), the unity of the intelligible world, between the divine essence and its attributes.²⁶³ This is the level of the divine names oriented towards the divine essence.²⁶⁴ The second is a relational oneness of entities in which oneness ultimately refers back to the True One through the relation of entities to it, almost in the sense of the togetherness (*ma'īyya*) mentioned above.²⁶⁵ This is monadic unity (*wāḥidiyya*) that encompasses these attributes deployed in the circle of being.²⁶⁶ The divine names at this level are the grounds for existence and acts deployed in the world.²⁶⁷ When Ṣadrā criticises hypostatic unity, he understands being as extra-mental being that encompasses everything, that is deployable being, not being in the mode of uniqueness or Pure Being as understood by Sufis. Thus, he allows modulation.²⁶⁸

One possibility is that instead of monorealism being an immature doctrine along with the synonymy of being, in fact it is modulation that is a pedagogical tool on the way to unitive awareness.²⁶⁹

From that it must be known that our affirmation of many degrees of being and our concessions in the interests of pedagogy (*al-ta'lim*) conceiving the diversity and multiplicity of being does not exceed what we shall explain as before God-willing concerning the affirmation of the unity of being and the existent as an essence and in reality. Such is the doctrine of the saints and the mystics among the great of the people of revelation and certainty.²⁷⁰

He certainly wants to hold on to monorealism. At the same time, Ṣadrā holds different views on unity,²⁷¹ sometimes even in the same paragraph.²⁷²

Do particular existents really exist? Or are they mere relations and modes of the Real?²⁷³ Rahman argues that modulation and 'unity-in-diversity' are incompatible with the forms of monism espoused in the text.²⁷⁴ One can find textual evidence for both positions. First, on particulars as mere modes of being one recognises their existential dependence and deficiency.²⁷⁵ In fact it is impious to suggest that particulars are independent beings.²⁷⁶ This follows from the doctrine of 'existential contingency'. Second, modulation is real and particulars are real and not figurative existents. They are not illusory, contrary to what the Sufis think.²⁷⁷

So what is the solution? Modulation circumvents the principle of Non-contradiction, thus allowing paradoxical juxtaposition of doctrines and negating binarism of possibilities. The being of Zayd is real in itself and is related to Zayd in its reality not metaphorically, yet this necessity is entailed by it being a mode of the real.²⁷⁸ Iqbal described the Sadrian system as proposing that reality was all things and yet none of them.²⁷⁹ This is the Akbarian He/Not He that describes the cosmos.²⁸⁰ Modulation of being thus absorbs monism and yet remains an alternative option in the market-place of metaphysical doctrines.

The God–World Relationship

God as the focal meaning of being is critical to any discussion. Ṣadrā discusses this in his commentary on *Sūrat al-jum‘a* by the statement that ‘all existents are oriented towards the Truth [i.e. God]’.²⁸¹ Monistic tendencies are shown here too: ‘every existent is like a drop in the ocean of His being, and a grain attached in the illumination of His manifestation and ray of His light’.²⁸² In this section I want to consider two issues. First, I want to examine the Sadrian proofs for the existence of God, especially the ‘proof of the truthful’ (*burhān al-ṣiddiqīn*). Second, we need to appreciate the God–world relationship in his work as expressed through the doctrine of ‘making’.

Ontological proof

There are many proofs for the existence of God because as Ṣadrā says there are many signs that indicate Him and facets about Him. *Kalām* cosmological proofs began with the intuition of phenomenal existence requiring a cause; there was a creation which needed a cause to be. There had to be a reason why there was something rather than nothing. Avicenna’s famous proof for the Necessary Being began with the concept of existence, proceeded with a modal distinction between necessity and contingent, and arrived at the exigency of a Necessary Being.²⁸³ Avicenna himself called his argument the ‘proof of the veracious’ (*burhān al-ṣiddiqīn*) and his commentator Ṭūsī provided a typology of three proofs for the existence of a Creator, which in turn are the *kalām* cosmological argument, the proof from motion that derives from Aristotle’s *Physics*, and the Avicennan ontological argument:

The systematic theologians (*al-mutakallimūn*) infer from the origination of bodies and properties [pertaining to them] the existence of the Creator and from considering the states of the creation to his attributes one after another.

The natural philosophers (*al-ṭabī‘iyyūn*) also infer from the existence of motion a Mover and from the impossibility of linking motive beings in a chain infinitely the existence of the First Mover (*muḥarrik awwal*) who is unmoved. Then from that they infer the existence of the First Principle (*mabda’ awwal*).

However, the divine philosophers (*al-ilāhiyyūn*) infer from their reflection upon being that it is either necessary or contingent to prove the Necessary. Then by reflecting upon what is entailed by necessity and contingency, they infer his attributes and from his attributes they infer the nature of the emanation of his acts from him one after another.

The master mentioned the preponderance of this method over the others because it is more reliable and nobler. That is because the more excellent of demonstrations is one that yields certainty and it is the inference from the cause to the effect; however, its opposite which is the inference from the effect to the cause may yield certainty and that is if the thing sought has a cause that can only be discerned through it as has been explained in *apodeixis*. These two levels are posed in his saying – exalted is He: ‘We shall show them our signs in the

horizons and in their souls until it is clear to them that He is the Truth. Is it not enough that your Lord is witness for everything?' [Q. 41:52]²⁸⁴

Ṭūsī mentions two types of argumentation that the tradition describes as assertoric proof (*burhān innī*) and demonstrative proof (*burhān limmī*), the former is an inference from effect to cause and the latter is from cause to effect. The demonstrative proof for Ṣadrā is the one that is 'most reliable, most illuminating and most noble' and it involves an inference of reality by taking God, Being as a witness to the totality of Being. This is what he calls the 'way of the veracious' (*sabīl al-ṣiddīqīn*).²⁸⁵ What he means by *ṣiddīq* is not the same as Avicenna and the gap in meaning is a good illustration of the difference in their philosophical method. For Mullā Ṣadrā, the *ṣiddīq* is one who possesses intuition and inner disclosure that is attained through grace and spiritual exercise. In the exegesis of Q. 57:19 on the phrase 'those who believe in God and His messengers are the veracious ones and witness before their Lord', Ṣadrā argues that the *ṣiddīq* is characterised by witnessing the truth through inner revelation:

What is meant by faith in God and his messengers is a perfect degree of knowledge that is only realised in true knowers. True, inner revealed faith is meant which the saints and mystics (*li-l-awliyā' wa-l-'urafā'*) possess especially because they are the veracious ones and witnesses due to the utmost level of their attestation [of truth] acquiring through inner revelation (*kashf*) and due to their self-annihilation acquired due to their inner spiritual struggle against the carnal forces of their souls.²⁸⁶

For Mullā Ṣadrā, the Avicennan argument was insufficient because it provided an assertoric not a demonstrative proof and because it engaged with the concept but not the concrete reality of being.²⁸⁷ The Sadrian proof of the veracious is a natural corollary to his monorealism.²⁸⁸ It is compatible with modulation; in fact the latter is significant for its proof.²⁸⁹ 'Being is a concrete reality that is simple and unique and there is no distinction among its individuals essentially except by perfection and imperfection and intensity and debilitation'.

