

Leibniz's Monads and Mulla Sadra's Hierarchy of Being: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Mulla Sadra and Leibniz, the two philosophers from the East and the West, belong to two different worlds. Though they were unaware of the ideas of each other, their philosophical systems share certain common points that are comparable. Monads constitute the basis of Leibniz's thought and he refers to their features in his various works. On the other side, Mulla Sadra's philosophy is also based on being and he tries to deal with its reality in his philosophy. Though Leibniz's monads are many and Mulla Sadra's being is one, they use certain terms for monads and being which are very close to each other and are comparable from different points of view. Leibniz's monads, while being many, are one as well. Similarly, Mulla Sadra's philosophy also enjoys multiplicity in unity. Leibniz's monads enjoy perception and Mulla Sadra's being likewise coexists with knowledge. This paper is an attempt to study being in Mulla Sadra's thought and monad in Leibniz's philosophy, and pinpoints the basic common grounds in these two philosophers.

Keywords: Being, Multiplicity in unity, Perception, Apperception, Monad.

In the history of philosophy, we come across occasionally certain ideas that are shared by both Eastern and Western philosophers. Though they may have been unaware of each other's views, they have dealt with certain issues that suggest a typical harmony among them. This similarity of thought is not merely formal for the sole similarity in thought can never bring two philosophers so close together to be studied comparatively. In the history of philosophy there may be some similar views put forward by different philosophers, yet at the same time the spirits of their thoughts are far away from each other. Therefore, in order to carry out a comparative study of two philosophers, apart from their similar views, one should try to find out their common principles as well without which a comparative study will be ruled out. The two philosophers whom are meant to be studied comparatively from this perspective are Mulla Sadra from the world of Islam and Leibniz from the world of the West. Leibniz was born a few years after Mulla Sadra's death, but there is no evidence to suggest that he had a general acquaintance with Mulla Sadra's ideas. It is possible that their common points of view stemmed from their study of Plotinus' *theology*, falsely attributed to Aristotle by Muslim philosophers and appreciated both by Mulla Sadra and Leibniz (Davari Ardakani, 1379, p.7). The concept of unity and its relation to the concepts of simplicity and infinity, which were the main concerns of seventeenth century philosophers, were considered to be the main constituents of Plotinus' philosophical system. These concepts are the key concepts of Mulla Sadra and Leibniz as well. In a sense, it can be said that their whole philosophies are attempts to clarify the concept of unity and the simplicity of the reality of the world, but a unity and simplicity that is not in contradiction with multiplicity. It seems that the Plotinus' version of unity was effective in the development of both philosophers. In Plotinus view, the real unity is not one composed of multiple things in a way that would be disrupted if a part of it was excluded. The real unity appears in a way that contains the multiplicity; however, it does not get it from without but rather possesses it within itself. Therefore, multiplicity is not alien to its essence. Real unity is infinity within which multiplicity is contained in its unity (Plotinus, 1988, pp.347-349). Leibniz multiple unites and Mulla Sadra's unity in multiplicity are affected by this Plotinus' idea. At any rate, from different points of view the ideas of the two philosophers are susceptible of a comparative study and this article seeks to explore their main concerns in philosophy: "being" of Mulla Sadra and "monad" of Leibniz.

Mulla Sadra (980/1527-1050/1640) is one of the most important and influential philosophers of Islam and Iran. Owing to his doctrine of principiality of existence (*asalat al-wujud*) versus the principiality of quiddity (*asalat al-mahiyyah*) and his theory of transsubstantial motion (*hakat al-jawhariyyah*) he managed to bring about a fundamental change in Islamic philosophy. His philosophy, known as transcendent theosophy (*al-hikmah al-mutaaliyah*), is based on the oneness of being (*wahdat al-wujud*) and its philosophical foundations were partially inspired by Islamic gnosis.

Leibniz (1646-1716) is likewise a prominent Western philosopher. He began his philosophy with substance or, in his own words, monad, and tried to solve all the

earlier philosophical problems by his version of monads. Despite some basic differences, there are certain common points between these two philosophers that bring them closer together. But before embarking on comparing them, it is worthwhile to introduce their ideas separately for a comparative study of them requires a familiarity with their ideas.

