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chapter 5 - shia gnostic cosmology**Chapter 5 - Gnostic Shi'a Cosmology**

by Michael McCarron

Generally, Shi'ite cosmology does not differ greatly from Sunni cosmology. The Essence of the Creator is separated from creation by veils (hijab), curtains (sitr), and pavillions (soradeq) impregnated with divine attributes. He created the creation ex nihilo. The First created things where the Archetypes: al-qalam, al-lawh al-mahfuz, al-arsh, and al-kursi (see Qur'an 68:1). Creation took place in six aeons. There are Seven Heavens, with a colour symbolism associated with each heaven as in Suhrawardi and Simnani's thought. In each heaven there are elements: Paradise in the seventh heaven, sudratul muntaha, al-bayt al-ma'mur (the house frequented-- a temple located at the center of the highest heaven, see Qur'an 52:4). In terms of Angelology there is the Highest Angel, ar-Ruh, and the four archangels: Gabriel, Mikail, Saraphiel, and Azrail, as well, the luminaries (an-najm). Separating the creation from the Creator is the realm of the Barzakh: which "contains the fountain of life ('ayn al-hayat) in the center; the silver tents (qiam min feyza) where the spirits of past imams dwell, the 'kingdom of earth' (malakut al-arz) and the cities Jabalqa & Jabalsa which, though described as located at the hidden centre, the extreme east & west, seem nevertheless located outside its physical boundaries. [Muhammad 'Ali Amir-Moezzi, Elr, "Cosmology and Cosmogony"]

The Earth is divided into Seven earths. The elements which are contained within it include:

- 1) Ka'ba, located at the center of the seven climes of the earth, it is also the middle member in a tower of fifteen sanctuaries located in the centers of the super imposed seven heavens and seven earths-- the highest of which is the house frequented, which stands below the throne in its image.
- 2) Mystic Whale, in the most frequently mentioned sequence the seventh earth rests on the cock-- the trumpeter of the Day of Judgement-- which stands on a rock poised on the back of a whale that swims in the ocean of darkness; the ocean is borne by the air, which is in turn sustained by the moist earth.
- 3) Zaman (Ages of the World), the age of the world is said to be 50,000 years symbolically divided between: 1. emptiness, 2. being populated, 3. emptiness, 4. creation of jinn & men, and 5. the descendants of Adam are born; Also, incorporated into the cyclical scheme are particular cycles of humanity within the cycle of the descendants of Adam.

And in more general terms a Shi'ite philosopher writes on Time:

"as for Him who is exalted above time (al-muta'ali an al-zaman), time for Him is a single thing from eternity (azal) to everlastingness (abad) and equally related to Him. His knowledge encompasses its parts in detail as well as what occurs in its parts one thing after another. It is as if a temporal being were to be likened to someone reading a book. His sight falls on the letter after another,

such that one letter has passed by him, another is present before his eyes, and yet another his sight has not yet reached. A being exalted above time, on the other hand, is like someone who has the whole book present before him and knows its arrangement. The First's knowledge of temporal being (al-zamaniyat) is of this sort." (Al-Tusi, qtd by al-Jami in Gloss 36, pg. 100, DF)

In Shi'ite Islam is also a 'Light Cosmology' which is the descent (tanazallut) of Light into creation it is described through several stages:

- 1) In the immaterial place of the '*Umm al-Kitab*' God sent forth the Light of Muhammad and the second light from the Muhammadan Light the light of 'Ali.
- 2) The stage of the 'shadow of light' is supposed to have occurred not in the primordial world but in the second world, the first world of shadows (alam al-azzeela al-awwal) or the first world of particles (alam al-dharr al-awwal).
- 3) The transition from primary to secondary marks the transition of light into subtle human form (spiritual human existence). [The immaculate ones are described as having performed a circumambulation of the throne (al-arsh) making tashbih and testifying to God's glory.]
- 4) Classes of Pure Beings are: a. shadows of future spiritual inhabitants of the heavens & earth, b. shadows of the prophets particularly the ulu'l-azim (prophets of constancy), and the shadows of the initiates (mu'minin).
- 5) The Covenant (mithaq) contains four solemn oaths: a. the promise to worship God, b. love and fidelity (walaya) to Muhammad, c. obedience to the Imams, d. obedience to the Mahdi, the universal saviour at the end of times.
- 6) Humanity is divided between the saved and the lost which correspond to the armies of light (a'immat an-nur) and the armies of darkness (a'immat az-zalam).