These degrees of being are acts of the divine essence such that even cosmological proofs are ultimately ontological.²⁹⁰ Ontological proofs depend on the intelligibility of the concept of being, which must be shared between our notion of our being and God's being.²⁹¹ This is precisely the point made earlier about the possibility of theology depending upon the concept of modulation. Being has three modes: positively conditioned, unconditioned and negatively conditioned. Mystics of the Akbarian school consider God, the Pure Being (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*), to be unconditioned even by the condition of being unconditioned.²⁹² The divine essence must be in this mode because it is utterly ineffable. This position is articulated against what was the prevailing view of being after the fourteenth century and before our philosophy, that of unrealism, of being as an unreal concept.²⁹³ For Ṣadrā, God, the divine essence, is being negatively conditioned at the level of pure henadic unity (*al-aḥadiyya*).²⁹⁴ This proof follows from the Illuminationist proof from the intensifications of light

towards the Light of Lights.²⁹⁵ Safar III of the *Asfār* begins with a discussion of the ways of proving the existence of God. Having discussed previous cosmological and ontological proofs, he expresses his own ‘method of the veracious’ (*manhaj al-ṣiddiqīn*) in the following manner as a ‘detailed thought experiment’:

The reality of Being (*ḥaqīqat al-wujūd*), by virtue of its being a simple thing (*amran basīṭan*), not possessing a quiddity or a constituent property or a means of being defined, is identical to the Necessary, requiring the most complete perfection that is infinitely intense, because every other degree [of being], which is weaker in intensity is not the pure reality of Being. Rather, it is being with deficiency since the deficiency of everything is other than that thing necessarily. The deficiency of being is not being itself but rather its privation and this privation is merely attached to being concomitantly and not the foundation of being, due to its actuality in a subsequent degree [of being] and what comes after that. Deficiencies and privations comprise secondary [entities] insofar as they are secondary, but the First is its complete perfection, which has no definition and nothing may be conceived that is more perfect than it. Deficiency and ontological indigence issue from emanation and existention (*min al-ifāda wa-l-jaʿl*) and are perfected by it [the Necessary]. The haecceity of these secondaries is attached to the First. So he treats their deficiencies with his perfection and their ontological indigence with his ontological richness (*iftiqārihā bi-ghināʾihī*).

Thus through this demonstration is the being of the Necessary proven.²⁹⁶

The Sadrian argument may be summarised as follows:²⁹⁷

- 1 There is being
- 2 Being is a perfection above which no perfection may be conceived
- 3 God is perfection and perfection in being
- 4 Being is a singular and simple reality
- 5 That singular reality is graded in intensity in a scale of perfection.
- 6 That scale must have a limit point, a point of greatest intensity and of greatest being.
- 7 Hence God exists (= being).

Thus the proof begins with the concept and reality of being and of God and ends with it.

This proof originates in the famous proof for the Necessary being in Avicenna.²⁹⁸ The Avicennan proof focuses on the concept of the being that is necessary by virtue of itself, a concept suggested by Aristotle.²⁹⁹ The proof is not a demonstration because it starts with the posterior and infers the prior, that is, its middle term is an effect and not a cause of the presence of the major term in the minor term.³⁰⁰ There is a certain debate about whether this proof is ontological or cosmological. Davidson describes it as cosmological because it begins with the intuition of contingent being, and contingency is defined by dependence upon another.³⁰¹ There are two major premisses of the argument: first, that there is existence, and second, that

an infinite ranked series of units in a causal relationship in reality is impossible, that is the impossibility of a real infinite regress.³⁰² It postulates a being that is necessary because the supposition of its non-being entails a logical impossibility.³⁰³ Avicenna formulates this argument in the following succinct way.

There is no doubt that there is being. Every being is either necessary or contingent. If it is necessary, then it is valid that it is the being of the Necessary, which is sought. If it is contingent, then we have shown that the being of the contingent culminates in the Necessary being.³⁰⁴

What this proof actually does is to suggest that the reality is entailed by the concept, but it does not mean that the concept of the Necessary Being is true in itself.³⁰⁵ This is a feature of an ontological argument that purports to be an *a priori* inference.³⁰⁶ It is more authentically Sadrian to regard the proof as ontological. The intuition of being refers to being *qua* being and every contingent is as we have seen ultimately necessary in reference to One True Being.

Nevertheless, the Sadrian proof remains susceptible to the common criticisms of ontological proofs. It actually seems to be tautological. Because Ṣadrā argues that the reality of being eludes human ability to confine it to discourse, it is not perhaps surprising that the *manhaj al-ṣiddīqīn* is not *in strictu sensu* an apodeictic proof. In a perceptive gloss, ‘Allāma Ṭabāṭabā’ī, the eminent philosopher and commentator, argues that Mullā Ṣadrā does not provide a *burhān limmī* but rather an assertoric argument because in effect all proofs for the existence of God begin with his effects and deduce his existence as the cause of those effects. This is because for Ṭabāṭabā’ī, as for Ṣadrā, being is an *a priori* intuition that all sound intellects possess and within that intuition, the existence of a Necessary Being is logically necessary (*ḍarūrī*). Proofs for the existence of God, therefore, are not attempts at producing demonstrations that convince or even fulfil the scientific parameters within proof theory, but are mere reminders (*tanbīhāt*) to what we already know in our souls and hence corroborate and support faith in the One.³⁰⁷ This perhaps is why Ṣadrā never refers to his argument as a ‘demonstration’ (*burhān*) but as a way (*manhaj*, *sabīl*) of understanding and as a thought experiment (*tadhkira*). Thus the ‘argument’ may be a useful means for the exposition of a theistic viewpoint but does not fall into the category of persuasion.³⁰⁸

‘Making’ (*al-ja‘l*)

The world is pure correlation for Ṣadrā.³⁰⁹ Contingent ipseities are mere connectives to the Emanator of being that is beyond any determination.³¹⁰ This reflects the Peripatetic doctrine of differentiation as a relational factor, such as less and more, big and small and so on, as well as contingent existential dependence.³¹¹ Making (*al-ja‘l*) relates to being since God’s relationship with the world directly is existential; it is the act of divine existential agency.³¹² This is because He has no quiddity.³¹³ What emanates from Him and is ‘made’ by Him is being, and quiddity is an accident of that process.³¹⁴

Making posits a sustaining role for the One who ‘is the ground of being’ (*huwa-l-aṣl fī-l-wujūd*).³¹⁵ He states that ‘His being and activity bring existents into being and make ipseities manifest and the being-a-thing of something is only by virtue of the mercy of the attributes’.³¹⁶

Thus His activity brings about their being, and His attributes bring about quiddities that allow for the identification of specific entities.

The first ontological level of making is that ‘source of being’ from which everything issues: it is deployable being (*wujūd munbaṣiṭ*) that safeguards God’s distinction from the cosmos. This hypostasis is pure act of being, unlike matter’s pure passivity, and from it are all things fashioned.³¹⁷ Yet this deployment is not totally separate from God (we already know this from the doctrine of togetherness) but is its shadow since it is equivalent in the language of the Akbarian tradition to the Breath of the Merciful (*nafas al-raḥmān*).³¹⁸ Ibn ‘Arabī makes the connection in his work.³¹⁹ This doctrine is recognisably Proclean and (at least ps.-)Empedoclean.³²⁰ Ṣadrā relates this breath of the Merciful and deployable being to the Muḥammadan reality and the primordial ‘point’.³²¹ In this Shi‘i cosmology, according to the saying of the first Imam ‘Alī, the totality of the Qur’ān, that is the cosmos itself, is encompassed in the primary letter of the *basmala*, and he the Imam is the point underneath.³²² The simplicity of the ‘point’ ensures that it is all things according to the doctrine of the simple reality.³²³ The letter *bā*’ enunciates the majesty of God and manifests Him as the cause of causes. As He is ineffable, so our intellects are too weak to see beyond the black of the ink of the words of the Qur’ān.³²⁴ But if one’s intellect is guided by God, illuminated by the simple intellect, one can see beyond the ink and recognise that the reality of the Qur’ān is all things. The Book is the deployable being, and is in fact identical of the Imam, the ‘clear Imam’ (*al-imām al-mubīn*) that is the heart of the Qur’ān (*Umm al-kitāb*).³²⁵ The Imam, who is the Perfect Man, is the ‘comprehensive book’ and a microcosmic disclosure of God and cosmos.³²⁶ So where does distinction arise? Again we return to the complementarity between the Book of God and of the Cosmos.

