

1. THE ONE AND THE MANY GODS

1. ***The Paradox of Monotheism***

During the 1920s of this [the last] century, the French translation of a double trilogy by Dimitri Merejkowski, an eminent Russian novelist and philosopher, was published in Paris. The first of these trilogies entitled *The Death of the Gods* portrayed the religious drama of Emperor Julien. Diametrically opposed in spirit to Henrik Ibsen's major play *Emperor and Galilean*, it left one expecting a response that would be no less than the resurrection of the Gods. Indeed this proved to be the theme of the second trilogy by Dimitri Merejkowski. On this occasion, it was at once an artistic, scientific and spiritual epic about Leonardo de Vinci hence justifying its title, *Renaissance of the Gods*. Yet what exactly did one have to make of this and what should one expect of this Renaissance in the past? Did it only have the force to refute a famous *Prière sur l'Acropole* [Prayer on the Acropolis] evoking Gods lying dead and buried in their crimson coloured shrouds? If such a power existed, then instead of a dusk-like crimson it should have been the crimson of dawn. Last year, while reading the forceful book by our friend James Hillman proposing the programme of a "re-visionary" psychology -- whose title I would readily translate as "the psychology of a resurgence in Gods" [1](#) -- I said to myself that it could very well be the crimson of dawn, and perhaps unbeknownst to us it was already and always thus; for without the clarity of this dawn how would we be able to decipher even just the message of its hero? In some ways, presented before us is the phenomenon of dusk inverted to dawn, the phenomenon of the Midnight Sun in the Great North that I wish to evoke here when speaking of the "paradox of monotheism".

It is to be deplored that this word, like many others, is carelessly used in our times. For example, one speaks of "monotheist" civilisation to describe a patronistic (*patronale*) civilisation. The term is employed as absurdly as the word "manichaeism" by people who have absolutely no idea of its meaning. Needless to say it is not from this misguided use of the term as a metaphor that we should expect any elucidation on "monotheism" and what I call its paradox. This paradox is essentially philosophical and theological in nature. When we speak of "monotheist religions" we generally have in mind the three great Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

To draw out the paradox that I have in mind here, first it would be wise for us to associate ourselves with certain aspects of Judeo-Biblical thought - eldest sister to us all. It will be necessary to specify the importance that esoteric teaching accords the use of the word "Gods" in plural in frequently used expressions such as "the sons of God" in verse 10/17 of *Deuteronomy*: "The Lord your God is God of Gods, the Lord of Lords." [2](#) It will be necessary

to dwell upon the angelology of the Essenians and the entire collection of the Books of Enoch regarding the Angel YHWH, the Cherubim on the Throne, Angel Metatron, Angel of the Face, the *Sephirot*; early and later Kabbalah, etc. Our fellow Jewish Kabbalists are the best placed to confront the complexity of this angelology and cosmology. We will recall how Fabre d'Olivet translated the name Elohim found at the beginning of *Genesis*: "He – the Gods, the Being of beings". But it will also be necessary to evoke the expansive Gnostic systems from early Gnosis to the Christian Kabbalists, not to mention opinions held by some Greek Fathers of the Church for whom trinitary Christianity was equidistant from monotheism and polytheism. Unfortunately, we have neither the time nor the space for this. I will therefore confine myself to Islamic theosophy and gnosis that I have previously dealt with here at Eranos. We will surely examine these disciplines to consider the consequences on closely related areas of study and thus a comparison will at least have been initiated.

And so when I speak of "the paradox of monotheism" above all I have in mind the situation as it was experienced and overcome by Muslim gnostics and theosophers, more specifically by the School of the great visionary theosopher Mohyidin Ibn Arabi (d. 1240). I will summarise this paradox very briefly, such that we may be able to discern its three phases according not only to Ibn Arabi himself but his successors as well. Here I will rely especially upon Sayyed Haydar Amoli (d. *post* 785/1385) at once critic and fervent disciple of Ibn Arabi. We have on many occasions in this very forum analysed his quite considerable oeuvre. [3](#)

The three instances of the paradox are:

- 1) In its exoteric form, namely the profession of faith that declares *La Ilaha illah*, monotheism perishes in its triumphant moment, unknowingly obliterating itself by becoming *volens nolens* metaphysical idolatry.
- 2) Monotheism attains salvation and obtains its truth only by attaining its esoteric form whose symbol of faith is expressed thus: *Laysa fi'l-wojud siwa Allah* - "in *being*, there is only God". For the naïve soul, this too seems to obliterate monotheism. Exoteric monotheism thus arises at the esoteric and gnostic level of *theomonism*. However, just as the exoteric level is constantly subject to the menace of metaphysical idolatry, so too the esoteric level is threatened by the danger that arises from a mistaken interpretation of the word *being*.
- 3) This danger is conjured by the institution of an integral ontology presenting itself, as we shall see, as integration at two levels; now this double integration establishes *eo ipso* metaphysical pluralism.

The risk incurred during the second instance was often denounced with foresight notably by two of our Shiite theosophers. As for the situation to which integral ontology leads, it is perfect harmony of the One and Many Gods - a situation also encountered by the great Neoplatonist Proclus in his commentary on the *Parmenides*. A paradox that is apparently difficult to perceive by the naïve soul unfamiliar with philosophical speculation who thus confuses the various levels of meaning. As evidence one may cite the campaign launched recently in Cairo against the critical edition of Ibn Arabi's monumental work undertaken by our friend Osman Yahya.

What exactly is the danger that arises during the instance we have just designated as the second instance of the paradox of monotheism? It is the danger embedded in the very pronouncement of theomonism: "in *being* there is only God" which is the expression itself of transcendental unity of *being* rendered in Arabic as *wahdat al-wojud*. The disaster occurs when feeble-minded folk, unexperienced in philosophy, confuse this unity of *being* (*wojud*, *esse*, *είναι*, *das Sein*) with the so-called unity of the existent being (*mawjud*, *ens*, *ὄν*, *das Seiende*). Orientalists as well have fallen into the trap and spoken of "existential monism", that is to say a monism that would be at the level of existent or existent being [*étant*], the very level of the multiple, the level at which theomonism itself established the pluralism of beings (the existents). It is here therefore that one does not see the *contradicto in adjecto*. This is the danger that is vigorously denounced by Sayyed Ahmad Alavi Isphahani (17th century)⁴ one of the great philosopher-theologians from the School of Isphahan. He reproaches a number of Sufis for having committed this error. "Let no one arrive at the conclusion," he says "that what is professed by mystic theosophers (*Mota'allihun*) is something of this kind. No, they all profess that the affirmation of the *One* is at the level of *being* and the affirmation of the many is at the level of the existent being.

The confusion leads to professing unity of the existent being, expressing itself in the pseudo- esoterism(s) by affirmations of an illusory identity, whose monotonous repetition understandably exasperates Hosayn Tonkaboni⁵ another great figure from the Isphahan School. At the beginning of his treatise on unity of being he writes:

"I was concerned with the need to write something on the unity of being which goes hand in hand with the multiplicity of epiphanies (*tajalliyât*) and the ramifications of their descent without the concrete existences becoming illusory things with neither substance nor permanence as implied by comments that are reportedly made by certain Sufis. For understood as the Sufis intend, the matter is no more than sophism. It would follow then that heaven and earth, paradise and hell, judgement and resurrection, that all this would be illusory. The futility of these conclusions will be apparent to all." ⁶

Theomonism therefore does not profess that the Divine Being is the only existent but the One-being, and precisely this *unitude* of being establishes and renders possible the multitude of epiphanies that are existent beings; the act of existing [*exister*] alone and on its own existentiates the multiple beings, for beyond being there is only nothingness. In other words, the One-being is the source of the multitude of theophanies. The immanent danger, present already in the first instance of the paradox of monotheism, is to make of God not a pure Act of being, the One-being, but an *Ens*, an existent being (*mawjud*), infinitely above all the other existents. Since it is already constituted as existent being, the distance that one attempts to establish between *Ens supremum* and the *entia creata* only aggravates its condition of *Ens supremum* as that of an existent being. For as soon as one has invested it with all the conceivable positive attributes to their pre-eminent degree, it is no longer possible for the spirit to rise further. The ascension of the spirit is stilled in the absence of the hereafter, an *Ens*, an existent being. And that is metaphysical idolatry⁷, which contradicts the status of existent being since it is impossible for an existent to be *Ens supremum*.

Indeed, the *Ens*, the existent being in essence refers beyond itself, to the act of being that transcends it and constitutes it as an existent being. Muslim theosophers conceive the movement of being (*esse*) to existent being (*ens*), as putting being into the imperative (KN, *Esto*). It is by the imperative *Esto* that the existent being is invested with the act of being. What is the Source and Principle cannot therefore be *Ens*, an existent being. And this is what mystic theosophers, notably such as the Ismailis and those of the School of Ibn Arabi clearly understood.

With them we shall discern the threat all the more clearly; the paradox by which monotheism of the naïve soul perishes in its triumph, were we to briefly evoke, as I pointed out a moment ago, the situation that reigns from beginning to end in the commentary that Proclus wrote on Plato's *Parmenides*. The *Parmenides* for Proclus is the *Theogony* that his very own "Platonic Theology" was to elaborate upon further. Plato's *Parmenides* is in some ways the Bible, the Sacred Scripture of the eminently Neoplatonic, negative, apophatic theology. Negative theology, *via negationis* (*tanzih* in Arabic) rejects the cause beyond all causes, the absolute One beyond all the Ones; being beyond all existent beings etc. Negative theology is presumed precisely by the investment of being in all existent *beings* of the One in the Many etc. All the while appearing to destroy affirmative theology of the dogmatic consciousness, it is negative theology that in effect safeguards the truth it bears; and this is the second instance of the "paradox of monotheism". The term is well known to both Greek and Arab Neoplatonists. In both cases it is resolved by simultaneity, the at once present [*comprésent*] One-God and the many divine Figures. Comparison of the process in these two cases has yet to be attempted.

Let us say that in the system envisioned by Proclus, there are the One and Many Gods. The One-God is the henad of henads. The word *One* does not name what it is but is the symbol of the absolutely Ineffable. The one is not One. It does not possess the attribute One. It is essentially unificent [*unifique*], unifying, constitutive of all the Ones, of all the beings that can only be existents by being each time *an* existent, i.e. unified [made one], constituted in unities precisely by the unifying One. This sense of *unifying* of the One is what Proclus meant by the word *henad* [principal of unity]. When this word is used in the plural form, it does not denote productions of the One but manifestations of the One, [8](#) "henophanies". Those in addition to Unity, are the divine Names and these Names govern the diversity of beings. It is from beings that are their partners that it is possible to know the divine substances, that is to say the Gods that are themselves inconceivable. [9](#) We have already compared the theory of the divine Names and celestial hierarchies in Proclus and in Pseudo Dionysius the Areopagite.

There is much to be learned from an in-depth comparison of the theory of divine Names and theophanies that are the divine Lords -- I mean to say the parallelism between Ibn Arabi -- the ineffability of God who is the Lord of Lords and the multiple theophanies that constitute the hierarchy of the divine Names -- and Proclus: the hierarchy originating in the henad of henads manifested by these henads themselves, and permeating all levels of the hierarchies of being: there are the transcendent Gods; the intelligible Gods (at the level of being); the intellectual-intelligible-Gods (at the level of life); the intellectual Gods (at the level of intellect); the hypercosmic Gods (leaders and assimilators); the intracosmic Gods (celestial and sub-lunar); there are the superior beings: archangels, angels, heroes, *daimons*. [10](#) However, these multiple hierarchies presuppose the One-Unique that transcends the Ones, because it unifies them; the *being* that transcends *existents* because it essentiate them; life that transcends the living because it vivifies them. In Proclus, harmony results from the encounter in Athens between philosophers of the Ionian School from Clazomenea and those of the Eleatic School, namely Parmenides and Zeno of Elea - all gathered for the Panathenian Festival. In Ibn Arabi's school of thought, harmony is achieved by the confrontation between monotheism of the naïve or dogmatic consciousness and theomonism of the esoteric consciousness; in short the acceptance of the exoteric or theological *tawhid* (*tawhid wujudi*). This is precisely the form that the paradox of the One and the Many takes in Islamic theosophy.

One may say that from generation to generation, the mystics and theosophers in Islam have contemplated and reflected on *tawhid* ad infinitum. This term generally denotes the profession of monotheist faith, which consists in affirming that there is no God except God; what Haydar Amoli, disciple of Ibn Arabi, designates as theological *tawhid*. Theologians

reflect *on* the concept of God. Theological *tawhid* poses and presupposes God as already being an *existent being*, *Ens supremum*. Now, the word *tawhid* is causative; it means to make one; to enable the becoming of one, to unify. It goes without saying that for abstract monotheism -- which consists of expressing oneself *on* the concept of God -- the unity of God cannot be envisaged as resulting ontologically from *tawhid* by man. This is the attestation of Unity, not the act of the Unificent (*Unifique*) making itself One in each One. This "unificence" comes into play with and by ontological *tawhid*: in being (the Act-to be) there is only God (*laysa fi'l wujud siwa Allah*). Which does not amount to saying that the only existent being (*mawjud*) is God. This confusion, already denounced here, is such a fatal error that Haydar Amoli does not hesitate to declare emphatically: *Tawhid* is to affirm being (*wujud*, the Act-to be) and to deny the existent being.¹¹ It is not denying that the existent is existent, but to deny that it is being and to deny that being is existent. It is to deny that *tawhid* professes the Unity of an existent, for it professes the unity of being, of the Act of being.

One therefore needs to consider the relationship between *being* and *existent being*. We shall advance two hypotheses: does the One absolutely transcend being itself? Or is it concomitant with Being, of the "Act-to be" that transcends existent beings? The first interpretation is Plato's interpretation as held by Proclus. We encounter it again among theosophers of Ismailism, in the School of Rajab Ali Tabrizi and among the Shaykhis. Is the source of being itself super-being, beyond being, *hyperousion*. What one calls the First Being is thus actually the First "made"-being. The second interpretation is from Suhrawardi's *Ishraqiyun* and the School of Ibn Arabi. The transcendental One and Being complement each other in the very concept of Light of Lights, origin of origins, etc. But in both cases, the procession of being is essentially *theophany*. In the West, this idea appears in the work of Jean Scott Erigene. It is precisely the idea expressed by Ibn Arabi. Unfortunately, one has not yet conducted a comparative study.

In order to make themselves understood, our authors turn to comparisons; for example ink and letters, the theme of the cosmic Ink and the primordial Inkwell.¹² Ink is single, letters multiple. It would be ridiculous to claim -- on the pretext that there is only one inkwell -- that letters do not exist. There would be nothing to read! This is the horrible confusion between *wujud* and *mawjud*; the inability to conceive simultaneously the One *and* the many. The transcendent One is therefore the unificent [*unifique*], the unitive, what constitutes the existent as existent since unless at each instance the existent were to be *an* existent (*a* plant, *a* colour, *a* mountain, *a* forest, *a* species, *a* group) there would be chaos; there would be no being-s. To be an existent being is to be constituted *one*; to be made one by the unificent One. Then the ontological multiple acts that unify the existents are always a unique "Act-to be" of the One and must be represented by 1 x 1 x 1 x 1,

etc. In other words, the Unitude of the unificent One is not a mathematical unity; it is an ontological unity. That is what *laysa fi'l-wojud siwa Allah* seeks to express. On the other hand, the many existent beings actualised by the unificent One are represented by 1+1+1+1, etc. We may thus represent the *simultaneous presence* of the One and the Many in two ways. This occurred to me while studying the great mystic Ruzbehan Baqli of Shiraz.