1. Mulla Sadra began his philosophy with this contention that there is a reality, and never has he doubted it. Then, he noticed that each reality in the mind is divisible into two parts: One is the concept of reality which shares all the propositions that denote the external reality of that fact. The other is the quidditative (*mahuwi*) concept which signifies the whatness of those realities. Thus, our mind abstracts from a reality, such as a man, two concepts of existence and quiddity (*al-mahiyyah*). Necessarily, one of them is the referent of that external reality and the other is secondary. The exponents of the principiality of quiddity hold that that external reality is the referent of quidditative concepts. On the contrary, the advocates of the principiality of existence hold that the external reality is the referent of the concept of existence. In this view, the external world is the extension of existence while quiddity has no extension in the outside; therefore, it is mentally-positated (*iitibari*). The latter is developed by Mulla Sadra who substantiated it in his various books (cf. Mulla Sadra 1990, vol. 1.ch. 4; Mulla Sadra, 1964, Mashar 3).

Now the question may arise as how a single concept of being can denote the multiple realities. To solve this problem, Mulla Sadra refers to his theory of the gradation or hierarchy of being (*tashkik-i wujud*). He compares existence with light and states that the sensible light is actually one but possesses various levels ranging from the weakest to the strongest. So, the difference here is one of hierarchical, that is, all levels share the same luminosity. The same is true of existence. Thus, the whole universe is nothing other than a single reality (being), and this unity does not preclude the multiplicity. The lowest level of being is the first matter (*hyle*) and the highest one is the Necessary Being. All levels share and differ from each other in terms of existence (Tabatabai, 1363, vol. 1, pp. 48-58). Existence constitutes the common and different points of all these levels for, according to the doctrine of the principiality of existence, nothing exists beyond existence so that to be the source of difference and multiplicity. According to Mulla Sadra, "the difference between the levels of the single reality of being and the differences in their realization depends on the reality itself and its determinations" (Mulla Sadra, 1990, vol. 1. P.120). In this system, the characteristics of each level of existence constitutes the same level, in a way when an existence is placed in a level, the existence of each level is not perceivable in early and later levels. Therefore, being is both one and multiple at the same time, and it is one in its multiplicity as well.

On the basis of his theory of hierarchy of being, Mulla Sadra considers a kind of existence among various levels of being. He regards the lowest level of being as effect and the highest one as cause. So, effect is the lower level of cause. Though cause and effect in reality are two things, they are, at the same time, a single reality, i.e. the strong level of the single reality is cause and its weak level is effect. Cause and effect

are nothing other than existence. They are common, and enjoy unity in existence, and at the same time are different and possess multiplicity in existence. Thus, the difference between cause and effect is rooted in their existential strength and weakness. Indeed, effect is the descended and weak level of the existence of the cause. In certain cases, Mulla Sadra calls it as theophany (*shan*) and considers the effect as a part of the modes (*Ibid*, Vol. 2, p. 292).

In Mulla Sadra's view, being co-exists with knowledge. The levels of knowledge and beings correspond with each other; i.e. the more levels of being ascend the more levels of knowledge will increase (Mulla Sadra, 1990, V. 6, p. 163) to the extent that in the highest level of being, namely Necessary Being, there is absolute knowledge without any veil. However, if being descends and moves closer to nonexistence, it will blend with material accidents, which are defects for it, and following which its parts disappear from each other and immerse in veil. Accordingly, even material entities possess knowledge, for they enjoy being, and apprehend their origin and God (Javadi Amoli, 1375, Vol. 2, part. 5, p. 230), though their apprehension differs from those of the higher beings. Mulla Sadra considers knowledge as a kind of being that enjoys various gradations.

Mulla Sadra divides being into material and immaterial being. Unlike his predecessors, he considers material being as identical with motion. For, it is always associated with a kind of potentiality while immaterial being is the same as stability. In his view, a material thing is essentially united with motion and so, unlike Ibn Sina, he believes in transsubstantial motion and holds that motion is part and parcel of the essence of material substance, and that it is indeed the fourth dimension of matter (Mulla Sadra, 1990, Vol. 3, pp. 59-64, 101-105). As a result, a material thing is always restless and at any moment wears a new dress.