The differentiation of forms of existents and the difference in their properties and contrariness of these states [reflect] great signs for cognition of the inner Qur’ān and lights of His beauty and rays of His signs, and bring knowledge of His names and attributes.³²⁷

Thus this first emanation, first existent and the Book and cosmos are cosmological proofs for the existence of God, of which the most potent proof is the comprehension of it all, the point and essence of the Qur’ān and the Face of God, the Imam.³²⁸ He is the *deus revelatus*, that first *nous* and the *logos* that manifests the One, Who is the *deus absconditus*, and the face of man to God as a proof of God, and as His theophany he directs man back to the One on the arc of ascent in reversion.³²⁹ This is a feature of the Muḥammadan reality and of Prophets as well who have divine and human aspects: the divine orients the Prophet towards the transcendence of the One (*taqaddus, ulūhiyya*), the human orients toward man and the material world (*tajassum, bashariyya*).³³⁰ ‘The [primordial] point [who is the Imam] is an

expression for the descent of Pure Being that is manifested'.³³¹ The reflexivity of him as the agent and proof of God, as God's revelation with the Book is a major theme of Imamology-cosmology and hermeneutics.³³²

For Rahman, a problem with this account of the divine attributes is that it seems to place quiddities in the mind of God as archetypes and reifies and ontologises them as necessities; this contradicts his normal denial of reality to quiddities.³³³ But as we have suggested, there are two chains of causality, one essential and existential, and the other quidditative.³³⁴ The attributes and divine forms determine the identification of quiddity through the traditional account of hylomorphism, but their reality is merely divine being and existence. Things occur because the divine agent act yields them. Following the mainstream Mu'tazilite reading of Shi'i theology, Ṣadrā realises that attributes and names are conceptual reflections of the reality of being.³³⁵ Quoting the Imam: 'The perfection of monotheism is sincerity to Him and perfection of that sincerity is negating attributes of Him'.

He then comments on this phrase.

All else is not a simple reality as a simple reality has nothing that can be negated of it (which is a sign of existential perfection). Negation of being is not affirmation of being. If one negates an existential reality of Him, that entails composition in His essence. But since He is simple that is absurd.

'... negating the attributes' means those whose being is other than the being of His essence, since His essence is the referent for all perfect attributes and qualities of the divine, and they do not subsist through another. So His knowledge, His power and so on exist through the existence of His unitive being, while they are differing notions and concepts.³³⁶

The attributes too undergo modulation, but not in a real sense rather in a conceptual sense, *pace* Rahman.³³⁷

***Wilāya* and the Perfect Man**

Finally, we come to the return to the One, the process by which man and the whole cosmos reverts to the One and the circle of being becomes complete. This is the arc of ascent.

Man has differing levels. 'Intelligible man', that is, the form 'man' encompasses all realities since they all participate in Him.³³⁸ It is this man that is the lord of creation. This is precisely the concept of the Perfect Man. The motif of the Perfect Man in cosmology and soteriology is widespread among Near Eastern traditions.³³⁹ It plays a central role in the Akbarian tradition. The Perfect Man is defined as, 'An expression of the comprehension of all the divine and ontic levels of intellects and universal souls'.³⁴⁰ It encompasses both vertical and horizontal hierarchies, from the One through the intelligible realm down to the sensible, and within this world of *sensibilia* as well. The Perfect Man mediates between the intelligible and sensible domains of being because he belongs to both.³⁴¹ The

most intense level of man, the Perfect Man/Imam/Walī is the last degree of being before the One.³⁴²

The Perfect Man is the primordial point and that point is the secret of *wilāya*.³⁴³ On this, Ṣadrā draws on the Shi'ī discussion of the fourteenth-century mystic, Rajab Bursī in his *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn fī asrār Amīr al-Mu'minīn*:³⁴⁴

Beings culminate in a single point that is the quality of the essence and the cause of existents, and it is known by many terms. In the words of the Prophet it is the intellect: 'the first thing that God created was the intellect'. Also in his words it is the Muḥammadan presence: 'the first thing that God created was my light', thus in this respect it is the first thing emanated from God the most High without any mediation that is called the First Intellect. But insofar as things acquire from it the faculty of intellection it is the Agent Intellect. Insofar as intellect flows to all existents from it such that they perceive through it the realities of things it is called the Universal Intellect. It is known through a clear proof that the Muḥammadan presence is the point of light that is the First manifestation, the reality of beings, the origin of existents, the pole of all orbits. Its outward nature is a divine attribute and its inward the divine unseen. It manifests the greatest name, and is the form of the remaining cosmos. It transcends belief and unbelief. His [the Prophet's] spirit is a copy of henadic unity (*aḥadiyya*) in the divine realm, and his body is the form of meanings in the visible and invisible realms (*al-mulk wa-l-malakūt*), and his heart is the treasure of the Living who does not die. This is because when God first spoke with a word it became a light, then it became a spirit. The spirit entered the light and made it a veil so that His word and its light and its spirit are veils. Their flow in the world is like that of the point in letters and bodies and the one in the numbers and the *alif* in speech.³⁴⁵

Imams partake in the modulation of being. The Muḥammadan reality is singular and each Imam partakes of it and manifests it.³⁴⁶ The realm of *wilāya* is the most intense grade of being in both vertical and horizontal hierarchies and the first emanation closest to the One, being the *logos* of it.³⁴⁷ It is both ontologically and epistemologically prior. Knowing the Imam is the epistemological *sine qua non* of knowledge just as being has to be intuited for the possibility of knowledge of syllogistic chains and definitions.³⁴⁸ He is the last indicating his role in the *eschaton* of our *epochē*.³⁴⁹ He is thus the instrument of return to the One.

The hierarchy of being and the role of *wilāya* at the culmination of the pyramid of being suggests a direction that Mullā Ṣadrā takes. His ontology begins with the semantics of the term being and the epistemological distinction between the concept and reality of being (whether mental or extra-mental) but seems to find its completion in the eschatology of the reversion of all beings that exist to their principle the One. The central role of *wilāya* as the hermeneutics of being, its unfolding and its folding demonstrates that confluence of Shi'ī thought and Neoplatonism in the critical synthesis of Mullā Ṣadrā's vision of metaphysics.

- prior *per se*. Rather, they are posterior to their concepts in the mode of the ‘fact-itself’ that is in the mind of God.
- 311 Khorassani (1976: 110).
- 312 On Plotinus, see Crystal (1998: 272), quoting Armstrong (1966–88, VII: 90–1) *Enneads* VI.7[38].2.25–7.
- 313 Ricoeur (1992: 27–8).
- 314 *Asfār* I: 415; Ṭūsī (1405 Q: 189).
- 315 This division might also follow a division of identity into *ipse* identity that picks out the ipseity, that is the being of a thing, and *idem* identity that picks out sameness and can pick out same types of things – see Ricoeur (1992: 2–3).
- 316 *Asfār* II: 289.
- 317 *Asfār* I: 414; Ṣadrā (1992: 46). His insistence that it is being that is made and emanated directly from the One is in direct criticism of the mainstream Illuminationist position that it is quiddity that emerges from the One and is made by it. See Suhrawardī (1952: 186), *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*.
- 318 *Asfār* I: 38–40. Cf I: 48, 54, 60–1, 65, 101–3, 112, 119, 172, 259, 340, 418, III: 87, 122, 257, 324, IV: 270, VI: 81.
- 319 *Asfār* IX: 185.
- 320 *Asfār* I: 45, II: 290–1, IX: 185.
- 321 *Asfār* I: 334–5.
- 322 Goodman (1992: 66–7).
- 323 *Asfār* II: 347.
- 324 Gerson (1994: 29–32) quoting Armstrong (1966–88, V: 33, 117, 141) *Enneads* V.1.6.41–6, V.3.12.39ff, V.4.1.1–5.

