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From Mystical Philosophy to Sufi Practice: Muhyiddin Ibn-Arabi in the Light of Mystical Dimension and Islamic Thought

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Abstract

This study article explores the deep ontology and theological ideas of Ibn-ul-Arabi, a renowned Islamic philosopher and mystic, in the framework of Islamic philosophy and Sufism. Ibn Arabi was a visionary in expanding the scope of philosophy beyond the confines of religious beliefs and ideologies.

The intellectual heritage of Ibn-ul-Arabi, which covers the period from the 12th to the 13th centuries, has had a lasting impact on Islamic philosophy and ideas. The research commences by contextualizing his works within the historical progression of Islamic philosophy and the rise of Sufism, emphasizing the crucial influences that molded his distinctive perspective.

The inquiry primarily focuses on Ibn-ul-Arabi's ontology, firmly rooted in Islamic metaphysics, explicitly emphasizing the idea of Wahdat (Tawhid). The article focuses on his profound comprehension of existence, divine qualities, and the dynamic interplay between God and

creation. The central idea in his thinking revolves around the concept of theophany, which refers to the ongoing revelation of the divine in the universe and the contentious teaching of the Unity of Being (Wahdat al-Wujud).

Moreover, the paper explores the interdependent connection between Ibn-ul-Arabi's philosophical study of existence and deep reflection practices within Sufism. It clarifies how the repetition of sacred phrases (dhikr) and spiritual exercises are crucial in forming his mystical encounters. The inquiry concludes by contemplating the persistent influence of Ibn-ul-Arabi's beliefs, underscoring their enduring significance in Islamic philosophy and Sufism. This book enhances our understanding of Islamic philosophy by thoroughly analyzing its ontology and religious ideas. It highlights the intellectual depth of Islamic thought and its enduring significance over time.

Keywords: Ibn-ul-Arabi, Islamic Philosophy, Sufism, Wahdat-ul-Wujud, Quran, Mysticism, Theophany, Ontology

"Exploring the Metaphysical: Ibn-ul-Arabi's Journey into Ontology in Islamic Philosophy"- *Exploring the complex layers of Ibn-ul-Arabi's ontology and its significant influence on forming the discourse of Islamic philosophy*

As elucidated in his Persian poetry, Ibn al-Arabī (1165-1240) gained renown for his distinctive examination of mystical encounters. He established himself as a prominent intellectual and instructor (Murshid) within the Sufi Tradition or Islamic spirituality. In addition, he was often known among the renowned Sufis as Shaikh al-Akbar ("The Greatest Master") and Muhyi al-Dīn ('Renewer of Religion')(Singh, 1990).

Ibn Arabī extensively authored works on several themes, asserting that they were divinely disclosed to him. He possessed extensive knowledge and expertise in the Islamic mystical tradition's spiritual practices and secret knowledge, making him more than just a typical Sufi moral agent. He is widely regarded as the preeminent visionary intellect of Islamic Sufism. His compositions are too intricate and convoluted. They skillfully organized Sufi theosophy, and "for the majority of Sufis after the thirteenth century, his writings represent the pinnacle of mystical theories."(Ansari, 2017)

"Theophany Unveiled: Ibn-ul-Arabi's Perception of the Revelation of God's Presence in the Act of Creating"-Examining the concept of theophany and its importance in explaining how the divine is always revealed in the world.

Ibn Arabī had a complex personality, was not afraid to acquire knowledge and skills and openly advocated for what is morally virtuous and artistically pleasing. He received instruction from numerous mystics and philosophers his age, including several highly esteemed women, who greatly inspired him. During his time in Spain, he came across two older women who were mystics: Shams of Marchena and Fatimah bint ibn al-Muthanna of Cordoba. Regarding the latter, Ibn Arabī states that she resided in Seville. He stated that upon their encounter, she was in her nineties. Observing her solely on a superficial level, one would have mistakenly perceived her as unintelligent(Shahid, 2009).

However, she would have retorted that the true fool is the one who lacks knowledge of their divine being. She previously expressed her utmost admiration for Ibn Arabī among all those who visited her. When questioned about the motive for her choice, she responded that although others bring a fraction of themselves due to their various preoccupations, Ibn Arabi is a source of solace for her because he presents himself fully. Upon standing, he fully embodies his being, and upon sitting, he completely engages his entire self without any part of him remaining elsewhere(Thoresen, 2022).

"Unity Beyond Diversity: Ibn-ul-Arabi's Contentious Doctrine of the Unity of Being"-Analyzing the intricate aspects of Ibn-ul-Arabi's theological framework, exploring the consequences of the Unity of Being and its disruption of traditional theological models.

