

**The Development of Philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajud*  
in South Asia: A Historical Analysis**



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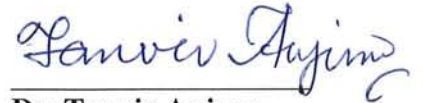
I hereby declare that the thesis presently submitted bearing the title “**The Development of Philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajud* in South Asia: A Historical Analysis**” is the result of my own research and has not been submitted to any other institution for any other degree.



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## *Final Approval*

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## Introduction

### Statement of the Problem

The philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* occupies a unique position in the annals of Islamic mysticism. The philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* is considered a Sufistic theory and spiritual philosophy. Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj, a tenth-century Sufi and iconic figure in the history of Sufism, was among those Sufis who had experienced the *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. He was executed on uttering the words *ana al-Haqq* meaning 'I am the Truth.' He experienced a kind of spiritual unity with God in a state of spiritual ecstasy. The philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* was described in various expressions in different mystical traditions. Mainly, the discourse of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* addresses the question existence of God in philosophical manner in the mystical tradition of Islam: this primordial concept explores 'One Supreme Reality' of God, that is One to be All and All to be the One.

A famous Spanish Sufi philosopher, Shaykh Muhiyy al-Din Ibn al-Arabi, who is called as *Shaykh-i Akhbar* in the Sufi circle, propounded the Doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. However, Ibn al-Arabi never employed the expression of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*, but his followers gradually adopted this term in the Sufi tradition. Ibn Sabīn, a Sufi philosopher of Andalusia, was the first Sufi who employed the famous expression *Wahdat al-Wajūd* as technical term; however, he was not a member of Ibn al-Arabi's school.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the ideas of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* already existed in the mind of Ibn al-Arabi; and he used the word '*Wajūd*' in his mystical writings. To him, in etymological sense the word *Wajūd* not

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<sup>1</sup>For details see, William C. Chittick, "The School of Ibn 'Arabi," in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London: Routledge Publishers, 1996), 512.

only means “to be” or “to exist” but also “to find” and “to be found.”<sup>2</sup> To him, there is no existence except ‘God’. He applied the term *Wajūd* to God and it means to know the existence of God in the realm of awareness, consciousness, and knowledge.

After the intellectual contribution of Ibn al-Arabi, the dominant idea of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* was defined by philosophers, theologian and Sufis with reference to God. Iqbal Sabir states that “Ibn al-Arabi’s conception of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* is an extension of the Islamic doctrine of *Tawhid*, the Oneness of God.”<sup>3</sup> It must be remembered that ideas of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* already prevailed in Sufi tradition before Ibn al-Arabi’s interpretation,<sup>4</sup> but the credit goes to Ibn al-Arabi, who translated this theosophy into proper doctrine in a comprehensive manner.

The Indian Sufis were influenced from by the mystical writings of Ibn al-Arabi since the fourteenth century. Ibn al-Arabi’s works on *Wahdat al-Wajūd* include *Fusus al-Hikam* and *Futuhāt-i-Makkiya* which got popularity in India and it attracted a great number of Indian Sufis. The Shaykh’s works were considered guide books for this mystical doctrine in the medieval Sufi literature of India. The mystical thinkers and scholars played a key role in developing and disseminating the Doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in India. Fakhar al-Din ‘Iraqi (d. 1289), who was a renowned Persian poet and disciple of Shaykh Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi, introduced the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in first time

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<sup>2</sup> William C. Chittick, “Ibn ‘Arabi,” in *ibid.*, 504.

<sup>3</sup> For details see, Iqbal Sabir, “Impact of Ibn ul ‘Arabi’s Mystical Thought on the Sufis of India during the Sixteenth Century” in *Sufis And Sufism: Some Reflections*, ed. Neeru Misra (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 2004), 129-42.

<sup>4</sup> Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimension of Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 263.

India. Shaykh ‘Ali Hamadani (d.1384), Shaykh Abu l-Mahasin Sharaf al-Din of Dehli (1392), Khawaja Saiyyid Muhammad Gesudraz, Shaykh Saiyyid Jamal al-Din Maghrabi, Masud Bakk, Saiyyid Ashraf Jahangir Simnani, Shaikh Ali Muhaimi were main exponents of the Doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajud* during fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries in South Asia.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, Shaikh Abdul Quddus of Gangoh, Shaikh Aman Allah of Panipat, their spiritual followers and many others, further developed this Sufi spiritual philosophy in South Asia. However, it faced mixed response of approval and disapproval from Sufis the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

### **Aims and Objectives of the Study**

The present study aims to explore the spread and development of philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in South Asia. The doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* has become the integral part of the Indian Sufism. It tries to see how different Sufi-philosophers interpret the philosophy of *Wahdat al- Wajūd*. Moreover, it also explains the views of Ibn al-Arabi and his disciples regarding the doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*; and it investigates the discourse of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* among different Sufi scholars in India. In addition, the present study explores the main proponents of mystical this mystical doctrine who played a key role in disseminating the thoughts of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in India.



## Review of Literature

There are a host of books written on the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* by indigenous and foreign writers. Some of these works deal the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* such as, A. E. Affifi's *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid Din Ibn ul Arabi* (1979), S.A.Q. Husain's *The Pantheistic Monoism of Ibnul Al-'Arabi* (1970), William C. Chittick's *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principle of Ibn al-Arabi's Cosmology* (2000) and Muhammad Abduh's *The Theology of Unity*. A plethora of literature is available on the South Asian mysticism regarding *Wahdat al-Wajūd* but it is limited in scope. It is hard to trace the narrative account of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in the history of South Asia. Muhammad Noor Nabi's *Development of Muslim Religious Thought in India: From 1200 A.D to 1450 A.D.* provides a systematic study of the development of Muslim thought in India; however, the philosophical aspect of religious thoughts remains unexplored to provide a holistic view of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in India. Seyyed Hossein Nasr's *Sufi Essays* (1970) addresses the question of development of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in Central Asia, and it gives minute details about the development of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in South Asia. Neeru Misra's edited work includes an article by Iqbal Sabir on the spread of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in South Asia; however, this attempt is limited only to the sixteen century.

Ijaz al-Haqq Quddusi writes in his book *Shaykh Abdul Quddus Gangohi and his Teachings* that Shaykh Abdul Quddus Gangohi had appreciable support to spread the teachings of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in South Asia. He was the firm believer in the doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* and he advised his sons to follow it. Ali Abbas Jalalpuri explains the

different expressions of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in his book *Rawayat-i-Tamaddun-i Qadeem*, which deals with different mystical traditions of South Asia.

Anna Suvorova explains Data Ali al-Hujwiri's views on *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in his book *Muslim Saints of South Asia: Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries*. Muhammad Mu'in al-Din Derdai explains Qādi Hamid al-Din Nāgaūri's ideas on *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in *Majlis Sufia*, who had comprehensive approach about *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. S.M. Ikram and Waheed Qurashi briefly discussed the views about *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in *Darbar-i-Mili*. Annemarie Schimmel mentioned about Shaykh Hamid al-Din Sūfi, who believed in thoughts of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*, in *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*. Most of the existing literature interprets Ibn al-Arabi's mystical doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*, but there has been very limited literature available on the spread of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in South Asia. The present study is an attempt to fill this gap in the existing literature on the subject.

#### **Research Questions to be addressed:**

The study raises and tries to address the following research questions:

What are Ibn al-Arabi's views about the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*?

What are the different expressions of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in different mystical traditions of South Asia?

How and when the doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* was introduced and later disseminated in South Asia?

What were the contributions of various Sufi- scholars in spreading the ideas of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in South Asia?



## **Methodology**

The study on *Wahdat al-Wajūd* on India employs narrative-descriptive as well as exploratory and analytical approaches within the discipline of history. It tries to narrate and describe how and why the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* was introduced and disseminated in South Asia.

## **Organization of the Study**

This study is divided into five chapters. After introduction, the first chapter briefly discusses the life of Ibn al-Arabi, and his major work on *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. The second chapter explains Ibn al-Arabi as founding father the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. The third chapter briefly analyses the early dissemination of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in Indian Sufism. The fourth chapter highlights the contributions of the major proponents of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in South Asia in pre-Mughal era. The fifth chapter, which is also the last chapter of the study, examines the further development of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in South Asia in Mughal era. It is followed by the conclusion and bibliography.



## Chapter 1

### **Ibn al-Arabi and *Wahdat al-Wajud*: An Introduction**

Ibn al-Arabi is an iconic figure of Islamic philosophy and Sufism, who provided a unique pattern of thought and intelligence in the form of *Wahdat al-Wajud*. All writings of Ibn al-Arabi circulate around his mystical doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajud*. Being a Sufi-philosopher, he got popularity in global history owing to his remarkable ideas on the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajud*. The present chapter is divided into two sections: The first section deals briefly with the life of Ibn al-Arabi and the second section deals with the major works of Ibn al-Arabi.

#### **1.1 Ibn al-Arabi: A Brief Biographical Sketch**

Ibn al-Arabi, whose complete name was Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Arabi al-Hātim al-Tā'i, was born in 1165 at Murcia in southern Spain (Andalusia).<sup>1</sup> He is better known as 'Shaykh al-Akbar' (The Greatest Master) and surnamed Muhyuddin (The Reviver). Ibn al-Arabi had spiritual lineage with Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani (popularly known as Ghaus-e Azam), and he had direct relation with Hazrat Khizr (A.S).<sup>2</sup> He was initiated at the hands of Ali bin Abdullah.<sup>3</sup> When Ibn al-Arabi was born, political decline had started in Spain. But despite that, the intellectual life of people was still illuminated. The land of Andalusia is regarded as a remarkable place that produced countless poets and religious scholars. As the Holy Prophet (PBUH) highlighted the importance of Andalusian lands in these words:

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<sup>1</sup> A famous historian Ibn Najjar (d. 1245) verified the date of birth when Ibn al-Arabi met him.

<sup>2</sup> Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn Arabi* (Lahore: Suhail Acadmey, 2000), 142-50.

<sup>3</sup> Dara Shikoh, *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, Urdu tr. Muhammad Ali Lutfi (Karachi: Nafees Academy, 189), 99.

“God spread out the Earth before me and I was able to see how much of it my community would possess. I saw that Andalusia would be its final conquest. I asked Gabriel: Gabriel, what is that peninsula? He replied: Muhammad that is the peninsula of Andalusia, which your community will conquer after your death. Whoever lives there will live in a state of blessedness whoever dies there will die martyr.”<sup>4</sup>

Ibn al-Arabi came from a pious family which had a particular interest in religious devotion, spiritual provoking and Sufi tradition.<sup>5</sup> Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi, who was a well-known and influential figure in the field of politics and learning, was the father of Ibn al-Arabi. He was a judge and scholar of Maliki School of jurisprudence from Andalus. His ancestors enjoyed pure Arab blood that belonged to the Yemenite clan of the Banu Tayy, which had emigrated to Spain during the initial years of the Arab conquest.<sup>6</sup> Ibn al-Arabi celebrates pure Arab origin and affirms about his Arab lineage:

“I am al-Arabi al-Hatimi, the brother of magnanimity: in nobility we possess glory, ancient and renowned.”<sup>7</sup>

His family had good social and cultural connections with strong religious tendencies.<sup>8</sup> Ibn al-Arabi left his town at the age of eight and went to Lisbon, where he received his early education.<sup>9</sup> His education consisted of reading the Quran, and he learnt Islamic law from Shaykh Abu Bakr Khalaf. Ibn al-Arabi started his formal education when he was eight years old. The Quran and its exegesis, the traditions of the Prophet (PBUH), Arabic grammar and composition, and Islamic jurisprudence were the famous subjects which he

<sup>4</sup> As cited in Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn Arabi*, 11.

<sup>5</sup> Rom Landu. *The Philosophy of the Ibn al-Arabi* (London: Routledge Publishers, 1959/2008), 1.

<sup>6</sup> A.E. Affifi, “Ibn al-Arabi,” in *A History of Muslim Philosophy: With Short Accounts of other Discipline and the Modern Renaissance in Muslim Lands*, ed. M.M. Sharif (Karachi: Royal Books Company, 1963/1983 rpt.), 398.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>8</sup> Ibn al-Arabi, *Sufis of Andalusia*, Eng, tr. R. W. J. Austin (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1985), 21.

<sup>9</sup> Idries Shah, *The Way of the Sufi* (London: Johnathan Cape, 1975), 76.

studied in his early life. He was careless in attending the classes of Quranic School. So his father appointed a private tutor for him to teach in his own home. Abu Abd-Allah al-Khayyat, who was a mystic, taught the Quran to Ibn al-Arabi. He remained deeply attached with his teacher who had great affection and love for pupils.