5 Reality and the circle of being

- 1 *Asfār* I: 259–60.
- 2 Iṣfahānī (1372 Sh: 281).
- 3 Since a multiplicity of senses does not entail a multiplicity of referents – see *Asfār* III: 352, 356.
- 4 Ṣadrā (1313 Qa: 223).
- 5 Āshtiyānī (1350 Sh: 17) and (1980: 10).
- 6 *Asfār* VI: 148.
- 7 Ṣadrā (1961b: 73); *Asfār* I: 47, II: 327.
- 8 Ṣadrā (1885: 137) *Sarayān*. Cf. Ibn ‘Arabī (1996: 422–3).
- 9 *Asfār* I: 146, 381, VI: 155, 187, 268, 277, 334. On Neoplatonism, see Proclus, in *Parm.*, 1039ff., 1199–201 in Dillon and Morrow (1987: 400ff., 546–7). Cf. Siorvanes (1996: 49).
- 10 *Asfār* VIII: 81. Cf. Siorvanes (1996: 57).
- 11 Jambet (2000: 9).
- 12 This Sadrian position evokes the views of Anaximander and Empedocles – see Ashkiwarī (1999, I: 207–8); Kirk *et al.* (1983: 132, 296); Walbridge (2000: 49–50).
- 13 Cf. Davidson (1980: 164) on the ontology of events; Levinas (1998: 96).
- 14 Davidson (1980: 174). I am using the language of Davidson and phenomenology to explain these processes in the Sadrian theory of the process of being. There is no Arabic equivalent for ‘vortices’ used by our author; but his concept of an existent is close to the phenomenological concept of a vortex.
- 15 *Asfr* III: 83, 183, VIII: 80–93. This is in sharp contrast to the rigid and stable hierarchy of the Neoplatonic Great Chain of Being. Cf. Lovejoy (1936: 242); Nasr (1996b, II: 647).
- 16 *Asfār* III: 183. Cf. Rahman in Hourani (1975: 233–4).
- 17 *Asfār* III: 37, 126, 160. Cf. Davidson (1980: 177).
- 18 Hamid (1998: 265).

- 19 *Asfār* V: 191, VI: 292, 301.
- 20 A p-series is an ordered series whose units or monads are held in common and the units are the same as the first member of the series. The classic example is that of a number series – see Lloyd (1990: 76, 84); Vlastos (1981).
- 21 Tr. O'Meara (1995: 44). Cf. Armstrong (1966–88, V: 141). The theme of the simple unconditioned (*apeiron*) principle that is the source of all in a form of monism is found in Anaximander and may be another source for the Sadrian doctrine filtered through doxographical literature such as the Arabic Aëtius – see Daiber (1980: 96). Cf. Hamīd (1995: 819–21); Kirk (1983: 107, 108, 115).
- 22 Šadrā (1996: 63) *Ittiḥād*. However, in Plotinus, the One has all the forms in it indistinctly (*mē diakekrimena*) – Armstrong (1966–88, V: 125), *Enneads* V.3.15.31. Cf. Gerson (1994: 33).
İşfahānī (1372 Sh: 173) quotes the eighth *mīmar* of the *Theologia*; Qayṣarī (1416 Q, I: 12–13); cf. Badawī (1948: 32, 68, 134). Cf. Armstrong (1966–88, V: 59), *Enneads* V.2.1.1–5. These texts are quoted in *Asfār* II: 66, VI: 278.
- 23 Šadrā (1996: 93) *Ittiḥād*.
- 24 *Asfār* VII: 272–3. Cf. *Asfār* VI: 277. Badawī (1948: 134); cf. Armstrong (1966–88, V: 159), *Enneads* V.2.1.
- 25 *Asfār* VII: 273.
- 26 Lloyd (1990: 82).
- 27 *Asfār* II: 368.
- 28 Šadrā (1340 Sh: 5–6) *Arshiyya*; Morris (1981: 98–9); *Asfār* II: 368, VI: 110.
- 29 *Asfār* VI: 124; cf. Šadrā (1377 Sh: 201). As such, they are also necessary. Cf. Āshtiyānī (1376 Sh: 177).
- 30 *Asfār* VI: 100. On the simplicity of the One, see Badawī (1948: 134). Cf. Armstrong (1966–88, II: 225, V: 59, VII: 203, 321) *Enneads* II.9.1.8, V.2.1.4, VI.7.37.19, VI.9.5.24. Cf. Gerson (1994: 7).
- 31 *Asfār* VI: 23–4. On God not having a quiddity, see Avicenna (1960: 489).
- 32 *Asfār* VI: 101. Cf. Fanārī (1363 Sh: 52).
- 33 *Asfār* VI: 103. Cf. Āshtiyānī (1376 Sh: 305).
- 34 *Asfār* VI: 280, VIII: 121. Cf. Qummī (1373–8 Sh, II: 420); Fanārī (1363 Sh: 63); Āshtiyānī (1376 Sh: 192).
- 35 As noted by Nūrī in his *risāla* on this topic in Āshtiyānī and Corbin (1972–8, III: 546).
- 36 On negative attributes, see *Asfār* II: 301, VI: 118. Cf. Ḥillī (1988: 292–301).
- 37 Nūrī in Āshtiyānī and Corbin (1972–8, III: 547).
- 38 Cf. *Asfār* VI: 111–12.
- 39 *Asfār* V: 295.
- 40 cf. *Asfār* III: 40, VI: 280; İşfahānī (1372 Sh: 409).
- 41 *Asfār* I: 123, VI: 116.
- 42 *Asfār* VI: 63. Here he says that this doubt is first raised by Suhrawardī in *al-Talwīḥāt* and only taken up later by his commentator Ibn Kammūna.
- 43 *Asfār* I: 132, 135, VI: 58; Šadrā (1964: 47) and (1967: 37). Cf. Intizām (1998: 86).
- 44 *Asfār* VI: 215.
- 45 Avicenna (1984: 2–3).
- 46 Goodman (1992: 66–7); Verbeke (1977: 42*–62*).
- 47 Cf. Davidson in Morewedge (1979: 173). Mason (1997: 51–4) shows how this holds for Spinoza as well. For Leibniz, see Rescher (1991: 18–19, 23–5); cf. Mişbāḥ (1405 Q: 42) on the Sadrian concept.
- 48 *Asfār* I: 221.
- 49 Legenhausen (1995b: 162). This process of necessitation is attested by the theory of the 'divine spark' in man beloved of both Near Eastern Hermeticism and late Neoplatonism – see Daiber (1995: 105); Nock and Festugière (1945–54, I: 11) *Corpus Hermeticum* I.11. The best study of theodicy in Mullā Šadrā arising from the notion of providence is Kalin (2007).