Henceforth we understand the import of pithy declarations such as those made by Haydar Amoli: He who contemplates the Divine (*al-Haqq*) at the same time as the Creatural (*al-Khalq*), i.e. the One at the same time as the Many, and vice versa, without either one veiling the other, well yes, then he is a unitarian, an authentic theomonist in the real sense of the word (*mowahhid haqiqi*). On the other hand, whosoever contemplates the Divine without contemplating the creatural, the One without the Many, though he [perhaps] attests no more than the unity of Essence is not one who integrates the totality, one who actually accomplishes this integration.

Which is why the Sages of God, the theosophers, are categorised according to their kind or mode of vision:

1) There is the person who possesses intellect (*dhu'l-aql*, the man of '*ilm al-yaqin*'); he is the one who conceives the creatural as being what is manifest, apparent, exoteric and the Divine as being what is concealed, hidden, esoteric. For such a person, the Divine is a mirror reflecting the creature but he does not see the mirror; he only sees the form that is manifested therein.

2) There is the person who possesses vision (*dhu'l'ayn*, the man of '*ayn al-yaqin*'). And conversely, unlike the first, he sees the Divine as what is manifest, visible; and the creatural as what is concealed, hidden, not apparent. Well then, for this person the creatural is the mirror reflecting the divinity, but he as well does not see the mirror; he only sees the form that is manifested therein.

3) Then there is the person who at once possesses intellect and vision (the man of '*haqq al-yaqin*'). He is the *hakim mota'allih*, the mystic theosopher, the "hieratic" in the Neoplatonic sense of the word. This person simultaneously sees the divine in the creature, the One in the many; and the creatural in the divine, the multiplicity of theophanies in the Unitude that "theophanises" itself. He identifies the unitive Act of Being (1 x 1 x 1, etc.) in all the beings actualised in as many monads or unities. The henadic unity that monadises all the monads and constitutes all the beings in multiple unities does not blind him to the multiplicity of epiphanic forms (*mazahir*) in which this Unitude of the primordial One is epiphanised. Here the mirrors reflect each other. [13](#)

Although this person (a disciple of Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi) has read neither Plato's *Parmenides* nor its interpretation by Proclus, he finds himself at the very stage that Proclus' initiatory teaching -- revealing the secret in the theogony of the *Parmenides* -- wishes to lead the initiate (*myste*). This observation will prove to be important for the dénouement of the paradox of monotheism.

We now have to consider how this integration is accomplished, more specifically, how the idea of an ontology -- that we may describe as an integral ontology and that corresponds to the very process of Creation as theophany -- unfurls. We shall then be able to appreciate how Haydar Amoli's diagrams illustrate this relationship between the One and Many entirely in conformity with the relationship between the unificent One and the unified One [i.e. made one]; of the pure Act-to be (*wojud, esse*) and of the being - existent being (*étant, mawjud, ens*) as we have just described: a relationship between the unitude of the unificent henad and the monadic unities that it monadises by actualising them. The vision will culminate in a figure (resembling a stained-glass window of a cathedral) in which Haydar Amoli integrates the entire history of religions.

2. *Integral ontology and the theophanies*

The advent of integral ontology has three moments, until we learn, as Ibn Arabi says, that "it is a world that is hidden and that never appears, whereas the Divine Being is the Manifested and is never hidden"; in short, the moment when Adam explains why he accepted the burden that the sky, the mountains and all creatures had refused: "I was not aware," he says "that there was any Other than God."[\[14\]](#) This could very well be the expression of integral ontology.

There is:

1) the point of view (*maqam, station*) that is called differentiation or discrimination (*iftiraq, farq*); that of the naïve conscience [simple soul] distancing things outside itself and contemplating their concept. This is the exoteric "station" of theological monotheism (*tawhid oluhii*), proclaiming divine unity as that of the *Ens supremum*, the Existent Being that dominates all the others, without an intimation of the question that being (the act of being) asks of the other existent beings. To use a familiar image, let us say that this is the point of view of one who cannot see the forest for the trees, or the inkwell for ink.

2) the point of view that is called integration (*jam'*). The dispersed or widely separated units are gathered and totalled in a unique whole. The latent

danger here is the confusion between unity of being [*wahdat al-wujud*] and unity of the existent being [*wahdat al-mawjud*]. At this level in fact there are no more trees: there is only the forest; there are no more letters, there is only ink and nothing to read. All that is other than the unique existent, all that constitutes "the many" is said to be to be "inexistent", illusory.

Next:

3) One must reach the level called the integration of integration or sum of the sum (*jam' al-jam'*), i.e. move from the undifferentiated Whole to the differentiated Whole once more. After the integration of diversity into unity, there must follow the integration of unity in diversity vanquished again. This is the second differentiation (*farq thani*) that succeeds the first integration. Such is the integral vision possessed by the integral Sage: a complete and whole vision of the One-God and the many divine forms. The trees enter the picture again. We see the forest and the trees, the inkwell and letters [of the alphabet]. The integrated "unitotality" is then itself integrated into the diversity of its component parts. Mathematicians speak of *functions*. In this case we have *mazhariya*, the theophanic function that expresses the relationship between the One-Being and its theophanies. It is therefore the transition from monolithic unity -- that excludes the "many" and in so doing excludes any notion of a theophanic unity -- to the henadic unity, which is the explanation of the "many" whose epiphanic functions it establishes. To turn once more to the *Parmenides* as commented by Proclus, we would say that the first two instances just described correspond respectively to those [instances] in the physicians from the Ionian School and metaphysicians from the Elean School, namely Parmenides and Zeno. Their encounter took place in Athens during the Panathenian Festival. To celebrate this festival is to find, in the Attic School of Socrates and Plato, the mediating factor raising both extremes to a superior level. Athens is the emblematic city where theogonic harmony between the One and the Many Gods reigns. This harmony would correspond to what is here called, "integration of the integration." Numerous discussions regarding the relationship between simple (*sirf*) and integral *tawhid* have taken place between spiritual masters of Islamic theosophy and Sufism.[\[15\]](#) The procession leading to integration of the integration i.e. the second differentiation, that which succeeding the first at last instates metaphysical *pluralism* in its truth; this procession has many variants that we need not dwell upon here. The more so since these variants appear instead to be procuring a necessary complement reciprocally. For some integration of the integration is the simultaneous vision of the One Essence *and* the multiple divine Names and Attributes. This is *the vision of multiplicity in unity*. For others, it consists of the vision of the Divine Being *in* multiple theophanies (*mazahir*), in the multitude of Figures that clothe the Divine Names by manifesting themselves. This is *the vision of multiplicity in unity*.

These two interpretations are each other's necessary complement: integral ontology according to the perfect Sage presupposes the simultaneous vision of unity in plurality and plurality in unity. It is by this simultaneity that the "second differentiation" is accomplished; due to which metaphysical pluralism is established from the One without which there would be no "many" but only chaos and "undifferentiation". This is the crucible where the paradox of monotheism is resolved; indeed without this it would not be resolved. But even from the perspective of exoteric monotheism this can only be another paradox: esoteric theomonism safeguarding it from metaphysical idolatry into which it falls while seeking to escape it, a descent that enables the appearance of the concept of "heresy".

By this we have an intimation of what the fundamental categories of esoteric *tawhid* mean, that is to say *tawhid* in its ontological aspect: *tawhid* of Essence (*dhat*), of the Names and Attributes (*asma'* and *sifat*, *tawhid* of the operations (*af'al*) or of theophanies. Haydar Amoli's *imaginal* representation of these three categories of *tawhid* in diagrams uses the image of trees.^[16] Now, as for the question pertaining to how the unitive act of *tawhid* is accomplished in these three forms: this may be grasped by referring to the cosmogony professed by the School of Ibn Arabi, a cosmogony that is essentially a succession of theophanies whose series originate in a threefold primordial theophany.

1) The first theophany (*tajalli awwal*) is the theophany of Essence with regard to itself, of the divine absolute Self to itself (*al-dhat li-dhat-hi*). ^[17] It is the level of the Presence or as Ramon Lull translated it, henadic "Dignity" (*hazrat ahadiya*), the level at which the act of Being in its pure state consists of neither definition, description nor qualification any more than the henadic unity needs, in addition to itself, a Unity that makes one-being or determines it as a unity, since quite the opposite *it* is the unificent of all unities (the *unified*); that which monadises all the monads (1 x 1 x 1. . .). One might say that all the metaphysical entities (*haqa'iq*) are in the henadic One just as the tree is [already present] in its seed, whereas the henadic One is the mystery of mysteries (*ghayb al-ghoyub*).

2) The second theophany^[18] is of divine Names and Attributes. Let us point out that the process here is conceived as an intensification of light, an ever-intensifying intra-divine illumination. The second theophany is the initial determination (*ta'ayyon awwal*, in German: *die Urbestimmtheit*). Here the pure henadic essence becomes contemplative, its own witness, that is to say of its eternal *cognoscibles*. These are all the Names by which it can be named and flowing from this the divine Attributes denoted by the Names; for example, the Knowing and Knowledge, the Desiring and Desire, the Viewing and Vision, etc. (At a corresponding level, one may evoke the

procession of the divine Names in the Hebrew *3 Enoch* or of the Gods in the Greek Neoplatonists). The metaphysical and concrete / physical realities to which these Names and Attributes correspond are termed "eternal hexeities" (*a yan thabita*) - archetypes of all the individualised concrete existences (the "socrates-ness" [socrates-like quality] of Socrates). These eternal hexeities respond to the nostalgia of the Divine Names aspiring to be revealed, to be invested with concrete existences that underpin them. There is complicity between the divine Names and these hexeities, without whose actualisation the divine Names (as denoted by the plural Gods in the expression *Ilah al-aliha*, God of Gods) invested respectively in beings, would remain forever unknown and unrevealed. Here we are at the crux of the matter, namely of the theogony that irradiates into a third instance.

3) The third theophany is at once contemplative and operative, i.e. onto-genetic (*tajalli wujudi shohudi*). It is the manifestation of the being as Light - Theophany in its many forms of divine Names; forms that are the concrete supports for the revelation of these divine Names because they are respectively its operations (in the School of Suhrawardi one speaks of "theurgies"). It is this theophany irradiating in multiple theophanic figures and forms that we designate in terms of sacred cosmology such as *Nafas rahmani*, Sigh of compassion, *Nafas al-Rahman*, Sigh of the Merciful. [19]

In short, the first theophany is at the level of the mystery of the henadic Unity (*ahadiya*) that only apophatic theology can discern and that can be represented by $1 \times 1 \times 1 \dots$. The second theophany is at the level of constituted monadic Unity (*wahidiya*), a unity able to be "pluralised" ($1 + 1 + 1 \dots$), that which has affirmative or cataphatic theology in mind when it articulates or deduces the divine Names and Attributes. The third theophany is at the level of Operations (*af'al*) being the very theophanies themselves. It is the level we designate as *robubiya*, of the lordly condition because that is where the plurality of divine Lords (*Arbab*) is born; precisely that which establishes the integral ontology, the metaphysical pluralism, thus the level of integration of the integration, second differentiation succeeding pure and simple integration that abolished the many, the multiple. It is therefore the denouement of the theogony upon which the relationship between the unificent One-God and many Gods or theophanies depend. We have just said as much: this relationship is defined as the lordly condition - *robubiya*. Which is to say?

To say it is to attain what we technically designate as *sirr al-robubiya*, the secret of this lordly condition; the secret establishes and renders it possible and without which it would disappear. The divine Names possess meaning and reality only by and for beings for whom they are forms, theophanies by which divinity reveals itself to his loyal-faithful. [20] *Al-Lah*, for example, is

the Name that signifies the divine Essence clothed in all its attributes. *Al-Rabb*, the "Lord" is the particularised Divine one of these Names personified in one of its Attributes. These divine Names are the "lords", the "Gods", [21] whence the supreme Name such as "Lord of Lords" (God of Gods in the *Deuteronomy* and Suhrawardi; "the best of the Creators" in the Qur'an.

Haydar Amoli [22] explains it thus: "The Divinity (*oluhiya*) and lordliness (*robubiya*) only become real by God and by one whose God is this God, by the Lord and by one whose Lord is this Lord." Furthermore [23]: "The absolute active Agent (*al-fa'il al-motlaq*) requires an absolute receptacle (*patiens*) such as the relationship that exists between the Divine Being and the Universe. Similarly, the limited active Agent requires a determined and limited receptacle, such as the relationship between the multiple divine Names and the eternal hexeities [pure possibles that do not demand concrete existence]. This is so because each divine Name, each divine Attribute postulates its own epiphanic form; what we designate as the relationship between *rabb*, the lord and *marbub*, he whose lord he is. These signs attest to the plurality of Creators and the multiplicity of Lords (*Arbab*)."

The complicity we spoke of earlier -- between the divine Name and the eternal hexeity in which this Name aspires to reveal itself -- leads to the investment of this Name in a form of manifestation (*mazhar*) that is specific to itself. There follow the acts of a cosmogony or theogony based not on the idea of an Incarnation, but on the idea of a theophanic union (a union exemplified by image and mirror), a theophanic union of the *lahut* and *nasut*, of the divine Name and the sense-perceptible form that is the mirror in which this name would appear. For integrality of the divine Name is an ensemble of Name *and* its mirror, the form of manifestation, not one without the other nor one *confused* with the other (as is the case in a hypostatic union). It is these two together that constitute the totality and reality of the divine Name. [24] Integral ontology is based on the epiphanic function that holds the "secret of the lordly condition".

Rabb is actually a proper name that postulates and implies the relationship with one whose lord he is; his *marbub* (*marbub* "carries" the Name; his name is theophore [god-bearing]). Sahl Tostari, a great mystic defined the secret in question as follows: "The divine lordly condition has a secret and that secret is you. If this *you/I* were to be removed, the lordly condition of the divine lord would also be abolished." [25] Elsewhere we have already pointed out the idea of a chivalric pact underlying the mystical relationship of *Rabb* and *marbub*, of the lord and his vassal, his "theophore". Each depends on the other. In the West, this very notion is what inspired a most beautiful distich composed by Angelus Silesius: "God does not live without me; I know that without me God cannot exist even for a blink of an eye." This is the

“secret of the divine lordly condition”. It is this secret that one must not forget when we pronounce -- as we did at the beginning -- the words “death” and “renaissance of the Gods”.

Thus, abstract monotheism opposing a divine Being (*Ens supremum*) with a creatural Being vanishes. The latter is integrated into the very advent of the lordliness of its lord. It [the creatural Being] is itself its own secret. They are partners in the same theogonic epic. In truth, this secret originates in the initial determination with which the totality of divine Names postulating the multitude of theophanies appear; thus the multiplicity of the relationship between *Rabb* and *marbub* linked to one another by the same secret which is definitively the epiphanic function of [the] *marbub*. This epiphanic function extends to an esoteric catotriptic level (i.e. of the science of mirrors). We now understand that it can only be safeguarded by integral ontology, going beyond every antinomian concept of the One and the Many, of monotheism and polytheism by the sum of the sum or integration of the integration (*jam' al-jam'*) integrating the unified Whole to the diversified Whole. The danger of metaphysical idolatry, of confusion between unity of being and unity of the existent being, is henceforth averted. In his extensive commentary on the *Gems of Wisdom* by Ibn Arabi, Sayyed Haydar Amoli -- whose ingenius, I would say even inspired diagrams that we have already analysed here at Eranos some years ago -- will illustrate some aspects of this integration of the integration, as determined by the authentic relationship between the unificent One and these multiple theophanies; the unificent One by no means a mathematical unity adding itself to the concrete unities that it unifies, i.e. actualises in unities. Which is why in these diagrams in the form of circles, it will always be at the *centre*.