While in the teenage the Shaykh's life was drawn to different directions.<sup>10</sup> He needed spiritual guidance; however, he hesitated to take a step. He referred to it as the period of his *Jahiliyya* in which he remained divided between his desire to enjoy the good things of this low world and his desire for God. In this period, he never knew the truth in its fullness.<sup>11</sup> He formally abstained to initiate into the Sufi way until he was twenty years of age. It seems clear that he had good company of his spiritual master; hence, he could not detach himself from Sufi writings and teaching from an early age. The youthful Ibn al-Arabi got considerable spiritual insight while still in his teens. His father arranged a meeting between his son and the celebrated philosopher Averroes. Ibn al-Arabi writes about this unique meeting:

"I spent a good day in Cordova at the house of Abū al-Walīd bn Rushd (Averroes). He had expressed a desire to meet with me in person since he heard of certain revelations. I had received while in retreat, and shown considerable astonishment concerning them. In consequence, my father, who was one of his close friends, took me with him on the pretext of business, in order to give opportunity of making acquaintance. I was at the time a beardless youth."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Affifi, "Ibn al-Arabi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy: With Short Accounts of other Discipline and the Modern Renaissance in Muslim Lands*, 398.

<sup>11</sup> It does not mean that he disobeyed God, but he gave minimum attention towards God.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn al-Arabi, *Fusūs Al-Hikam*, 2.

Being a devotee of spiritual world, he studied many subjects of mystical nature such as the metaphysical doctrines of the Sufis, cosmology, esoteric exegesis, along with astrology and alchemy.<sup>13</sup> Ibn al-Arabi had comprehensive command in the learning of frequent invocation, prayer, fasting, night vigil, retreat, and periods of meditation. Such practices led to enhance his experiences of super-sensory nature. He was still young; however, he would spend long hours in the cemeteries communicating with the spirit of the dead. Ibn al-Arabi often had difficult relationship with his masters; for example, he had difference opinion with Shaykh al-Uryanī regarding the spiritual state of certain person. He willingly accepted himself that he, “was a novice the time”<sup>14</sup>

After spending his early years in Murica, he soon went to Seville which was a great centre of Spanish Sufis at that time. He grew up and stayed for thirty years in Seville; furthermore, he studied Islamic law, tradition and theology. He influenced most of his early spiritual master in the Sufi Path<sup>15</sup> in Seville. During the stay in Seville, Ibn al-Arabi travelled to al-Maghrib. He visited Cordova. He also visited Tunis, Fez and Morocco in 1194. He was influenced by two Sufi women, and he became their disciples. Yāsmīn was one of them who inspired him in Marshena, and the other was Fātima bint al-Muthannā who lived in Cordova. Though she was very old, she possessed beauty and charm. So Ibn al-Arabi compared her with a young girl of sixteen.<sup>16</sup> Ibn al-Arabi considered her a spiritual mother. To him, she was a real lover of God and a gnostic lady. He served her for several

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<sup>13</sup>Shah, *The Way of the Sufi*, 76-81.

<sup>14</sup>Ibn al-Arabi, *Fusūs Al-Hikam*, 3.

<sup>15</sup>A.E. Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyidin Din Ibn al-Arabi* (Lahore: Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, 1979 rpt.), xv.

<sup>16</sup>Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna, Suhrawardī, Ibn 'Arabī* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1988), 92.

years: he built a hut for her with his own hands. After completion his education, he obtained employment as a secretary to the governor of Seville. He married a girl of good family named Maryam. Luckily, she was a greatly pious woman who shared her mystical experience with her husband, and she encouraged him to follow the Sufi path.<sup>17</sup>

In 1190, Ibn al-Arabi left his native land and travelled in North Africa, spending mostly time in Tunis, where he took the opportunity of studying *The Doffing of the Sandals by Sandals* by Ibn Qisi, who was the Sufi leader of the rebellion against the Almoravid in the Algarve.<sup>18</sup> After relatively short time, Ibn al-Arabi came back to Seville, because political troubles had prevailed in the region. He studied the Traditions of the Prophet with his uncle. A year later, he returned to Fez, and spent most of his time in the mosque and shrine in meditation. Ibn al-Arabi had strange experience of spinelessness during this stage. He also developed a growing sense of his own spiritual authority, and he said:

“I learned of the Seal of Muhammadan Sainthood in Fez in the year 594, when God acquainted me with His identity and revealed to me His mark.”<sup>19</sup>

Ibn al-Arabi had faced the threat of persecution by the Almohad rulers in North Africa, who perceived the Sufi orders as a threat against their regime. Undoubtedly, the relations between the Sufis and political rulers were creepy. Ibn al-Arabi also discussed it in his biographical sketches of his master. To him, the Sultan of Ceuta offered the food to eat in a

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<sup>17</sup> Muhyi-D-Din Ibn ‘al-Arabi, *Fusūs Al-Hikam*, Eng. tr. With Introduction. R.W. J. Austin (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1988), 2.

<sup>18</sup> Ibn al-Arabi, *Rūh al-quds and al-Durrat al-Fākhira*, Eng.tr. With Introduction and Notes. R.W.J Austin (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1985), 142.

<sup>19</sup> Ibn al-Arabi, *Fusūs Al-Hikam*, 6.

Sufi gathering; consequently, he had to face arrest on refusal to eat. Furthermore, he maintained that one his Shaykh opposed the rulers of the day.

Ibn al-Arabi reached at Marrakesh (Morocco); he spent some time with certain Abu al-Abbas of Ceuta. During his stays, he received to call to travel to the East.<sup>20</sup> In Marrakesh, he met Muhammad al-Nasr whom he was ready to travel together to the Eastern Islamic lands. They continued their journey until they reached Egypt. During the travelling, they visited Bijah and Tunis. Ibn al-Arabi stayed in Alexandria and then at Cairo, where his companion, al-Hasher, died. After a brief stay, Ibn al-Arabi carried on his journey alone to the holy city of Makkah. The fame of spiritual awakening and authority had already disseminated among the most pious families of Makkah before his arrival there.<sup>21</sup> He could not stay for long time in Makkah; however, he received accolade by the most learned citizens. Abu Shaja Zāhir ibn Rustum offered his beautiful and gifted daughter for marriage him. Ibn al-Arabi accepted and started mystical poetry. The relationship between Ibn al-Arabi and the young woman had something of the strong appreciation of femininity in him. In this pursuit, Ibn al-Arabi explains the saying of the Prophet: "Three things in this world have been made beloved to me, woman, perfume and prayer."

During staying in Makkah, he visited punctually of Ka'abah, and performed the rites and meditation. There he had two important experiences: firstly, he enjoyed the

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<sup>20</sup> Affifi, "Ibn al-Arabi," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy: With Short Accounts of other Discipline and the Modern Renaissance in Muslim Lands*, 399.

<sup>21</sup> Shah, *The Way of the Sufi*, 76-81.

cosmic scheme of things in his mystical experiences, and secondly, he confirmed that he was the seal of Muhammadan Sainthood.

In 1204, Ibn al-Arabi left the Holy City and travelled to Baghdad. He stayed there for brief time and went to Mosul, where he spent a year and wrote *Mosul Revelation* that deals with the esoteric significance of ablution and prayer. He was initiated for third time when he was at Mosul.<sup>22</sup> Ibn al-Arabi reached Cairo, but the religious authority of Cairo denounced his teaching and ideas.<sup>23</sup> He even faced many threats of assassination in Egypt in 1201.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, he left Egypt and travelled widely in Jerusalem, Makkah, Hijaz and Baghdad. In Makkah, he taught for some time, and he visited Bagdad twice in A.H. 601 and 608, Aleppo and Asia Minor. He got respect and honour wherever he went. He spent his handsome endowments on the poor.

In 1210, he arrived at the city of Konya, and received the honour and dignity from the ruler of Konya, Kaykaus.<sup>25</sup> He rapidly got popularity. There, Sadr al-Din al-Qunavi<sup>26</sup> became a key figure in spreading the teaching of Ibn al-Arabi. He reached Baghdad once again in 1211. In Baghdad, he had short meeting with Shaykh Shihab al-Din Umer al-Suhrawardi (d. 1234) and declared him “an ocean of divine truth.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibn al-Arabi, *Rūh al-quds and al Durrat al-Fākhirah*, 157.

<sup>23</sup> Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna- Suhrawardi-Ibn 'Arabi*, 96.

<sup>24</sup> Affifi, “Ibn al-Arabi,” in *A History of Muslim Philosophy: With Short Accounts of other Discipline and the Modern Renaissance in Muslim Lands*, 400.

<sup>25</sup> It is said that Sultan Kaykaus allotted him a luxury house as alms to beggar.

<sup>26</sup> He was step son and disciple of Ibn al-Arabi who wrote extensive commentary on his mentor's works. In addition, he was close friend of Jalal al-Din Rumi who was exponent of Oriental Sufism. Rumi helped to synthesize Oriental and Andalusian Sufism.

<sup>27</sup> Ibn al-Arabi, *Al- Futhhāt al-Makkiya*, Eng. tr. Michel Chodkiewicz (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2004) 459.

After a visit to Aleppo, Ibn al-Arabi returned to Makkah in 1214 to face the criticism on his mystical poetry by religious scholars. To its critics, it was incompatible with the religious feelings and pious sensibilities of the orthodox masses. On the account of this, he wrote a full commentary in which he explained the inner meaning of his poetic verses. He argued that his poems were related to Divine truth in various forms such as love themes eulogy, the names and attribute of women, name of rivers, places and stars. In 1215, he went to Asia Minor again and lived there for four to five years instructing and supervising disciples. He was at Aleppo during the year 1220-1221, where a previous ruler treated him with great honour.<sup>28</sup>

From the year 1223 until his death in 1240, Ibn al-Arabi lived in Damascus. During this period, he remained busy in completing his massive works, *The Meccan Revelation*, *The Bezels of Wisdom* and major collection of his poetry or *diwan*. He died at Damascus in November 1240 was buried at the foot of Mount Qasiyun in the private sepulchre of Qazi Muhyi al-Din ibn al-Zaki. Ibn al-Arabi married three times in his life. Maryam was the first wife whom he married when he was still a young man. Fatima, the daughter of Makkan nobleman, was his second wife, while his third wife, unnamed lady, was the daughter of a judge in Damascus. He had two sons, Sa 'ad al-Din, who was a poet of fairly high standard, and 'Imad al-Din. The former died in A.H 656, the latter in 667, and they were both buried next to their father. William C. Chittick says, "Ibn al-Arabi had a number of close disciples, including Badr al-Habshi and Ibn Sawdakin al-Nuri, who wrote works that are more

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<sup>28</sup> Growing respect of Ibn al-Arabi one ruler seems have worsened his relationship with jealous jurist and theologians.



important for the light that they throw on the Shaykh's teachings than for than for influence on the later Islamic thought."<sup>29</sup>

## **1.2 Major Work of Ibn al-Arabi**

The works of Ibn al-Arabi were about 150.<sup>30</sup> Dara Shikoh writes in *Sakinat-ul-Auliya* that Ibn al-Arabi was the writer of more than 500 works.<sup>31</sup> Apparently, it is difficult to determine exact number of his works or size of many of them. The major works of Ibn al-Arabi are as follows:

### **1.2.1 *Fusūs al-hikm*: The Bezels of Wisdom**

*Fusūs al-hikm* deals with the spiritual teachings of Ibn al-Arabi. The book contains twenty seven chapters, which are dedicated to spiritual meaning and wisdom of a particular prophet.<sup>32</sup> God blessed each prophet with individual quality of wisdom. Over the centuries, Ibn al-Arabi's followers wrote a number of commentaries on *Fusūs al-hikm*<sup>33</sup> and propagated its teachings all over the world. The major themes of Ibn al-Arabi's teaching such as *Wahdat al-Wajūd* (unity of God), and divine names are described in this book.

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<sup>29</sup> William C. Chittick, "The school of Ibn 'Arabi," in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London: Routledge Publishers, 1996), 511.

<sup>30</sup> The ninety of his extant works and mostly MSS are justified from the Royal Egyptian Library in Cairo.

<sup>31</sup> Shikoh, *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, 99.

<sup>32</sup> Stephen Hirtenstein, "Selected major works of Ibn 'Arabi" reproduced from *The Unlimited Mercifier-The Spiritual Life and Thought of Ibn 'Arabi*, <http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/works.html> (accessed July 12, 2015).

<sup>33</sup> See, for instance, William C. Chittick, *Ibn 'Arabi: Heir to the Prophets* (London: Oxford Publishers, 2005).

### 1.2.2 *Futūhāt al-Makkiyya*: The Meccan Revelations

Ibn al-Arabi wrote *Futūhāt al-Makkiyya* when he was living in Makkah. This principle work was later compiled by al-Sha'rānī (d. 973 AH), and it provides a complete system of mystical knowledge.<sup>34</sup> He shared his mystical experiences in this book: what he mediated, and what God revealed to him at Makkah. This book possesses profound knowledge about metaphysics, cosmology, spiritual anthropology, psychology and jurisprudence.

### 1.2.3 *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq*: The Interpreter of Yearnings

The book titled *Tarjuman al-ashwaq* contains collection of Ibn al-Arabi's poetry. He wrote it when he went to Makkah for his first pilgrimage. He was inspired by Lady Nizam, the beautiful and gifted daughter of great scholar from Isfahan.<sup>35</sup> As above mentioned, his poetry was criticized by the scholars, but he responded to his critics. According to him, his poetry dealt with spiritual truths, and not profanes love.<sup>36</sup>



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<sup>34</sup>H.A.R. Gibb, and J.H. Kramers *Of Islam: Edited on the Behalf of the Royal Netherlands Accedemay*, 1974), 146.