Also of importance is that of the Shaykhi Shi'ite school of thought which held that reality was divided between three parts: a. al-dunya or al-mulk (earthly existence), b. al-barzakh (hurqulya - the inter world) and c. al-malakut or al-akhira (the transcendent world). It is interesting to note the use of akhira to designate the transcendent world as the reflections on qiyama become important in the Baha'i movement and may be understood more in terms of a spiritual attainment of divine vision than the supreme day of judgement as in orthodox Islam where akhira designates the 'hereafter'. Hurqulya is pointed out to be

"According to al-Ahsa'i, hurqulya is a barzak between the realms of mulk (al-dunya) and al-malakut; he describes it in one place as 'another mulk'. Its lowest extension touches the 'prime mover', the outermost celestial spheres, 'in rank not in direction'. Images appearing in physical mirrors belong to this level of hurqulya. In temporal terms it stands between the highest point of earthly time (a'la al-zaman) and the lowest level of eternity (asfal al-dahr). hurqulya is situated in the eighth clime (al-iqlim at-tamin) of which it forms the highest part, with the cities of Jabalqa and Jabalsa forming the lower. The earthly paradise (jannat al-dunya) is located in the western part of hurqulya and the earthly hell to the east." [MacEoin, Elr, "Cosmology and Cosmogeny"]

Also, the Shaykhi school taught that there were three periods of history:

- 1) al-dunya, the time of concealment

2) al-raja', the time of the return of Muhammad and the Imams

3) al-Qiyama, the time of the universal resurrection. It should also be pointed out that Shaykh Ahsa'i had an elaborate theory regarding resurrection which is not carried through by the Bahai movement, rather the Bahai, especially 'Ali-Muhammad-i Shiraz, al-Bab, teachings bare more resemblance to the universal theory of resurrection of Mulla Sadra.

The Symbolic Cosmology of Mulla Sadra:

Mulla Sadra was an influential 'Irfani philosopher of the 17th century in Shiraz. His teacher was Mir Damad a famous 'Irfani philosopher of Iran and considered a member of the Dhahabi Sufi Tariqat. He was schooled in the 'Irfani tradition of the Ishraqiyyun. Mulla Sadra's primary view does not differ in terms of the contents of the cosmos, but rather of the quality or substance of the cosmos. He wrote of all existence being reality, that is essences are not real they are conceptual. The only real reality is Existence of which Essence is an accident. This is directly opposed to the Ishraqiyyun philosophers Suhrawardi and Sayyid Qutb al-Din. Of Existence he writes that it is in perpetual motion (ar. harakat, per. junbish) and existence beside the Real Reality, God, is ambiguous due to this motion. The Doctrine of Mulla Sadra states that even though his philosophy sounds monistic it is not existentially so and thus he teaches an doctrine of Tawhid al-Wujud (Existential Unity), in terms of humanities knowledge of the Creator.

His Doctrine of Perpetual Motion:

Movement does not occur only in the qualities of things but in their very substance. Substantive Motion (haraka jawhariya)-- transforms the fixed 'grades' of al-Suhrawardi into a systematically ambiguous (tashkik) idea of existence.

"1. 'grades' of being are no longer fixed and static but ceaselessly move and achieve higher forms of existence in time.

2. 'existence is applicable to all evolutionary stages (bi-al-tashkik), with systematic ambiguity, and no other concept has this character: only existence is that principle which 'by virtue of being simple and unitary (basit) creates differences:

3. this movement of the universe (which is irreversible and unidirectional) ends in the 'Perfect Man' (al-insan al-kamil) who becomes a member of the Divine Realm and becomes unified with the Attributes of Divinity (Sifat God)

4. each higher stage of existence includes all the lower ones and transcends them; this is expressed by the formula 'a simple reality is everything', i.e. the higher reality is, the simpler and more inclusive it is.

5. the more something has or achieves of existence, the less it has of essence, since, while existence is real, concrete, determinate, individual and luminous, essences are exactly the opposite and arise only in the mind by the impact of reality upon it. hence, Divinity being pure existence, has no essence at all." [Note: essences ('ayan) should not be confused with the Essence of Divinity (Dhat God)] (Rahman, MS, pg. 11)

So what is 'ambiguity'. It is that existence moves continuously and successively through higher and higher forms of evolutionary 'modes' of being, culminating in the Perfect Man (al-insan al-kamil).