3. *Diagrams of the unificent One and the many theophanies*

We have previously highlighted Haydar Amoli's penchant for diagrams (there are 28 of them, each one taking a whole page in his *Text of Texts*) [26] and the significance of this “diagrammatic art” as such, mostly ignored until now. Haydar Amoli expressly establishes a relationship [between his art] and metaphysics of the Imagination. We may say the same for the cosmological diagrams so dear to Ismaili theosophers. It is an attempt to conjure (at the level of the active Imagination) a structure that corresponds with a pure intellectual diagram. Which is why Haydar Amoli speaks of “intellective” or “metaphysical” images projected into pure imaginal space. [27] According to him, the construction [of this imaginal space] is indispensable as soon as we wish to better appreciate the relationship of unitive *tawhid* with regard to multiple theophanies. Here we readily perceive the case of an “anamorphosis” [distorted projection] *sui generis* that we wish played a role in his research. Haydar Amoli's effort -- with a view to depicting in space

the relationships and intensification of modalities of being -- resembles that attempted by Nicolas d'Oresme (14th century).[\[28\]](#) The success of Haydar Amoli's diagrammatic art lies in the fact that we sometimes get the impression we are reading a ground plan of some temple in the round in which the inscribed circles are indicating the placement of columns. There are also gardens (categories of *tawhid* forming tangled branches of trees).[\[29\]](#) Finally, we discover therein an ideal topography that meditation is called upon to roam in the manner of a *mandala*.

Haydar Amoli explains this very well himself: [\[30\]](#) "The reason," he says "for all these diagrams in the form of circles is that it is extremely difficult to make *tawhid* understood and rather arduous to explain Being. Many philosophers have gone astray while seeking to understand *tawhid* (the unitive act) and being; and subsequently they have misled many others that followed them." It is incumbent upon the gnostic "to integrate *and* differentiate". Separated from each other, both operations lead to catastrophe. It is up to you therefore to combine them for he who does so is an authentic unificent (a theomonist, *mowahhid haqiqi*, practises *tawhid* in the true sense) and this is what we call the integration of integration (*jam' al-jam'*). To differentiate (*tarifa*, to separate) is to contemplate created beings without contemplating the divine Being at the same time. To integrate (and no more) is to contemplate the Divine Being (the Unique/ the One) without simultaneously contemplating created beings (the Many). . . . To such a person, the vision of the Divine Being in its epiphanic forms (vision of the One God in the many Gods) -- forms in which in one sense he shows himself, although in another sense these forms are other than him -- remains veiled. It is therefore key to have a simultaneous vision of the Divine Being *with* that of the created beings, and the simultaneous vision of created beings *with* that of the Divine Being. In short, it is important to see the multiple in the very unity of this multiplicity (and to see the unity in the very multiplicity of this unity), an integral vision that is "the integration of integration"; this is realised by the differentiation that succeeds the first integration.

1) *Diagram of Mirrors* (no. 18). [\[31\]](#)

In the centre the One-God. The many flames in the surrounding mirrors are as many theophanies of this One-God: one in itself many in its theophanies without the truth of the Unity abolishing that of multiplicity or vice versa (cf. in Proclus the One and Many Gods). "The vision of unity in plurality," declares Haydar Amoli "and of plurality in unity is only truly understood by the image of a single mirror in which (sic: *fi-ha*) there is a single candle placed in the centre. All around there are many mirrors, such that in each mirror a candle is seen depending on the placement of the [single] mirror." Now, such is the reciprocal relationship of being (*wojud*) and determined existent (*mawjud*) (or the unificent One and the unities that it monadises). Most people are perplexed before being, before its essential unity and its multiplicity as for its Names and forms of manifestation (*mazahir*, its hypostases). The mystic theosophers solve the matter by the vision of the Unicity in the multiplicity itself and of

the multiplicity in the unicity itself. "In fact whosoever contemplates the single mirror placed in the centre and the many mirrors all around, contemplates in each of these mirrors the same candle, in such a manner however, that the single candle is each time another candle. The person contemplating will not be dazzled by the fact that the candle in the middle is one all the while being many in its epiphanies (the mirrors)."

To summarise, one who differentiates (and no more) sees the mirrors but does not see the solitary candle in the center. This is the case with most people. The person who integrates (and no more) simply shatters all the mirrors. He only sees the solitary candle in the centre. Such is the case with exoteric monotheism. Integration of integration is to see *all* the mirrors differentiated at the same time as one sees the candle in the centre. That is esoteric monotheism, theomonism.

2) *Diagrams of the divine Names*. A) *Diagrams of the Names of grace/bounty and Names of austerity* (diagram no. 17). This differentiation between the divine Names is a fundamental dichotomy that is also present in the *Sephirot* of Jewish Kabbalah. Unfortunately we shall have to confine ourselves to very brief comments here.^[32] When the Absolute agent wishes to confer being to one of the receptacles of its Names designated as eternal hexeities (*a'yan thabita*) this implies that he has forever known the quiddity, the essential reality, the inhereents and the accidents in which its existence will consist . . . (n.b. these hexeities, these essences are uncreated; they are eternally as they are and have been in the divine knowledge.) Then the absolute Agent confers it existence as a function of the knowledge he has of it and due to justice doing right by each deserving one (. . .). Zayd cannot voice an objection: why did you create me in such and such a manner? This objection would be overruled by itself because what is manifested of Zayd is what has always belonged to his essence and requires to be manifested in such and such a fashion (. . .). Similarly, when a writer confers being to a certain letter among the letters [of the alphabet], either orally or in writing, this letter cannot object to the writer: why do you make me exist in such and such a fashion? The writer would say to him: it is your eternal individuality, your quiddity that demands this. I have no choice but to confer being to what you are (not to what your are not)." In short, the act of existing is conferred in response to a silent request (*lisan al-hal*) formulated by the very state of the hexeity in which such and such a divine Name is invested. ^[33] Now there are Names of bounty (*asma' jamaliya*) and Names of austerity (*asma' jalaliya*). The entire secret of predestination (*sirr al-qadar*) is thus the very secret of the theophany of divine Names. In diagram 17, the vertical diameter separates the blessed from the outcasts. Each semicircle has twelve divine Names inscribed: on the one hand, twelve Names of grace or gentleness that are the "lords of proximity and rejunction". On the other hand, twelve Names of austerity that are the "lords of distancing and rejection". On one side Adam, the prophets and men of God down to blessed animals and plants. On the other, Iblis-Satan, the Pharaohs, Nimrods, down to the cursed animals and harmful plants. ^[34] We get the impression that we are standing before a dualist Zoroastrian diagram. In fact it is a depiction of the twofold category of divine Names. It appears that what is being postulated here is a metaphysics of immutable essences and that a revolution of the essences (*inqilab al-haqa'iq*) is inconceivable. However, it is this revolution indeed that Molla Sadra Shirazi (d. 1640) will attempt by giving priority to the act of existing whose intensifications and diminutions determine and vary the essences themselves.

B) *Diagram of the Names of essence, attributes and operations* (diagram no. 19).^[35] The divine Names are the divine Essence itself and the divine Attributes are its act of being . . . Which is why the mystic theosopher does not contemplate any divine Name without at the

same time contemplating what this Name names, which is to say this Essence which it names relative to an Attribute, whereas this Attribute is itself relative to a theophany, a determined divine operation. Theosophy excludes all that philosophy designates as nominalism. It is a question of the relationship between being as inactive (*wojud*) and the existent as a passive name (*mawjud*), since the latter is the receptacle, the *patiens*, of the unificent being that constitutes it as an existent. We are guided here by the relationship between the single and multiple candles in the diagram of mirrors (see above, diagram no. 18). Whence we have here at the centre of the diagram in the form of a circle, the henadic Essence (*dhat ahadiya*). The periphery is formed by three large concentric circles: a) The innermost is the circle of the Names of essence (*al-Lah, al-Rabb*, etc.), 36 names in total. b) The middle circle is the circle of Attributes (*sifat*) where 24 small circles bearing 24 Names of attributes are inscribed. c) As for the outermost circle, it is that of Names of activity or operation (*af'al*) upon which are inscribed 33 small circles bearing 33 names. The diagram that follows is its complement:

C) *Diagram of divine Names relating to numbers and letters* (diagram no. 20).^[36] This diagram invites one to contemplate the divine Being in numbers and letters, the numeric value of these serving as the basis of the science of letters (*'ilm al-horuf*) which is a kind of philosophical algebra. "The "co-presence" [i.e simultaneous presence (*ma'iyah*)] of the Divine Being with the world is nothing less than the co-presence of the One with the Numbers or the co-presence of *alif* with the letters, or of the manifestation of ink with the form of these letters." In the centre of this diagram there is *tawhid*, the unicity of the One in relation to the forms of numbers and letters participating in the One. Then, as in the previous diagram, three large concentric circles: a) Inscribed in its radiuses, the innermost circle bears the names of a two-fold series of cosmogonic entities ($28 + 28 = 56$). b) and c) A double outer circle is inscribed with 28 small circles corresponding to 28 cosmogonic entities. Each small circle is divided by a line traced in the middle. In the lower section, there are the 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet. In the upper section, the value of each letter is indicated. The method of theosophic prayer thus sets the philosophical algebra to work. Here too, contemplation of this diagram leads to the diagram of mirrors.

3) *Diagrams of Religions* (nos. 21 & 22)

The purpose of these diagrams is to "enable us to see" by means of an imaginative structure, the edifice of the history of religions as a whole; in other words, to operate integration of the integration. We regret one matter. The material at Haydar Amoli's disposal is drawn entirely from the encyclopedia of the history of religions (*Kitab al-Milal*) by Shahrastani (d. 1153), granted a very honest and sincere historian to whom we owe knowledge of many sources, yet without being elaborated upon to the extent the presumed scale envisioned by Haydar Amoli. Before proceeding, let us recall that in these diagrams, the unity in the centre is not a unity that would be added to the others. As in the previous diagrams, it is unificent [*unifique*]; generator of all the surrounding determined unities as individual unities. The centre is not a mathematical unity in addition to the others. It is co-presence of the One with all the unities. This situation will enable a homologation of the structure presented by schools of thought and sects within Islam with the structure presented by all religions other than Islam.

This was a rather audacious undertaking; a theomonist, an esoterist alone could have conceived it. Haydar Amoli was perfectly aware of this. Referring to these two diagrams (21 & 22) in the form of circles or rosettes that correlate branches of Islam and those constituting the entirety of religions i.e. the *res religiosa* of mankind, he writes: "My purpose is to facilitate their

perception in the imaginative faculty . . . No one before me has ever had the idea of presenting such diagrams especially in terms of their layout (a structure enabling comparison).” In each diagram there are 72 “squares”. “Contained within this number,” continues Haydar Amoli, “are esoteric secrets of subtle realities, secret impressions.” [37]

The point of departure is thus the material that Shahrastani provides in his encyclopedia of the history of religions to which everyone has referred over the centuries because it testifies to matters that have since perished. Amoli begins by recalling the pages in which Shahrastani mentions the different ways to classify religions.[38] Some classify them in terms of the seven climates of traditional geography; others according to regions of the world (North, South, East, West); others still based on empires (Persians, Arabs, Byzantines, Indians); finally in terms of opinions and doctrines. From this rich diversity, we shall here retain only the remark about the arithmosophic significance of the number of branches vis à vis the four communities that constitute the People of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitab*).[39] We are told that the Mazdeans are comprised of 70 branches; the Jews 71; the Christians 72; and Muslims 73. No doubt a number rich with arithmosophic meaning. Unfortunately, reasons for the mathematical progression from 70 to 73 are not given. Still we are aware of the importance of the numbers 70 and 72 in the Gnostic and Jewish apocalyptic traditions.

This arithmosophy does no more than prompt the recollection of a famous *hadith* in which the prophet of Islam clearly states: [40] “My community will be divided into 73 branches; only one will attain salvation, the others will be condemned.” Two questions arise immediately: in the first place why 73? Haydar Amoli goes to great lengths to point out that all the modes of arithmosophic deduction, whether borrowed from anthropology, cosmology, astronomy or hierohistory lead to the number 72 and not 73. Unfortunately, we cannot here dwell upon his reasoning in detail.[41] In the second place, which branch or sect is the only one to be saved (*najiya*)? The answer emerges from the very juxtaposition of these two questions [i.e. why 73 and which sect].

For the stroke of genius is to have made of the only sect that saves and which is saved, a sect that would mathematically be the 73rd, but is said to be the 73rd because it does not belong to the mathematical whole of 72. In the centre, the number 73 is ontologically the unificent of these 72 and that is an entirely different thing than being a mathematical unity added therein. One need only study both diagrams carefully. Each of them has 72 squares. If the sect that saves were simply and mathematically a 73rd sect, then like the others it would occupy a box - 73rd in this instance. Well, such is not the case: it is in the centre; rather it forms the centre. Let us once more

refer to the paradigm that is the mirror of mirrors. The sect that saves and is saved is to the 72 others as *Esse* is to *ens*, in the same relationship as the unificent One with regard to the unities that it monadises in as many unities (its unitivity represented by $1 \times 1 \times 1 \dots$). The 73rd that saves is not $72 + 1$ but the centre of the 72. The reason for the 72 is only intelligible in relation to this centre, just as the many are intelligible only when led back to the One-Being. The plurality of religions is in fact the very secret of the plurality of theophanies. Just as the diagram of the single candle is multiplied in the many candles of the many mirrors, so is this implying and guaranteeing the multiplicity of theophanies entirely faithful to the theomonism expressed by Ibn Arabi. It is the ontological *tawhid*, the unitivity of the One that is the guarantor of theomonism, [42] in the sense of expressions such as "Lord of Lords" or "God of Gods".

Such is well and truly Haydar Amoli's profession of faith: "The Saved (*naji*)," he says, "is the witness of the integrality of being (*esse*) as of a unique "Act-to be" . . . He for whom the linked 72 are a veil, the True (*Haqq*) will remain veiled. The saved is the unificent (*mowahhid*), the perfect gnostic to whom nothing is veiled. Those that are delivered [saved] from veils are designated as the family of *tawhid* (*ahl al-tawhid*), members of the home of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*)." [43] In strictly Shiite terms, the latter are the holy Imams; in the gnostic interpretation of the designation, they are all those who along with the Imams constitute the Temple (*bayt*) of *tawhid*.

Indeed, there has been many an objection regarding the identification in name of this pseudo-seventy-third branch.[44] However, for Haydar Amoli as well as for Shiite theosophy in general there is no doubt. The saved group is the pleroma of the prophets and immaculate Imams (the seven major prophets - manifestations of *Verus Propheta* - each extended esoterically by twelve Imams). [45] And with them, all the loyal-faithful gathered in the same temple, the same home of the family (*ahl al-bayt*). "For among the immaculate Imams of the home of the Prophet, there is the following tradition: the image of my home (of my family, of my temple, *mithl bayti*) is comparable to Noah's Ark. Whosoever boards is saved. Whosoever remains behind shall drown." [46]

Noah's Ark is not simply a 73rd ark in the sequence of numbers. It is the singular centre. The 72 cease to be veils when from one or another the centre is attained. The question is not to move, to "convert" from one square to another, but to attain the centre for only the centre shares its truth with each and every one of the 72 squares. To be present in the truth is to have attained the centre (the *co-presence* of the centre that was at issue previously). This is what it means to board Noah's Ark. One can board from any one of the 72 squares. They are even expressly designed for this.

Now, if we were to turn to the philosopher to ask how such a movement is accomplished, we would say that it is by referring to the dialogue between Socrates and Zeno in the *Parmenides*. The integration of the many with the One saving from confusion and chaos. The irradiation of One in the ones.