Ibn Arabī's contribution was to fully articulate the concepts of Sufism that had hitherto been only implied in the teachings of different Sufi gurus(Rizvi, 2020). He became the ultimate interpreter of gnosis in Islām. He openly revealed the esoteric (bātin) aspect of Islam, allowing anyone with sufficient intelligence to contemplate and understand its spiritual universe. This theoretical understanding could guide individuals towards a practical realization of metaphysical theories. In Ibn Arabī's writings, he introduces concepts such as the transcendent unity of Being (Waḥdat al-wujūd) and the Universal Man (al-Insān al-Kāmil), even though these ideas have always existed in the tradition. Wahdat ul Wujud is the belief that God Almighty is solely responsible for all events in the world and that every being on earth ultimately belongs to Him(Khan & Saleem, 1994).

The existence of majestic mountains, meandering rivers, breathtaking landscapes, lush orchards, soaring birds, and crawling critters, as well as the presence of walking humans and captivating animals, all in some way or another point to the existence of a divine being. This concept, called "Tawheed, " is the fundamental principle for embracing Islam. Tawheed refers to the recognition and acknowledgement of Allah as the singular and ultimate authority. This also posits that if he possesses omnipotent abilities, he wields authority over the mortality of individuals. The individual administers both incentives and punishments, displaying a high degree of fairness in their actions and remaining impartial to the inherent traits of human nature(Meiring, 2021).

Ibn Arabi's teachings emphasize the fundamental notion of Wujud, which refers to the actual existence or presence of anything. Avicenna initiated this. In Quranic terminology, the phrase "vast" carries a profound significance and conveys the idea of discovering something, valuing it, or deriving pleasure from one's existence. Essentially, it signifies the existence of something. Ibn Arabi articulated its meaning using both Islamic and intellectual terminology. According to him, the process consists of three steps: firstly, experiencing sensations; secondly, being conscious of one's surroundings; and thirdly, employing all of one's focus to locate it. Avicenna's teachings encompassed these fundamental principles, wherein the name "Wujud" denotes the existence of mysticism and the act of valuing it within philosophical discourse(Dogan, 2014).

**"Contemplative Cosmos: Sufi Practices and the Ontological Realities of Ibn-ul-Arabi"-
*Exploring the interconnectedness between Ibn-ul-Arabi's understanding of existence and the meditative practices of Sufism, uncovering the profound capacity for personal growth through mystical encounters.***

Ibn Arabi eloquently elucidated the existence of the divine by emphasizing that without the initiation of thoughts and emotions, one would be unable to perceive the reality of things. All sensory perceptions, including taste, smell, sight, memory and imagination, are experienced through light. Hence, it can be regarded from a broad standpoint. To fully acknowledge the existence of all things, the presence of light is required. To commemorate the tranquillity of nature and its possessions, it is necessary to have faith in God. Therefore, God is the supreme illumination to navigate existence in this universe. Upon acquainting oneself with him, one attains the pinnacle of mysticism(Kausar & Mehmood, 2020).

Ibn Arabi commenced his writings and preaching by ascribing to the Supreme Being, Allah, His unity, cruelties, attributes, and blessings. Corbin stated that imagination is a prominent subject in

Arabi's literature. Ibn Arabi has described 'Aqal' as one of the most profound gifts bestowed by Allah. One can utilize it not just for seeking advice but also for verifying the existence of objects in one's surroundings. He has accused scholars of failing to acknowledge its significance in acquiring accurate knowledge of phenomena. The realm of imagination is expansive and boundless. Employing as a disciplinary tool enhances an individual's understanding and awareness of Allah. The objective of a human being's life is to utilize all of their senses to appreciate the presence of Allah and adore Him with their whole heart (Nazar, Hassan, & Rehman, 2021).

The term "Al Quran" refers to a compilation that consolidates all the teachings of Allah into a single book. They have been implicated by Muhammad (SAW) through his Sunnah in his family life. Subsequently, Sufis and saints authored numerous books to enhance people's comprehension. The Quran is "Al Furqan," meaning "the one that distinguishes." The Quran explicitly describes and distinguishes the route to goodness or evil. In the Quran, Allah is described by 99 names. Ibn Arabi referred to this as the concept of Oneness belonging to Allah, and he believed that the diversity of Allah's names reflects his various attributes and demonstrates his widespread existence (Nazar et al., 2021).

The phenomenal universe, or the entirety of the cosmos, consists of various manifestations of the singular invisible reality. According to Ibn Arabi's explanation of *Waḥdat al-Wujūdī*, the Real Being is represented by the One, while the phenomenal universe is considered to be its shadows. This concept can be interpreted in multiple ways. It can be likened to an object reflecting itself in multiple mirrors. It can be likened to a primary light source that generates unlimited light. The sea might be considered a vast body of water continuously generating and vanishing numerous waves (Chodkiewicz, 1993).

God's Names (*asmā*) represent God's various roles and attributes in the world, such as Creator, Sustainer, Guide, Forgiver, Compassionate, Exalter, Slayer, and others. God is discovered and reveals Himself in the world through these interpersonal connections. The Qur'an (42:11 and 112:4) states that the Essence of God is self-contained and not comparable to anything else, emphasizing that there is no being similar to Him. Instead of attempting to comprehend or explain God rationally, we must come to understand our divine nature. We must acknowledge that we have been fashioned in the exact likeness of God Himself. Like other Sufis, Ibn Arabi had a penchant for citing the Hadith Qudsi: "I was a concealed treasure, and I longed to be recognized." Subsequently, I fashioned beings to be recognized by them (Yu, 2020).