Cosmogenesis in Sadra's Thought:

This brings us to how Sadra imagined creation's genesis. He bases his ideas on the doctrine of 'Ibn Arabi and synthesizing this with Muslim Peripatetic tradition. His process runs like this:

1. When Divinity as Necessary Existence, reflects upon Himself, the first effulgence from His being takes place. This is the first effect of Divinity. It is the self-unfolding existence (al-wujud al-munbasit). It is absolute (itlaq).
2. Contingency (mumkinat): Contingency is the particular determination of the self, unfolding being necessitates the attachment to it of a 'thing'-- in the mind. When the self-unfolding being enters the realm of contingency and through its self-determination (ta'ayyuna) being with 'thingness' arise, it is called the 'the Breath of the Merciful' (nafas al-rahman), this is the self-unfolding being insofar as it gives rise to contingent beings and manifest 'things'. This occurs in the Mind of Divinity.
3. A second reflection or effulgence upon Himself generates a multiplicity of attributes. The attributes are also the Ideal Entities of the created world. Difference between the two reflections: the first reflection-- of existence-- had reflected or irradiated the outward of Divinity, which is pure existence; the second is inward. Due to the principle that existence is reality while 'things' are concepts, and concepts are confined to mental existence.
4. With this Second Effulgence, a change occurs in the first effulgence-- it becomes infected with 'entitization'. Sadra calls this new substance highest Intelligible Substance, which by casting a shadow upon the temporal world, generates the primary substance, Pure Matter-- which generates specific substances, like Intelligence, man, animal... in the Case of Divinity, there is nothing but an absolute and pure existence which in His mind generates a multiplicity of attributes.(cf. Rahman, MS, pg. 86-89)

It is clearly differentiated substantially between Divinity and that which is emanated. These lesser realms are actually according to Sadra modes of Existence (anha al-wujud). That is that as existence is one there is actually different modes within existence which generates the idea of Unity in Diversity or Diversity in Unity (wahda wa'l-kathrat):

"...in the realm of diversity and multiplicity, a real unity exists while, conversely, in the realm of absolute unity, multiplicity exists in an eminent, ideal, or simple manner. This is the doctrine of unity-in-diversity and diversity-in-unity (wahda fi'l-kathra wa'l-kathra fi'l-wahda). He condemns those materialist atheists who recognize only a disjointed multiplicity in nature and do not recognize the presence of one Existence-principle, one Divinity in it... he declares erroneous the views of those mystics, who even in the realm of contingent multiplicity only see unity and deny the existence of diversity" (Rahman, MS, pg. 132)

Sadra's Unity and Diversity in Sufi and Baha'i Terms:

To begin I would like to draw attention to the correlation of 'Abdu'l-Baha's usage of the principle of movement (harakat) and ambiguity (tashkik). In the Baha'i prayer (salat/namaz) it is recorded that the Pen of God is that which moves (haraka) creation (al-mumiknat) and that creation is ambiguous (mutashkik), 'stirred up', by the movement of the Pen. 'Abdu'l-Baha likewise writes that:

"Know that nothing which exists remains in a state of repose-- that is to say, all things are in motion. Everything is either growing or declining; all things are either coming

from non-existence into being, or going from existence into non-existence... This state of motion is said to be essential-- that is, natural; it cannot be separated from beings because it is their essential requirement, as it is the essential requirement of fire to burn." ('Abdu'l-Baha, SAQ, pg. 232)

From this usage we can derive a field of context to Mulla Sadra's philosophy. Unity-in-Diversity (wahda fi'l-kathrat) is not an isolated usage of Mulla Sadra's view and philosophy, i.e. Bada', Harakat, Tashkik, Shuhudi Unitarianism, Tanazallut, Mental Existence.

In terms of Unity-in-Diversity Baha' Allah writes:

"These Lights have proceeded from but one Source, and these fruits are the fruits of one Tree. Thou canst discern neither difference nor distinction among them. All this is by the grace of God! On whom He will, He bestoweth His grace. Please God, that we avoid the land of denial, and advance into the ocean of acceptance, so that we may perceive, with an eye purged from all conflicting elements, the worlds of unity and diversity, of variation and oneness, of limitation and detachment..." (Mirza Husayn-`Ali, BW, Kitab-i Iqan, pg. 160)

as seen in the opening quote from Baha' Allah, the realms of Unity and Diversity are realms assigned to a station below that of the Divine Unity, Thus the Unity is not that which we speak of asserting to God's existence. It is the concept of the unity of existence in terms of contingent existence. Abdu'l-Baha speaks of it in this manner when using the doctrine:

"And this Spirit hath both restitution and return, inasmuch as it consists of the Light of God and the unconditioned grace. So, having regard to this state and station, Christ announced that John the Baptist was Elias, who was to come before Christ. And the likeness of this station is as that of lamps kindled: for these in respect to their glasses and oil-holders, are different, but in respect to their light, One..." ('Abdu'l-Baha, BWF, pg. 371)

And again he writes:

"The Creator of all is One God. From this same God all creation sprang into existence... Man is the sum of Creation, and the Perfect Man is the expression of the complete thought of the Creator-- the Word of God. Consider the world of created beings, how varied and diverse they are in species, yet with one sole origin. All the differences that appear are those of outward form and colour. This diversity of type is apparent throughout the whole of nature." ('Abdu'l-Baha, PT, pg. 51)

It is interesting that he speaks of diversity as type, underlying an unity. This process of differentiation is likened in Mulla Sadra's writings to differing modes of existence. Hence, each lower differentiation is the differentia of the higher genus. That is, diversity of the unity. It is this idea of diversity of an underlying unity which gives us the concept of the unity. (see below for further elucidation) Albeit this is a short glimpse of Sadra's Philosophy in the Baha'i movement it demonstrates one point: that the Baha'i movement continues the Shi'a 'irfani tradition in both philosophy and sufism. :

"The background to Sadra and Baha'i thought is owned in great part to Ibn `Arabi, the twelfth century mystic. He writes on the Unity and Diversity that it is similar to the mathematical reciprocity of 'one as source of all numbers, and the numbers: "The numbers are produced in a serial form by the (repetition of) 'one'. Thus the one brings into existence the numbers, while the numbers divide the 'one', (the only essential

difference between them being that) a 'number' subsists as a number by virtue of something which is counted." (Ibn 'Arabi, ST, pg. 79)

All the numbers are each a particular form in which 'one' manifests itself according to its peculiar determination and the rank it occupies in the numerical series. This is noted by Bali Effendi as:

"You must notice that 'one' corresponds symbolically to the one inner essence ('ayn) which is the reality itself of the Absolute, while the numbers correspond to the multiplicity of the Names arising from the self-manifestation of that reality (i.e. of the Absolute) in various forms in accordance with the requirements of its own aspects and relations... Finally, the 'things counted' correspond to the concrete things of this world, that is, creaturely forms of theophany, without which neither the properties of the Names nor the states of the permanent archetypes can become manifest (in the external world in a concrete way)." (Izutsu, ST, pg. 79)

Abbas Effendi 'Abdu'l-Baha uses the same imagery to convey the same meaning where he writes:

"And similarly consider the Unitary Concept (ahad) how all the numbers appear from it and it is in no number since it is the point of origin of all numbers. And the first to be specified and to appear from it is the number 'one' (wahid) and from 'one' all other numbers come into being. So all these numbers are contained in the unitary concept in the most perfect simplicity and oneness. And so it is the Hidden Treasure of all numbers and from it do they appear." (Abbas Effendi 'Abdu'l-Baha, Momen trans., KM, pg. 11)

Each number is an independent reality:

"The 'thing counted' partakes of both non-existence and existence, for one and the same thing can be non-existent on the level of the senses while being existent on the level of the intellect. So there must be both the 'number' and the 'thing counted'. But there must be, in addition, also 'one' which causes all this and is caused by it. (And the relation between 'one' and the numbers is to be conceived as follows) Every degree in the numerical series (i.e. every number) is in itself one reality. (thus each number is a self-subsistent unity and) not a mere conglomeration, and yet, on the other hand, there certainly is a respect in which it must be regarded as 'one's put together'. Thus two is one reality (though it is a gathering of one and one)... Since each number is in this way one (i.e. an independent reality), the essence of each number cannot be the same as the essences of other numbers. And yet, the fact of 'gathering' (of ones is common to all of them (i.e. as genus, as it were, which comprises all species)." (Izutsu, ST, pg. 79)

Interestingly, again the concept of Genus is integrated into this picture the concept is developed through further elucidation:

"...that what is in reality the one unique Essence multiplies itself into many essences through the multiplicity of self-determinations. These self-determinations are of two kinds: one is 'universal' (al-ta'ayyun al-kulliy) by which the Reality in the state of Unity becomes 'man', for example, and the other is 'individual' (al-ta'ayyun juz'iy) by which 'man' becomes Abraham... Since 'man' remains preserved both in father and child on the level of the specific unity, (Ibn 'Arabi) avoid affirming the difference of essence [substance/matter] in father and child and affirms only the difference of 'capacity' (hukm) saying 'or more exactly, in the capacity of son'. This he does because there is no difference at all between the two in essence, that is, in so far as they are 'man'. The

difference arises only in regard to their 'being father' and 'being son' respectively. The same is true of Adam and Eve. Both of them and their children are one with respect to their 'being man'. Thus the Absolute is one in itself, but it is multiple because of its various self-determinations, specific and individual. These self-determinations, specific and individual. These self-determinations do not contradict the real Unity. In conclusion we say: '(The Absolute) is One in the form of Many.' (al-Qashani, quoted in Izutsu, ST, pg. 80-81:

"Ibn 'Arabi writes of the role of the Divine Names in the One/Many paradigm. The Names have two aspects: toward God they are one, toward multiplicity-diversity they are other than the Absolute." "The Unity of God on the level of the Divine Names which require (the existence of) us (i.e., the phenomenal world) is the Unity of multiplicity (ahadiyah al-kathrah). And the Unity of God in the sense of being completely 'independent' of us and even of the Names is the Unity of essence (ahadiyah al-'ayn). Both aspects are called by the same name: 'One'." (pg. 102, ST, Izutsu) :

The Divine Names are the cause (sabab `illah) of multiplicity. Higher Names contain lower names and every Name contains in a certain sense the other Names in the graded hierarchy of Names:

"When you assign a higher rank to a Divine Name, you are thereby calling it (implicitly) by all the Names (that belong to the Names of lower ranks). The same is true of the things of the world; every higher being possesses the capacity of comprehending all that is lower than itself. However, every particle of the world is (virtually) the whole of the world, that is every single particle is capable of receiving into itself all the realities of all single particles of the world. So the observed fact, for instance, that Zayd is inferior to 'Amr in knowledge does not in anyway prevent the same He-ness of the Absolute being the very essence of Zayd and 'Amr; nor does it prevent the He-ness being more perfect, more conspicuous in 'Amr than in Zayd." (Izutsu, ST, pg. 107)

Abbas Effendi `Abdu'l-Baha writes similarly:

"Know thou, O lover of the All-Glorious Beauty, that differences between the statements of the saints is on account of differences in the effulgences of the Names of the Absolute and variations in their places of manifestation. For in the being of every one of the mirrors of the Attributes of the Absolute and in the reality of each locus of the manifestation of Absolute Self-Sufficiency, one of the Names of the Absolute is King over the rest of the Names. Moreover humanity is honoured by the cloak of 'We have created mankind the best of forms' and has put on the spiritual garment of 'and praised be to God the best of Creators.' The True One (praised be He) has manifested every created thing through one of His Names. Thus some of the mystic knowers have said that the angels are the manifestations of the Praiseworthy One and the Holy One while devils are the manifestation He who leads astray and He who is proud. Similarly everything else is each one under the revelation of one of the Absolutes' Names. And if this Divine Subtlety and this Heavenly Refinement be separated for one instant from a thing, it would become absolute nothingness and complete non-existence." ('Abdu'l-Baha, Momen trans., KM, pg. 28-29)

Mirza Husayn-Ali Nuri, Baha' Allah, writes in the same way in direct regards to the doctrine of Tawhid al-Wajid (Existential Oneness) and Wahdat al-Shuhud in *Kitab-I-Ittihad*:

Two stations can be observed in the Divine Unity: Existential Oneness (tawhíd-i wujúdí), and this is that [station] wherein all things are negated with a "no" and only the Absolute Reality is affirmed. This means the existence of nothing is acknowledged

except the Absolute Reality, in the sense that all things, when compared with Its manifestation and remembrance, have been and will continue to be absolute nothingness (faná-yi mahd). "All things perish save the [Divine] Face(21)", which means that compared with Its existence, nothing else has the capacity for existence and so no mention of the existence of anything else should be made. It has been said "God was and there was nothing else beside Him. And He is now as He always has been." And yet it can be seen that things exist and have existed. The meaning of these words is that, in His court, nothing has, or has ever had, existence. In the Existential Oneness, "all things" perish and are nothing and the [Divine] "Face(22)", which is the Absolute Reality, and is eternal and unceasing.