- 50 *Asfār* I: 225. Cf. Rahman (1975: 77).
- 51 *Asfār* VI: 301.
- 52 Lloyd (1990: 104).
- 53 *Asfār* I: 224. This also implies a critique of Avicenna (1984: 32) for whom Being of the One does not entail volitional creation but a necessary emanation.
- 54 *Asfār* II: 251. Badawī (1948: 19).
- 55 *Asfār* I: 53–4; Dīnānī (1372 Sh, II: 295ff). This principle has a venerable history and was known to be Parmenidean in the Arabic Aëtius – see Daiber (1980: 132).
- 56 Hintikka in Knuuttila (1981: 4).
- 57 *Asfār* I: 83.
- 58 *Asfār* VI: 124.
- 59 *Asfār* I: 86, 206; Avicenna (1375 Sh, III: 18, 19) on quidditative contingency. Cf. Imām-jum‘e-ī (1997: 48); Mason (1997: 59–62) on Spinoza. Bäck (1992: 226–7) sees the distinction in terms of temporal and atemporal contingents.
- 60 Ṣadrā (1377 Sh: 191).
- 61 Ṣadrā (1377 Sh: 192); cf. Avicenna (1375 Sh, III: 19–20).
- 62 Imām-jum‘e-ī (1997: 50).
- 63 *Asfār* I: 87, 412.
- 64 Sabzawārī (1969: 106); Izutsu (1983: 115). On the use of the term ‘sufficient reason’ from Leibniz, see Rescher (1991: 21–2).
- 65 *Asfār* I: 69; Ṣadrā (1982: 23). Cf. ‘Aṣṣār (1391 Q: 18).
- 66 Avicenna (1973: 177–9); *Asfār* I: 46. Existential poverty is a major theme in the Akbarian tradition as well – see Āmulī (1969: 662).
- 67 He quotes a verse of Shabastarī stating this, and Ḥasanẓāda states that this is indeed the Sadrian view – Ṣadrā (1995–, I: 107–8), *Asfār*.
- 68 *Asfār* I: 46, quoting Avicenna (1992b: 41).
- 69 Armstrong (1966–88, I: 281) *Enneads* I.8.2.2–4. Cf. Gerson (1994: 9).
- 70 Armstrong (1966–88, V: 125) *Enneads* V.3.15.27–29; Badawī (1948: 177); Gerson (1994: 27).
- 71 Nābulusī (1995: 29).
- 72 Cf. Legenhausen (1994b: 123).
- 73 Sabzawārī (1969: 48); Izutsu (1983: 40).
- 74 *Asfār* II: 307, VII: 243–53. Cf. Khāliqānī (1999: 74).
- 75 Suhrawardī (1999: 107).
- 76 Suhrawardī (1945: 435) *Muṭārahāt*, and (1952: 154) *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*. Cf. Badawī (1948: 54); *Asfār* VII: 244–5; Dāmād (1977: 372, 378–80); Khāliqānī (1999: 72).
- 77 *Asfār* IX: 245.
- 78 *Asfār* VII: 258.
- 79 Avicenna (1375 Sh, III: 35).
- 80 *Asfār* VI: 277.
- 81 Siorvanes (1996: 106). Cf. *Asfār* V: 347; Ṣadrā (1987, III: 66).
- 82 Fayḍ Kāshānī (1375 Sh: 14).
- 83 *Asfār* I: 253. Ṣadrā (1961b: 63) and (1992: 58). Cf. Armstrong (1966–88, V: 207) *Enneads* V.6.2.13; Āshtiyānī (1376 Sh: 277).
- 84 Ṣadrā (1313 Qb: 379).
- 85 *Asfār* VI: 300.
- 86 Suhrawardī (1945: 293) *Mashārī‘* and (1952: 87) *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*. Cf. Dīnānī (1372 Sh, III: 104–5).
- 87 Cf. Bonmariage (1998: 83–4).
- 88 Steel (1978: 108–9). It is important to note that this is a feature of Iamblichean Neoplatonism, since most other Neoplatonists reject it.
- 89 *Asfār* I: 443; Ṣadrā (1885: 118) *Ittiṣāf*. The Agent is more perfect than its effects following an old Aristotelian rule – see *Asfār* III: 250; Ṣadrā (1964: 44).
- 90 *Asfār* VI: 86.

- 91 *Asfār* I: 441, 443, IV: 270, V: 92. Cf. Suhrawardī (1945: 13, 22) *Talwīḥāt* and (1945: 299) *Mashāriʿ*.
- 92 *Asfār* I: 427; Ṣadrā (1967: 134–6).
- 93 *Asfār* VI: 21, 390.
- 94 The Leibnizian Law of Indiscernibles postulates that ‘if a is identical to b, whatever is true of a is true of b’ – see Russell (1905: 47).
- 95 *Asfār* II: 313.
- 96 *Asfār* VIII: 256.
- 97 *Asfār* IX: 186.
- 98 *Asfār* IV: 273.
- 99 *Asfār* IV: 274.
- 100 *Asfār* II: 96–7.
- 101 *Asfār* II: 112. He draws on the Akbarian tradition for the doctrine of the renewal of forms (*tajaddud al-amthāl*). See Humāʾī (1997: 14) and Chittick (1998: 57–66).
- 102 *Asfār* III: 96, 101, IV: 273.
- 103 Gerson (1994: 99) quoting Armstrong (1966–88, VI: 183) *Enneads* VI.3.2.21–2.
- 104 Steel (1978: 157–8); Shaw (1995: 98–102). Steel (1978: 55–6) shows how Priscianus uses Theophrastus on this point against his thesis in the commentaries on the *De Anima*.
- 105 Steel (1978: 62), quoting Priscianus.
- 106 Steel (1978: 155).
- 107 Evangeliou (1988: 66), quoting Porphyry’s *in Cat.*, 2 b 7–22 in Strange (1992: 84).
- 108 Avicenna (1960: 276); Bahmanyār (1375 Sh: 529); Ḥillī (1988: 29). Cf. *Asfār* II: 188–9.
- 109 Avicenna (1960: 57); Bahmanyār (1375 Sh: 304). Cf. Verbeke (1977: 83*).
- 110 Bahmanyār (1375 Sh: 307–8).
- 111 Bahmanyār (1375 Sh: 308).
- 112 *Asfār* IV: 263.
- 113 *Asfār* III: 229.
- 114 *Asfār* I: 260.
- 115 *Asfār* IV: 247–48.
- 116 *Asfār* IV: 265. They do affirm intensity in substance – see Suhrawardī (1945: 13), *Talwīḥāt*; cf. Ḥasanẓāda in Ṣadrā (1995–, I: 696) *Asfār*.
- 117 *Asfār* IV: 269.
- 118 *Asfār* IV: 269.
- 119 Intizām (1998: 79).
- 120 Avicenna (1960: 269).
- 121 Avicenna (1960: 277).
- 122 Bahmanyār (1375 Sh: 529–30). Cf. Avicenna (1960: 277–78).
- 123 Avicenna (1960: 278).
- 124 Suhrawardī (1999: 120). *Asfār* IV: 265.
- 125 *Asfār* I: 53. Cf. Ḥasanẓāda in Ṣadrā (1995–, I: 88).
- 126 *Asfār* I: 54.
- 127 Ḥasanẓāda in Ṣadrā (1995–, I: 206ff); Sabzawārī (1969: 106); Izutsu (1983: 115).
- 128 *Asfār* I: 221.
- 129 *Asfār* I: 401.
- 130 *Asfār* II: 187; Ṭūsī (1405 Q: 58).
- 131 *Asfār* IV: 276.
- 132 *Asfār* II: 188.
- 133 *Asfār* IX: 186.
- 134 Avicenna (1375 Sh, III: 33).
- 135 Avicenna (1375 Sh, III: 34).
- 136 Ṣadrā (1996: 306) *Rubūbiyya*.
- 137 Ṣadrā (1996: 322) *Rubūbiyya*.