2. As pointed out earlier, like Descartes, Leibniz also bases his philosophy on substance or monad in order to solve certain problems that were rooted in Cartesian and Spinozian version of substance. He tried to find a way to attune the concept of connected substance to its opposite, i.e. a substance composed of indivisible elements. In his view, the apparent opposition of these concepts stems from the misunderstanding of substance. Thus, his main problem is how it is possible to interpret the whole-part relation in order to maintain the whole unity with its parts or, in other words, to reconcile unity and multiplicity. Before Leibniz there prevailed two major theories about substance. One was the theory proposed by the Atomists and the other was that maintained by Descartes. Leibniz holds that if the atoms constitute the ultimate reality of the world, as stated by Atomism, which once appealed to Leibniz himself (Leibniz, 1890, p. 72), then its unity is destroyed; its continuity becomes an illusion. However numerous the atoms may be, they will together constitute no true unity "but only a collection or heaping up of parts *ad infinitum*" (*Ibid*).

On the other hand, according to Descartes, the whole is one in effect but is divisible infinitely. In this case, its parts should be unreal. Thus, it seems that either its parts should be real and the whole unreal, as believed by the Atomists, or *vice*

versa, i.e. the whole is real and the parts are unreal. Leibniz tried to reconcile these two views.

Though those believing in indivisible parts (Atomists) and those advocating the unity of the world stand against each other, they also share a common point: "The common element in the contrary positions of the Cartesians and the Atomists is the explicit or implicit reduction of qualitative to quantitative differences" (Leibniz, 1898, p. 27). According to the former, the parts are material in nature and the whole consists of those parts. Thus, the whole should be considered as a collection of the parts. Descartes also tried to give a quantitative explanation of the whole. If we apply this Cartesian principle according to which the reality of substance is nothing other than that which remains after eliminating all determinations, then, as stated by Latta, nothing will remain but we and quantity, either, as in the case of Spinoza, quantity of substance in general, or, as in the case of Descartes, quantity of a specific substance, i.e. quantity of one quality. For, apart from God who is an infinite substance, there are also two other created substances. The essential attribute of bodily substance is extension and that of thinking substance is thought. All the specific qualities of created things are reducible to one or other of these as a common quality; and consequently the essence or reality of created substance comes to be either extension without specific contents or thought without a specific object. In other words, bodily substance is quantity of one determination, namely extension; while thinking substance is quantity of one either determination, namely thought. Thus, the presupposition of the Cartesian systems is a purely quantitative relation of the whole and the parts (*Ibid*, pp. 25-26).

But according to Leibniz, a quantitative conception of the relation of the whole and the parts affords an inadequate theory of substance. In order to refrain from involving in Descartes problems, he is obliged to present a picture of substance in which the whole and the parts are real and inseparable. He tries to consider simultaneously both the whole and the parts. Leibniz insists that the real whole without the real parts is impossible (*Ibid*, p. 217); and at the same time, the essence of substance is non-quantitative, and that the relation of the whole and the parts must be conceived as intensive rather than extensive. In his view, substance is simple, and a 'simple substance' has no parts, i.e. no quantitative elements. "The monad... is nothing but a *simple* substance, which enters into compounds. By 'simple' is meant 'without parts'" (*Ibid*). But, substance must "comprehend a manifold in unity; that is to say, it must be real, it must be *something*, it must be qualitative, specifically determined" (*Ibid*, p.27).