[The second station in Divine Unity,] Manifestational Oneness (tawhíd-i shuhúdí), is that [station] where the signs of the Primal Divine Unity, the manifestations of Eternity, and the effulgences of the light of Singleness can be observed in all things. Thus in the divine book it is revealed: "We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and in themselves." (23) [108] In this station the effulgences of the signs of the uncompounded reality can be observed and are apparent in all things. The meaning of the philosopher was not that the Absolute Reality is dispersed among the innumerable existent things. Immeasurably exalted is It from being dispersed in any thing or from being constrained by any limits or from being associated with any other thing in creation. It is and continues to be sanctified from and exalted above all else except Itself. We bear witness that It is one in Its Essence and one in Its attributes. And all things are held in the grasp of the power of Him [God] Who is the sovereign Protector of all the worlds. [Baha' Allah, LAWH BASÍT AL-HAQÍQA, Momen tr., <http://www.northill.demon.co.uk/relstud/basit.htm> (1/17/05)]

UNITY, INDIVIDUATION AND DIVERSITY:

So far we have seen the over arching idea behind diversity and unity, however there are some philosophical questions which need addressing. The question of unity and diversity is one which involves several issues. Of interest in regards to individuation is that of the Natural Universal (al-tabi'ah kulli). The Natural Universal is defined as the nature (al-tabi'ah) or quiddity (al-mahiyyah) as it is in itself (min huwiyyat hiya hiya), absolute and unconditioned by anything (la bi-shart shay'), whether universality, particularity, existence, non-existence. Philosophers held that natural universals existed externally. Theologians held they exist in the mind:

The question of external existence (wujud khariji) is argued through the following lines: a) Tusi argues that a concrete thing cannot subsist in things, if it did it would be many things. If it is a composite then it does not subsist in things. If it is the whole in the sense of being divided among its units (ahad), then each unit is only a part of that thing. Therefore, it is in neither units or the whole it does not subsist in them. (cf. Jami, DF 13, pg. 38)

Fanari counters:

"The meaning of the realization (tahaqquq) of a universal reality (al-haqiqah al-kulliyah) in its singulars (afrad) is its realization at one time qualified by this individuation (al-ta'ayyun) and at another by that individuation. This does not necessitate its being many things..." (al-Fanari quoted in Jami, DF 14, pg. 38-39)

al-Razi adds:

"numerous realities such as genus, difference and species are all realized in one singular (fard). If they existed [externally], however, predication between them would

be impossible because of the impossibility of predication between multiple [external] existents (mawjudat muta'addidah)." (Jami, DF 15, pg. 39)

al-Fanari answers:

"it is possible for numerous related realities (haqa'iq mutanasibah) to exist through a single existence which includes them as such, just as fatherhood subsists in the sum total of parts of the father as a whole." (Fanari quoted by Jami, DF 16, pg. 39)

The Source of Existents (Mabda' al-Mawjudat) is the reality of existence. If the Source of Existents is the Absolute then the external thesis is proven since the Absolute is simple not compound. If the Source is an individuation then the universal must be extrinsic (kharij)

Sufis attest:

"to the affirmation of the existence of an absolute essence (dhat mutlaqah) encompassing the intellectual and concrete planes and expanding over mental and external existents. It has no individuation which prevents it from appearing in other individuations whether divine or created. Thus it is not impossible to affirm of it an individuation which is consistent with (yujami') any of them, which is identical with its essence and not superadded to it either in the mind or externally, and which the intellect, should it conceive of it in a certain individuation, would be unable to imagine as being common (mushtarak) to many in the same way that universals are common to either particulars, but would be able to conceive of as being transformed into or as appearing in numerous forms (al-suwar al-kathirah) and infinite manifestations (al-mazahir al-ghayr al-muyaniyah)..." (Jami, DF 20, pg. 40-41)

These concepts are explained through an analogy by Jami:

"If a single particular form (surah wahidah juz'iyah) is impressed (intaba'at) in many mirrors which differ with respect to being large or small, long or short, flat convex or concave, and so forth, then there can be no doubt that this form multiplies (yatakaththar) in accordance with the multiplicity of the mirrors, and that its impressions differ in accordance with the differences in the mirrors. Furthermore, this multiplicity [of impressions] does not impair the unity of the [original] form, nor does the appearance [of the form] in any one of these mirrors preclude it from appearing in the others. The True One (al-Wahid al-Haqq), 'and God's is the loftiest likeness,' is thus analogous to the one form, whereas quiddities (al-mahiyat) are analogous to the many mirrors with their differing predispositions (istii'dadat). God appears in each and every individual essence ('ayn) in accordance with that essence, without any multiplicity (takaththur) or change (taghayyur) occurring in His holy essence. Moreover, His appearing in accordance with the characteristics (ahkam) of any one of these individual essences does not prevent Him from appearing also in accordance with the characteristics of the others, as you have learned from the foregoing analogy." (Jami, DF 24, pg. 42)