- 138 *Asfār* I: 50.
- 139 *Asfār* I: 427–31.
- 140 *Asfār* I: 432–3.
- 141 *Asfār* I: 433.
- 142 *Asfār* I: 436, III: 83, 434.
- 143 *Asfār* VIII: 71–4, 80–93, 257.
- 144 *Asfār* III: 85, 95.
- 145 *Asfār* I: 433, 438.
- 146 *Asfār* I: 437.
- 147 Vlastos (1981: 65).
- 148 Vlastos (1981: 73).
- 149 *Asfār* I: 440–1.
- 150 *Asfār* II: 189, III: 252.
- 151 Ṭīhrānī (1417 Q: 211).
- 152 Ṭabāṭabā'ī in Ṭīhrānī (1417 Q: 212).
- 153 Ṭabāṭabā'ī in Ṭīhrānī (1417 Q: 213–14).
- 154 *Asfār* V: 342ff. Cf. III: 131, 402, 500, 502.
- 155 *Asfār* V: 345–7.
- 156 Armstrong (1966–88, IV: 407), *Enneads* IV.8.3.14–16. Cf. Shaykh al-Yūnānī translated by Lewis in Plotinus (1951–73, II: 235). It draws upon the Neoplatonic concept of the world-soul. See Gerson (1994: 63), Clark in Gerson (1996: 285); Walbridge (2000: 92).
- 157 The lithograph has 'dawr' while the edition has 'dār' (abode).
- 158 *Asfār* V: 343.
- 159 *Asfār* V: 343.
- 160 *Asfār* V: 79, VI: 117. Miṣbāḥ (1405 Q: 43–4) denies any modulation in the vertical hierarchy of being.
- 161 *Asfār* V: 349. Cf. Ṭīhrānī (1417 Q: 210).
- 162 *Asfār* I: 263.
- 163 *Asfār* V: 343.
- 164 *Asfār* IX: 175.
- 165 Chittick (1989: 392).
- 166 Chittick (1989: 88) quoting Ibn 'Arabī (n.d., II: 56); Murata (1992: 221); Qummī (1373–8 Sh, I: 442).
- 167 Qayṣarī (1416 Q, I: 513); Fanārī (1363 Sh: 283); Iṣfahānī (1976: 169); *Asfār* I: 261, III: 146. Cf. Hamid (1998: 148).
- 168 This is disputed by Dāmād (1998: 246) for whom this togetherness occurs at the ontological level of *dahr*, of that temporal stage that is beyond the sublunary world and below the pure level of the Divine essence in itself.
- 169 Murata (1992: 70).
- 170 Izutsu in Nasr (1977c: 130–2) on 'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī [d. 1132]. Cf. Gerson (1994: 46) quoting Armstrong (1966–88, VII: 303), *Enneads* VI.9.1ff.
- 171 Ibn 'Arabī (n.d., II: 94, 153, 404, III: 484, IV: 120).
- 172 Ibn 'Arabī (n.d., II: 486, III: 153, 177, IV: 97). Or *dhikr* – see Qummī (1373–8 Sh, III: 86).
- 173 *Asfār* V: 151. On the principle, see *Asfār* I: 440, III: 257. Cf. Lloyd (1976). This togetherness is not a mere coincidence – see *Asfār* II: 141.
- 174 Murata (1992: 9).
- 175 Chittick (1998: 137) quoting Ibn 'Arabī (n.d., II: 434).
- 176 Chittick (1989: 181) quoting Ibn 'Arabī (n.d., I: 41).
- 177 Chittick (1989: 4–9, 113–18) and (1998: xxvi–xxvii).
- 178 *Asfār* VII: 332. Cf. Badawī (1948: 134). See Armstrong (1966–88, V: 63) *Enneads* V.2.2.24–6, 'All things are the One and not the One; they are He because they come from Him; they are not He because it is in abiding by himself that he gives them'.

- 179 Ibn 'Arabī (n.d., I: 90, 183); Iṣfahānī (1976: 40).
- 180 Ibn 'Arabī (n.d., II: 119).
- 181 Chittick (1998: 37).
- 182 Ṣadrā (1987, III: 303).
- 183 Chittick (1998: 21) quoting Ibn 'Arabī (n.d., IV: 424).
- 184 *Asfār* VI: 374. Cf. Qummī (1373–8 Sh, I: 616).
- 185 *Asfār* III: 400. On the theme of the omnipresence of the One, see Armstrong (1966–88, III: 391, V: 180–3) *Enneads* III.8.9.25, V.5.8.24, V.5.9.18–19.
- 186 *Asfār* II: 372. Cf. Qummī (1373–8 Sh, I: 195–9).
- 187 Ṣadrā (1987, VI: 171). An important consequence of this is that the conventional philosophical view of the eternity of the world with the eternity of its principle cannot hold.
- 188 Āshtiyānī (1376 Sh: 180ff).
- 189 Nasafī (1998: 104, 106). Cf. Landolt (1996: 189–90).
- 190 Ṣadrā (1982: 46). Cf. Qummī (1373–8 Sh, I: 14, 221, 445); Ibn 'Arabī (n.d., III: 116).
- 191 'Aṣṣār (1391 Q: 14) argues that this position is concomitant with modulation.
- 192 *Asfār* I: 117.
- 193 Ibn 'Arabī (n.d., II: 56, 383).
- 194 *Asfār* V: 27, VIII: 73. Cf. Ṣadrā (1982: 46).
- 195 Corbin (1962a: 63).
- 196 Imām 'Alī (1967: 40, 273 for different version). Cf. Qummī (1373–8 Sh, II: 420, III: 510, 513).
- 197 Baḥrānī (1958, I: 128).
- 198 On his monism that is quite independent of the Akbarian tradition, see Oraibi (1992: 177). On the causality point, see *Asfār* I: 219.
- 199 *Asfār* III: 257–8.
- 200 *Asfār* III: 268–71 and Ṣadrā (1885: 138), *Sarayān*. Cf. Qummī (1373–8 Sh, II: 502).
- 201 Ṣadrā (1984b: 322).
- 202 *Asfār* IX: 141.
- 203 *Asfār* I: 261.
- 204 Sabzawārī (1969: 114); Izutsu (1983: 126).
- 205 Ṣadrā (1313 *Qa*: 375) and (1976: 32).
- 206 *Asfār* VII: 274.
- 207 Gerson (1994: 18) quoting Armstrong (1966–88, VI: 283) *Enneads* VI.4.3.18. Cf. Lewis in Plotinus (1951–73, II: 352–3) and Hadot (1997: 39). It is also Hermetic – see Festugière (1983, IV: 65), quoting Nock and Festugière (1945–54, I: 65) *Corpus Hermeticum* V.11.
- 208 Monism has good Near Eastern credentials and can be noticed in the *Corpus Hermeticum* 12.23 in Nock and Festugière (1945–54, I: 183), 'He is All and the All pervades and encompasses everything'.
- 209 Khorassani (1976: 126–8).
- 210 Ibn 'Arabī (1997: 154). See also these three modes in the Hallajian concept of God as reality (*al-ḥaqq*), essence (*ḥaqīqa*) and realisation (*taḥaqquq*) in Massignon (1975, II: 85–6).
- 211 Āmulī (1969: 351, 361).
- 212 Āshtiyānī (1370 Sh: 39, 138, 187, 194, 262), Qayṣarī (1375 Sh: 15, 19), Fanārī (1363 Sh: 59) and Āmulī (1969: 438, 631). This view is shared by many Sadrians as well – see Āshtiyānī in Qayṣarī (1375 Sh: 156, 187). Cf. Attas (1995: 270).
- 213 Āmulī (1969: 410, 424). Cf. A'vānī (1374 Sh: 145–6).
- 214 Ḥā'irī (1982: 14).
- 215 Takeshita (1982: 244–5, 247).
- 216 *Asfār* II: 335, 327–33; Ṣadrā (1982: 11) and (1996: 313) *Rubūbiyya*. Cf. MS Dār al-kutub (Cairo) 11 mīm, *Majāmi' fārsiyya* fol., 150a, quoted in Elias (1995: 63); Āshtiyānī (1972–8, I: 73–6); Corbin (1981b: 66–9); Hamade (1992: 264).