<sup>35</sup>Stephen Hirstenstein, "Selected major works of Ibn' Arabi" reproduced from *The UnlimitedMercifier - The spiritual life and thought of Ibn 'Arabi*, <http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/works.html> (accessed July 12, 2015).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 2

### Ibn al-Arabi as the Founder of the Philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*

Ibn al-Arabi got popularity owing to his theological, philosophical and mystical thoughts pertaining to *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. There is no doubt that he was not the first Sufi who propounded the thoughts of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. The philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* or monism was being experienced and articulated in different mystical traditions of the world, including South Asia. The similar notions already prevailed among Sufi traditions, but credit goes to Ibn al-Arabi, who firstly systematized it in the form of proper doctrine. According to Annemarie Schimmel and A. E. Affifi, the correct interpretation of Ibn al-Arabi's thought is a challenging task, and Seyyed Hossien Nasr holds the view that Ibn al-Arabi's works is a full explanation of what was already understood by earlier Sufis.<sup>1</sup> This chapter discusses Ibn al-Arabi as the founder of the doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*.

#### 2.1 Etymology of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*

Ibn al-Arabi never used the expression of term *Wahdat al-Wajūd*, but his followers continued his mission and developed this expression.<sup>2</sup> The unity of God, which is an English expression, is used for *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. *Wajūd* is one, and its multiplicity is rooted in oneness<sup>3</sup>. The Shaykh's employed the expression of *ahadiyya* to elaborate upon it. Muslim scholars used the concept of unity of God to *ahadiyya*. God's unity basically

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<sup>1</sup> Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publication, 2003), 263.

<sup>2</sup> William C. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabi's Cosmology* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2000), 171.

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret* (New York: Oxford university Press, 1964), 35-65.

demands that “there is nothing but God.”<sup>4</sup> The etymology of “unity” is *ahadiyya* that is derived from “*ahad*” or “One.” As God says in the Holy Quran: “He is God, One.”(*Al-Ikhlās*: 1)

*Wāhid* is another related word that means one. Ibn al-Arabi illustrates the difference between two words: *ahad* is used for God’s unity in respect of *tanzih*(transcendence), whereas *wahid* is used in terms of *tashbih* (closeness). In *tanziah*, God is conceptualised without relation with cosmos, and in *tashbih*, God is perceived in relation to cosmos. In philosophical sense, *wahid* is God: He is Real, and He has One Reality. The Reality of Real infuse all things of the cosmos. Ibn al-Arabi refers to God’s unity by expression of *ahadiya al-wajūd* (Unity of the Ones) or *ahadiyyat al-kathra* (Unity of Many). He maintains that God’s Entity is similar to *ahadiyyat al-kathra* to the Unity of Many-ness.<sup>5</sup>

Ibn al-Arabi refers to God in two ways: God’s incomparability to cosmos, and God’s similarity to cosmos.<sup>6</sup> Firstly, the expression of *tanzih* is employed in God’s incomparability, in which theologians insist on the concept of *tawhid*. Secondly, the expression of *tashbih* is employed with reference to God’s similarity with the cosmos, in which imagination or contemplation is applied to perceive God. Ibn al-Arabi defines the Unity in two ways: unity of many-ness and unity of one. The Unity of Many-ness expresses

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<sup>4</sup> Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God*, 167.

<sup>5</sup> Affifi, “Ibn al-Arabi,” 411.

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 162-65.

that One has many-ness, and it is referred to as the “many-ness of one.”<sup>7</sup> Ibn al-Arabi explains the inconsistent use of pronouns that refer to God. To him, when God says “I”, it addresses the unity of One; moreover, when God says: “we”, it addresses the unity of Many.<sup>8</sup> For instance, the Quran says: “We are nearer to him than the jugular vein” (*Qaf*: 16), and again “He is with you wherever you are” (*Al-Hadeed*: 4).

His “He-ness” expresses that He is with us through his names, and we are. The Real appears Himself plural regardless in our society. There are many examples for “we” in Quran: “We have created everything in measure” (*Al-Qamar*: 49), and again it says: “It is We who have sent down the Remembrance, and We are the preservers of it.” (*Al-Hijr*:9)

‘He’ is used singular, when He means His He-ness, not His names, like His words. As Quran says: “Verily, I am God; there is no god but I.” (*Ta-Ha*: 14) The Quranic divine name, which is the All-Encompassing, explains the fact that God is *Wajūd*.<sup>9</sup> The Real is identical with *Wajūd*, and He has attribute of encompassing the cosmos. Everything in cosmos is incorporated in *Wajūd* and embraced by *Wajūd*.<sup>10</sup> Ibn al-Arabi stressed the Divine name that stresses the nature of the relationship between the Creator and the creation. Every divine name explains a particular aspect, and it is distinct from others.<sup>11</sup>

## 2.2 The Doctrine of *Tawhīd*

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<sup>7</sup> William C. Chittick, “Ibn ‘Arabi,” in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London: Routledge Publishers, 1996), 497-507.

<sup>8</sup> Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s Cosmology*, 169.

<sup>9</sup> Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, 35-65.

<sup>10</sup> M. Fethullah Gülen, *Emerald Hills of the Heart*, trans Ali Ünal (Clifton: Tughra Books, 2004), 171-72.

<sup>11</sup> Ibn al-Arabi, *Fusūs Al-Hikam*, 88.

Ibn al-Arabi was criticised by theologians on the doctrine of *tawhid*. Ibn al-Arabi addressed those people who associate others with God. He built his argument on the following Quranic verses: “Thy Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him” (*Al-Isra*: 23), and “On the state of the Pole whose way station is And your God is One God.” (*Al-Baqara*: 163) To him, God has commanded to you that it is impossible to worship others. In fact, there is no other that can disobey God. He declared: “One group upholds the *tawhīd* of the God, but the *tawhīd* of many is *Wajūd*.”<sup>12</sup>

### 2.3 Origin of Creation

The philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* is closely associated with primordial question regarding the origin of creation and its purpose. The origin of creation is the Dust,<sup>13</sup> and the first existence is *Muhammadden Reality*.<sup>14</sup> What was the goal of creation? Why creation came into existence? God says in Quran: “I did not create *jinn* and man except to serve Me.” (*Adh-Dhariyat*: 56) Here Jinn are referred to everything hidden including the angels and other things. God made the world in the form of mix of based on good and bad people. In this regard, the men of knowledge were preferred over others.<sup>15</sup> God will separate corrupt people from pious people on Day of Resurrection. God says:

“And the infidels will be mustered into Gebenna so that God may separate the corrupt from the good, and place the corrupt one upon another, and so heap them up altogether, and put them in Gebenna.” (*Al-Anfal*: 37).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 87.

<sup>13</sup> The term Dust is referred to God’s manifestation Himself in theophany through His Light. It can be exemplified to the plaster that a builder throws down in order to mold within it whatever shapes and form desires. It was the first existence in the world that mentioned by Ali ibn Abi Talib and Sahl ibn Abdullah.

<sup>14</sup>Ibn al-Arabi, *Al-Futuhāt al-Makkiya*, 30.

<sup>15</sup> Gülen, *The Essential of Islamic Faith*, 3-33.

<sup>16</sup>Ibn al-Arabi, *Al-Futuhāt al-Makkiya*, 37.

## 2.4 Relationship of God and Cosmos

According to Ibn al-Arabi, God and cosmos have interdependent relationship. They cannot be comprehended in separate manner. Neither Creator, nor creature may be known except in relation to each other.<sup>17</sup> In this regard, cosmos is impossible to discern without reference to God. Ibn al-Arabi draws the conclusion from God and cosmos relationship that the knowledge of cosmos unfolds the mysteries of God. It is closest relationship between Creator and creature. He emphasised the concept of mutual permeation between God and cosmos.<sup>18</sup> He elaborated upon this concept from consumed food that becomes one with the consumer with the process of digestion. In case of divinity, it is archetype nourishment of the cosmos, which leads to the nourishment of the Divine self-awareness.

## 2.5 God's Unity of Existence, and the Objects of Knowledge

Ibn al-Arabi explained the two scales for the unity of existence: a cosmic scale and a divine scale. The reality of God Himself is beyond, and at the same time, associated with position or degree.<sup>19</sup> The number One is par excellence from all other numbers. All other numbers are manifestation of One number.<sup>20</sup> Richard Walzer says, "If a man possesses no knowledge of reasoning, he is incapable of expressing truth."<sup>21</sup> God exists through His Essence, and His

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<sup>17</sup> Chittck, "Ibn 'Arabi," in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, 497-507.

<sup>18</sup> Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages: Avicenna, Suhrawardi, Ibn 'Arabi*, 111-16.

<sup>19</sup> Chittck, "Ibn 'Arabi," 82.

<sup>20</sup> Gülen, *Emerald Hills of the Heart*, 171-79.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Walzer, *Greek into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy* (London: Bruno Cassirer Oxford, 1962), 236-52.

Essence is a sufficient reason of His Existence.<sup>22</sup> Ibn al-Arabi highlights the four important objects of knowledge, in which first is God. God is Non-delimited Being (*al-wajūd al-mutlaq*). God is neither the effect, nor the cause of anything. He exists through His very Essence, and the knowledge of Essence remains unknown.<sup>23</sup> The Essence cannot be explained by logical proof, rational demonstration, and definition.<sup>24</sup> The attributes of God, which are the attributes of Perfection, are known. Secondly, the object of knowledge is universal reality, and it belongs to God and the world. It does not depend on existence, nonexistence, temporal origination and eternity. This reality is considered eternal when it is described; otherwise it is assumed temporary. The world has come into existence by means of God from this reality. God says in Quran: “And He has subjected to you what is in the heaven and what is in the earth, all together, from Him.” (*Al-Jathiya*: 12)<sup>25</sup>

## 2.6 God and Man

Ibn al-Arabi highlights the theory of perfect man with reference to Mansur b. Al-Hallaj (d. 309/922), as he was the first person who founded this theory. Ibn al-Arabi had close association with Hallaj’s theory, and it played a very important role in the history of Muslim mysticism.<sup>26</sup> According to this theory, God created Adam in His own image, and it was tradition which Sufis differentiated between two natures in man: the divine (*al-lahūt*)

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<sup>22</sup> Herbert A. Davidson, “Avicenna’s Proof of the Existence of God as a Necessarily Existent Being” in *Islamic Philosophical Theology*, ed. Parviz Morewedge (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979), 165-81.

<sup>23</sup> Wahid Bakhsh Rabbani, *Islamic Sufism: The Science of Flight in God, with God, by God, and Union and communion with God* (Lahore: Bazm-i-Ittehad-ul-Muslimin, 1994), 68.

<sup>24</sup> Ibn al-Arabi, *Al-Futuhāt al-Makkiya*, 32.

<sup>25</sup> Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s Cosmology*, 34.

<sup>26</sup> D.S. Mohammedanism and the Islamic World (New Delhi: Deep Publications, 1988), 200-3.



and the animal/human or *al-nāsūt*.<sup>27</sup> Ibn al-Arabi explains this relationship in his beautiful poem:

“He praises me and I praise Him,  
He worships me, and I worship Him.  
In my state of existence I confirm Him,  
He know me while I know naught of Him,  
Where then is His Self-sufficiency,  
Since I help him and grant him bliss?  
It is for this that the Reality created me,  
For I give content to His knowledge and manifest Him.  
Thus did message come,  
Its meaning fulfilled in me.”<sup>28</sup>

Ibn al-Arabi’s God the essence of all that is worshipped and loved in all religions.

## 2.7 Cosmos as Signs, Marks and Proofs

The word cosmos comes from Arabic word *ālam* that is derived from same root as *alāma* (mark), *alam* (signpost), and *‘ilm* (knowledge). Ibn al-Arabi explains the term *ālam* as “everything other than God” (*māsiwā Allāh*) or “everything other than the Real” or *māsiwā al-haqq*.<sup>29</sup> Cosmos is creation (*khalq*), and it is created by the Creator. Ibn al-Arabi borrowed the term *dalil* to refer to the cosmos. Furthermore, William Chittick explains this term with two meanings: “signifier” and “proof.”<sup>30</sup> Ibn al-Arabi remarks that rational argument and formal proofs are inferior to unveiling and tasting as sources of knowledge. He argued that signs lead to direct unveiling of God, while proofs lead to indirect understanding of God. The changes of the states in the cosmos are among the signs of God.

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<sup>27</sup> Gülen, *Emerald Hills of the Heart*, 171-79.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn al-Arabi, *Fusūs Al-Hikam*, 95.

<sup>29</sup> Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Cosmology* 3.

<sup>30</sup> Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, *The Vision of Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1994), 52-57.

People apparently see these changes but remain unaware of them.<sup>31</sup> The Shaykh points out that everything in the engendered existence is a sign of Him. To him, the superiority of signs over proofs is valuable. The signs point to God and each sign brings a message to it by God.