Let us compare the situations as laid out. In its centre, Diagram 21[47] has the *Ahl al-tawhid* and *Ahl al-bayt*. We have just examined what this means. Around them the 72 sects or schools within Islam; as soon as they ceased to be a veil, they are led to the centre (to the co-presence of the centre). As for diagram 22[48] regarding those who are termed "men of desire" [49] i.e. those of religions other than Islam, we find the Yeshuanites[50], Qaraites, Samaritans, the Melkites, Jacobeans, Nestorians, Zoroastrians, Manichaeans, Mazdeans, Daysanians (disciples of Bardesanes, the gnostic), the Brahmans, the ancient Arabs, all the Greek Sages from Thales upto Plotinus, Porphyry and Proclus. [51]

Of course, all this material is borrowed from Shahrastani and so Haydar Amoli is not immune to inadvertent observations. The most serious one is the following: in the centre of Diagram 22 we find -- as if equivalent to the *Ahl al-Bayt* shown in Diagram 21-- "men of God of utmost integrity to whom the call of the prophets has never reached". Well then, where does this leave the Jewish and Christian communities? This does not reconcile well with Haydar Amoli's Shiite prophetology: Judaism and Christianity are the fourth and fifth events in the cycle of prophethood Sealed by Muhammad.

Having expressed this reservation, I would say that the marked interest of Haydar Amoli's project lies elsewhere.

1) It lies in the correspondence established in diagrams 21 and 22 between the Muhammadian totality centred on the family or temple of the immaculate Imams (*Ahl al-bayt*) and the totality of religions centred on men whose original intrinsic nature was preserved (*fitr salima*). *Fitra salima* is human nature, the *Imago Dei* "as released from the hands" of the Creator without ever being destroyed. This merits a comparison between the conception of the destiny of the *Imago Dei* according to the different theological schools of Christianity, that in any case advances the idea of natural religion and rights that the flood of historicism and dialectical sociology have long since swept away in the West. This idea is nonetheless required for a homologation to be possible between those to whom the call of prophets has reached (those of the cycle of the *Verus Propheta*) and those who — without having received this call — testify to an appeal to the intrinsic nature of man, in the sense that man is already prophet of God at the center of Creation.

2) The interest also lies in the layout of the 72 [sects] around the centre (simple reminder: the rotunda of the Temple of the Grail at Mount Salvat, in the New *Titirel* contains 72 chapels all around the centre - the sanctuary of the Grail)[52] a layout that corresponds exactly to that of the diagram of mirrors (no. 18 above). The one who contemplates "sees in each mirror another candle." All around the multiple mirrors are as many epiphanies of the single candle: One always One, "co-present" in the many (1 x 1 x 1, etc); the being always one in the many existents. Well, such is also the *situs* in the solitary salutary sect as discretely suggested by Haydar Amoli. The centre is the point of origin and return for the radiuses. It is not a matter of moving, of "converting" from one square to another; the task is to attain the centre from whichever one of the squares, because "to be in the centre" is to grasp the truth of all the squares; to be "the ark of salvation". Only one group can be this ark: the centre. One of the Prophet's sayings declares: "The paths to God are as many as the number of breaths in created beings." As Haydar Amoli explains: it is not a matter of the path outlined by legal obligations /canonical duties but the path specific to each being as a function of the inner norm specific to his being, for that is "the ontological straight path" (*al-sirat al-mostaqim al wojudi*).[53]

I believe that to this point we have surveyed, though ever so briefly, the question that arises regarding the relationship between the One and Many Gods, the simultaneous truth of the One and the Many, that of the Multiple being conditioned by the Single. It is remarkable that *tawhid*, the profession of unitarian faith, should have placed the speculative high theosophy of Islam on the path of problems confronted by Plato in his *Parmenides* and that to solve these unprecedented dialectical difficulties, we have at once to extend a helping hand to Haydar Amoli (the most profound [Twelver] Shiite commentator of Ibn Arabi, and to Proclus the most profound commentator of Plato. I fear that until now we have hardly been aware of this.

Henceforth, the path is clear to restore the meaning of divine hierarchies whose mediating function is perhaps the most foreign of conceptions to the official science of our time.

II. THE DIVINE HIERARCHIES

1. *Theogonic dramaturgy*

I have learned of an expression coined by Joseph de Maistre thanks to *Science de l'homme et tradition*, the admirable book by our friend Gilbert Durand. The expression that most naturally finds its place here in our presentation is "reasoned polytheism" arranging their rank and *inamissible* function to all the metaphysical hierarchies of intercessors and mediators

between the worlds.[54] The idea is of interest to us all the more so since it accommodates *Dii gentium* as well as *Angelus rector* "still dear to Kepler's astrology"; it encompasses what we have now to discover by re-descending so to speak down the other slope of the paradox of monotheism.

Upto this point, we have drawn out the idea that the ontological and esoteric truth of the latter [monotheism] essentially rendered theomonism the guarantor for the pluralism of beings, existents, a pluralism that is essentially formed as an ontology of divine hierarchies. Ismaili theologians define *tawhid* as "the spiritual knowledge of celestial and terrestrial hierarchies and the recognition that each of these ranks is unique in its respective position." [55] Now, the existence of these hierarchies brings us face to face with a theogonic dramaturgy whose acts are constituted by the eternal birth of their hypostases in the form of a "Battle in Heaven" that determines the unification of the plurality of their ranks necessary with the One-being. We find signs of this battle in a Proclus just as in Ismaili theosophy and among disciples of Sohrawardi, the *Ishraqiyun*, "Orientals" in the metaphysical sense of the word. The procession of these hierarchies culminates in the advent of a Figure who is the Holy Spirit-Angel, Angel of humanity. Thus it requires a phenomenology of this Holy Spirit, the ultimate product of a pluralism that was only envisaged, it seems, by a few errant knights of philosophy and that definitely spares us -- in one fell swoop-- from all the excesses of an absolute Spirit sinking into totalitarianism. Finally, we shall see that this idea establishes the relationship of a [human] community of Elected ones with the celestial entity that Suhrawardi designates with the name of the first archangel from Zoroastrianism i.e. the royal Order of Bahman-Light.

The idea that divine hierarchies, this "reasoned polytheism" at its origin presupposes a "battle in heaven" is already found, as we have just noted, in Proclus, the master Neoplatonician/Neoplatonist. He had admirably grasped the sense of dramatic scenography in Plato's *Parmenides* which is the major dialogue regarding the Ideas (in the Platonic sense of this word) and which consequently is a theogony + since according to the *Parmenides* itself, "the Ideas are Gods". [56] In his major commentary on this dialogue -- reputedly one of Plato's most difficult -- Proclus reads symbolic meaning into Zeno of Elea's arrival in Athens.

Indeed Zeno arrives in Athens precisely during the celebration of the Panathenians. He brings his own book and for Proclus this book plays the same role as Athena's Veil that one dons in the *theoria* or procession of the Panathenians. This Veil contains the Giants subjugated by the Olympian Gods. "The Veil contains Athena's victory by which she becomes mistress of all divided and pericomic causes, uniting and connecting them to her father; similarly, this discussion (Plato's *Parmenides*) seeks to link the entire

plurality of beings to the One-being, and demonstrates how, abandoned by the One, all is rife with disorder and confusion of truly gigantic proportions.” [57] Elsewhere Proclus emphasises: “The real battle of the Giants takes place in the souls: when thought and reason are their guides within, it is the Olympian forces along with those of Athena that are the guides and their entire life somewhat royal and philosophic.” [58] At times souls abound with the Gods (“the enthusiastic ones”); at times they become children of the Earth, succumb to tyrants and become tyrants of themselves.

This is the very theme of our current study: the profound meaning of the link we have come across elsewhere between the two-fold integration that esoteric *tawhid* accomplishes and the integration which at once renders the witness of the unificent One, the One and the Many, a unified balanced being, in whom the myriad forces of light are deployed.

We find this idea of a theogonic battle elsewhere. We will have occasion here to compare it with the battle against the Giants that both the 1st *Book of Enoch* as well as Manichaean cosmogony inform us about. I fleetingly refer to it here since it introduces us to the very heart of some cosmogonies of Islamic gnosis, above all Ismaili and *Ishraqi* gnosis. Each in its own way, these cosmogonies demonstrate how as a result of the “battle in heaven” are formed divine hierarchies from which in turn pleromatic *unity* results. As the process nears its end, we are brought together with this Angel of humanity whom I moments ago described as the interceding and mediating Figure that radically changes the horizon of abstract monolithical monotheism; based on which our theological and philosophical systems have developed for centuries. Yet, we find the idea of hierarchical pluralism -- from which its Figure emerges as the beacon -- clearly expressed in some currents of thought in our times.

Having dwelt extensively upon the doctrines of Ismailism and the *Ishraqiyun* elsewhere, I shall confine myself to a brief discussion. [59] What dominates the conception of the world as professed by the Ismailis is the fundamental theme of an apophatic theology (*tanzih, via negationis*). As in every form of gnosis, the Principle (*Mobdi'*) that is the source of being, is itself beyond being; it is *hyperousion*. It is absolutely ineffable and indescribable; one can confer it neither Name nor Attribute (cf. *En-Sof* of the Jewish Kabbalists). The Principle is the One-unificent. This “unificence” consists of putting the being of a unique-Being eternally into the imperative. This is the primordial Origin (*Mobda'awwal, Protokristos*), First Archangel of the primordial Verb (*Kalima*) from which the Pleroma of cherubic Intellects proceed. As no Name can be conferred to the Principle, the supreme name *Al-Lah* falls upon the first among the Cherubims (*Karubiyun, Kerubim*) as fiat [command]. But Ismaili theosophers have given the Name an etymology that takes into account the Archangel's profound mode of being. As primordial

theophany, the Archangel aspires to know its Principle, except from the latter only the mode of being that is constituted in him can be attained: his own being is its first and only accessible Ipseity. By deriving the name *Allah* (= *Wilah*) from the root *w-l-h*, Ismaili theosophers have exposed the nostalgia and sadness whose mystery is forevermore buried in the supreme Divine Name. From the primordial Intellect, proceeds a second cherubimic Intellect that in fact is the First Emanation (*Monba'ith awwal*), since the primordial Archangel is not an Emanation of the Principle but its Imperative. Each intellect respectively accomplishes its *tawhid* i.e. the unification of the principle of their being. From their pair emanates a third Intellect of the Pleroma and with it begins the tragedy, the great drama in the Heavens.

This third Intelligence is designated as the celestial Anthropos, the spiritual (*ruhani*) or metaphysical Adam. From the very beginning, he is the Archangel of humanity; his metaphysical gesture bears the secret of Man's fate. He will set off the tragedy but he shall also play the heroic saviour. By a paradox that illustrates our theme perfectly, he sets off this tragedy because he first behaves as a perfect exoteric monotheist; he is not yet aware of theomonism. Ismaili gnosis, as I mentioned earlier, defines *tawhid* as consisting of recognising the unique rank that each entity occupies in the hierarchy of beings. It is a monadological *tawhid*. The Angel-Adam must also perform his *tawhid* but he refuses; he is not aware that his act of unification [of making one] can only seek to attain the unique and the unique ones that precede him in the hierarchy of being.

Without mediator, he seeks to accomplish and directly attain *tawhid* of the Principle that is inaccessible to him. In short, his obsession with the One, leads him to cast himself as an absolute that excludes pluralism - the very secret of the hierarchy of being. I believe that Ismaili gnosis here had, as far reaching as possible, a vision of the origins and consequences of what we call "the paradox of monotheism" at its exoteric level. Unfortunately, the esoterism of Ismaili gnosis has barely enabled it, until now, to influence currents of philosophical thought.

Here then our Angel of Humanity is brought to a standstill in a giddy stupor, an unconsciousness that immobilises him and excludes him from the hierarchical procession of being. The metaphysical time of this stupor is measured by the procession of being that continues to take place without him, i.e. of the Seven cherubim Intellects or primordial Verbs. It is these Seven Intellects that eventually have compassion for the third, take pity upon it and awaken it. However from the third rank that he originally occupied, the spiritual Adam, the Angel of humanity now finds himself relegated to the tenth and last rank of the Pleroma. This is the "delayed eternity" in which the phases of cosmogony originate; the rhythm of the seven phases of the cycle of prophethood does not constitute its official History of Mankind but its secret

and Divine History, its hierohistory. Unfortunately, I am not able to narrate further details here.

Let us simply recall that awakened by the conscience of its being by its "brothers" in the Pleroma, the Angel- Adam wishes to rectify his error by summoning the multitude of human entities to the celestial state that forms his own Pleroma, so that each may perform their own *tawhid*. Apart from a small number in his favour, he is met with fierce resistance. A formidable battle then ensues; a battle comparable to that described by Manichean cosmogony. A proto-Ismaili treatise in Persian describes it as the seven battles of Salman the Pure against 'Azaziel. [60] Let us say that our celestial Adam is not unlike an archangel Michael defeating the devil (earlier hidden within himself) by hurling him into the abyss. He then begins to form the physical world as an instrument for the salvation of his condemned own. This is clearly reminiscent of Manichaeism cosmogony.

This cosmos will follow a cyclical rhythm successively of epiphany (*kashf*) -- during which the Antagonist and his band of devils remain hidden and harmless -- and clandestinity (*satr*) during which the forces of light remain hidden in the face of demoniac forces unleashed. To the hierarchy of the ten primordial cherubimic Verbs corresponds the hierarchy of the esoteric sodality, itself in correspondence with the hierarchy of the heavens in astronomy. To the seven Verbs that proceed while the stupor of the Angel Adam lasts, correspond the seven periods of a cycle of prophethood. From cycle to cycle, the Archangel of Humanity leads all his own (partners in the same struggle) to reconquer their celestial status in the paradise lost. From cycle to cycle, the entire Ismaili chivalry rises one degree in the structure of the "Imam's Temple of Light", the Imam being the earthly representative of the primordial Archangel.

Here then in broad strokes is the Shia Ismaili conception of the drama of humanity, the meaning of its secret history originating from a fault committed by its Angel, the one by whom mankind communicates with the Pleroma of archangelical entities. The drama is set off by a monotheism understood in the exoteric sense, in which the Anthropos considers himself the Absolute. Gnostic Redemption occurs by the gradual restoration of the multiple ranks that constitute the ontological hierarchy of the "Temple of Imamat".

It is this figure of the Archangel of Humanity as the tenth of the archangelical Pleroma that we encounter in Avicenna's cosmology and -- with an even more dramatic context -- in Suhrawardi (1191) whose work was deliberately the restoration in Islamic Iran of the philosophy of Light as professed by the Sages of ancient Zoroastrian Persia. [61] Although we do not find the notion of a "battle in Heaven" as in Ismailism, the process

of the emanation of beings leads to the same result: the condition of man in darkness, the salutary function of the Angel of humanity. As for the procession of the Many from the One-being, our Suhravardi's work describes a two-fold aspect of this that I shall review briefly. *On the one hand*, there is the procession of the Many as he described in his major work, the *Book of Oriental Theosophy (Hikmat al-Ishraq)* where he proves to be under Avicennian influence. Here too apophatic theology gives way to affirmations that have the splendour of the Light of Glory, the Mazdean Xvarnah. There is *ab origine* the Light of Lights, that in his *Book of Hours* he honours with the name it bears in ancient Iranian religion: Ohrmazd (in the Avesta: Ahura Mazda, the Lord [of] Wisdom). "The unique/one God to whom absolute Unity belongs in all forms . . . Light of Lights." Therefore at once unique and God of Gods (as *Deuteronomy* 10/17 has already reminded us). From this Light of Lights proceeds the primordial Archangel that Suhravardi also honours by the name that it bears in Zoroastrianism: Bahman (Vohu Manah, Eunoia, Good/Worthy Thought). Henceforth, by virtue of the multi-faceted relationships that "oriental" theosophy i.e. theosophy of the "rising light" (*ishraq*) has at its disposal, namely dominance and obedience of love, independence and indigence, contemplation and illumination, irradiation and reflection etc. the increase in the number of hypostases of light soon become countless. [62]

Let us briefly state that Suhravardian angelology is comprised of three major Orders:

1) There are the dominating triumphal Lights (*Anwar qahira*), cherubic transcendent Intellects that have no direct relationship with the world manifested to sensible perception; these are the archangels that constitute the "world of Mothers", [63] the longitudinal or vertical series (*silsila tuliya*).