- 217 Zunūzī (1378 Sh, I: 242).
- 218 Lāhījī (n.d.: 40). Pure being (*wujūd muṭlaq*) for Ṭūsī is not God but rather that conceptual source of being that encompasses everything and is metaphilosophically speaking identical to ‘deployable being’ – see Avicenna (1375 Sh, III: 36). The debate on this term reveals the tension between monists who deny a distinction between *hyparxis* and *ousia* and pluralists or Peripatetics who affirm it – see Festugière (1983, IV: 6), quoting Nock and Festugière (1945–54, I: 113–14) *Corpus Hermeticum* X.2; Hadot (1999: 82–4).
- 219 Ṣadrā (1982: 5–6).
- 220 *Asfār* II: 327.
- 221 *Asfār* I: 299. Cf. Zunūzī (1378 Sh, I: 244). Aḥsā’ī modifies this by placing both negatively conditioned and conditioned being in limited being since they are both outcomes of divine acts – see Hamid (1998: 97).
- 222 Ṣadrā (1982: 6).
- 223 Zunūzī (1378 Sh, I: 243).
- 224 Āshtiyānī (1376 Sh: 211ff).
- 225 Qayṣarī (1375 Sh: 157).
- 226 Attas (1995: 290).
- 227 Ṣadrā (1982: 6–7). Cf. Āmulī (1969: 635); Āshtiyānī (1370 Sh: 153).
- 228 *Asfār* II: 342; Rahman (1975: 82–3).
- 229 Qāshānī (1987: 74). Cf. Qayṣarī (1375 Sh: 47).
- 230 *Asfār* I: 71. Cf. Mu’ayyadī (1996: 70).
- 231 Ṣadrā (1982: 15). Cf. Mu’ayyadī (1996: 72).
- 231 *Asfār* II: 342.
- 233 *Asfār* II: 291.
- 234 *Asfār* IV: 227.
- 235 Qayṣarī (1416 Q, I: 51).
- 236 *Asfār* I: 25.
- 237 *Asfār* II: 292, VI: 368.
- 238 Walbridge (1992: 193). Cf. Knysh (1999: 153–7) on an earlier *kalām* refutation with similar themes. On parallels in Anaximander, see Ḥamīd (1995: 823, 825, 828); Kirk (1983: 115).
- 239 Rahman (1975: 14–15, 266); Ḥusayn (1998: 28).
- 240 *Asfār* I: 53, 71, 433, II: 291, 300, 305, 318, 335, 339, VI: 18, 24.
- 241 Ṣadrā (1961b: 70–2).
- 242 Ṣadrā (1961b: 65). Cf. Gersh in Wallis (1995: 134–5), referring to *Asclepius* 33.344.22–3; Festugière (1983, II: 59), quoting Nock and Festugière (1945–54, I: 182–3) *Corpus Hermeticum* XII.20–2.
- 243 Āmulī in Iṣfahānī (1372 Sh: 48) quoting *Asfār* I: 330.
- 244 *Asfār* I: 261–2.
- 245 Ṣadrā (1313 Qa: 305).
- 246 *Asfār* I: 71.
- 247 Sabzawārī (1969: 54); Izutsu (1983: 48). Cf. Āshtiyānī (1376 Sh: 195–7); Qazvīnī (1376 Sh: 128–9).
- 248 *Asfār* I: 71–3. Cf. Sabzawārī (1969: 56); Izutsu (1983: 51).
- 249 ‘Aṣṣār (1391 Q: 9).
- 250 Sabzawārī in *Asfār* I: 72. Beings are modes of being and not portions or parts of a whole – *Asfār* VIII: 369, IX: 186.
- 251 *Asfār* I: 73.
- 252 *Asfār* I: 72.
- 253 *Asfār* I: 74.
- 254 *Asfār* I: 73.
- 255 *Asfār* I: 74. The quotations are from Sabzawārī’s *scholia* on the *Asfār*.
- 256 *Asfār* I: 71.

- 257 Sabzawārī (1969: 55); Izutsu (1983: 50).
- 258 *Asfār* I: 71. Sabzawārī tries to reconcile these four views as merely four levels of unity, each of which in itself is not incorrect. Cf. Ṣadrā (1313 *Qa*: 298–9).
- 259 *Asfār* II: 333–34 quoting the Persian poets on this. Cf. Jāmī (1979: 35–36); Iṣfahānī (1372 *Sh*: 461); Qazvīnī (1376 *Sh*: 127); Dīnānī (1366 *Sh*: 286).
- 260 Qayṣarī (1375 *Sh*: 37).
- 261 Nābulusī (1995: 11).
- 262 Āmulī (1969: 51). Cf. Chittick (1998: 173).
- 263 *Asfār* II: 305, 310, 327, V: 232.
- 264 *Asfār* VI: 143, 144.
- 265 Iṣfahānī (1372 *Sh*: 213).
- 266 Corbin (1976*b*: 83–4).
- 267 *Asfār* VI: 146; Ṣadrā (1987, II: 324, IV: 55).
- 268 Āshtiyānī's comment in Qayṣarī (1375 *Sh*: 31, 172).
- 269 Nasr (1972*b*: 159) argues this.
- 270 *Asfār* I: 71.
- 271 *Asfār* I: 73–4, II: 292, VI: 86; Ṣadrā (1313 *Qa*: 277); cf. Sabzawārī (1969: 56–7).
- 272 *Asfār* I: 65.
- 273 This is a central problematic of modulation as noticed by Rahman (1975: 37–41) and Bonmariage (1998: 174).
- 274 Rahman in Hourani (1975: 250–1).
- 275 *Asfār* I: 206, II: 138, 319.
- 276 *Asfār* I: 220, II: 223.
- 277 *Asfār* I: 65, 406, IX: 159.
- 278 *Asfār* VI: 374. Cf. Bonmariage (1998: 177).
- 279 Iqbal (1908: 175).
- 280 Chittick (1998: 29–31).
- 281 Ṣadrā (1987, VII: 144).
- 282 Ṣadrā (1987, VII: 144–5).
- 283 Avicenna (1375 *Sh*, III: 18–22); Mayer (2000) is the best analysis of the argument.
- 284 Avicenna (1375 *Sh*, III: 66–7).
- 285 *Asfār* VI: 13.
- 286 Ṣadrā (1987, VI: 229) *Tafsīr*. I am grateful to Janis Esots for alerting me to this reference.
- 287 Avicenna (1375 *Sh*, III: 66–7).
- 288 Ṣadrā (1885: 139), *Sarayān* and (1964: 68). The name of the proof comes from Avicenna (1375 *Sh*, III: 67). Cf. Iṣfahānī (1372 *Sh*: 739–40).
- 289 *Asfār* VI: 14–16; Ṣadrā (1964: 69) and (1967: 35–6).
- 290 *Asfār* VI: 16.
- 291 Iṣfahānī (1372 *Sh*: 742).
- 292 Iṣfahānī (1372 *Sh*: 276, 743). Cf. *Asfār* II: 336. The Sadrian proof draws upon the Akbarian tradition – see A'vānī (1374 *Sh*: 155).
- 293 Iṣfahānī (1372 *Sh*: 191). This shows the success of the Illuminationist agenda in philosophy before the Safavid period.
- 294 *Asfār* VI: 284.
- 295 *Asfār* VI: 17; Suhrawardī (1999: 87–9). Sabzawārī considers the Sadrian proof to be more comprehensive and better than the Illuminationist proof because it considers everything both in the vertical and horizontal hierarchy to be an intensity of being from the One, while in the Illuminationist account bodies and other base beings in the horizontal hierarchy of light are not lights at all.
- 296 *Asfār* VI: 23–4.
- 297 *Asfār* VI: 14–26.
- 298 Avicenna (1375 *Sh*, III: 146), (1992*a*, II: 89), (1984: 22, 33).
- 299 Aristotle (1984, II: 1694–5) *Metaphysics* 1072 b 10–14); cf. Averroes (1938–52, III:

- 1608–9). Davidson (1987: 289). It is also suggested by *kalām* arguments about the being that cannot not be – see Baḥrānī (1406 Q: 34).
- 300 Avicenna (1960: 6); cf. Davidson (1987: 299).
- 301 Davidson in Morewedge (1979: 169).
- 302 Davidson (1987: 336). This follows Aristotle (1984, II: 1570), *Metaphysics* 994 a 1–19; cf. Averroes (1938–52, I: 16–19). Arguably the proof can work in an unconditioned mode without the presumption of the impossibility of infinite regress – see Davidson (1987: 308).
- 303 *Asfār* I: 83.
- 304 Avicenna (1984: 22).
- 305 Legenhausen (1994a: 217).
- 306 Legenhausen (1994a: 210).
- 307 *Asfār* VI: 29, n. 1 and 14–15, n. 3.
- 308 Cf. Oppy (1995: 186).
- 309 Ṣadrā (1885: 133) *Sarayān*. Rahman (1975: 77). Aḥsā'ī actually goes as far as stating that contingents are correlational accidents – see Hamid (1998: 258).
- 310 Dāmād (1998: 234).
- 311 Bahmanyār (1375 Sh: 362).
- 312 Ṣadrā (1992: 55) and (1987, I: 49).
- 313 *Asfār* I: 96. His quiddity, in the sense of ‘that by which something is’, is His specific being, His very ipseity.
- 314 *Asfār* I: 397. Cf. Sabzawārī (1969: 88); Izutsu (1983: 94).
- 315 Ṣadrā (1377 Sh: 179).
- 316 Ṣadrā (1984b: 265–6).
- 317 *Asfār* II: 328.
- 318 *Asfār* II: 312–13, 314, 329–31. Ṣadrā (1967: 70) and (1964: 41). Cf. De Smet (1999: 476–7).
- 319 Ibn ‘Arabī (1919: 53) ‘*Uqlat* and (n.d., III: 443–4).
- 320 Proclus (1963: 68, 72). Cf. Walbridge (2000: 49).
- 321 Cf. Qummī (1373–8 Sh, I: 522, II: 132, 602). This is because the Muḥammadan reality is that through which divine mercy flows – see Jilveh in Qayṣarī (1375 Sh: 213).
- 322 *Asfār* VII: 32. Ṣadrā (1984b: 21). For the *khavar* of the Imam ‘*anā-l-nuqṭa taḥt al-bā*’, see Majlisī (1392 Q, 40: 165). There is a further saying attributed to the Prophet that all existents are manifested by this point – see Ibn ‘Arabī (n.d., I: 102); Āmulī (1374 Sh: 210–11). These sayings can be related to the previous discussion on *ma‘iyya* since it is also reported that the Prophet said, ‘I did not see anything without seeing the point of the *bā*’ written upon it’ – see Ibn ‘Arabī (n.d., I: 102); Āmulī (1374 Sh: 211).
- 323 *Asfār* VII: 33.
- 324 *Asfār* VII: 33. Ṣadrā (1984b: 22).
- 325 *Asfār* VII: 34.
- 326 *Asfār* VI: 296, quoting the famous verse of Imam ‘Alī.
Wa-nta l-kitābu l-mubīnu lladhī, bi-ahruḥihi yazharu l-muḍmar
a-taz‘amu nnaka jirmun ṣaghīr, wa fīka ṇṭawā l-‘ālamu l-akbar
 See Imam ‘Alī (n.d., 45). On the microcosm theme, see Murata (1992: 45–6).
- 327 Ṣadrā (1984b: 23).
- 328 Corbin (1967: 170) and (1964: 83). It is in this sense, following the famous sermon of declaration (*khutbat al-bayān*) of the Imam, that he is the First and the Last, since in the reversion to the one, the last stage is that of the first emanation – see Amir-Moezzi (1996: 195, 208–14); cf. Āmulī (1374 Sh: 214–24) for the text of the sermon and references to it.
- 329 Ṣadrā (1987, I: 41) and (1967: 813). Corbin (1967: 172) and (1971: 41). Amir-Moezzi (1998: 209). Knowing him is knowing God – Amir-Moezzi (1994: 52). Cf. Qummī (1373–8 Sh, II: 336, 340). On deployable being as the logos, see Āshtiyānī (1370

- Sh: 161). On the Hermetic roots, see Festugière (1983, II: 55), quoting Nock and Festugière (1945–54, I: 61–3) *Corpus Hermeticum* V.3–8.
- 330 Ṣadrā (1988, II: 394). Cf. Corbin (1962a: 58).
- 331 Bursī (1978: 23).
- 332 Amir-Moezzi (1994: 24).
- 333 Rahman (1975: 88). Certainly the Akbarian tradition regards quiddities as forms of attributes – see Āshtiyānī (1370 Sh: 158).
- 334 *Asfār* II: 250.
- 335 Following the famous sermon of Imam ‘Alī (1967: 212), true unity involves negating the attributes – *Asfār* VI: 135, 145. Cf. Āmulī (1969: 638); Sabzawārī (1969: 114); Izutsu (1983: 126).
- 336 *Asfār* VI: 140. Ṣadrā (1982: 6) on Akbarian authority for this.
- 337 *Asfār* VI: 125. Rahman (1975: 142).
- 338 Ṣadrā (1967: 256, 712).
- 339 For some comparative references, see Amir-Moezzi (1996: 193–4).
- 340 Āshtiyānī (1370 Sh: 219); *Asfār* VIII: 140.
- 341 Ṣadrā (1967: 355).
- 342 The discussion of the ontological and cosmological role of *wilāya* is interspersed throughout Ṣadrā’s commentary on *kitāb al-ḥujja* of Uṣūl al-Kāfī – see Ṣadrā (1988, II: 388–95) for a representative sample.
- 343 Bursī (1978: 158).
- 344 This is not to say that he quotes him directly. Rather, the intellectual tradition of Shi‘i mystical and philosophical thought and its meditation upon the concept of *wilāya* permeates its thought and finds an appropriate precursor in the thought of Bursī.
- 345 Bursī (1978: 30–1). Cf. Ṣadrā (1988, II: 417ff).
- 346 Corbin (1962a: 51).
- 347 *Asfār* II: 315, IX: 175. Cf. Ṣadrā (1988, II: 508ff).
- 348 Morris (1981: 84); *Asfār* I: 25–6.
- 349 *EII* I: 173. Corbin (1962b: 158) notes that Shi‘i philosophy such as Ṣadrā’s is inherently eschatological.

Conclusion

- 1 Shields (1999: 266–7).
- 2 *Asfār* V: 349.
- 3 *Asfār* IX: 186.
- 4 Nasr (2006: 245–6). For an excellent study and collection of his treatises and glosses, see Jilveh (1385 Sh); for the latter thinker, see Ḥā’irī Māzandarānī (1956).
- 5 Nasr (1996a: 304–19) and (2006: 242–4); Iṣfahānī (1976).
- 6 Nasr (2006: 235–42); Dabashi (1993: 273–323); Javādī Āmulī (1996–2002).
- 7 For basic introductions to this intellectual tendency, see Mu‘īnī (n.d.), Ḥakīmī (1373 Sh), Raḥīmīyān-i Firdūsī (1383 Sh).
- 8 Aḥsā’ī (1993: 45, 51). For a general account of Aḥsā’ī’s critical engagement with Ṣadrā, see Bayat (1982: 37–58).
- 9 Aḥsā’ī (2006, I: 63).
- 10 Aḥsā’ī (2006, I: 76–7).
- 11 Aḥsā’ī (2006, I: 192).
- 12 Aḥsā’ī (2006, I: 91).
- 13 Iṣfahānī (1363 Sh: 3).
- 14 Iṣfahānī (1363 Sh: 24–6).
- 15 Miyānjī (1415 Q: 11–12).
- 16 Miyānjī (1415 Q: 119).
- 17 Miyānjī (1415 Q: 211–20).

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