## 2.8 Time and *Wajūd*

Generally, one question is asked about beginning of universe in context of time. When did the universe originate? *Wajūd* has no link with time but to the Real.<sup>32</sup> The Shaykh's view is that cosmos exists through God but not itself. Time (*zamān*) is created with (*makān*) place. Time is negated by *Wajūd* and origination of cosmos. It did not come into *Wajūd* with time. One cannot say God existed "before" the cosmos and one also cannot say that cosmos came into existence "after" *Wajūd* since there is no 'after-ness' and 'with.'

## 2.9 *Wajūd*: God's Form

Ibn al-Arabi repeatedly says that God created Adam in His form.<sup>33</sup> The word 'form' itself occurs many times in the Quran:

"(God) created you, then proportioned you, then balanced you, in whatever form He willed, He mounted you." (*Al-Infitar*: 7-8)

"He formed you." (*Ghafir*: 64)

"He made your form beautiful" (*At-Taghabun*: 3)

"He is called the "Former", Form-Giver", (*musawwir*)" (*Al-Hashr*: 24)

The term of form in Islamic philosophy was used in Aristotelian sense. The correlative of matter method was applied on form, and the words of reality and quiddity were applied to

<sup>31</sup> Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabī's Cosmology* 4.

<sup>32</sup> Gülen, *Emerald Hills of the Heart*, 171-90.

<sup>33</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Ideals and Realities of Islam* (London: George Allen Publishers, 1966), 18.

derive the meaning of this word.<sup>34</sup> In Sufi literature, meaning of form were associated with reality and quiddity. Ibn al-Arabi employed the term of form and paired with term entity. To him, the entity is fixed while the form's reality embedded with God. Manifestation is concerned with forms but not to entity. God is *Wajūd* and every gendered existence gets His form.<sup>35</sup> There is nothing to exist but the All Merciful. The Shaykh beautifully explains the God's form:

“Engendered existence because manifest in the form of Be!  
Be is His command, His command His speech His  
knowledge, and His Knowledge His Essence. Hence the  
cosmos because in His form.”<sup>36</sup>

Every individual thing in cosmos borrowed the form of God in the respect of *Wajūd*. The Shaykh points out that only the perfect human beings manifest the form of God in remarkable ways. Every part of the cosmos neither would be the form of the cosmos. Apart from the human being, only whole cosmos is perceived in the form of Real. The whole cosmos is viewed in the divine form. God loves divine beauty as His Messenger said in the *Sahīh* of Muslim: “God is beautiful and He loves beauty.” Hence, the form of cosmos is beautiful.

## **2. 10 *Wajūd*: Entities and Name**

The Holy Quran summarizes its teachings that God is referred with the “most beautiful names (*al-asma al-husna*) and the word *al-husnais* derived from *hasan* which means

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<sup>34</sup> Gülen, *Emerald Hills of the Heart*, 171-90.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s Cosmology*, 80.

“beautiful and “good.”<sup>37</sup> The Quran emphasized that God is beautiful. God’s beauty and goodness is above the beauty and goodness of His creation (cosmos). The Holy Prophet said that God has ninety-nine names.<sup>38</sup> According to William C. Chittick, everything other than God is the name of God, and God is Being, everything, every entity, every possible thing, is a name of Being.<sup>39</sup> So every name in the cosmos is His name, not the name of other than He.

Ibn al-Arabi stressed the relation between *Wajūd* and nonexistence through divine names. The names express the *Wajūd*’s perfection in different forms like power, desire, life and knowledge. Names have no independent existence, for they are only words which represent the relations. When viewed from the perspective of physics, the laws of physics are the form that the self-manifestation of One Being takes. When viewed from the perspective of metaphysics, the Divine names are the form that the self-manifestation of the One Being takes. Fundamentally, all of these forms express the same principle: I was a Hidden Treasure, I wished to be known.<sup>40</sup>

### 2.11 *Wajūd*: The One Entity (‘*Aynwāhida*)

God alone has true *Wajūd* that belongs to the One Entity.<sup>41</sup> Ibn al-Arabi explains that cosmos is One Entity, but it is multiplicity. There are many entities, but how they can be

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<sup>37</sup> Murata, *The Vision of Islam*, 58.

<sup>38</sup> M. Fethullah Gulen, *Question & Answer about Islam*, Eng. tr. Muhammad Cetin (Clifton, NJ: Tughra Books, 2010), 17-19.

<sup>39</sup> William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-Arabi’s Metaphysics of Imagination* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2000), 80-87.

<sup>40</sup> Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyidin Din Ibn ul Arabi*, 54-59.

<sup>41</sup> Fakhruddin Iraqi, *Divine Flashes (Lama’at)*, 9.

one. *Wajūd* belongs to One Entity, and It is identical with Its reality. Ibn al-Arabi used the phrase *wāhida fil-wajūd* (one in *wajūd*); it explains the relation between One Entity and multiple entities.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, he elaborates this fact by the saying of Holy Prophet (PBUH): “Your Lord is one, just as your father is one”<sup>43</sup> The Shaykh took example of Adam and children. Eve is identical to Adam. There are two diverse forms, but they present on entity. In this respect, father is one. All the multiple entities of cosmos are following only one God. Entity is one, but it has many relations. Ibn al-Arabi frequently remarks that the divine names are conceptualised with One Entity and many entities. In one respect, they are limited, when they are associated with many entities. On the other hand, they are unlimited. The Real is one entity with multiple properties. The philosophers emphasized that “Nothing proceeds from the One but one.”<sup>44</sup> It seems that many divine names give rises to universal multiplicity.

## 2.12 *Wajūd*: Unity and Totality

Ibn al-Arabi explains the relation between the two sorts of divine unity. The term *jam‘*, which means ‘All Comprehensiveness’, and it can be better translated as: “He-who-brings-together.”<sup>45</sup> The active participle *Jāmi‘*, which is *al-ism al-Jāmi‘* (an adjective name of Allah), has same expression with its meanings. The Shaykh applied the same adjective name of *Jami* to the perfect human being. The perfect human being is the all-comprehensive engendered entity. He brings together all divine and cosmic attributes in

<sup>42</sup> Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyidin Din Ibn ul Arabi*, 54-59.

<sup>43</sup> Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-‘Arabi’s Cosmology*, 73.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>45</sup> The words cannot be separated, and in the philosophical sense, it expresses closely relationship of things. Ibid., 171.



single created locus. In brief, *jam'* is quality of "bringing together" or all-comprehensive" that is equated to God and the perfect human being.<sup>46</sup>

The Shaykh applies the passive participle of *majmu* that means "which has been brought together" or "totality." The unity of many-ness or unity of totality is referred to as *ahadiyyat al-majmū* that means unity of what has been brought together. The Unity of *wajūd* is that all attributes together comprise a unity. The Real discloses Himself in the Unity of totality. As God says in the Quran: "To Him the whole affair is returned" (*Hud*: 123). The Shaykh often employs the formula of *Wajūd*, which is  $1 \times 1 = 1$ . Accordingly, everything in the universe is one, and it reflects God's oneness. *Wajūd* multiplies by the entities of things in the term of the things unity equals one reality. One *Wajūd* equals one reality. One *wajūd* is related to multiplicity and it remains one. God is the First and *Wajūd* cannot be. God is the Last when all things will return to from where they arose. As Ibn Arabi declared:

"There is none besides God;  
There is none besides His  
Being firm, none but God  
He is not known in time,  
No one can ever know God."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyidin Din Ibn ulArabi*, 54-59.

<sup>47</sup> S. A. Q. Husaini, *The Pantheistic Monism of Ibn al-Arabi* (Lahore: Ashraf Publication, 1970), 70-71.

## Chapter 3

### Introduction and Early Dissemination of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in South Asia

The renowned fifth-century BC Greek sage, Aristotle advised the famous Greek conqueror, Alexander the Great, to acquire knowledge after reaching India.<sup>1</sup> The Indian sages had a complex concept of higher truth or the One Supreme Reality, which was eternal. The One Eternal Reality and its attributes have been experienced in all mystical traditions of South Asia; however, it was referred to with different names in these religious traditions. The debate on experiencing the Real is undertaken with reference to two related concepts: transcendence and immanence. With reference to the concept of God's transcendence, He is understood as the Absolute, as well as incomprehensible and unreachable, i.e. He is beyond human understanding. However, with reference to the concept of immanence, He is experienced with relatively subjective ways. In ancient India, the Hindu sages and religious theorists and philosophers had written about it. The religio-spiritual and intellectual elite in India was monotheistic, i.e. they were believer of One Reality, though they call it with different names, and they associated it with beauty and charm of cosmos.

The third chapter of the present study is divided into three sections: the first and second sections explain the concept of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* with reference to similar philosophical views in Vedantic Hinduism and Zen Buddhism. The third section discusses the introduction of the Ibn al-Arabi's works in South Asia, with particular reference to the early dissemination of the concept of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*.

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<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Shafi Baloch, *Shaykh Akbar Muhuddin Ibn al-Arabi* (Lahore: Maktaba Jamal 2006), 210.



### 1.1 Concept of *Advaita* (Non-dualism) in Vedantic Hinduism

India had rich philosophical and intellectual traditions in ancient times. It was the time when India was at its peak of knowledge production in realms of philosophy, astronomy, astrology, mathematics, political science, etc. The level of wisdom of people was high, and they had possessed high level of rational thinking about cosmos and God. The Indian society, that had highly rational understanding, can be assessed by religious scriptures of Upanishads and Gita, which included much philosophical contents. Vedantism is the mystical aspect or dimension of Hinduism, just like Sufism is the mystical branch of Islam, and similarly, Zen is the mystical dimension of Buddhism, which will be discussed in the preceding pages. Advaita Vedanta is a sub-branch of Vedanta, which deals with the philosophy of non-dualism. A renowned Pakistani philosopher-scholar, Ali Abbas Jalalpuri remarks that Upanishads (which are a collection of many ancient texts, and which are considered Divine or revealed texts by many Muslim scholars) provide the comprehensive account of the philosophy which can be compared with the concept of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*.<sup>2</sup> The philosophy of Advaita Vedanta or non-dualism has many similarities with the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. Adi Sanakara (d. 820), a great Indian philosopher and theologian of eighth century, is said to have systematized and consolidated Advaita's philosophy in Hinduism by synthesizing the existing views on the subject. He primarily focused on the interpretation of the Hindu scriptures with reference to the concept of transcendental reality, rather than relying on logic, cosmology, ritualism and psychology.<sup>3</sup> His commentaries on Advaita Vedanta are considered the basic doctrine of non-dualism. A

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<sup>2</sup> Ali Abbas Jalalpuri, *Rawayat-i-Tamadduan-i Qadim* (Lahore: Takhliqat Publishers, 1991), 194.

<sup>3</sup> William M. Indich, *Consciousness in Advaita Vedanta* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1995), 2.



simple formula of Non-Dual Vedanta is described in Adi Sankara's writings in these words:

*"brahmasatyam*  
God is the Reality.  
*Jaganmithya*  
The world is illusory.  
*jivobrahmaivanapara*  
The soul (or self) is, indeed, nothing else but God."<sup>4</sup>

To him, it is transcendental and non-dual consciousness, which is the essence of both subjective and objective elements of our experience; hence, subjective and objective experiences unfold only one Reality itself.<sup>5</sup> The Upanishads frequently repeat this statement that "verily, all this is Brahman (God)."<sup>6</sup> According to this statement, the claim that cosmos is directly Brahman (God) is never made, but the cosmos is a sign of Brahman. The world of appearance comes from the ultimate Reality of Brahman; thus, cosmos is the manifestation of God. In the words of the Upanishads:

"These three: the soul, the world, and the Lord of all,  
Are nothing else but the one Brahman.  
It's Brahman alone who exists as everyone and everything;  
beyond Brahman, the Self, there is nothing further to know."<sup>7</sup>

The ancient Greek philosopher, Plotinus (d. 270 AD), who is considered the founder of Neoplatonism, repeatedly explains in one sentence the philosophy of non-dualism: "There were not two; beholder was one with beheld; it was not vision composed but a unity

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<sup>4</sup> Swami Abhavanada, *The Wisdom of Vedanta: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nondualism* (London: John Hunt Publishing, 2006), 17.

<sup>5</sup> Indich, *Consciousness in Advaita Vedanta*, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Abhavanada, *The Wisdom of Vedanta: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nondualism*, 33.

apprehended.”<sup>8</sup>The essence of non-dualism can be described in the sentence: “Brahman alone is real, the world is illusory and Atman is identical with Brahman.”<sup>9</sup>

This statement characterizes the basic features of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*; for example, “Brahman alone is real” means that there is nothing but God, and “the world is illusory” fulfils Ibn al-Arabi’s point of view that this world is nothing more than a dream. “Atman is identical with Brahman” illustrates that every individual has Divine self in his or her soul, which is identical with God.