On the basis of the quantitative approach to substance, the whole and the parts contradict each other, and such contradiction springs from this idea that the whole and the parts are not identical. But, in accordance with intensive doctrine of substance the whole and the part are inseparable. All specific determinations, states, or functions are determinations, states, or functions of the whole, not in the sense that they are ultimately reducible to one vague determination that is common to everything, but in the sense that the whole is expressed, symbolized, and therefore in

some way included in each of them. Thus, the parts are not determined or characterized without reference to the whole, and the whole is not a mere vague aggregate of the independent parts. In some sense, each part must contain the whole within itself; each unit must include an infinite manifold. The whole is not merely other than the part, but in some way passes into it and expresses itself through it. That, in general, is the conception of substance as essentially intensive rather than extensive. In this system the part cannot contain the whole within itself actually and fully, but it must contain the whole potentially or by means of representation. The relation of the whole and the parts is as a relation of symbolized and symbols, sign and the thing signified. That is to say, the part must be a representation of the whole from some particular point of view, a symbol or expression of the whole, and the part must contain the whole in such a way that the whole might be unfolded entirely from within it (*Ibid*, pp. 31-33).

As stated, Leibniz explains the differences among the monads in terms of their internal quality. He holds that monads are individuated by their "whole entity," i.e. by virtue of having different internal properties.¹ Unlike Descartes, Leibniz considers substance merely a force. So, his image of reality contains a type of dynamism. This intensive essence or force in the part (or individual substance) appears in two ways. As representative or symbolic of the whole, the part, in Leibniz's terminology, has 'Perception,' while, in so far as in the part the potential whole tends to realize itself, the part is said to have 'Appetition.' Perception is simply the internal condition of the monad representing external things. Leibniz defines perception as "the expression of the many in one... and it is in terms of the concept of perception that Leibniz explains how all monads have the God-like property of expressing the universe; they thus all contain within themselves at least a shadow of divine omniscience. Appetite or appetite is the dynamic principle by means of which a monad moves from one perceptual state to its successor" (Jolly, 2005, pp. 67-68).

According to Leibniz, there is nothing in the universe but simple substances, and in them perception and appetite (Leibniz, 1969, P.537). "Monads cannot have shapes; otherwise they would have parts. And consequently a monad, in itself, and at a given moment, cannot be distinguished from another except by its internal qualities and actions, which cannot be other than its *perceptions* and its *appetitions*, which are the principles of change" (Leibniz, 1890, p.209).

The monad has perceptions, but these representations and ideas are not necessarily conscious representations and ideas. It is true that consciousness is itself perception, but consciousness is not the essence of perception. It is merely an additional determination belonging to certain kinds of degrees of perception. "The passing condition which involves and represents a multiplicity in the unit or in the simple substance, is nothing but what is called perception, which is to be distinguished from Apperception or Consciousness" (*Ibid*, p. 224). Thus monads

1. For a detailed account of the "principle of the individual" cf. Daniel Garber, LEIBNIZ: *Body, Substance, Monad* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2009), pp.55-62.

possess two kinds of perceptions: perception and apperception.² The term “apperception” was introduced into philosophy by Leibniz. It means a mental state involving self-consciousness, or at least consciousness. The differences of monads are based on the level of the clarity or vagueness of the perceptions. The monads are “everywhere and always the same—differing only in degrees of perception” (Leibniz, 1898, p. 66). The manifold of the monad is to have a multitude of perceptions as it is for the mathematical point to contain within itself an infinite number of angles. In Leibniz's view, “souls differ from one another by the degree of clearness and distinctness in their perceptions, from the perfect and eminent degree of distinctness in God to total confusedness of the perceptions of dormant soul” (Carr, Leibniz, 1929, p. 66).

The notion of differences in the clarity and distinctness of perceptual states is crucial to understanding Leibniz's further thesis that there is a hierarchy of monads. As Jolley observes, the fact of such a hierarchy is clear, but the details of the picture are less so. On the face of it, Leibniz seems to envisage the following picture. God is at the top of the hierarchy by virtue of possessing perceptions that are perfectly clear and distinct. Thus, strictly speaking, God has no point of view. Human minds are somewhat lower down the hierarchy. They are high-quality monads by virtue of possessing not only the faculty of reason, which allows them to know the eternal truths of logic and mathematics, but also self-consciousness, or what Leibniz calls the ability to say ‘I’. At the bottom of the hierarchy are what Leibniz terms ‘bare monads.’ Such monads of course have perceptual states but these perceptual states are extremely obscure and confused. They fall well below the threshold of consciousness (Jolley, 2005, pp. 69-70).