2) There is the "latitudinal series" (*silsila ardiya*) of Archangel-theurgies, angels or lords of multiple species, the latter being respectively their image, icon or "theurgy". These are the *Arbab al-anwa'* (singular *rabb al-nu'*; feminine *rabbat al-nu*). At this level of archetypes, Suhravardi interprets the Platonic Ideas in terms of Zoroastrian angelology. But we have heard Proclus proclaim that "the Ideas are Gods." Now, the Angel of humanity is at the head of these lords or Angels of the species. [64]

3) Finally, there are the Angel-Souls by which the Angels, the lords of species govern the latter. Hence their name, "Regent/Custodian Lights" (*Anwar modabbira*; there are Souls that are movers of the Heavens and there are human souls); they are also designated by the term *Espahbad* [Greek: *Hegemonikon*] borrowed from ancient Iranian chivalry.

On the other hand, there is the scheme from the angelology of the Avicennian tradition that Suhravardi employs in his other books. This scheme is not at all in contradiction with the previous one but by limiting himself to three spiritual “dimensions” in each intellect, he is able to better determine the rank and function of the Holy Spirit-Angel, Angel of humanity, Tenth Intellect of the Pleroma, just as in Ismaili theosophy. These three constitutive dimensions of the archangelical being at each grade of the pleroma consist of three theogonical acts or genesis of the *Dii-Angeli*, the psychogony or genesis of Souls and cosmogony or genesis of the worlds. 1)

The First emanated Intelligence that Suhravardi sets in Zoroastrian angelology contemplates its *Principle*. 2) It contemplates its own *essence* that by itself would not have the power to confer itself being and contains its part of non-being. 3) It contemplates its own act of *being*, of existing, which as a necessity for its Principle, is absolved of all contingency.

As there is no hiatus between thought and being, these three acts of contemplation *eo ipso* produce being. 1) The first contemplative act of the First Intellect is its dimension of pure light. By this act it eternally breeds a Second Intellect. 2) The contemplation of its own essence which is not powerful enough to confer itself being on its own, is its dimension of darkness/shadow. From it is produced the first (or ninth) Heaven or the Sphere of Spheres, admittedly from yet more subtle matter but including the origin of darkness/shadow. 3) Thus by contemplating its own act of being necessitated by its connection to the procession that proceeds from its Principle, it produces a Soul, the first of the *Animae caelestes*, the Soul that is the driving force behind the first (or ninth) Heaven. And so it continues from Intellect to Intellect, the three acts of contemplation recurring in each of them and generating a new triad. Each Heaven in some ways marks the distance that separates every archangelic Intellect from the Principle from which it originates. The Soul that emanates from it is the driving force of this heaven, of its “world”. It is therefore the very nostalgia of this Intellect from which it emanates, and it is in order to narrow the distance marked by this nostalgia that it implicates its Heaven in the movement of its Desire. In order to express this, in one of his spiritual novels, Suhravardi configures the symbols of Love, Beauty and Nostalgia.[\[65\]](#) One will recall that the etymology for the supreme Name, as given by the Ismailis, contains this sentiment of nostalgia (cf. above).

Let us take good note of the following. By recurring from Intellect to Intellect, each time the three acts of contemplation form a world that the corresponding astronomical heaven with its own circular movement typifies. Certain historians ridicule this universe arranged in hierarchies of concentric Spheres for they fail to see that this system of the world is the projection of the transcendent *Imago mundi*. [\[66\]](#) Here once again Proclus will be our guide.

He is well aware of the assimilation of thought moving as a Sphere, revolving around itself; consequently he knows that the thought of the Being is a spherical movement. He knows that this spherical figure is of the world even before its generation and it is better contemplated in the intellectual Gods (the Intellects in the Avicenna-Suhrawardian context). He knows moreover that theologians are aware of the "incorporeal cyclophor" since the theology professed by the *Hellenes* (Orpheus) said of the first God, of the hidden God anterior to Phanes (the revealed, the *zahir*), "that it accomplishes a movement of translation following a vast circle without ever tiring. And the Chaldean Oracles proclaim that "all Sources and Principles . . . always remain in an unending circular movement. [\[67\]](#)

Thus we find the context of the Avicennian and Suhrawardian system of the world, and at the same time we are alerted to the fact that the essential are not the Spheres of astronomy . . . but the internal movement of thought prior to the genesis of the worlds; in short the movement of invisible Heavens, known to spiritual astronomy that outlive the vicissitudes of physical astronomy in which it was expressed.

It is precisely by following what is expressed here that we understand the drama that is played out with the emergence of archangelical hierarchies, a drama that is described as less tumultuous than in Ismaili cosmology, but that similarly interprets the same situation. The dimension of shadow born with one of the acts of contemplation of the First Intellect will continue to grow in relation to the descent of the hierarchical degrees. Once the procession of the Intellects reaches the Tenth, it is as if the flow of light had sapped its energy. The Tenth has no more energy to generate a new unique and individual Intellect. Its contemplation explodes, so to speak, in the multitude of human souls that proceed from it and of whom it is the NOUS *patrikos*, the archangelical Intellect that is their "father", whereas the subtle matter of higher Heavens denegerates into dark matter of the sub-lunar world. However, the ordeal of movement through this Matter will also prove to be the redemption of these souls.

This situation, as is evident, leads us back to that described by Ismaili cosmology. Here too, the Tenth Angel is the Angel of humanity (In broad outline, it corresponds to the rank of the tenth [angel] in the *Sephirot*). As such it is Gabriel, the Angel-Holy Spirit, at once Angel of knowledge and Angel of revelation. It shares the destiny of humanity that is its divine *œuvre*, its "theurgy". In response to the visionary's question, he states: "A long time ago, he who imprisoned you . . . hurled me as well into the Well of Obscurity." [\[68\]](#)

And this is how the crimson Archangel explains its appearance, i.e. using an analogy with the crimson of dusk that is an admixture of day and night, as though contact between the heavenly and earthly manifests in this colour. Suhravardi expresses this in the fascinating vision of the two wings of Angel Gabriel: one wing of light and one of darkness. Salutary gnosis among the *Ishraqiyun* seeks to vanquish this darkness and regain Light lost [e.g. Paradise Lost]. I had not yet attempted a comparison between Ismaili and *Ishraqi* gnosis. Henceforth we begin to understand that in either case, the role conferred to the Angel of Humanity stems from an identical perception of the original drama and salutary oeuvre of gnosis. In both cases as well, there is a similar link between this salutary work and the hierarchical pluralism of being.

At the beginning of the vision of the initiatic recital that Surhavardi names "the Rustling of Gabriel's Wings" the visionary is put in the presence of a brotherhood of ten Sages "amiable and of elegant physical stature, whose respective positions form an ascending hierarchical order". He notes however, that notwithstanding their beauty, magnificence and grace, they observe absolute silence. He questions the young Sage who is the closest to him - none other than Gabriel, Tenth in the hierarchy. The latter answers: "Given your situation, you and those of your kind cannot have a relation with them. I am their interpreter [mediator], but they can converse neither with you nor your kind. [69] This is a warning of incalculable significance. He informs the visionary and us alongside him that all the worlds above the Angel of humanity -- or in the symbolic terms of another recital -- all the Sinaï's arranged in tiers above the mystical Sinaï that is his oratory, all these worlds are as yet unrevealed and inaccessible to us. Their doors will be cracked ajar for us only by the mediation of this cherubic Intelligence or Angel of humanity. He is for us the spiritual interpreter (*herméneute*) of these universes, without whom they shall remain forever closed.

Thus we reach the heart of our research, at the flourishing point of a pluralism of "hierarchicised" universes forevermore challenging every philosophy (atheist or exoterically monotheist) that would [dare] claim to be privy to secrets of divine understanding or of universal absolute Reason. We therefore need to better discern the traits of this archangelic Figure - the mediator for humanity guiding mankind to the conclusion of a drama whose origins lie well before its history on earth because the latter is no more than a consequence of the drama played out "in Heaven".

2. *A phenomenology of the Holy Spirit as Angel of Humanity*

When the *Ishraqiyun* speak of the Angel or Lord of a species (*rabb al-nu'*) they mean to suggest the Angel as hypostasis, a spiritual entity from

whose thought (a contemplative act) proceed the material species in the manner of a *theurgy*.^[70] All the natural proportions and relationships that we observe in the corporeal species are the shadow, image or icon (*sanam*) of spiritual relationships and modalities of light that are constitutive of the angelic hypostasis and its noetic activity. Every philosophy of Nature must present itself as a phenomenology of the angelic consciousness. The notions of the mirror, the epiphanic form (*mazhar*) and functions (*mazhariya*) are fundamental in this case. Just as by one of its acts of contemplation the angelic Intellect is the mirror of the Intellect that precedes it and which in fact gave it origin by an act of contemplation, so too the world proceeding from a contemplative act by the Angel is its mirror, its apparitional form. At levels above the hierarchy, it is a matter of universes represented emblematically by the heavens of astronomy. At the level of our mundane world, it is the human race as the thought of its Angel, "exploding" in a multitude of souls that procede from it, an active thought which thus makes of it "father" of the human race.

In the *Book of the Temples of Light*, Suhravardi writes: ^[71] « In the hierarchy of archangelical triumphal Lights (*Anwar qahira*), there is a relationship with us that is analogous to the relationship between father and child. It is our «Father », the lord of the theurgy that is the human species, at once the Donor that emanates from our souls and the one that confers them their perfection. It is the Holy Spirit (*Ruh al-Qods*) which among philosophers is designated as the Intellect Agent (*al-Aql al-fa'al*). » As the Holy Spirit, this Angel of Humanity is identified with Angel Gabriel in theological terms. It is at once the Angel of Knowledge and the Angel of Revelation that henceforth renders the vocation of a philosopher inseparable from that of a prophet, as their respective knowledge is derived from the same source.^[72] This is the distinguishing mark given by our theosophers of « the religion of the Book » to their gnoseology. It has far-reaching consequences. Many other names are given to this same archangelical Figure. Among others in pure Persian, *Javidan Kharad*, which is the literal equivalent of the Latin *Sophia aeterna*. As Angel of the human species (*Rabb al-nu al-insani*), it also takes on an altogether typical appellation. Suhravardi refers to it as Angel of the species of Christ (*Rabb nu al-Masih*) ^[73] by which he means the *Christus aeternus*, manifest in all the prophets from Adam to Jesus of Nazareth continuing to Muhammad, Seal of the prophets. Here we find a trace of the prophetology of *Verus Propheta* as professed by Judeo-Christianity in Jerusalem and by Ebionism, a prophetology once definitively rejected by Christianity becomes the heritage of Islam, more precisely of prophetology in Shia Islam. It precedes the Athanasian trinitary dogma and bears no trace of the latter. For Suhravardi, there is the original Principle and the pleroma of angelic spirits culminating in the Holy Spirit-Angel. The Shaykh-al-Ishraq states that Jesus of Nazareth is the son of the Holy Spirit that is the Angel of humanity, an

expression that we find both in the Gospel according to the Hebrews as well as in the Epistle of *Jacques*, a gnostic Copt text.^[74] However, all humans with souls of light are also considered the offspring of the Holy Spirit.

And this is what determines the *johannisme* present in Suhravardi's theosophy. In the last section of the *Book of the Temples of Light*, he cites with precision all the verses from the Gospel of John announcing the advent of the Paraclete: "I go to my Father and your Father so that he may send the Paraclete (*al-Faraqlit*) who will reveal the spiritual meaning to you (*John* 14/16, 15/26, 20/17)." He adds: "the Paraclete that my Father sends in my name will teach you all things (*John* 14/26)." ^[75] However, we know from a previous chapter from the same *Book of the Temples*, that this "father" is the Holy Spirit Angel Gabriel from whom our souls emanate. The commentators stress this point. In the *Book of Hours* by Suhravardi we also find verses such: "Honour your Father, the magnificent prince of the *Malakut*, the Holy Spirit, the archangel Serosh."^[76] Serosh is the name of an archangel from the Avesta that Suhravardi identifies with Gabriel. The text continues: Our Father the Holy Spirit speaks to us thus: "You who are born from me you do not answer . . . O soul! You the occidental, you are of noble lineage. You are daughter of the Holy Spirit. How will you return to your father . . . and so on; ^[77] the entire passage or "Verses of Remembrance" are just as allusive.

Thus we find ourselves in a situation that eminently describes the shattering of monolithic monotheism. It is by the Holy Spirit-Angel that the human race can gain access to loftier universes, find a clear path leading to the God of Gods (*Ilah al-aliha*). This Holy Spirit is the *Christus aeternus*, the one for whom the successive prophets served as Christophor. He is the *Dator formarum* in both the cosmogonical and gnoseological sense i.e. the entire process of knowledge makes human consciousness the mirror into which the Angel projects the forms whose structure and relationships constitute its very own being – its being that is itself the mirror or epiphany of higher angelical consciences of the Pleroma. At the actual level of our being, our spiritual conjunction with this Angel of humanity as Holy Spirit and as Intellect Agent is for both prophet and philosopher the necessary prelude but in no way does it indicate the final step. This Holy Spirit-Angel, the Intellect Agent is itself in an ascending procession towards the glorious majesty of the God of Gods. Its journey leads it to the Light of Lights, but this Light of Lights is it itself marching in a procession towards the God of Gods. Elated, it rushes on in an uninterrupted eternal journey carried along without rest regardless of the many degrees by which it is successful in elevating itself, for God designates himself as the highest above the highest of degrees (HQ 40:15). ^[78]

What however does this procession entail? Acts of knowledge whose increasing scope abolishes the darkening of Gabriel's left wing. Just as in Ismaili theosophy these actions are those by which the Angel, with the help of his own, regains the status of paradise lost. "With

the help of his own", we just noted. Since these active thoughts, these acts of increasing and ascending knowledge, are exactly the forms that the Holy Spirit-Angel illuminates upon our souls and by which, while wresting them from ignorance and unconsciousness, he wrests them from darkness. The history of the gnostics of this world is in some ways the autobiography of the Angel of Humanity. It is a phenomenology of angelic consciousness, of the Holy Spirit - Angel that rises progressively towards the horizon of an absolute consciousness whose day can only break beyond worlds whose names remain unknown to man.

In this dramatic gesture, the way is paved for an infinitely ascending procession *post mortem* – what seems to me to be a fundamental contrast with we are accustomed to reading in the West as phenomenology of the Spirit. Hegel's phenomenology is in direct lineage of monotheism that, according to the Ismaili vision of things, led to tragedy in the Pleroma. Just as it is in direct lineage of the *homoousious* in official Christology of the Councils; although it elevates the meaning to an unforeseen point of view on the exoteric theological consciousness. As we have said however, all it takes is for Karl Marx to turn Hegelian philosophy on its head in order for what happens to have really happened.