In Advaita Hinduism, One Supreme Reality (*satya*) is qualified by three levels: *Pāramārthika*, *Vjāvahārika* and *Prātibhāsika*.<sup>10</sup> In the first level, *Pāramārthika* is Pure or Absolute Reality which cannot be contradicted by any other reality or existential experience. At the second level, *Vjāvahārika* is the empirical or phenomenal reality of five senses. This reality is perceived in the world of names and forms, and it is contradicted by other realities and experiences. At the third level, *Prātibhāsika* is illusion (*maya*); for example, it is illusion to see a mirage or two moons instead of one. This stage of reality expresses the relationship of Brahman (God) and *maya* (illusion) which can be explained in two aspects: “Godhead and Creator.” It is also associated with *Theos* and *Logos* “Light and Darkness,” and *Purusha* and *Praktri* or “Shiva and Shakti.”<sup>11</sup> *Maya* illustrates another name

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<sup>8</sup> David Loy, *Non-duality: A Study in Comparative Philosophy* (New York: Humanity Books, 1998), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Yakub Masih, *Shankara's Universal Philosophy of Religion* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1987), 66.

<sup>10</sup> Raphael, *The Pathway of Non-duality, Advaitavada: An Approach to Some Key-points of Gaudapada's Asparśavāda and Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta by means of a series of questions answered by an Asparśin* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1992), 13.

<sup>11</sup> Abhavanada, *The Wisdom of Vedānta: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nondualism*, 22-23.

of God's power manifestation. It is the power of world-projection which is inherent and co-eternal with God. Thus, *Maya* is world illusion which is produced by God's power.

Furthermore, Advaita emphasizes that Being and becoming are both dialectical movements of Absolute or non-qualified Supreme Reality (*nirguna*). Gaudapāda, a philosopher and theologian of sixth century AD, elaborated upon the Advaita philosophy by writing text on it. He denies the casual change with a general metaphysical principle after reaching point of unconditional monism.<sup>12</sup>

The Absolute is beyond human being, He is truly Transcendent and Infinite; moreover, it is beyond human comprehension.<sup>13</sup> It cannot be personal, and it is one without second.<sup>14</sup> Avatar Adi Da Samraj (d. 2008), an American spiritualist, beautifully explains this Ultimate Reality:

"I Say Only Reality Itself (Which Is, Always Already, The One, and Indivisible, and Indestructible, and Inherently egoless Case) Is (Self-Evidently and Really) Divine, and True, and Truth (or Real God) Itself.... I Say the only Real God (or Truth Itself) Is the One and Only and Inherently Non-Dual Reality (Itself)—Which Is the Inherently egoless, and Utterly Indivisible, and Perfectly Subjective, and Indestructibly Non-Objective Source Condition and Self-Condition of All and all."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Loy, *Non-duality: A Study in Comparative Philosophy*, 63. According to this principle, objects are nonexistence at the beginning, and it originates; consequently, it is nonexistence. When it is destroyed, it is nonexistence in the middle. In the end, it is completely nonexistence.

<sup>13</sup> Masih, *Shankara's Universal Philosophy of Religion*, 69-70.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph A. and Bracken, "Infinity and the Logic of Non-Dualism," *Journal of Hindu-Christian Studies* (Jan. 1998, 1-2).

<sup>15</sup> Burton Daniels, "Nondualism and the Divine Domain," *The International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, (Jan. 2005), 2-8.

A song in the *Avadhut Gita* (a Hindu text which elucidates the basic principles of Advaita Vedanta, composed in the ninth or tenth century AD) unveils the ultimate Reality and knowledge:

“To some, the Self appears as other ;  
To me, the Self is I.  
Like undivided space, One alone exists.  
How, then, could the subject and object of meditation be two?  
You are the ultimate Reality; have no doubt.  
The Self is not something known by the mind;  
The Self is the very one who knows!  
How, then, could you think to know the Self?  
You are the one Purity! You have no body.  
You are not the mind; you’re the supreme Reality.  
“I’m the Self, the supreme Reality!”  
Say this without any hesitancy.  
Why do you weep, O mind? Why do you cry?  
Take the attitude: “I am the Self!”  
O dear one, go beyond the many;  
Drink the supreme nectar of Unity!”<sup>16</sup>

According to Advaita Vedantism, the Self is Brahman. It is One Self, or “I” that includes all selves. Brahman exists in the form of subjective and objective reality. In subjective reality, He is directly known as “I”, while in objective reality, He is perceived by a subtle form which based on sensual level.<sup>17</sup> Hence, the subjective reality (I) is perceiver of objective reality (Witness).

## **2. Concept of *Anātman* (No-Self) in Zen Buddhism**

Zen Buddhism, the sub-school of Buddhism which deals with the mystical aspects of Buddhist faith, believes in perfection of nondiscriminatory knowledge (wisdom).

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<sup>16</sup> Abhavanada, *The Wisdom of Vedanta: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nondualism*, 43-44.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 19.

Generally, the knowledge is divided into two categories: experimental and theoretical knowledge. The knowledge which is based on experiment is called experimental or practical knowledge, while the knowledge which is based on theory is called theoretical or intellectual knowledge. According to Zen, theoretical knowledge is the form of “game of language,”<sup>18</sup> and it promotes discriminatory knowledge. Zen maintains that discriminatory knowledge is delusion or illusion in nature.

The Buddhist *Anātman* doctrine (No-Self) developed in the *Prajñapāramitā* text of the *Mahāyāna* tradition.<sup>19</sup> This doctrine emphasizes denial of permanent, changeless and substantial self; moreover, it represents the fundamental ontological emptiness (*śūnyatā*). All the phenomenon of reality is interdependent on rise and fall, coming and going. The self that is considered reality is unfocused and unstable; indeed, all is empty (*śūnya*).<sup>20</sup> The dominant theme of Zen meditation focuses on the radical non-duality, which means end of Buddhist practices. According to Buddha, *dharmakāya* is already reality of everyone and everything. In this regard, enlightenment, liberation from sufferings and pain by meditation, unveils this primordial reality. This practice of meditation leads to the vision of the Ultimate Oneness of all things.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Nagatomo Shigenori, “Japanese Zen Buddhist Philosophy,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Mar 2015), 2.

<sup>19</sup> Leesa S. Davis, *Advaita Vedānta and Zen Buddhism: Deconstructive Modes of Spiritual Inquiry* (New York: Continuum Publishers, 2010), 4.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> David L. McMahan, “Meditation (Chan/ Zen),” in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, eds. Damien Keown and Charles S. Prebish (New York: Routledge, 2013), 500.

The followers of Zen Buddhism teach No-Self, that supports the Non-duality of subject and object. Buddha observed that human beings were suffering on account of their state of delusion.<sup>22</sup> He came to the conclusion that the delusion needs to be eradicated; hence, he propagated the teachings of emptiness from delusion. Buddha summarized his teachings by “the four noble truths.”<sup>23</sup> firstly, all beings experience suffering which is self-evident; and secondly, there is cause of suffering which is the ignorance of the “permanent Reality”.<sup>24</sup> Thirdly, there is a release from suffering that is the extinguishing of the false ego and consequent realization of the Unborn Self. Fourthly and lastly, the meditation is the only way to liberate from the delusion, which causes sufferings and hardships.

### 3.1 Introduction of Ibn al-Arabi's Works in South Asia

Ideas similar to those of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* already existed in the sufi literature before the arrival of Ibn al-Arabi's teachings in South Asia. Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj writes in his book, *Kitab al-Luma* that the renowned Persian sufi, Bayazid Bastami (d. 874) learnt the knowledge of the higher truth about Oneness of God from Abu Ali Sindhi (who was originally a Hindu, but later converted to Islam). Alternatively, Abu Ali Sindhi got education about Islamic injunctions from Bayazid Bastami.<sup>25</sup> According to Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi, Abu Ali was a student of Vedantism before he became a Muslim, and so the Hindu doctrines of Advaita Vedantism (which were similar to the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*) reached Bastami from Abu Ali Sindhi. Moreover, he also maintains that

<sup>22</sup> Thrangu Khenchen, *On Buddha Essence: A Commentary on Rangjung Dorje's Treatise* (Boston: Mass Shambhala, 2006), 34.

<sup>23</sup> Abhavanada, *The Wisdom of Vedanta: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nondualism*, 38.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Baloch, *Shaykh Akbar Muhuddin Ibn al-Arabi*, 211.

famous sufis including Hussain ibn Mansur Hallaj (d. 922), Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār of Nishapur (d. 1220), and 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 1424) also came to Sindh.<sup>26</sup>

The Suhrawardiyya *Silsilah* (a sufi order) spread in the Indian subcontinent from Sindh, where there were many *khanqahs*. It is said that during the ninth and tenth centuries, forty sufis settled in Baluchistan who believed in the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*, where they made a circle and became 'nameless'. People could not name them because they were nameless after absorbing themselves in One truth.<sup>27</sup> It is interesting that the celebrated sufi text, *Kashf Al-Mahjub* (The Revelation of the Hidden) by Saiyyid Ali ibn Usman al-Hujwiri, which was considered the most authentic work in all sufi circles of South Asia,<sup>28</sup> is silent about it. Directly, it is hard to find full details of the doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in the book but indirectly, there are many traces about Ibn al-Arabi's doctrine. In one place, Ali al-Hujwiri explains God's relation with things and man.<sup>29</sup> He divides the concept of unification of God in three kinds: Unification of His knowledge, Unification of His creatures, and men's unification with God. In brief, ideas related to *Wahdat al-Wajūd* and mystical experiences pertaining to *Wahdat al-Wajūd* were experienced in the Sufi tradition of South Asia, but the sufi theorists could not give it a proper doctrinal shape as Ibn al-Arabi did. In other words, the concept could not be

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Anna Suvarova, *Muslim Saints of South Asia: Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge, 2004), 39-53.

<sup>29</sup> For details see, Ali B. Uthman Al-Hujwiri, *Kashf Al-Mahjub*, Eng. tr. Reynold A. Nicholson (Karachi: Darul-Isha'at, 2004), 278-90.

theorized by the South Asian sufis in a systematic manner, though a lot many commentaries had been written by them.

Many sufis of South Asia belonging to diverse sufisilsilahs strongly believed in the mystical doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. However, generally the Chishti and later the Qadri sufis, and some Suhrawardī sufis were the most vocal advocates of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. They studied Ibn al-Arabi's monumental work, *Fusūs al-Hikam* and *Futuhāt al-Makkiyya*, but they generally avoided debate on it in public gatherings, though they did it in their private circles which included only the accomplished sufis, and not the sufi novices, laymen, or the uninitiated. Probably, they knew the dangers inherent in the publicization of this philosophy, and they also knew the consequences which sufis like Husain ibn Mansur al-Hallaj—the cotton carder—had to face for publicizing it. In a state of spiritual ecstasy when he was experiencing unity with God, he raised the slogan of *ana al-Haqq* (I am the Truth), which was taken as a self-divinizing cry by the orthodox *ulama* or scholars, upon whose insistence he was eventually assassinated in the tenth century.<sup>30</sup>

Ibn al-Arabi's mystical philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* is considered the cornerstone of Muslim spiritual or sufi thought. It influenced the Sufis of different *silsilahs*, philosophers, poets, *ulama* and intellectuals circles all over the world. It was hard ever to disassociate from Ibn al-Arabi's doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* for the scholars of Sufism, and Muslim theology and philosophy. The early proponents of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in South

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<sup>30</sup> Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (California: University of California Press, 2007) 19-26.



Asia took interest in the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*, and they propagated the teachings of Ibn al-Arabi in their religious institutions. They involved in writing treatises and commentaries on the great works of Ibn al-Arabi including *Fusūs al-Hikm* and *Futuhāt al-Makkiyya* during the medieval period.<sup>31</sup> There is no parameter that can define to what extent the Sufis, intellectuals, and philosophers were influenced from Ibn al-Arabi's teachings, and how they developed their own independent views to explain the doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*.

The famous Suhrawardi sufi and poet, Fakhr al-Din Ibrahim 'Iraqi (d. 1287), who was a disciple and caliph of Shaykh Baha al-Din Zakariyya of Multan (d. 1262), introduced the work of Ibn al-Arabi for the first time in the history of South Asia. 'Iraqi belonged to Hamdan, where he got early education.<sup>32</sup> He was a renowned Persian sufi-poet and scholar, who interpreted Ibn al-Arabi's work *Fusūs al-Hikm* (Bezels of Wisdom) in his poetic manner. He wrote *Lama'āt* (The Divine Flashes) when he was living in the company of Sadr al-Din al-Qunavi,<sup>33</sup> a student of Ibn al-Arabi, in Konya.<sup>34</sup> 'Iraqi spent some time in the *khanqāh* (hospice or sufi dwelling) of Shaykh Bahā al-Din Zakariyya in Multan.<sup>35</sup> The Shaykh was quite fond of 'Iraqi because of his spiritual insight and accomplishments. He

<sup>31</sup> Iqbal Sabir, "Impact of Ibn Arabi's Mystical Thought on the Sufis of India during the Sixteenth Century," in *Sufis and Sufism: Some Reflections*, ed. Neeru Misra (New Delhi: Manohar Publisher, 2004), 129.

<sup>32</sup> Dara Shikow, *Sakinat-ul-Auliya* Urdu trans. Muhammad Ali Lutfi (Karachi: Nafees Academy, 189), 152.