Mirza Husayn-Ali Nuri, Baha' Allah, uses this same analogy in the *Seven Valleys* (cf. Pg. 27) What is clearly established is that the One is not affected by the Multiplicity. As well, Universality is analogous to the Form and the particular to the Quiddity. Thus we can understand the subtlety involved with the concept of Unity in Diversity. Sadra holds that Universals are mental existents, that is internal (dhihni) not external. The same is true for genus. He holds this view since for him essences have no reality only existence is real. And all concrete existents are differentia of multiple particulars. For a universal to have reality it must be something other than a mental concept such as essence. On genus he holds:

1. Genus is identical with or parallel to the potentiality of matter, while the differentia is identical with the actualized form;
2. Genus, because of its imperfection and indeterminacy requires and is perfected by the differentia;
3. Differentia is the only reality, since genus, as a pure potentiality in the nature of matter, cannot form part of actual existence. :
4. hence, differentia equal concrete existence:
5. species and specific nature is a classification of objects by the mind.

Speculatively we may suggest that Abbas Effendi calls existence one due to the realization that diversity is particularization this particularization is the process of entitization (ta'ayyuna) or forming essences ('ayn) and these have no real existence in Sadra's system. Entitization is related to Sadra's doctrine which relates the differentia of a higher mode becomes the genus of the station of the differential of the lower mode. So all reality is one once entitization is annihilated in the Unity of God, that is the Shuhudi Unitarianism vis. Wujudi Unitarianism or the materialist doctrine of witnessing only multiplicity. This can be seen in the *Seven Valleys* of Mirza Husayn-Ali Nuri:

"In sum the differences (ikhtilaf) in objects (mahall) have been made plain. Thus when the wayfarer (salik) gazeth (nazar) only upon the place of appearance (al-mahall)-that is, when he seeth only the many colored globes-he beholdeth yellow and red and white; hence it is that conflict hath prevailed among the creatures, and a darksome dust from limited souls (anfus) hath hid the world ('alam). And some do gaze upon the effulgence (ishraq) of the light; and some have drunk of the wine of oneness (wahidat) and these see nothing but the sun itself." (Baha' Allah, SV, pg. 20-21, HV pg. 21)

Hence, what is really real or actual is Oneness. And later it shall be seen that Existence is the proof for the Existence of God, though not in an anthropomorphic sense (hulul).

DIVERSITY IN UNITY:

The next consideration is in regards to the One as simple and without multiplicity so how is it the Unity has diversity/multiplicity. Multiplicity enters at the level of Divine Knowledge through the differing relations (attributes of God), the Divine quiddities. The conflict between the Shuhudi Unitarians and Wujudi Unitarians to be considered at a later period is in regards to the question of the Quiddity (mahiyya) being created ('ibda) or emanated (fayd/sudur). Shuhudis say they are originated. Wujudis say emanated. For now it is necessary to examine the role of the quiddity in forming multiplicity. This brings us to a discussion of Emanation in general in Sufi thought.

For the Sufis it is impossible for multiplicity to emanate from what is One. This is shared with the Philosophers.

"They differed from them, however, with respect to the First Principle's being really one, for, as has been said, they affirm of Him attributes (sifat) and relations (nisab) which differ from Him in the mind ('aqlan) but not in the external world (kharijan). Thus, in view of His being the origin (mabda') of the world, they believe it possible for multiplicity to emanate from Him with respect to the multiplicity to emanate from with respect to the multiplicity of His attributes and relations (i'tibarat). However, with respect to His essential unity (wahdatihi al-dhatiyah) there can emanate from Him only

a single one of these attributes and relations. Then, through the mediacy of this one, there attaches to Him all the other relations and, through the mediacy of the multiplicity of these relations there attaches to Him a real existential multiplicity (kathrah wujudiyah haqiqiyah)." (Jami, DF 78,pg. 67)