The desire of God to introduce or explore oneself served as a generative power and resulted in the creation of our entire cosmos. This profound and imaginative desire gave rise to the entirety of the universe, with all its elements and structures, and brought forth human beings as the ultimate creation. These elements function as logoi, linguistic representations that convey God's essence to Himself. Each individual element is a distinct manifestation of the divine, a singular revelation of the transcendent deity. Each individual element is a unique and distinct embodiment of the divine presence. Each element, as a logo, represents a Divine Presence. Nevertheless, due to the boundless nature of God's existence, the manifestation of God within each element is distinct and countless. Chosen human of Almighty serves the same purpose. In their diverse and individualistic manners, humans unveil God in infinite ways. Every individual, in their distinct manner as a vicegerent (Khalīfah), brings the Hidden God out of His seclusion (Ali, 2020).

"The Enduring Influence of Ibn-ul-Arabi on Islamic Philosophy and Sufism: A Legacy of Light"- *Contemplating the persistent impact of Ibn-ul-Arabi's ontology and theological ideas, highlighting their enduring influence on Islamic thinking and mysticism over many centuries.*

Although Ibn Arabi was recognized as a prominent figure among the Sufi saints, his teachings extend beyond the boundaries of Sufism. Al Ghazali (1058-1111) is often considered the most prominent Muslim mystic and spiritual leader. He was of Persian descent and known as Imam Ghazali for his extensive knowledge of Sufism. He was a highly influential Sufi saint renowned as a prominent figure in Sunni Sufism. Sunnis belong to one of the two principal divisions of Islam. Imam Al-Ghazali is regarded as the foremost proponent of Avicennism within the Islamic faith (Buana, 2017). Ibn Arabi himself did not confine his views and teachings solely to the realm of Sufism. To him, Islam is a diverse religion with worldwide teachings, not limited to any particular tribe or culture. Sufism is a constituent of Islam, although it does not embody a comprehensive whole on its own. Ibn Arabi classified saints as Awliyah, intimately connected to Allah. He maintained that the most devout and resolute among them eventually ascended to higher levels of Islamic faith and the divine realm (Moazzeni & Hoseini, 2021).

According to Ibn Arabī, the Divine presence is only mirrored in the Perfect Man, and it is through him alone that God becomes aware of Himself and His perfection. Moreover, God's intention is to be recognized. Hence, people were brought into being to possess consciousness. The mission of God is to unite human beings and creatures through

love. Maulana Rumi asserts that love is the fundamental catalyst for all creation (Moazzeni & Hoseini, 2021).

Furthermore, he posits that love is both the source and the effect of its existence. Rumi accurately observed that the Perfect Man is the conduit through which God perceives Himself and His creations. The Perfect Man's characteristics are displayed, giving him reasons to appreciate. Before Rumi, Ibn Arabī had already presented a similar concept, asserting that "the divine reveals itself in the human, and the Perfect Man (al-Insān a.-Kāmil) is none other than Muhammad." Muhammad, like Jesus, is also referred to as the kalimah and the logos. According to Ibn Arabī, the authentic mystic relies solely on the inner light as their guide and recognizes the presence of God in all religions (Jeffery, 1959).

Hence, Ibn Arabī underscores the necessity for God to fashion humanity in His likeness, endowing them with free will to ensure that the love they exhibit is genuine and inherent rather than merely a means to an end. Thus, individuals who indirectly love God would also exhibit love for His Creation. God cherishes all individuals devoted to love who fulfil His mission, the Obligating Command, with pure hearts and souls. As God's representative, the Perfect Man occupies a prestigious position in the realm of God and actively engages in His various endeavours due to the manifestation of His Attributes in Man (Austin, 1980).

Conclusion:

In essence, Ibn Arabi can be described as a sagacious and astute spiritual guide for Muslims. Whose work significantly impacted Sufis and resulted in the elucidation of certain phenomena. One of the most notable examples is Wahdat ul Wujud. Furthermore, he possessed the dual roles of a philosopher and a poet. He elucidated the concept of the unity of Allah, known as Tawheed, and the interconnectedness of nature, humanity, and their relationships with exceptional lucidity. He believed that maintaining authenticity leads to converging all aspects of one's life. This force refers to the cohesive power that unites many nationalities and civilizations, resulting in a Muslim brotherhood that surpasses any secular relationship. Ibn-Arabi's metaphysical conception of man aligns with the philosophy of mysticism. He believes God is the eternal and all-encompassing reality, possessing unlimited knowledge, power, and presence. Contrary to the monotheistic focus on God's complete unity, Ibn Arabī emphasizes the complete unity of all things in God. Reality is a singular, undividable, and unparalleled entity.

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