<sup>33</sup> Fakhr al-Dīn 'Iraqī was student of Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunavi. Sadr al-Dīn was an adopted son and pupil of Ibn al-Arabi, and he played key role to spread the teachings of Ibn al-Arabi after his death. Sadr al-Dīn was also close friend and contemporary of Rumi, because Rumi was living in the spiritual circle of saints in Konya.

<sup>34</sup> Hamid ibn Fazlulah Jamāli, *Siyar al-'Arifīn*, Urdu tr. Muhammad Ayub Qadri (Lahore: Markazi Urdu Board, 1976), 152.

<sup>35</sup> Tanvir Anjum, *Chishtī Sufis in the Sultanate of Delhi 1190-1400: From Restrained Indifference to Calculated Defiance* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 299.

gave his daughter in his marriage.<sup>36</sup> Shaykh Sadr al-Din Ārif, who was the son and spiritual successor of Bahā al-Din Zakariyya, received the copy of *Fusūs al-Hikm* by Iraqi.<sup>37</sup> Hence, the work of Ibn al-Arabi was introduced in the thirteen century, but it got fame later during the fourteenth century.

In the middle of the fourteenth century, the sufi literature of Chishti and Suhrawardi sufi shaykhs spread in South Asia.<sup>38</sup> From that time onward, the ideas of Ibn al-Arabi inspired the Sufis of South Asia; however, they hesitated to spread them in South Asia. In fact, the sufis feared that the mystical ideas of Ibn al-Arabi might have critical repercussion for the Indian society at large.<sup>39</sup> Mostly, the Sufis believed that the works of Ibn al-Arabi dealt with the higher and subtle truths that were revealed to Ibn al-Arabi, which were essentially incommunicable to laypersons. Moreover, the Sufi masters thought that it was risky to teach laypersons such complicated mystical teachings of the Shaykh. To them, it was difficult for laypersons to comprehend complicated theosophy of Ibn al-Arabi. On the account of this, the Sufi masters preferred to conceal rather than to publicize their subtle, intricate and subjective spiritual experiences. Owing to the fear of adverse repercussions, Shaykh Sharaf al-Din Yahyā Maneri (d. 1371) of Bihar rejected some of his letters becoming popular among the people.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, the Chishti sufi, Khawāja Bandanawaz Gēsūdirāz of Gulbarga (d. 1422) warned his disciples to study Ibn al-Arabi's *Fusūs al-*

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<sup>36</sup> Suvorova, *Muslim Saints of South Asia*, 193-95.

<sup>37</sup> Anjum, *Chishtī Sufis in the Sultanate of Delhi*, 299.

<sup>38</sup> For details, see Joseph Kitagawa, *The Religious Tradition of Asia: Religion, History, and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 150-55.

<sup>39</sup> Anjum, *Chishtī Sufis in the Sultanate of Delhi*, 299.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

*Hikm*. In this way, the teachings of Ibn al-Arabi remained in closed circles of the Sufi Shaykhs. However, dissemination of Ibn al-Arabi's works was initiated when Sufi scholars started producing literature on them. Many Sufi scholars such as Shaykh Ali Hamadāni (d.1384), Shaykh Abū l-Mahāsin Sharaf al-Din of Delhi (d.1392), Khawāja Saiyyid Muhammad Gēsūdirāz, Shaykh Saiyyid Jamāl al-Din Maghrabi (d.1423) and Mir Saiyyid Jamal Afzal al-Din Amir Māh wrote commentaries and treatises on Ibn al-Arabi's works dealing with *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. It must be remembered that the fourteenth century marked the spread of Ibn al-Arabi works and doctrines in South Asia.

## Chapter 4

### Major Proponents of *Wahdat al-Wajud* in South Asia in Pre-Mughal Era

In South Asia, although majority of the sufis were the believers and advocates of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*, the phenomenon was neither codified nor uniform. It remained an unending debate in various sufi circles, and every sufi perceived and interpreted *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in the light of his personal experience. The present chapter elaborates the various interpretations of the renowned South Asian sufis, who played a key role in spreading the teachings of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in South Asia.

#### 4.1 Khawāja Saiyyid Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī

Khawāja Saiyyid Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī of Ajmer (d. 1236) was the founder Chishti *silsilah* in India.<sup>1</sup> As mentioned earlier, the Chishti sufis were the foremost advocates of the teachings of Ibn al-Arabi, compared to any other Sufi *silsilah* in South Asia, but these ideas remained limited to their close circles. Reference *Wahdat al-Wajūd*, neither Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī, nor his disciples propagated the philosophy independently in public spheres until the first half of the fourteenth century. K.A Nizami argues that Shaykh Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī had a firm belief in *Wahdat al-Wajūd*.<sup>2</sup> According to Amir Hasan Sijzī (the compiler of *Fawa'id al-fuad*, the *mal'fuzat* of Shaykh Nizam al-Dīn Awliya), Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī never mentioned the name of Ibn al-Arabi in his conversations, as recorded

<sup>1</sup>Dara Shikow, *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, 129.

<sup>2</sup> Syed Shah Khusro Hussaini, *Saiyyid Muhammad Al- Husayni-i Gisudiraz on Sufism* (Delhi: Idarah-I Adabiyat-I Delli, 2009), 8.

*Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*.<sup>3</sup> However, the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* reflects in his poetry, and he used the term *hama ost*.<sup>4</sup> He explains the criteria for an *Arif* or a Gnostic that he or she should abstain from all worldly desires and long for nothing but Allah; and that is possible, he opines, only when he would cease to distinguish between the creature and the Creator.<sup>5</sup> An *Arif* knows all the secrets of God, because the latter reveal all the secrets to him. When someone annihilates oneself, one sees God's light everywhere and in everything.<sup>6</sup>

#### 4.2 Qādī Hamīd al-Dīn Nāgaurī

Qādī Hamīd al-Dīn Nāgaurī (circa d. 1246) was a native of Bukhāra, and his father, Atāullā Mahmūd, migrated to India and settled down in Delhi.<sup>7</sup> Qādī Hamīd al-Dīn Nāgaurī, a versatile genius and disciple of Khwaja Qutb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, wrote many books on Sufism.<sup>8</sup> His most famous books, *Tawale 'i-Shamus* and *Risālah Majmū'a-i 'Ishqiyya* deal with the subject matter of the subtle mystical problems and the interpretation of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. In *Tawale 'i-Shamus*, he explains God's ninety-nine names.<sup>9</sup> Apart from these books, *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*, *Khazīnat al-Asfīyā* and *Akhbār al-Akhyār* elaborate the philosophical ideas of Qādī Hamīd al-Dīn Nāgaurī.<sup>10</sup> Regarding the philosophical ideas pertaining to *Wahdat al-Wajūd*, he says, "A man reaches higher status where he perceives

<sup>3</sup> Anjum, *Chishtī Sufis in the Sultanate of Delhi*, 299.

<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Mu'in al-Din Derdai, *Majlis-i Sufia* (Karachi: Nafees Academy, 1988), 273.

<sup>5</sup> Shaykh Abdul al-Haq, *Akhbar-ul- Akhyar*, Urdu tr. Iqbal al-Deen Ahmed (Lahore: Darul Ishayat, 1997), 62-70.

<sup>6</sup> Sabah al-Din Abdur Rehman, *Bazm-i Sufia* (Lahore: National Book Foundation, 1949), 65.

<sup>7</sup> Dara Shikow, *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, 129.

<sup>8</sup> For details see, Jamāli, *Siyyar al- 'Arifin*, 210-20.

<sup>9</sup> Rehman, *Bazm-i Sufia*, 93.

<sup>10</sup> Mohammad Noor Nabi, *Development of Muslim Religious Thought In India: From 1200 A.D. to 1450 A.D.* (Aligarh: Muslim University, 1962), 38.

nothing but God”<sup>11</sup> He explains the two major aspects of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* which are as follows:

**(i) God as Absolute (*Alam-i-Wahdāī*): God’s Transcendence**

God as Absolute is referred to as *tanzīhi* aspect of God, and it has been mentioned in the second chapter. According to Hamīd al-Dīn, God is the Absolute Who cannot be derived from anything. Similarly, the Absolute is independent and free from association with others. It cannot be ascribed with attributes because that will change the very essence of things. Only the creation can be ascribed characteristics but not God. The attributes of things can be known by modes, but God is free from all modes, which makes Him unknown. The essence of God cannot be comprehended with the help of human senses, imagination, and intellect or reason (*aql*), for these are limited but not God who is unlimited. The Unlimited Being cannot be estimated by the limited being. The modes of God are above the stations (*maqām*) and miracles (*karāmat*) of the sufīs, the intoxication, (*sukr*) or sobriety (*sahw*) and the annihilation (*fanā*) or the subsistence (*baqa*).<sup>12</sup>

**(ii) God and Cosmos, and God’s Immanence**

Qadi Hamīd al-Dīn has discussed the attributes of God in his *Risālāh Majmua ‘Ishqiyya*. He, like Ali al-Hujwiri, thinks that God possesses the attributes of Majesty (*Jalāl*) and Beauty (*Jamāl*). Hujwiri also held the same view about God in his *Kashf Al-Mahjub*.<sup>13</sup> The other attributes such as longing (*shawq*) and pleasure (*dhauq*), joy (*farka*) and sorrow

<sup>11</sup> Abdul al-Haq, *Akhbar-ul- Akhyar*, 71.

<sup>12</sup> S.M. Akram and Waheed Qurashi, *Darbar-i-Mili*, (Lahore: Mujlas Taraki Adab, 1966), 47-51.

<sup>13</sup> For details see, Al-Hujwiri, *Kashf Al-Mahjub*, 286-90.

(*huzn*), happiness and anger are derived from the majesty and beauty. The Muslims are the manifestation of beauty whereas the infidels are the expression of majesty. The term “Muslim” is ascribed to the spirit (*rūh*) and infidel is referred to as the lower soul (*nafs*). In heaven, spirits will rest, and the hell is the abode of lower souls. Hamīd al-Din creates the logical relationship among human heart, spirit and *nafs*, and asserts:

“Human heart is midway between the spirit and the lower soul. Sometimes, it inclines towards the spirit which brings the bounties of God, and sometimes, it inclines towards the lower soul which cause the wrath of God”<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, his followings words are important to know the relation of Servantship (*Ubūdiyyat*) and Lordship (*Rubūbiyyat*):

“Whenever the attribute of ‘Lordship’ overpowered Prophet Muhammad, whatever he said at time was called the word of God (*Kalam-i-Allah*); but whatever he uttered at the stage of Servantship, that was known by as tradition (the sayings of Prophet) Thus, *Jibri’el* represented the personality who was bearer of the state of the Lordship of Prophet Muhammad.”<sup>15</sup>

Hamīd al-Din states that God’s manifestation and concealment follow two attributes of God: sobriety and intoxication respectively. Similarly, the Day of Judgment and death indicate the intoxication of God whereas the creation and life indicate the sobriety of God.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Nabi, *Development of Muslim Religious Thought in India*, 40.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Akram and Waheed Qurashi, *Darbar-i-Mili*, 47-51.

### 4.3 Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Masūd Ganj-i-Shakar

Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Ganj-i-Shakar (d.1265) was a man of letters. He was the caliph or *khalifa* (spiritual successor) of Shaykh Qutb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī. He is popularly known as Baba Farīd. He writes:

“God alone deserve all praises. He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden. Whosoever He elevates none can bring down and whomsoever He throws down non can elevate. None can bring to light what He has concealed and none can conceal whatever He has revealed.”<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, he says:

“Love is related to fire, where all *Alams* would burn. At the result of this love, lover loses his mortal self, and unites with beloved. Lover does *mujheda* to meet his Beloved. They do *makashfa* to observe with other. After observation, his love becomes faster and all secrets reveals on him slowly. Love reaches at station, where lover united with beloved.”<sup>18</sup>

To him, walking on the *rah-i-‘ishq* (path of love), there are seven hundred stations (*maqamat*). The first station is that of trial and tribulation (*bala*) from the Beloved, which the lover should not hesitate to take. He has to consume his self. He listens only with His ears, sees with His eyes, and walks with His feet. He does *zikr* with his tongue only for the Beloved.

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<sup>17</sup>Nabi, *Development of Muslim Religious Thought In India: From 1200 A.D. to 1450 A.D.*, 48.

<sup>18</sup>Rehman, *Bazm-i Sufia*, 122-149.



#### 4.4 Shaykh Hamīd al-Dīn Sūfī Siwālī of Nagaur

Shaykh Hamīd al-Dīn Sūfī Siwālī (d. 1273) was a *khalīfah* of Khwajah Mu‘īn al-Dīn Chishtī, who gave him the title of *Sultan al-Tarīkin* (The King of Ascetics). He was also a believer and advocate of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*.<sup>19</sup>

Ibn al-Arabi explained the two important aspects of *Tanzīh* and *Tashbīh* of God with a remarkable approach to search for God. There were two schools of thought that had different views for a search of God.<sup>20</sup> One school denied the acquirement of knowledge of God on the intellectual grounds, while the other emphasized the intellectual grounds. For one group, when a seeker applies human attributes to find God, he ends up declaring an anthropomorphic God, which is against the teachings of the Qurān. Shaykh Hamīd al-Dīn adopted a reconciliatory approach and suggested that one should neither confine God to anthropomorphism, nor should one deny the existence of God on intellectual grounds. One should bear in mind the following views while seeking and searching for God:

“(i) God has no direction, so as to move in it; (ii) He is not in space so as to require space as an indispensable condition for His existence; (iii) He is not one who would ever take a concrete shape so as to justify one seeking spatial proximity with Him; (iv) He is not at a measureable distance, so as to enable one to come close to Him; (v) He is not the one who is lost so as to make it possible for one might wait for Him; (vi) He is identical with time so that one might wait for Him; and (vii) He is not space so that one might depend on Him in the sense I which one depends on space.”<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 133.