Each monad reflects its world commensurate with its ability. All monads mirror the whole universe, but they differ in that they mirror the universe from points of view and with different degrees of clearness and distinctness in their perceptions. This clearness and distinctness in perception in human monad is such that we may say that “it is not only a mirror of the universe of creatures, but also an image of the Divinity. The *spirit* has not only a perception of the works of God, but it is even capable of producing something which resembles them, although in miniature” (Leibniz, 1890, p.215). There is no monad without perception. But the essence of perception in general is that in it we have a unity variously modified or a unity which appears in a multiplicity of relations. “I have many conceptions, a wealth of thought is in me; and yet I remain one, notwithstanding this variety of state. This identity may be found in the fact that what is different is at the same time abrogated, and is determine as one; the monads are therefore distinguished by modifications in themselves, but not by external determinations” (Hegel, 1896, Vol. 3, p. 334).

2. Leibniz says it is “for lack of this distinction’ between perception and apperception that ‘the Cartesians have made the mistake of disregarding perceptions which are not themselves perceived... and think...that there is no soul in beasts” (Leibniz, 1969, p. 637).

Therefore, it can be said that each monad is a multiplicity in unity (Leibniz, 1898, p.226).

In Leibniz's view, each monad reflects the world. Though on the basis of the principle of the identity of indiscernible it is not possible to find two monads that share the same quality, on the basis of the law of continuity, in nature there is no leaps. This law not only states that nobody is ever at rest, since what we see as rest is imperceptible motion (Leibniz, 1896, p.50), but it also states that nature does not reveal an order of being different in kind, but an order of beings different only in degree. Consequently, there is no break between the living and non-living, for what we regard as non-living is living. Leibniz, in accordance with this law, maintains that man is not fundamentally different from animals, that animals are not fundamentally different from plants, and that plants are not fundamentally different from still lower forms of life.³ Consequently, there is a general descent or ascent of one and the same reality (Alles, 1994, pp. 61-62). Thus, between two substances there are a set of substances that each of them differs with other indistinguishably. As a result, on the basis of the law of continuity the order of natural beings are unitary in which various types and classes are so connected that it is impossible to ascertain it. Accordingly, all beings including men, animals, plants, and bodies are connected to each other. "There are *some animals* [emphasis in the original] who seem to have as much knowledge and reason as some that are called men; and there is so close a relation between animals and vegetables that if you take the most imperfect of the one and the most perfect of the other, you will scarcely perceive any considerable difference

3. It seems that believing in the principle of continuity and gradation in monads is not comparable with Christian religious beliefs, for God is creator and the rest of monads are created. There are obvious theological difficulties in allowing that any created substance might differ from God, its creator, only in this way. Theological orthodoxy surely requires that there be a difference of kind between the Creator and his creatures. Furthermore, "the difference between man and the lower forms of life is not one of the degrees but one of kind, and the difference in kind is due to the rational faculty which man alone possesses. For this faculty that man receives a unique status in the order of nature and this entitles him to citizenship in Republic of God; a status man can never lose" (Alles, 1994, p. 63).

Hence, Leibniz at times uses certain words that suggest a kind of specific differences between mankind and inferior forms of life. For instance, he writes: "It is certain (I admit) that man can become as stupid as an ourang-outang, but the interior of a rational soul would abide there in spite of the suspension of the exercise of reason" (Leibniz, 1896, P. 244).

With reference to these words, some of his commentators are of the view that Leibniz often writes as if the perceptual capacities of monads can be obtained by incremental addition in clarity and distinctness to those of lower monads. In the case of human minds, which are distinguished by the faculty of reason from lower substances, Leibniz seems committed to saying that this is not so. It seems as if the presence of the faculty of reason marks a difference of kind, not of degree. But, as Jolley has referred to, "however serious these problems may be, there is no doubt that Leibniz is deeply committed to the existence of a hierarchy of monads" (Jolley, 2005, p. 71).

between them. Thus, until we reach *the lowest and least organized parts of matter* [emphasis in the original], we shall find everywhere species bound together and differing only by degrees almost imperceptible" (Leibniz, 1896, p. 333).