The contrast stemming from the eruption of what we have termed the paradox of monotheism seems to me evident in the contrast between the phenomenology of the angelic consciousness, that of the Holy Spirit-Angel, and a phenomenology that seeks to be of the absolute Spirit. If in Hegelian terms we were to say that religion is the knowledge that God gradually acquires about Himself, the revelation of the Spirit through History, the formation of God as he becomes conscious of Himself as absolute Spirit, then the finite Spirit, the human spirit, is the vehicle by which God attains this absolute. Now, in terms of the phenomenology of the angelic consciousness of a Holy Spirit that is the Angel of Humanity, the meaning of man and his fate as the partner of his Angel in the quest to regain paradise lost is entirely different. In this world, the God of Gods, the absolute Spirit remains forever beyond the knowledge that religion can have of it. The formation of the supreme divine consciousness does not occur [in the discipline] of History. The contact of divine archangelic Forces with what we call History volatilises the latter and is accomplished between Heaven and Earth. This is the very meaning of theophanies. We are not dealing with History when we speak of theophanies. I must admit that I have been obsessed with this opposition for some years now. I have been confronted by it at many crucial turning points in my research. This as you can see has just happened to me again. I wish the Heavens would grant me the time to write a book on the phenomenology of such an opposition. Perhaps the human hand is not capable of writing such a book.

For the moment and to bring our inquiry towards its conclusion, I would simply like to evoke two testimonies from favoured lands whose secret remains unsuspected and supports what we have just attempted to draw out from our "oriental" philosophers.

The first testimony is found in the cosmology of a heroically destined community that designates itself as the Church of Jesus Christ of the Saints of the Final Days or simply as the Mormons. Their doctrine includes a theogony, the concept of a primordial God, who as the God of Gods is not at all the

creator but the generator of other Gods. All have the stature of man, since man was created in the image of God. The essential function of these Gods is to produce souls for bodies that have been created in this and other worlds. Each world has its own God. In the case of our planet, the God is Adam as described in the Book of Genesis and who has gradually reached his present predominant status. He is the God with whom we have to deal. All the Gods are in a gradual process of development. Saints gain entry into this series of Gods via death. At first they are much lower in rank but they progress until each one even surpasses the Adam-God in splendour and might. This is the meaning of the pithy statement: "What you are, God has been. What God is, you shall be." In body, an eminently subtle body, our God is in space. In Holy Spirit, he is omnipresent. [79]

It is striking that here we find an entire structure not unlike Ismaili and *Ishraqi* monadologic hierarchism. There is an inaccessible God of Gods, removed from the most central and vital position of all the universes. It is incumbent upon each of the Gods to function as the previously described *Dator formarum*. There is an Angel or lord of the human species, the only God to whom we have immediate access, and who is the mediator opening up other worlds to us. This Adam-Angel is identified by the Mormons with Adam of the *Book of Genesis*. Among Ismaili theosophers, Adam featured in *Genesis* is the epiphanic form of the metaphysical, spiritual Adam, the celestial Anthropos, the Third Angel become Tenth due to his error. Finally, there is the idea of an infinite post mortem ascension that corresponds to what Ismaili theosophy describes as operating from world to world in an attempt to reconquer paradise led by the Angel of humanity, this Tenth Angel of the cherubic pleroma, the guide of the *Ishraqi* pilgrim rising from Orient to Orient, whose names (i.e. the pleroma) still remain unknown to us. This it seems to me concurs with Mormon adamology. For Ismaili gnosis, the reconquest of paradise lost is the exaltation of the Imam's "Temple of Light", the eternal Imam whose manifestation this gnosis recognises in Melchisedek. The sacerdotal role of the latter among the Mormons comes to mind. Alas, we must confine ourselves to such briefly suggested comparisons that need further examination.

As for the second testimony, it is found in the work of Samuel Butler (1835 - 1902), a British writer, philosopher and novelist whose profound originality has attracted no less original friendships. Unable to acquire his very rare book on the known and unknown God, I here refer to a page from his *New Travels in Erewhon* (Erewhon is an anagram for *nowhere*, which in turn corresponds to *Na-Koja-abad* [80] - a term forged by Suhrawardi; however, Erewhon is not yet exactly what Suhrawardi designates as the eighth climate, "no-where land" i.e. that has no [geographical] location in this world). We

cite a passage from this book in which the hero's son describes his first voyage to Erewhon.

"My father had given them [the Erewhonians] some vague notions about astronomy and had affirmed to them that all the fixed stars are suns like ours, with planets that revolve around them, and that are probably inhabited by intelligent beings as different as they may be from us. Based on these facts they constructed a theory according to which the Sun was the lord and master of our planetary system and thus should have to be considered as a person, just as they considered as persons, the God of the air, of time and space, the Goddesses of hope and justice, and all the other deities listed in my father's book. They held on to their ancient belief in the real existence of these Gods, but henceforth they considered them as subordinate to the Sun. The only point when they come near to having the same conception as ours of God, is when they say that it [the Sun] is the lord and master of all the suns in the universe; the suns being in relation to it as the planets and their inhabitants are to our Sun. They say that they do not take any more interest in our sun and its particular system than any other sun. All the suns with their tributary planets are considered its offspring equal among them, and It delegates to each sun the duty to administer and protect their particular system. From this they conclude that if we can address prayers to the God of air and other divinities, and even to the Sun, we should not address them to God. We may discretely thank him for watching over the suns, but should go no further than that." [81]

In the guise of its British and Socratic humour, this text conceals a very important point; and it is not insignificant that it is made by a liberal Anglican thinker of the last century [i.e. 19th]. Briefly stated, this is the affirmation of a cosmic pluralism, the exploding of every conception of a monolithic spiritual universe, and flowing from this are all the theological consequences of such an explosion. The multiplying of worlds, each with its own sun, lets Samuel Butler (so-called anti-Platonist unknowingly gripped) foresee the profound thought of late Neoplatonism, namely that of Syrianus, Proclus' master. This is the idea of an astronomy that is able to define the Sun and infer the necessary attributes of all the suns. "If we are able to 'define' the Sun and Moon, says Syrianus, each of the properties that such a definition will have attributed to each of these beings, will apply to all the suns (and moons), even if there were to be ten thousand suns, for in their Idea, they will all be identical to each other." [82] Again here, the Platonic harmony of the One and the Many Gods.

Among Samuel Butler's Erewhonians, the Sun God of our world, the only God to whom our prayer may actually be addressed, holds the rank of the Angel of humanity in Ismaili and *Ishraqi* theosophy; of Angel or Adam-God among Mormon theosophers. One will note that the Angel of the Sun holds a distinguished rank in both Suhravardi's cosmology and hymnology [83] where one may at times even perceive a resonance with the Mithraic faith. As for the multitude of other Gods of each respective universe, this idea corresponds with that described by Mormon theogony and the archangelical hierarchies in Suhravardi. In short, each of these encounters ushers us into the presence of a known and limited God (known because limited and vice versa): Holy Spirit-Angel, Angel-Adam, Sun of our world and of an unknown and unknowable God, God of Gods, for whom all the universes and galaxies are the *sensorium*. Well, is a phenomenology of the Spirit (i.e. the absolute Spirit of this God of Gods), possible *hic et nunc* for Man? Or rather, isn't every

phenomenology at the human level in essence that of the Holy Spirit who is the Angel of humanity?

The name Samuel Butler has many striking resonances. Indeed he is one of the patron saints of this group that we mainly, if not only, know through the admirable book by Raymond Ruyer titled *The Gnosis of Princeton*.^[84] Admittedly, the work contains its share of literary fiction, and we are slightly in the position of our ancestors at the beginning of the 17th century, in the presence of manifestos penned by the Rosicrucian order. One is not sure whether the "gnostics of Princeton" exist as a group elsewhere than in this book. In any case, the subject "Princeton Gnosis" is thus handed down to us and is certainly based upon other gnostics that do exist. It would seem they identify themselves to some extent with the Society of the Friends of Samuel Butler that still exists or once well and truly existed. Which is why, in referring to this book, I will act as a naïve reader who believes all that one tells him and who "plays along".

By the gnostics of Princeton, Raymond Ruyer means to designate men of science: astronomers, physicians, chemists, biologists [*biologues*],^[85] psychologists etc. whose conceptions break with the *scientism* and positivism professed by science of the previous century [19th], if not of our time. These learned men would have accepted or themselves chosen the description of the gnostics. Their behaviour is of a discreet nature worthy of the gnostics. This renders their approach difficult whereas the situation of our world urgently calls for an encounter -- itself discreet -- between scholars of traditional gnosis and those that Princeton Gnosis would group together.

I have just pointed out Samuel Butler's conception of the structure of worlds, which is in harmony with the pluralism that is the very theme of our inquiry. Here I can only suggest some complementary hints in the hope that they may be examined in depth in the near future. Above all, these hints have a bearing upon the concept itself of new gnosis and upon what stems from it regarding a fundamental gnostic concept, namely of hypostases or Aions (Eions) to which archangelic entities of Ismaili and *Ishraqi* gnosis correspond. Finally, to conclude, we shall examine its effect upon the community of gnostics in this world? We find striking analogies. The new American gnosis - a discreet even secret movement going back according to R. Ruyer the last ten years. It emerged in Princeton and seeks to be religious in spirit while remaining strictly scientific. The new gnostic radicalises the gnostic stance. Spirit does not consider Matter to be opposed to it, rather one constitutes the other; it is its substance its only substance. When new gnosis speaks of the right side and left side worlds, it seems that this corresponds perfectly with the notions of *zahir* (apparent, exoteric) and *batin* (hidden, esoteric) in Islamic gnosis. The universe is composed only of

forms aware of themselves and of the interaction of these forms by mutual information. For consciousness is to have received information right side up and not upside down, as structure-object in another consciousness. [86]

Above all, a preliminary effort is required to understand the meaning of words such as "myth" and "to demythify". If we are told that new gnosis is not a mythology, that the new gnostics who at once welcome and vigorously minimise myth, [87] we must note that neither the Eons of Gnosis nor the *Dii-Angeli* advanced by Proclus, nor even the Angels of lords of species are myths, at least according to current usage of the word connotating imaginary or unreal. They are hypostases of forms that are self-aware. As for us, we never speak of mythology but of hierology, hiero-history [sacred knowledge and history], of events in the imaginal world. This clarified once and for all, we perceive the key preoccupations of new gnosis with a musical flourish [*symphoniquement*]. There is the notion of multiple universes arranged on multiple levels in which modern gnostics are inclined to see the equivalent of insurmountable abysses as once spoken of by ancient gnosis. It will be necessary to banish every tendency that believes these upper levels to be illusory. Well then, how to conceive communication between the unity or cosmic consciousness (i.e. God of Gods) and this multitude of tiered levels? Would this be in some simply thematic manner, by impulses or missions [assignments]? Or rather by participation of all the *domaniale* consciousnesses? [88]

This latter term is typical. New gnosis speaks of great domanial unities, of great "totalising" domains if not, *holons* (from the Greek *holos*, the whole, the universe) employing a term forged by Arthur Koestler. [89] But does it suffice to use this term to demythicise, so to speak, the Eons of early gnosis and would this demythification be conceivable or desired? I believe quite the contrary in the need to refer to the sources of traditional gnosis (only just recently discovered) in order for new gnosis to attain its goals. Surely, God is not observable. However, is it possible to reconcile the notion of the participable with that of the unknowable, in the ordinary sense of the word? This may be the direction for new gnosis to explore; we might consider that for this new gnosis the psychological, biological and linguistic experience (and we would add, every other experience of participation) is truly a kind of natural *revelation* of religious value. And this would then be *eo ipso* the participation in Great Beings, great domains or the supreme Domain that is "over-orderly" to us. [90]

The finality of the scheme would here seem to us to be in perfect harmony with those of the divine hierarchies put forward to us by the pluralism of Ismaili and *Ishraqi* theosophy; and also with the theosophy suggested to us by the Mormons or by Samuel Butler. We will thus only pose two

complementary questions: 1) What would the alchemists (we will resist saying *soufflers*) have done if they had access to the material in laboratories of our time? Here I have in mind for example a John Dee or Michael Maier, in short to those works revealed to us by Fran Yates as constituting the Rosicrucian reform. 2) Did the Neo-Gnostics pursue something analogous to what they would have done? If not, where would the difference lie?

Whether there is similarity or difference, seen simply or not, I believe that both would depend on our definition of the Figures of Light who constitute the pleroma of superhumans - these great *domaniale* unities that designate the Eons of Gnosis and the archangelical Intellects, the triumphant Lights of *Ishraqi* theosophy, the latter being mediator and Angel of humanity.

Now, the consequences of the idea we might form of these superhuman Entities depend on the sense that the gnostic community has of itself. And here too, we would perceive so striking an analogy that it would make us wish even more fervently for a confrontation that would surmount any illusion of myth and the so-called demythification. In the awareness that the Neo-gnostic community has of it itself we find the idea that enlightens the spiritual horizon of Suhravardi, our restorer of the theosophy of Light as professed by the Sages of ancient Persia, namely the royal Order of Bahman-Light.

3. *The Royal Oder of Bahman-Light*

The gnostics from Princeton, Raymond Ruyer tells us, are horrified by the clericalism of scientists who represent political ideologies. With the wisdom of monks from the Middle Ages, they maintain the oasis of their monasteries or quasi-religious corporations. Once more in history, the relationship between master - companion or master - disciple gives rise to a non-ecclesiastical religious community, and a conventual State, not unlike the one in ancient Tibet or Mount Athos detached from the political State. The gnostics look upon idealogues as monks considered the Priests of the Church as secular clerics lost in this world. [91] The gnostic movement is precisely an attempt to establish a philosophical and social aristocracy by quiet and discrete co-option. [92]

These few lines in which the Neo-gnostics invoke the relationship between master and companion or master and disciple are in harmony with the practice of companionship in the profound philosophy of high spirituality in Islamic gnosis. It is the form *par excellence* for the relationship between man and God. This is precisely what is meant in Arabic by *fotovvat* or in Persian *javan-mardi* namely, spiritual chivalry. [93] Such a community cannot be this humanity whose knowledge it has of it self would identify itself with the absolute Spirit. Absolute knowledge in the Hegelian sense would fill a void

whose maintenance is a vital necessity for the Spirit. A human community founded on the link conceived by the Neo-gnostics and the *fotovvat* will never form a totalitarian *imperium*, whether of Church or State. It is thus even more necessary that the link that unites this community and the purely spiritual hierarchy that constitutes it rise beyond the limits of this world. This hierarchy must encompass the entire pluralist whole of universes to such an extent that doubts will once again be expressed regarding these Great cosmic Beings already indicated as the equivalent of the Eons in ancient gnosis. If we consider them as myths suitable to demythicise, we can be sure that the constitutive link of the gnostic corporation will very quickly disappear. Both Ismaili and *Ishraqi* theosophy as well as ancient and Neoplatonic gnosis have very complex divine hierarchies that are related to those of the gnostics. *Fotovvat* or spiritual chivalry can only be the extension on earth of celestial chivalry, and it is all the more telling that our Suhravardi conceives the structure of these celestial hierarchies as exemplifying the typical relationship of master and companion or master and disciple. To conclude, let us attempt to provide a prelude to the encounter between *Ishraqi* and modern gnosis.