Philosophers believe multiplicity has being through multiple aspects. Sufis believe multiplicity has existence through the First Principle. The quiddities take existence through the aspects (l'tibarat), each arising out of the previous, through the mediacy of the aspects arise concrete existential entities in a single station or plane. These existential entities are of two ranks. Those having contingency except for its being in its reality contingent and created. And those contingent in its essence whose existence is dependent on an existential entity other than the Absolute, i.e. the Exalted Pen. This first emanation which all other aspects take their existence is an mental existent, the philosophers say that the first emanation is an concrete existent, such as the spheres or Divine Ideas. Qunawi writes:

"And that single entity which emanates first (al-wahid al-sadir awwalan) is, in our opinion, general existence (al-wujud al-'amm) which is poured forth upon the individual essences of contingents (a'yan al-mumkinat), that is, upon their fixed essences (al-a'yan al-thabitah laha). This existence is common both to the Most Exalted Pen, which is the first existent according to the philosophers and is also called the first intellect, as well as to all other existents. This single emanation is not, however the first intellect as mentioned by the rationalist philosophers"

He further states,

"This general existence is, in reality, not different from the inner True Existence (al-Wujud al-Haqq al-batin), which is unconnected (al-mujarrad) with individual essences (al-a'yan) and manifestations (al-mazahir) except through relations and aspects (nisab wa-l'tabarat) such as manifestation (al-zuhur), individuation (al-ta'ayyun), and multiplicity (al-ta'addud), which occur to it through attachment (al-iqtiran) and through reception of the quality of being common (qabul hukm al-ishtirak)." (Qunawi, quoted by Jami, DF 89, pg. 71)

Succinctly stated the First Principle is One, multiplicity derives from aspects, which are the Divine Attributes, the first of these is the first emanation through which all other existents take their existence. Multiplicity is a product of Knowledge not of the Essence of God, which is One. God is the source of all existents, but there is no multiplicity in His essence (dhat). Thus in relation to the Baha'i teachings there are three considerations to look at to verify the similarity to Sufism in this respect :

1. There is no multiplicity in the Absolute:
2. the First Emanation is the source of multiplicity:
3. Natural Universals have an internal existence, proved through God as source of existence.

It can be demonstrated that the Baha'i teachings reflect this through textual citation:

THE SUN OF REALITY: In our solar system, the center of illumination is the sun itself. Through the will of God this central luminary is the one source of the existence and development of all phenomenal things. When we observe the organisms of the material kingdoms we find that their growth and training are dependent upon the heat and light of the sun. Without this quickening impulse there would be no growth of tree

or vegetation, neither would the existence of animal or human being be possible; in fact no forms of created life would be manifest upon the earth. But if we reflect deeply we will perceive that the great bestower and giver of life is God; the sun is the intermediary of His will and plan. Without the bounty of the sun therefore the world would be in darkness. All illumination of our planetary system proceeds or emanates from the solar center. Likewise in the spiritual realm of intelligence and idealism there must be a center of illumination, and that center is the everlasting, ever-shining Sun, the Word of God. Its lights are the lights of reality which have shone upon humanity, illumining the realm of thought and morals, conferring the bounties of the divine world upon man. These lights are the cause of the education of souls and the source of the enlightenment of hearts, sending forth in effulgent radiance the message of the glad-tidings of the kingdom of God. In brief, the moral and ethical world and the world of spiritual regeneration are dependent for their progressive being upon that heavenly center of illumination. It gives forth the light of religion and bestows the life of the spirit, imbues humanity with archetypal virtues and confers eternal splendors. This Sun of Reality, this center of effulgences is the prophet or Manifestation of God. Just as the phenomenal sun shines upon the material world producing life and growth, likewise the spiritual or prophetic Sun confers illumination upon the human world of thought and intelligence, and unless it rose upon the horizon of human existence the kingdom of man would become dark and extinguished. (Effendi, BWF, pg. 254)

Thus, the considerations are verified in Baha'i thought and thus it can be said on the issue of Unity and Diversity the Baha'i teachings are in accord with this doctrine.

Unity and Diversity presents some difficult questions as can be seen there is no multiplicity in the Self of God, multiplicity in the Divine Station is the multiplicity of Divine Ideas in the Knowledge of God. This is expressed in concrete form in the world of sense and vision ('alam al-huss wa'l-shuhud). The use of 'Abdu'l-Baha of the terms Unity and Diversity is common to that of Mulla Sadra's, where both are derived from Sufi sources.

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