3. As it is said, similarity of Mulla Sadra and Leibniz is due to their certain common principles in their philosophical systems. Both philosophers based their philosophical systems on certain rational and logical principles and tried to infer their whole system from those principles except in Mulla Sadra, apart from the intellect, the unveiling and gnostic intuition is also involved. Of course, Mulla Sadra justifies his concept of unveiling and intuition rationally. These principles in Leibniz are the principle of contradiction, the principle of sufficient reason, the principle of containment, the principle of perfection, the principle of identity of indiscernibles, and the principle of continuity. Most of these principles are shared by Mulla Sadra. The principle of contradiction and sufficient reason in Leibniz corresponds with the distinction between truths of reason and truths of facts. It also corresponds to distinction made by Mulla Sadra between primary essential predication and common technical predication. By making distinction between these two predications Mulla Sadra succeeded in solving a great deal of philosophical problems. Similarly, Leibniz by referring to two kinds of truths was able to solve many of the contradictions among the rationalists and empiricists and reconcile them. The Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason appears in Mulla Sadra's works in different forms as the principle of final and efficient causes and the principle of impossibility of giving preponderance without a preponderant. Both Mulla Sadra and Leibniz by virtue of the principle of perfection consider the order of the world as good order and in virtue of the same principle try to explain the existence of evil in the world. Though these two philosophers shared common features in many principles, undoubtedly they belonged to two different cultures with two different concerns. So, they tried to apply the same principles to solve their own particular problems. In particular, the concept of unity and simplicity, while representing the basic concepts in the both philosophical systems, led to a different conclusion in the seventeenth century western culture because of its reliance on the mathematics and the rise of modern sciences and technologies that were absent from the Islamic culture. It can be said that "in his personal philosophical interest, Leibniz tended to a philosophy similar to that of Mulla Sadra, but since they came from different worlds they arrived at two different conclusions from the same principles or those principles assumed different places in their philosophies became different" (Davari Ardakani, 1379, p.7).

4. On the basis of the foregoing discussion, there are some similarities and differences between the two philosophers:

I. Since Mulla Sadra and Leibniz considered reality as simple, and at the same time did not consider multiplicity as illusion, the starting point and one of the basic issues of the two philosophers was to clarify the unity and multiplicity of the reality. Against the theory of pure multiplicity or pure unity, Mulla Sadra set forth the theory of gradational unity of being through which he succeeded in reconciling unity with multiplicity. According to this approach, beings are different on the basis of their

existential levels. That is, the reality of being is only one, but at the same time the same reality is multiple in its essence. In Mulla Sadra's view, being is a simple unity in whose essence there is no difference but limits and degrees (Mulla Sadra, 1990, Vol.7, p. 149). This sort of multiplicity should be considered as gradational multiplicity only, for it does not exclude unity. According to Mulla Sadra, a great deal of philosophical problems are rooted in misunderstanding of being such as the cognation of cause an effect, created and eternal relation, transmigration, etc. If we have a proper conception of being, then there will be no room for such problems. Leibniz too develops his new idea of substance, which is a qualitative one, by criticizing the wrong conception of his predecessors of substance, following which he seeks to resolve their problem. Though he accepts the small infinite unities, by believing in the perception in each of them, he assumes a kind of gradational unity in monads and tries to justify their differences through density and weakness or distinction and clarity. And, as Nachtomy puts it, "the structure of nested individual substances involves a hierarchy of dominating and dominated substances, which is not accidental but rather typifies the nature of living individuals" (Nichtomy, 2007, p. 220). Accordingly, differences and communalities of monads are based on only perception and this multiplicity is identical with gradational multiplicity.

II. Though both philosophers considered the simple reality as the basis of their systems, and juxtaposed it with compound thing, and applied it in the sense that lacks any part, they have different concepts of simplicity and draw different conclusions. Leibniz believed that combination was identical with extension or corporeality, and simplicity was identical with non-corporeality, and he was of the view that since simple thing lacked parts it possessed immaterial existence, that is it was spiritual. Accordingly, he considered monads, including both creator or created, as simple and spiritual beings. On the contrary, Mulla Sadra considered simplicity in a particular sense and viewed necessary being by itself as the referent of simple reality. In his view, simplicity of Necessity necessitates the negation of any kind of combination including mental or external combination such as genus and difference, matter and form, and being and quiddity from God (Mulla Sadra, 1380, pp. 140-142).