<sup>20</sup> Nabi, *Development of Muslim Religious Thought in India*, 32-33.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

To him, “the search for God” implies one’s complete annihilation of himself and then getting absorbed into God. The purification of soul from human vices is the only way of union with God.

#### 4.5 Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Bu Ali Qalandar

Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Bu Ali Qalandar (d. 1323) was initiated into Chishtī *silsilah* by Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā and Shaykh Qutb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī. His book *Mathnawi Bu Ali Qalandar* explains the features of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. He addresses his followers about *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in the followings words:

“Become the lover of beloved. Know the Beauty Who is beloved of both worlds. Say to yourself beauty of beloved. Beloved made you the owner of *Wajūd* by his love so that He can see His Beauty (*Jamāl*) and Majesty (*Jamāl*) through your mirror. You know His secret, and He knows your secret. Become lover so that you can see His Beauty forever.”<sup>22</sup>

In his *Mathnawi*, he explains his ideas regarding *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in the following verses:

“I was nameless in the garden of wahdat when world appears.  
God see me through His Beauty to exist in the world.  
He manifested His Beauty in the creation.  
My God named whom I am soul, and  
He (*Saqi-yi-wahdat*) filled my cup with intoxication.”<sup>23</sup>

#### 4.6 Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā

Muhammad bin Sayyid Ahmad bin Ali (d.1325), better known as Sultan *Shaykh al-Mashaykh* Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā, was a disciple of Bābā Farīd Ganj Shakar.<sup>24</sup> He received

<sup>22</sup> Abdul Haqq, *Akhbar ul-Akhyar*, 188.

<sup>23</sup> Bu Ali Qalandar, *Mathnawi*, Urdu tr. Malik Siraj al-Dīn (Lahore: Andersons, 1956), 6.

<sup>24</sup> Dara Shikow, *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, 133.

education from Maulana Ala al-Din Usuli. Zia al-Dīn Bārāni writes in *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*:

“God showered similar bliss on Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā as He granted Shaykh Junaid and Shaykh Bayazid Bastami in previous centuries.”<sup>25</sup>

Going through *Maqamat-i-Auliya*, it appears that he was greatly influenced by Ibn al-Arabi’s theosophy. For instance, he expresses his views in followings words:

“When a companion of God (*Walī*) crosses the station (*maqam*) of *Qutbiyat* and *Ghosiya wa fardiya*, he reflects *Wajūd* of the Real, and his will becomes God’s will.”<sup>26</sup>

#### 4.7 Shaykh Sharaf al-Din Yahyā Maneri of Bihar

Shaykh Sharaf al-Din Yahyā Maneri (d.1371) was a descendent of Imam Ja‘far al-Sadiq. According to the writer of *Majalis Sufia*, more than twelve works are attributed to him. He was an influential and inspiring personality and attracted the attention of intellectuals and sufis for philosophical debate on *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. In his times, the debate on *Wahdat al-Wajūd* started for the first time in South Asia. His intellectual contributions to the propagation of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* were appreciated, and his writings became popular in South Asia. He explains his views regarding *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in this letters or *maktubat*, which he wrote to his contemporary sufis and scholars, and these letters were later compiled under the title *Maktubat-i Sadi* (The Hundred Letters). According to him, meditation (*mujahida*) and virtuous actions (*riyza*) are mandatory for a seeker to attain the *maqam-i-hama ost* (the station of ‘Everything is He’ or unity) and for that he has to

<sup>25</sup> Zia al-Dīn Bārāni, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, Urdu tr. Siraj Afifi (Karachi: Nafees Academy, 1965), 436.

<sup>26</sup> Sheikh Muhammad Akram, *Aab-e-Kusar*, (Lahore: Idarah-i Thaqafat-i Islamia, 1987), 242-43.

annihilate his or her self by worship and meditation. After attaining that stage, he sees nothing but Allah. He enters in the condition of annihilation (*fanaiyat*) which is referred to as *fana fi tawhid* (or *hama ost*).<sup>27</sup> There is another station (*maqam*) that comes after *fana fi tawhid*: it is called *al-fana al-fana*. The seeker cannot differentiate between the *Jamāl* and *Jalāl* of God. The status of '*ayn al-haqq* and *jama al-haqq* (unity with God) is achieved only when the seeker annihilates himself completely and becomes a part of God. It is only after reaching the station of *tafrid* (individuality) that the seeker gets to know about the reality of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*.<sup>28</sup> After that the seeker gets indifferent to everything except God.<sup>29</sup> He writes in his poetry:

“If you get out of yourself, you become eternal;  
when you turn your face from yourself,  
you get eternal life in His (Allah) company.  
Put your heart and soul in the of beloved  
so that you may reach there.  
For you do know how lofty is the love of the Beloved.”<sup>30</sup>

He further highlights:

“The holy person was radiant with the Divine beauty and majesty awe.  
He had negated himself in response to the word La (not) of *Kalma*, and rose to high negated his self to the extreme. He had been blessed in the eternity of Allah's existence.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Rehman, *Bazm-i Sufia*, 385-86.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Sharaf al-Dīn Yahyā Maneri, *Maktubat-i-Sadi*, Eng.tr. Shah Ilyas Bihari (Hyderabad: Press Publication, 1964), 6.

<sup>30</sup> Syed Sadrul Hasan, *The Life and Teaching of Sufi Saint Hazrat Shaikh Sharafud al-Din Ahmed Yahya Maneri* (Karachi: Bazm-e-Firdausia Trust, 2005), 140.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 144.

#### 4.8 Shaykh Ali Muhaimi

Shaykh Ali Muhaimi (d. 1374) belonged to village Muhaim which is located near Mumbai. Maulana Abdul Hai pays tributes to Ali Muhaimi in his book *Nuzhat al-Khwatir*. According to Abdul Hai, after Shaykh Abdul Haqq Dehlawi, Shaykh Ali Muhaimi was the only exceptional person left in the Indian sub-continent who had the ability to tell the “truth about God.” He wrote commentaries on *Fusūs al-Hikm* by Ibn al-Arabi and *Awārif al-Ma‘arif* by Shaykh Shihab al-Din Suhrawardy. He was the follower of Ibn al-Arabi and an admirer of the concept of *Tawhid-i-Wajūd*. In his *Tabsir al-Quran*, he explains an important verse stating that “God is nearer to you” in the light of the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*: According to his interpretation, God is not only nearer to the humans with reference to place, time, and status of creature, but He is also nearer to us in terms of Self (The Divine Self which is an integral part of all creatures) without any contact and union.<sup>32</sup> To him, God is with us in His Essence, without an admixture or fusion of any kind.

#### 4.9 Saiyyid Ali Hamadani

Saiyyid Ali Hamadani (d. 1386) was an eminent sufi of the Kubrawiyyah *silsilah* in Kashmir,<sup>33</sup> and is remembered as *Amir-i-Kabir*.<sup>34</sup> He was born at Hamadān in 1314 and became popular by the titles of ‘Ali Sāni and *Shāh-i Hamadān* in the history of Kashmir.<sup>35</sup> He enjoyed popular appeal which attracted local people to his spiritual fold and eventually a large community of people was initiated on his hands. The authorship of about forty three

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<sup>32</sup> Abdul Haqq, *Akhbar ul-Akhyar*, 277.

<sup>33</sup> Dara Shikow, *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, 145.

<sup>34</sup> Saiyyidah Ashraf Zafar, *Amir-i-Kabir Saiyyid Ali Hamadani* (Lahore, Nadwa tul al-Musanifin, 1972), 28-31.

<sup>35</sup> Agha Hussain Hamadani, *The Life and Works of Sayyid Ali Hamadani* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 2002), 5-6.

works are attributed to him, including a commentary on *Fusūs al-Hikm* with title *Sharh-i Fusūs*. He also authored *Risālah-i Hal al-Fusūs*; in addition, he wrote *Risālāh-i Wujūdiyyah* to explain *Wahdat al-Wajūd*.<sup>36</sup> He wrote *Risālāh Manami* which explains the terms and concepts in *Wahdat al-Wajūd*; for example, *Alam-i Mithal*, *Alam-i Khiyal*, *Manam* and reality of *Rauya*. In *Risālāh Al-Sab in al-Manaqib*, Ali Hamadānī wrote that he once read in the writings of Ibn al-Arabi that a man can live seventy days without eating and drinking. He applied this mystical experience on himself, and did not eat or drink for seventy days.<sup>37</sup> He says that he saw Holy Prophet (PBUH), and asked the meaning of *Fusūs*, to which the Holy Prophet (PBUH) replied: *Āl-Fusūs Ho Wallah Ho*, meaning “God knows about *Fusūs*.”<sup>38</sup>

From among his many works, *Risālāh Nuriya*, *Risālāh Ma'sh al-Salikin*, *Risālāh Kashf-ul-Haqāiq*, and *Risālāh Isrār-e-Wahi* deal with the explanation of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. In *Zakhirat ul Malūk*, he disclosed the secrets of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in these words:

“Please know that God Almighty has created the human beings on account of two reason: the first is the appearance (*Surat-i-Zahir*) and second in inner self (*Sirat-i-Batin*).”<sup>39</sup>

He emphasized the importance to know one's self, since it is the key to know God. In one place, he explained the fundamentals of highest virtues which the “perfect man” of Ibn al-Arabi had. According to him, these are “knowledge, politeness, charity, piety,

<sup>36</sup> Anjum, *Chistī Sufis in the Sultanate of Delhi*, 310.

<sup>37</sup> Zafar, *Amir-i-Kabir Saiyyid Ali Hamadani*, 137.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>39</sup> Hamadani, *The Life and Works of Saiyyid Ali Hamadani*, 14.

courageousness, justice, truthfulness, forbearance, nobility, and faith.”<sup>40</sup> In this way, he produced a plethora of literature which deals with the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*.

#### 4. 10 Khwaja Masud Bakk

Khwaja Masud Bakk’s (circa d. 1388) real name was Sher Khan; he was born in the royal Tughlaq family. He was a poet of high repute.<sup>41</sup> He turned into a hermit and got interested in experiencing the doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. He was deeply influenced by this mystical doctrine. In *Mirat al-Arifin* (The Mirror of Gnostics), he says:

“When the Real appeared, possible things disappeared. He exists because He has *Wajūd*, and we do not exist, because we have no *Wajūd*. We cannot explain the Real in the words, because the words are limited to explain the Reality of whole. The Real does not use the words to explain Himself, but we use the words to explain Him.”<sup>42</sup>

According to orthodox Islamic teachings, it is prohibited to talk about the mysteries of the soul, because it is *Amr-i-Rabbi* according to the Quran, meaning that it is from the domain of God. It discloses the entire secret about the cosmos and the Real.

“Dear friend, you are mirror in which: He sees his image. Similarly, the soul is the *Jamāl* of Allah, and you are moving to discover *the Jamāl*.”<sup>43</sup>

He further explained that “The personality of man is defined on the behalf of soul rather than physical appearance.”<sup>44</sup> The soul is not witnessed by physical eye, but is felt by the inner metaphysical eye. Moreover, he argued that God created Adam as His reflection.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Abdul Haqq, *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, 239.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 240-43.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

Being a poet, he freely discussed ideas pertaining to *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in his verses without any fear of the leaders of orthodoxy. Narrow-minded and bigot *ulama* had zero tolerance for his views. Unfortunately, he was executed on the charges of heresy.<sup>45</sup>

#### 4. 11 Saiyyid Ashraf Jahangir Simnani

Saiyyid Ashraf Jahangir Simnani (circa d. 1405), a well-reputed sufi scholar who belonged to Chishti and Kubrawi *silsilahs*, was born in Northern Iran.<sup>46</sup> He belonged to a royal family and he succeeded his father as a king. He was inspired by the mystical teachings of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* and retired to sufi way of life after abdicating his throne in his youth. He devoted his life to wandering around in the Muslim world, and delivered lectures on *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. He held the polemic discussions over *Wahdat al-Wajūd* with the *ulama*, sufis, and scholars of various places he went to. He was a big admirer and supporter of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* and explained his ideas on the subject in a comprehensive manner. To him, the common people made mistakes in understanding Ibn al-Arabi's philosophy in its true sence. He proved the validity of the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* with reference to Quran and *Sunnah*; however, he held that such an intricate debate on the "Unity of God" might turn the laymen away from the right path. He believed that the status of *fāna* could only be attained by following Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s teachings with heart, actions, and speech.<sup>47</sup> According to him, there are two types of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*: *Wahdat Mutalaqa min heyth al-Zāt wā Sifāt* and *Wahdat Muqiyeda min heyth al-Sifāt*.