Suhravardi, we have seen, has given the first hierarchical Intellect its Zoroastrian name Bahman. He simply affixes to it the epithet Light. For his *Book of Hours* he composed a liturgy for Ahura Mazda, God of Gods, Light of Lights, the Sacrosant that is beyond all description. There follow the liturgies of the God(s)-archangels, first of Bahman-Light as First Intelligence, principle Light of God, supreme Creation of God, the primordial Image, the Most-Holy, the Most-Proximate, king of Angels, prince of triumphant Lights, the master of the house of *Malakut* in the sacrosant world: Bahman-Light. [94] In verses about the beings of light, the God of Gods himself proclaims: "None is more venerable for me than Bahman-Light. He is the first I originated. Then I instated supreme Archangels in being." As if in response, this verse follows: "Celebrate in extensive liturgies the race of Bahman-Light and kings of the family of Bahman-Light populating the inviolable depths of *Jabarut*." [95]

These kings of Bahman's race, this Royal Order of Bahman-Light, are all God(s)-Archangels of the Pleroma that the *Book of Hours* honours. In the final position (in descending order), there is the Holy Spirit-Angel, Gabriel, Angel of the human race, who is the link between their celestial chivalry and those who -- issued from him in this world -- respond to his Call to constitute the earthly extension of this Royal Order. [96] Gabriel the Holy Spirit, the celestial Anthropos, is the mediating Intellect that intelligises the human being and human universe issued from him [Gabriel], just as he himself is the thought of the God-archangel that precedes him, and so on until the God of Gods. It is this entire pleroma of Light, the entire royal race of Bahman-Light that is the Theophany reproducing itself from world to world. And it is by

mediation that to human souls of light comes the Call to rejoin their brothers in kind, a Call that ends human solitude and anguish. [97]

The entire structure of mystical cosmology is ordered according to the ranks of this Royal Order of Bahman-Light. The end of the Recital of the Occidental Exile ushers us into the mystical Sinaï that is the abode or oratory of the Angel, our Holy Spirit. Above this Sinaï, arise in unscalable spiritual heights other Sinaïs (this plural form seems to insinuate the plural Elohim!). These superposed tiers of Sinaïs are the respective abodes of the archangelical princes from the race of Bahman-Light. Man in his current state may aspire to climb there only by mental ascension and this too only if led by the Angel of humanity. Elsewhere, these Sinaïs are designated as castles making up the fortified castle (*shahrestan, Burg*) of the spiritual world. [98]

We note mainly that the archangelical filiation, the relationship of each *Nous patrikos* with the subsequent, of each Intellect with one that proceeds from it, is represented as a relationship between master and companion or master and disciple. In his visionary Recital that Suhravardi names *The Rustling of Gabriel's Wings*, the hierarchy of the Order of Bahman-Light appears as an initiatic order/brotherhood of Sages. The highest in rank is the Shaykh, the educator and master of the second Sage who follows immediately in status. And so on from Sage to Sage, until the descending Order reaches the rank of Gabriel the Holy Spirit, whose master is the ninth Sage; the one who engraved his name in the student register, invested him with the robe and conferred initiation. The entire description of their Orders draws its symbols from the ways and customs of the Sufis and the *fotovvat*: there is the Pir (*shaykh* in Arabic); the *khangagh*, or lodge of the Sufis; the *jarida*, the [enrollment] register; and the *khirqa* or robe. The arrangement of the ranks in the archangelical Pleroma is thus an archetype that is replicated in the initiatic order - its extension in this world. The Ismaili order/brotherhood is also organised according to the celestial archetype of the Pleroma of Intelligences. [99] Here from century to century is a community that does not take the form of a Church or political State. As R. Ruyer specifies, this is the secret ambition of the Neo-gnostics of Princeton.

This idea has such repercussions that with Surhavardi, the entire cosmology is expressed in symbols from astronomy formulated in terms of companionship. The constellations of the zodiac, the planets in the sky are all characterised as workshops whose activities are supervised by a master (*ostâd*). [100] The ten archangel-Gods are represented as ten brothers constituting an esoteric sodality whose first nine are the nine brothers of our Angel-Holy-Spirit. [101] Know that all ten of them form an order whose companion is never abandoned in distress nor anyone familiar to them ever left alone. [102] Their world is designated as *Bayt al-Maqdis*, the Temple, the

celestial Jerusalem or as the Ka'ba of the spiritual world. Which is why if he wished to regain the celestial Templars, the pilgrim of the Oriental Light (the *mostashriq*) must base his ethos on theirs [the brothers]. They are the ones to receive him, accept his commitment and thus enable him to gradually scale the City of God that stands in the towering heights above. However, this competition to qualify for the Royal Order of Bahman-Light is only possible for those who by the mediation of the Angel of humanity respond to its call. So he exhorts each one by saying to them: "Your brothers, in the supreme Pleroma await your return. Your brothers are the archangel-Gods that like the human soul - itself the daughter of one them (the Holy Spirit) - are the royal race of Bahman-Light." [\[103\]](#)

In the epistle of the lofty towers, as we have already pointed out, this Holy Spirit is designated by the strictly Persian term *Javidan Kharad*, the literal equivalent of the Latin *Sophia aeterna* just as *piri javan*, an eternally youthful spiritual master. Here too, Mosannifak the commentator draws our attention to an essential aspect of *Ishraqi* spirituality. The Angel is designated as their *shaykh*, their *morshed*, he explains, because the *Ishraqi* do not rely upon a human master, upon any guru. Their only master and guide is he who designates himself as the crimson Archangel, partner in their struggle and fate, their secret master, their guide or inner Imam.[\[104\]](#) By this defining feature, the Royal Order of Bahman-Light is not subject to human genealogy, just as hierohistory does not at all belong to the framework of exoteric History.

It is by this precisely -- by no means an accident -- that the idea of the Royal Order of Bahman Light is akin to the Order that in other contexts is designated as the Order of Elie, the prophet. [\[105\]](#) Elie is the one whose advent is promised in the Bible at the end of the book of the Prophet Malachie (4/5). He is the master of all those who do not have a human master. His inspiration alone suffices to authenticate a teaching deemed innovative. This is the role he plays in Jewish gnosis; so too in Islamic gnosis where it may even extend to conferring the robe of initiation. Mount Carmel thus becomes an emblematic mountain and the Order of Elie is integrated into Christian esoterism. It does so -- an ancient tradition describes it as the father of the Essenians (*pater Essenorum*) -- by prompting a prophetology that amplifies the early Judeo-Christian idea of the *Christus aeternus* who is none other than the Holy Spirit, and from whom we glean some details on the three branches of the Abrahamic tradition. It would thus be of great interest if American gnosis were to remind us of something in this vein.

Indeed, we learn from R. Ruyer that the movement approached ever nearer to the point of winning over Anglican priests of the High Church, so gnostic priests! What is more, there would be numerous Neo-gnostics of both

Jewish and Christian origin but together they would share the same point of view, undoubtedly more secretive than the others for it would envisage nothing less than a kind of reconversion of Christianity to its origins, that is to say Judaism. [106] All would take place as though new gnosis unbenownst to itself, tended to reconstitute the thirteenth tribe that lost its way in the desert by separating from Moses. It is by the name of this tribe that in a recent book Arthur Koestler describes the extraordinary adventure of the Khazari royalty from the 8th to 12th century, an adventure of a non-Semitic populace that deliberately chose to profess the Jewish faith.[107] I allude to this only because it seems extraordinarily striking that a gnostic community of our times spontaneously attempted to revive the conditions of early Judeo-Christianism, namely of the community in Jerusalem gathered around *Jacques le Juste*, brother of the Lord prior to the split between Judaism and Christianity.

All the more striking, we reiterate, that this new gnosis – considering the objective world of science as the “left side of a right side” would seek to rediscover beyond this right side what one might call the the right side of the right side which in turn would seem to correspond -- subject to further in-depth analysis -- to what the gnostics in Islam, among the Shaykhis for example, designate as *batin al-batin*, the esoteric of the esoteric, the inner of the inner and which would perhaps be only one aspect of this integration of integration that we spoke of in our introduction.

If conscience is the right side (inner, esoteric, *batin*) of this left side (*zahir*, apparent) that is the visible and perceivable body, as R. Ruyer says, there must necessarily be a right side of a right side, because nature “naturising” [making nature] remains as mysterious as nature “natured” [made nature]. The vision is perhaps still a stain in the eye. It is of profound importance that popular wisdom attributes clairvoyance/clear vision to the blind. [108] One needs a form of vision beyond vision to perceive the presence of the Royal Order of Bahman Light or the Order of Elie the prophet, just as one requires a vision beyond vision to understand the paradox of monotheism.

This pre-eminence of visionary clairvoyance may even render us clairvoyant regarding a prophetic symbol that André Neher in his book entitled *The Exile of Speech* urges us to understand in an entirely different manner: before the two statues on the southern façade of the Strasburg Cathedral, he writes, more than a Christian has been struck by the fascinating beauty of the *Synagoga* of this surprisingly young woman: a band over her eyes prevents her from seeing, and she has most certainly heard nothing and hears nothing, as she pursues a dream whose silence speaks volumes more than the eloquent expression of the *Ecclesiastics*. The band over the young woman’s eyes alerts us that her vision is beyond vision. So emphatic is the certitude of this visionary clairvoyance that it made its presence felt to a

German poet, a Christian and theologian of our times. André Neher reports his testimony. The poet Albrecht Goes believed that in a metaphysical dimension the *Synagoga* was not only more *beautiful* but also more *truthful* than the exoteric *Ecclesia*. Which prompts him to declare: *Sie ist's, die sieht*: "She is the one that sees." [109]

Pentecost Monday.
7th June 1976.

[1](#) James Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, New York, Harper and Row, 1975.

[2](#) Cf. *Ps.* 82/1: "He judges among Gods" *Ps.* 82/6: "I said: You are Gods; you are all sons of the Almighty." *John*: 10/34: "Is it not written in your Law: I said: You are Gods." *Ps.* 136/3: "Praise the Lord of Lords." *Apocal*: 17/14: "For he is the Lord of Lords." *Job* 1/6: "For the sons of God shall some day come . . .", etc.

[3](#) Cf. Henry Corbin, « la Science de la Balance et les correspondances entre les mondes en gnose islamique, d'après l'œuvre de Haydar Amoli, VIIIe/XIV siècle » in *Temple et Contemplation* Paris, Flammarion, 1981.

[4](#) Regarding this eminent personality and his work, see S.J.Ashtiyani and H. Corbin, *Anthologie des philosophes iraniens depuis le XVIIe siècle jusqu'à nos jours*, tome II (Bibliothèque iranienne, 19), Tehran-Paris, 1975, p. 7 to 31 of the French section [reprinted in *la Philosophie iranienne islamique aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, Paris, Buchet-Chastel, 1981]. On the issue at hand, see pp. 22-23. See also our articles: l'Évangile de Barnabé et la prophétologie islamique, in *Cahiers de l'Université Saint-Jean de Jérusalem*, Paris, ed. Berg International, 1977, cahier no. 3: La loi prophétique et le Sacré. "Theologoumena Iranica", in the journal *Studia Iranica* (1976, II), as well as our course summary in *l'Annuaire de l'École pratique des Hautes Études: Section des Sciences religieuses*, 1976 - 1977, p. 273-277.

[5](#) Regarding Hosayn Tonkaboni, refer to *Anthologie II* (see our preceding note), p. 77 to 90 of the French section.

[6](#) *Ibid.*, p. 88.

[8](#) Consult the references in Jean Trouillard, *l'Un et l'âme selon Proclus*, Paris, Belles-Lettres, 1972, p. 95 ff., 108.

[9](#) Cf. Proclus, *Eléments de théologie*, translation, introduction and notes by Jean Trouillard, Paris, Aubier, 1965, par. 162, p. 157.

[10](#) See Proclus, *Théologie platonicienne*, Livre I, text established and translated by H.D. Saffrey and L. G. Westerink, Paris, Belles-Lettres, 1968, p. LXIII ff. of the introduction.

[11](#) Cf. Sayyed Haydar Amoli, *le Texte des Textes (Nass al-Nosus), Commentaire des Fous al-hikam d'Ibn' Arabi. Les Prolégomènes*, published with a two-fold introduction a five-fold index by Henry Corbin and Osman Yahya, tome I: Texte and introduction (Bibliothèque iranienne, 22). Tehran-Paris, 1975, par. 769, p. 350.

[12](#) For what these technical terms designate, see the diagrams of Semnani's cosmology that we have presented in our book, *En Islam iranien: aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, Paris, Gallimard, 1971-1972 (reed., 1978), tome III, p. 330 and 339.

[13](#) For the preceding, see mainly *le Texte des Textes* (note 11 above), par. 789-790, p. 360. As for the formula 1 x 1 x 1, etc. see *En Islam iranien . . .* (note 12 above), tome IV, index s.v. Un.

[14](#) See *En Islam Iranien . . .*, tome I, p. 104-5.

[15](#) Cf. *Le Texte des Textes*, par. 794 ff., p. 362 ss.

[16](#) See *Le Texte des Textes*, par. 803 ff., 808-813, with diagrams 14, 15 and 16 that unfortunately we have not been able to reproduce here. On many occasions, as their inventor, Haydar Amoli explains his approach to the diagrams that illustrate his metaphysical concept of the Imagination. For example, regarding diagrams 14-16, he states: "We have

rendered them in the form and structure of trees with roots, trunk, branches, leaves, fruit, flowers . . . we have outlined them according to the structure (*tartib*) of genres, species, individuals and categories (*asnaf*) to help better perceive and understand elements therein. For, when one interprets things borne of intimate experience by intellectual realities, their meaning approximates the Intelligences. And when one interprets things by objects of sense-perception, their meaning approximates sense-perception. In short, [we have sought to] help the seeker in his quest, to bring him closer to the path that leads to realisation. If one truly understands this, he will notice that the Qur'an as a whole follows this structure, most notably verse 24:35: 'God is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth. The image of his Light is like a niche in which there is a lamp, the lamp in a glass', etc." *Ibid.*, par. 809.

[17] *Cf. Le Texte des Textes*, par. 951, p. 442.

[18] *Ibid.*, par. 952, p. 443.

[19] *Ibid.*, par. 953-954 and *Soufisme d'Ibn Arabi*, 2nd ed., p. 95 ff.

[20] *Cf. Soufisme d'Ibn Arabi*, p. 93 ff.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 98 ff.

[22] *Le Texte des Textes*, par. 966, p. 451.

[23] *Ibid.*, par. 969, p. 452.

[24] *Cf. Soufisme d'Ibn Arabi*, index s.v. Nom divin.

[25] *Ibid.*, index s.v. sirr al-robubiya and *Le Texte des Textes*, par. 969-970.

[26] *Cf.* our study on "la Science de la Balance" cited above in note 3.

[27] *Cf. Le Texte des Textes*, 32 ff. of the French section.

[28] See our article, "Comment concevoir la philosophie comparée?" in *Philosophie iranienne et philosophie comparée*, Paris, Buchet-Chastel, 1977, p. 21-51, mainly p. 39 ff.

[29] As noted above, this is the case with diagrams 14 to 16.

[30] *Le Texte des Textes*, p. 32 ff.

[31] Refer to Diagram 18 reproduced here, *Cf. Le Texte des Textes*, par. 838. The numbering of these diagrams corresponds to our edition of Haydar Amoli's *Le Texte des Textes* (see note 11 above).

[32] *Le Texte des Textes*, par. 835, p. 382.

[33] *Ibid.*, par. 836.

[34] The details of the nomenclature in Diagram 17 (not reproduced here): In the semicircle formed by the theophanies of the Names of bounty (*jamal*) we find: 1) Adam, father of humanity. 2) Prophets and Men of God. 3) The *Awliya* and the Imams. 4) The truly learned among the men of God. 5) All the Believers. 6) The gnostics of God. 7) The poles and *Abdal*. 8) Angels of Mercy. 9) Men of good nature. 10) Beneficial animals. 11) Beneficial plants. 12) Beneficial minerals. In the semicircle formed by the Names of austerity (*jalal*) we find: 1) Iblis, father of the jinn. 2) Pharaohs and Nimrods. 3) The unfaithful and *moshrikun*. 4) Charlatan learned ones. 5) Negators. 6) The masses and the vulgar. 7) Magicians. 8) Angels of Punishment. 9) Men of evil nature. 7) Harmful animals. 8) Harmful plants. 9) Harmful minerals. These theophanies of the names of austerity pose a very serious problem. The Creator cannot confer essence an existence other than what this essence requires. He has pre-eternal knowledge of it, but no alteration of the divine *cognoscibles* is possible. The creative act of the Agent (conferring existence) does not create the essences and their capabilities as they are from all eternity (*Cf.* par. 836-837). And so the theophanies of the Names of austerity take on a devilish form. On this point, comparative research may find resonances with the Kabbala of Isaac Luria, specifically the theme of the "shattering of the vase". In both cases there is a kind of *katharsis* (a process of purification for the divine Being). We cannot dwell upon this here.