III. Leibniz's discussions of monads and their simplicity are more inclined toward the principiality of quiddity rather than the principiality of existence. In his view, pure simple existence or, in his own words, existence without predicate or attribute is impossible (Leibniz, 1896, p.226). He maintains that the richness of existence depends on its combination rather than its purity and the combination of existence is similar to its limitedness. This Leibnizian sense of existence appeared in Hegel's philosophy as to say that the more limited the existence is, the richer it will be, and pure existence is equal to non-existence. This view that the richness of existence depends on its limitedness not its purity suggests the proof of the principiality of quiddity. Based on the principle of identity of indiscernibles, Leibniz considers monad specifically one but numerically infinite. Thus, he develops his pluralistic view which is compatible with the principiality of quiddity (Sanei, 1378, p.19).

IV. Mulla Sadra equates being with knowledge. Hence, no being is considered to lack perception. Consequently, in Mulla Sadra's philosophy the differences between different levels of being are attributable to different levels of perception; and each being that possesses more knowledge possesses more intensive existence. As already stated, Leibniz argues that the difference of monads can be explained in terms of their different perceptions. On the basis of the differences of perceptions, he divides monads into three groups: 1) The pure monads that lack clear perception, i.e. their perceptions are so weak that is not sufficient for the perception of a thing; 2) The monads of soul whose perceptions are strong enough to make distinction among them; and 3) The monads of reason whose perceptions are so clear and distinct that whose knowledge is of scientific or reflective one. Mulla Sadra also considers the levels of perception as consisting of sense perception, imaginative perception, and intellectual perception.

V. For Mulla Sadra being is a gradational reality that proceeds from the perfectly continuous ontological levels. On the basis of the principle of continuity, Leibniz also rejects presence of any leap in the world, and claims that there is always a continuity between each level of monads with that of the early and later ones in such a way that if the highest level of a monad is compared to the lowest one there will be a negligible differences between them and they are indeed indistinguishable. Both philosophers are of the view that the highest level of this hierarchy is God and the lowest is matter.

VI. In line with Mulla Sadra, Leibniz considers the reality of substance as force and contends that change and process is identical with its essence and this position is similar to Mulla Sadra's trancessubstantial motion.

VII. By referring to the distinction between perception and apperception in monads, Leibniz comes closer to Mulla Sadra's theory of simple and compound perception. Both these philosophers more or less base their division on a common principles and rules and refer to common conclusions and requirements for it, with the difference that they had different objectives. Mulla Sadra referred to this division to prove that perception and knowledge of divine being is innate, while Leibniz did so to solve the problems resulted from Cartesian dualism and explain the two substances of mind-body problem (Davari Ardakani, 1379, p.7). In Mulla Sadra's view, simple knowledge is merely knowledge of something regardless of being attended. While, compound knowledge is knowledge of something along with awareness to such knowledge (Mulla Sadra, 1990, Vol. 1, p. 116). Leibniz also considers the mere perception as "perception" and the perception associated with conscious or self-consciousness as "apperception."

VIII. Leibniz in his attempt to explain the part-whole relation unwittingly approached a kind of mystical theory, although he refused to regard his philosophy as a mystical one. In his view, part without its relation to the whole cannot attain determination; each part in a way contains the whole, and in a sense it is the manifestation of the whole. Hence, each unit should include an infinite multiple things. Likewise, the whole can expose itself through the parts. So, it seems that Latta

is right in saying that one of the requirements of Leibniz's thought, according to which God is the ultimate reality, is that all individual created things are His modes or manifestations. But, Leibniz avoids such a conclusion (Leibniz, 1898, 137, notes).

Mulla Sadra also by propounding the theory of the poverty by indigence (*imkan-i faqri*) does not consider creatures other than their relation to the creator and the expression of divine Names and Attributes. In the view of both thinkers, the relation between the whole and the parts is like that of the manifestation and locus of manifestation.

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