[35] *Le Texte des Textes*, par. 841 and 845, p. 385 ff. Diagram 19 is not reproduced here; it can be found in our edition of Haydar Amoli's text.

[36] *Ibid.*, par. 841 and 846. Diagram 20 not reproduced here; see our edition of the text.

[37] *Ibid.*, par. 866 and 867. For the meaning and usage of the word « impressions » compare with Surhvardi's *Épître des haute-tours* (in our collection, *l'Archange empourpré* [The Crimson Archangel]; see note 61 above. Awaken among our traditional philosophers the awareness of not having a precursor for a somewhat essential aspect. Haydar Amoli affirms it here (par. 866); as for Surhvardi, he affirms it in his chapter *The Word of Sufism*. These masters hardly ever "transmit" anything without giving rise to something new.

[38] *Ibid.*, par. 853, p. 391.

[39] *Ibid.*, par. 854.

[40] *Ibid.*, par. 869 to 874.

[41] *Ibid.*, par. 855.

[42] *Ibid.*, par. 875.

[43] *Ibid.*, par. 873 and 874.

[44] *Ibid.*, par. 856 to 859.

[45] *Ibid.*, par. 861.

[46] *Ibid.*, par. 860 and 861.

[47] *Ibid.*, par. 864.

[48] *Ibid.*, par. 865. Diagrams 21 and 22 are reproduced here.

[49] *Ahl al-ahwa'*: In this context, we cannot translate the term simply as "man who is slave to his passions" which would then include the Greek Sages and the Christians. Especially since the term *hawa* (pl. *ahwa'*) is employed ambiguously. It may be used to denote carnal desire but also ardent desire experienced by mystics. Which is why we have translated it as "men of desire" (reminiscent of L.- C de Saint Martin).

[50] From Yishu = 'Isa = Jesus. Whom does this mean? Shahrastani describes the *'Isawiya* as disciples of Abu Isa ibn Ya'qub Isphahani, the Judeo-Christian messianic prophet during the Abbasid caliphate of al-Mansur (754 - 775). *Kitab al-Milal*, lithogr. Tehran 1288 p. 104.

[51] The Greek Sages are listed in the following order (par. 865): Thales, Anaxagoras, Anaximenes, Empedocles, Pythagoras, Plato the divine, Socrates the ascetic, Plutarch, Xenophanes, Zeno the Great, Democritus, Heraclius the wise, Epicurus, Hippocrates, Ptolemy, Euclide, Chrysippe, Aristotle, Themistios, Theophrastes, Alexander the king, Diogenes, Porphyry, Plotinus (*as-shaykh al-yunani*, the Greek shaykh), Proclus, Alexander of Aphrodisias.

[52] See the chapter, "le Temple et les Templiers du Graal" in our study, "L'Imago Temple face aux normes profanes", in *Temple et Contemplation*, Paris, Flammarion, 1981.

[53] *Le Texte des Textes*, par. 868.

[54] Gilbert Durand, *Science de l'homme et tradition, le "nouvel esprit anthropologique"*, Paris, Tête de feuilles Sirac, 1975, p. 157.

[55] See our *Trilogie ismaélienne* (Bibliothèque iranienne, vol. 9) Tehran-Paris, 1961, 2nd treatise, p. 148 of the French section.

[56] Proclus the philosopher, *Commentaire sur le Parménide* . . . translated . . . by A. - Ed. Chaignet, tome I, Paris, 1900; Frankfurt a. M., 1962, p. 162.

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 127. See also our outline on "Les Cités emblématiques", in the Preface to Henri Stierlin, *Ispahan, image du paradis*, Geneva, 1976.

[58] Proclus, *op. cit.*, I, p. 133.

[59] For what follows, see our *Trilogie ismaélienne* (note 55 above), the second treatise ; as well as our study, "Épiphanie divine et naissance spirituel dans la gnose ismaélienne", in *Eranos* 23-1954, Zurich p. 164 ff.

[60] See *Ummu'l-Kitab* (= *Le Madre del Libro*), introduzione, traduzione e note di Pio Filippini-Ronconi, Napoli, 1966, p. 65 ff.

[61] For what follows, see our *Avicenne et le Récit visionnaire*, Paris, Berg international, 1979; H. Corbin, *En Islam iranien: aspects spirituels et philosophiques*, in 4 volumes (see

note 12 above), tome II: Sohrevardi et les Platoniciens de Perse. Sohrevardi, Shaykh al-Ishraq, *l'Archange empourpré, recueil de quinze traités et récits mystiques*, translated from the Persian and Arabic and introduced by H. Corbin (Documents spirituels 14), Paris, Fayard, 1976.

[62] See *En Islam iranien . . .*, tome II, p.121 ff.

[63] *Ommahat*. Not to be confused with usage of the word to mean « the Elements ».

[64] *En Islam iranien . . .*, tome II, p. 125.

[65] Refer to the treatise, « Vade-mecum des fidèles d'amour » in our collection *l'Archange empourpré* (see note 61 above).

[66] We are rather surprised that in his monumental work, *les Somnabules*, otherwise doing justice so lucidly to Kepler's fate and work, Arthur Koestler should have devoted the first hundred pages to a caricature of Ptolemy's system. We are all the more taken aback by this derision and condemnation in that it targets a system that the author reproaches for delaying (by a thousand years) the birth of a science that he himself, at the end of his book, denounces as a catastrophe without precedent for humanity.

[67] Proclus, *Commentaire sur le Parménide* (note 56 above), tome II, p. 390-391.

[68] Cf. *l'Archange empourpré* (note 61 above), p. 203.

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 229-230.

[70] Cf. *En Islam iranien . . .*, tome II, p. 117 ; tome IV, general index and *l'Archange empourpré*, index. s.v. *Rabb al-nu*, Angels of species etc.

[71] *l'Archange empourpré*, p. 52.

[72] See *ibid.*, index s.v. Ange-Esprit-Saint, [theory of visionary knowledge], and *En Islam iranien . . .*, tome IV, index s.v. Intelligence agente, Gabriel, etc.

[73] *l'Archange empourpré*, p. 65 and 87, note 115.

[74] See our study, "L'Évangile de Barnabé . . ." cited above in note 4.

[75] *l'Archange empourpré*, p. 65 and p. 87, note 115.

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 494.

[77] *Ibid.*, p. 496.

[78] See our edition and translation of Molla Sadra Shirazi, *le Livre des pénétrations métaphysiques (Kitab al-Masha'ir)* (Bibliothèque iranienne, vol. 10), Tehran-Paris, 1964, p. 241 of the French section.

[79] Cf. J. J. Herzog, *Realencyclopadie fur protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, 3. Aufl., vol. XIII, article, *Mormonismus*, p. 477.

[80] On *Na-Koja-Abad*, see *En Islam iranien . . .* tome IV, index s.v.

[81] Samuel Butler, *Nouveaux Voyages en Erewhon, accomplis vingt ans après la découverte du pays, par le premier explorateur et par son fils*, translated from the English by Valery Larbaud, Paris, NRF, 1934, p. 76. The page cited above is all the more meaningful for Samuel Butler's "pluralist theism" that one may read in *God the Known and God the Unknown*, London, 1909 (a work that is no longer available; we owe a debt of gratitude to M. Michael Innes of London for providing us with a photocopy). Cf. also Raymond Ruyer, *la Gnose de Princeton*, Paris, 1974, pp. 72-78 devoted to S. Butler and J. B. S. Haldane; to the idea of a God known and limited to our « Galaxy »; and the Tree of Life. This work calls for expansive comparative studies (Cf. below). However, this research will not be fruitful if one insists on misusing the word "myth" and if one speaks of Jacob Boehme's "gross error" (p. 71) or indeed of "what amuses" J. B. S. Haldane (p. 72).

[82] Syrianus, *In metaphysica commentaria*, ed. Kroll, p. 28, cited by Pierre Duhem, *le Système du monde de Platon à Copernic*, tome II, Paris 1914, p. 102.

[83] Refer to the hymn by Surhavardi addressed to the Zoroastrian archangel Shahrivar as archangel of the sun, for whom Hurakhsh is the "theurgy", *En Islam iranien . . .*, tome II, p. 131 ff. Compare with *l'Archange empourpré*, p. 493, 496, 505, 507, related notes and index s.v. Hurakhsh, Sharivar.

[84] Cf. R. Ruyer, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

[85] I deliberately use the word *biologues* and not biologists as currently misused in French no doubt under the influence (contamination) of English. On the other hand we refer to *géologue, archéologue, psychologue, sociologue*. *Psychologisme* and *sociologisme* have a different connotation than *psychologie* and *sociologie*. Well then, what of the *biologisme* of the *biologiste*?

[86] R. Ruyer, *la Gnose de Princeton*, p. 33-34. Cf. as well: "materialism consists of believing that "all is object", "all external", "all thing" [. . .]. It considers the wrong side of beings to be the right side. This right side confers beings an independent reality. "The vast matter of the stars and clouds are in a pulverised state, a kind of snow of consciousness, snow composed of billions of ice crystals and rendered visible whereas the ice (consciousness) is transparent," *ibid.*, p. 35.

[87] *Ibid.*, p. 75 ff.

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 55-58.

[89] *Ibid.*, p. 63 ff. Cf. Arthur Koestler, *les Racines du hasard* (=The Roots of Coincidence) translated from the English by G. Pradier, Calmann-Levy, 1972 (better yet, rather than coincidence it is a matter of "synchronicity" as Pauli and Jung meant), p. 144 : "These unwhole entities, these *holons* (from the Greek *holos*) . . . as I have named them, are not unlike entities in Janus: at once having independent properties, a whole; and properties that are dependent, a part." But how to maintain: "The *holons* or Great cosmic Beings are themselves mortals . . . "? Our feeling is that every type of Neo-Gnosis in the West should rediscover the ontology of *mundus imaginalis* in order not to succumb to the very thing they wish to avoid.

[90] R. Ruyer, op.cit., p. 129-130. "The gnostics turn Hobbes' formula on its head. The latter stated: 'When someone says that God spoke to him in a dream, it is as though he said that he dreamt that God spoke to him.' Yes, the gnostics reply. But the statement has two aspects . . . It is his *Daimon*, God that spoke to him in a dream [. . .]. Gnosis seeks to insert participation and the participle in religious philosophy by the front door and not the back door of psychology that is suspect . . ." *ibid.*, p. 130. Once again it becomes necessary to rediscover the reality of the subtle body, *corpus spirituale*, without necessarily going back to theories emanating from India (*ibid.*, p. 182-183). Islamic gnosis and the tradition of alchemy address this matter more than adequately.

[91] *Ibid.*, p. 9. One must also take into consideration the spiritual Israel of the verse, *Exodus* 19/6: "You shall be for me a kingdom of priests, a sacrosanct nation." The Vulgate translation: *regnum sacerdotale et gens sancta*.

[92] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

[93] Cf. M. Sarraf and H. Corbin, *Traité des compagnons-chevaliers, recueil de sept « Fotovat-Nameh »* (Bibliothèque-iranienne, vol.20), Tehran-Paris.

[94] See *L'Archange empourpré*, p. 487- 488 and p. 505 notes 43 to 45. The description "King of Angels" here corresponds to the designation of the archangel Logos in Philon as *Arkhe ton Angelon*.

[95] *L'Archange empourpré*, p. 494.

[96] *Ibid.*, p.509 and notes 77 - 78.

[97] *Ibid.*, p. 475.

[98] *Ibid.*, p. 287 note 43. Regarding the Sinaï standing one above the other, see *ibid.*, the conclusion of *Récit de l'Exil occidental*, p. 279 and p. 334, note 39.

[99] See *ibid.*, p. 229 to 231, the passage that corresponds to *Bruissement des Ailes de Gabriel* [The Rustling of Gabriel's Wings] and the commentary, p. 245 - 246.

[100] *Ibid.*, p. 209-210.

[101] *Ibid.*, p. (Book of Hours), p. 345, verses 6, 29, 30 and p. 354.

[102] *Ibid.*, p. 355, verse 30.

[103] *Ibid.*, p. 482, 486, 511, note 98.

[104] *Ibid.*, p.359 note 19 and p. 369.

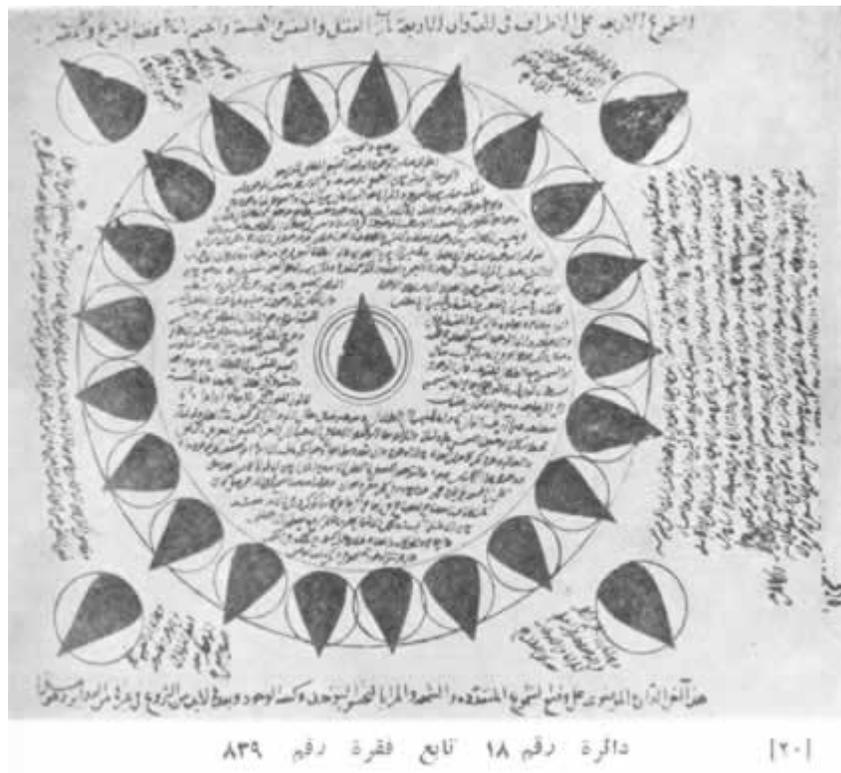
[105] Regarding the "Great Order of Elie" see our study, *l'Évangile de Barnabé* (chapter V) cited above in note 4.

[106] R. Ruyer, *la Gnose de Princeton*, p. 27-28.

[107] Arthur Koestler, *la Treizième Tribu*, Paris, Calmann-Levy, 1976. It is probably going too far to attribute the origin of *all* the Jewish communities from Russia, Eastern Europe and Germany to the Khazaris although they were responsible for a good number among them. On the other hand, we do not see how this can infirm (as the author believes at the end of his book) the notion of "the people of God." The fact that the Khazaris rallied to the Jewish cause integrated them *eo ipso* to the people of God. I fear that it is an agnostic prejudice that leads one to envisage this fact as secularisation.

[108] Cf. R. Ruyer, *op. cit.*, pages 283-385. R. Ruyer (p. 285) believes that "for lack of a scientific step, [leading then to] "a converted scientist", the Sages or ancient gnostics could only refer to the hereafter of consciousness in a vague and confused manner." I firmly believe that this observation is equally valid for "New Gnosis". The step hinted here should not be missed.

[109] André Neher, *l'Exil de la Parole*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1970, p. 50.





دائرة رقم ٣١ تابع فقرة رقم ٨٦٧ [٢٢]