<sup>45</sup> Khaliq Ahmed Nizāmī, *Salātīn-i-Dehlī kē Madhabhī Rujhānāt* (Lahore: Nigarshat Publishers, 1990), 413.

<sup>46</sup> Zahurul Hassan Sharib, *The Sufi Saints of the Indian Subcontinent* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 2006), 145.

<sup>47</sup> Nizam Yemani, *Lataif-i-Ashrafi dar Biyan Tawaiif*, Urdu tr. Mushir Ahmed Kakurwi (Kichhauchha: khanqah Ashrafia, 1943), 35.



Ashraf Jahangir argued that God is Absolute with His Essence (*Zāt*) and attributes (*Sifāt*). There is only One *Wajūd* that exists with His Essence. Everything is non-existence with its attributes in the cosmos.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, he explained the story of Pharaoh and Prophet Moses (PBUH) which has been written in *Fusūs al-Hikm*.<sup>49</sup> After visiting various sufi centers of the Muslim world, he finally settled in Kichhauchha,<sup>50</sup> India. Out of large collections of writings that are associated with him, only two works survived: *Maktubat-i-Ashrafi* and *malfuzat* which deal with the subject of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. His disciple, Nizam Yemani, compiled *Lataif Ashrafi*.

#### 4. 12 Saiyyid Muhammad bin Ja'far

Saiyyid Muhammad bin Ja'far (circa d.1405), one of many *khalifah* of Shaykh Nasir al-Din Mahmud Chiragh of Delhi, lived in the period of Tughluq Dynasty and held expertise in the knowledge of Oneness of God. He expressed his views regarding *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in his book *Bahr al-Ma'ani*:

“When a saint absorbed in *tajallisifa'at*, he finds himself incorporated with His *Jamalisifti*. In one hand, the saint's possible *wajūd* absorbed in the light of *sifa'at Wahdat al-Wajūd* of Real; on other hand, Real's *Wahdat al-Wajūd* dominates on the saint's possible *wajūd*. In this condition, saint explains the things in the state of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* of Real. He becomes nothingness, and Ultimate Reality reveals on him. He says *anā al-Haqq* ‘I am the Truth.’”<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Rehman, *Bazm-i Sufia*, 465-67.

<sup>49</sup> Abdul Haqq, *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, 236-37.

<sup>50</sup> It is a village in the modern Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh, India.

<sup>51</sup> Nabi, *Development of Muslim Religious Thought In India*, 109.

#### 4. 13 Shaykh Abū'l-Mahāsin Sharaf al-Din

Shaykh Abū'l-Mahāsin Sharaf al-Din was a well known sufi of his times, and received acclamation across the sufiworld on account of his books. He was a literary man and gave up his worldly desires and preferred to live in poverty. He got absorbed in the love of God, and disconnected himself from all world affairs.<sup>52</sup> He wrote '*Ayn al-Fusūs Sharh-i al-Fusūs* in which he explained the ideas of Ibn al-Arabi as had been expressed in *Fusūs al-Hikm*.<sup>53</sup> He also wrote *muktubat* or letters to his contemporary sufi, Shaykh Sharaf al-Din Yahyā Maneri in which he explained the theoretical development of Sufism with reference to *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. He explained the importance of 'ilm (knowledge) in the stages of Gnosticism.<sup>54</sup> The subject matter of book is a detailed account on *Sharīat*, *Tarīqat*, and *Haqīqat*, gnosis, love of God, manifestation of God, and nature of soul.

His views on *Wahdat al-Wajūd* were contradictory: he supported and rejected the various aspects of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. According to him, when a sufi attains the gnosis of God, it is the perfect stage of Oneness of God (*Tawhīd*). By the grace of God, his soul gets enlightenment, and in the enlightenment of inner-self, he never perceives anything except the existence of God. The sufi's invisible particle hardly ever becomes non-existence. Neither creatures would be the Creature, nor they would they be non-existent. The sufi forgets the existence of everything except God on account of self-absorption in God. Sharaf al-Dīn believed in union of creature with the Creator, but he maintained the difference

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<sup>52</sup> Nizāmī, *Salātīn-i-Dehlī kē Madhabhī Rujhānāt*, 412-13.

<sup>53</sup> Anjum, *Chishtī Sufis in the Sultanate of Delhi*, 310.

<sup>54</sup> Nabī, *Development of Muslim Religious Thought in India*, 18.

between the creature and the Creator.<sup>55</sup> To him, God and cosmos are not identical. He stressed on remembering Allah always in your heart, and Allah provides solution to all the problems of life.<sup>56</sup> He believed that the mysteries of God cannot be known. If someone spends one's entire life to know the mysteries of God, it will be hard to solve even a single mystery. All the attributes of God cannot be limited in human consciousness. Whatever is happening in the creature, it is the reflection of God's mystery.

#### 4. 14 Shaykh Abdul Karim bin Muhammad

Abdul Karim bin Muhammad of Lahore was a disciple of Shaykh Nizam al-Din Balkhi and was initiated in Chishtī *silsilah*. He was a great scholar, and he wrote many books on Sufism.. He writes about *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in his book '*Aqaid al-Wahidon*:"God is everywhere, and He exists in all things, and nothing is without his existence."<sup>57</sup> When things exist, it means God exists. Things cannot exist without the existence of the Real, because they have not the *wajūd* of Real.

#### 4. 15 Khawāja Saiyyaid Muhammad Gēsūdirāz

Khawāja Saiyyaid Muhammad Gēsūdirāz (d. 1422) was a descendent of Imam Zayn al-Abidin, and he was initiated in Chishtī *silsilah* by Shaykh Nasir al-Din Mahmud Chiragh of Delhi. He was a profound scholar and authored innumerable works. He wrote a commentary on *Fusūs al-Hikm* and translated a treatise of Ibn al-Arabi with the title of

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>56</sup> Abdul Haqq, *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, 172-73.

<sup>57</sup> Zubaid Ahmed, *Arabi Adabiyat*, Urdu tr. Shahid Hussein Farooqi (Lahore: Idarah Thaqafat-i Islamia, 1991), 106.

*Hawashi Quwat al-Qulub*. It was Khawāja Gēsūdirāz who popularized the doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in India.<sup>58</sup> Gēsūdirāz wrote:

“God means His essence (*dhāt*) with its variety of attributes (*sifāt*) which include attributes of beauty (*jamāl*), majesty (*jalāl*), power (*qudrat*), knowledge (*ilm*), hearing (*samaʿ*), sight (*basar*), and such.”<sup>59</sup>

Once, a Brahman came to Gēsūdirāz and said:

“Since forty eight years I have been searching a person, who has known reality of self, and he has known there is nothing in the world without *Wajūd* of self.”

Gēsūdirāz replied:

“A person can know the reality of self and *Wajūd* if he has self control on his desires (*Kasb-e-Dil*) with a particular action. He will understand that there is nothing but only *wajūd*.”<sup>60</sup>

He further explained: “God’s *Wajūd* is not more than that God’s attributes in matter. All matter is manifestation of His *Wajūd*.”<sup>61</sup>

In pre-Mughal era, the dissemination and propagation of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* was mostly an individual endeavor of the South Asian sufis. Although, majority of the sufis were closely affiliated with the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* and were the believers and

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<sup>58</sup> Anjum, *Chishtī Sufis in the Sultanate of Delhi*, 310.

<sup>59</sup> Hussaini, *Sayyid Muhammad Al- Husayni-i Gisudiraz on Sufism*, 67.

<sup>60</sup> Ikram and Qureshi, *Darbar-i-Mili*, 191-92.

<sup>61</sup> Abdul Haqq, *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, 195.

advocates of *hama-ost*, yet there was hardly any collective effort on their part to develop the philosophy into a doctrine, which was undertaken by Ibn al-Arabi only.

## Chapter 5

### Major Proponents of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in South Asia in the Mughal Era

Varied sufi scholars carried on the legacy to propagate the ideas of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in the Mughal era. Debates and discussions on *Wahdat al-Wajūd* were held among the scholars and sufis, who highlighted different features of the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* among the people. The present chapter will highlight major personalities who contributed to spread the ideas of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in South Asia.

#### 5.1 Shaykh Abd al-Quddus Gangohi

Shaykh Abd al-Quddus Gangohi (d. 1538) was a disciple of Shaykh Abd al-Haqq.<sup>1</sup> Shaykh Gangohi was a renowned sufi of South Asia who whole-heartedly accepted Ibn al Arabi's teachings, and he spread them in South Asia. He spread the ideas of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* by his poetry. He wrote a commentary on *Fusūs al-Hikm*. He argued that the ideas of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* were controversial in *tasawwuf*, and Ibn al-Arabi was the first person who synthesized the thoughts of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in the form of a coherent philosophy. Apart from Naqshbandi *Silsilah* which came from Central Asia, all other major *silsilahs* of Sufism such as Qadri, Suhrawardi and Chishti came from Iran and Iraq, and they were influenced by the ideas of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* (*hama ost*). He explained the concepts of *Alam-i-Zahiri wa Batini* (the external and the internal realms) with reference to *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. He asserted that *Wajūd* is the real essence, which has two aspects of *Zahiriwajūd* and *Batiniwajūd*. In *Batiniwajūd*, God is Light in the universe, while in *Zahiriwajūd*, God is shadow of that Light. His names and attributes have prevailed in *Alam-i Zahiri*, and He is

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<sup>1</sup>Dara Shikow, *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, 137.

real source of the whole. The reality of *Zahiriwajūd* is the reality of *Wahdat*. In brief, all things in the cosmos are manifestation of the Real. God is the witness for all creatures, and He is *al-Haqq mehsus wa al-Haqq*.<sup>2</sup> To him, *Wahdat al-Wajūd* is an important mystery of God that is associated with the Absolute. He writes: "I always find Him, wherever I see."<sup>3</sup>

## 5.2 Shaykh Abd al-Razzaq of Jhanjhana

Shaykh Abd al-Razzaq (d.1542) belonged to Qadri *Silsilah*, and he was a disciple of Shaykh Muhammad Hasan. He started his usual course of studies, but he gave it up for higher aims. Shaykh Abd al-Razzaq was a good orator who delivered lectures on the theme of *Tawhid*, and his style was similar to that of Shaykh Ibn al-Arabi. He used to say: "There is a mystery in all speeches which motivates towards the Real."<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, he said: "God blesses the *Wajub al-Wajūd* so His *Wajūd* becomes compulsory and any *wajūd* cannot be traced apart from Him."<sup>5</sup>

According to him, there are two types of gnosis: *istadlali* (interpretative) and *wajdani* (intuitive). According to the former, someone who investigates the earth and the skies in the light of God's beauty, one finds creatures between earth and sky. He or she will explore the secrets of God. Some gnostics say that in *Alam-i-Kasrat*, God is present with all His attributes, but in *Alam-i-Wahdāt*, He exists with His *Wajūd* in the *batin* of people.<sup>6</sup> He is the First and the Last. He cannot be associated with particular time and space, because

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<sup>2</sup>Ijaz al-Haqq Quddusi, *Shaykh Abdul Quddus Gangohi and his Teachings* (Karachi: Academy of Educational Research, 1961), 234-42.

<sup>3</sup>Munis Prakash, *Urdu Adab par Hindi ka asr* (Allahabad: Law Publisher, 1968), 35.

<sup>4</sup>Baloch, *Shaykh Akhbar Muhuddin Ibn al-Arabi*, 218.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Abdul al-Haqq, *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, 321-26.

He is unlimited. He created the cosmos, and He is witness of the time and space. Man is the best creature of all His creatures, and cosmos have similar features to man. Man is *Alam-i-saghir* (microcosm; a small universe in himself) to explore the *wahdāt*, because it leads to *Wahdāt* of Allah.<sup>7</sup> When a man separates the darkness, he finds the light of the Real. Every possible thing is attached with the Real, which is called world. The world is manifestation of God, and He is the Absolute. He says: “Do not call time bad, because Allah is attributed to time.”<sup>8</sup>

### 5.3 Shaykh Amanullah of Panipat

Shaykh Amanullah of Panipat (d. 1550), whose real name was Abdul Malik and got popularity with the title of Amanullah, was a great proponent of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. He was a great lover of the doctrine of *Tawhid* and he had a comprehensive command on it. He delivered lectures on the theme of unity of God.<sup>9</sup> He wrote a few books on *Tawhid*. He was the great follower of Ibn al-Arabi’s teachings, who wrote to support the views of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in his *Risala Athbat al-Ahdiyat Nami* and *Risala Athbat*. He writes about *Wahdat al-Wajūd*:

“God is beyond possible things, but possible things are not real. They are inaccessible to follow and trace. We cannot set two separate parameters to access for cosmos and God, because they are associated with each other.”<sup>10</sup>

He claims that two steps are required to reach God; moreover, he says there is a way in which one step is required to God. The one step deals with existence and non-existence

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 326-29.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



with reference to God and cosmos. God has *Wajūd* (existence), which is related to *Sajud wa Qalb* (prostration and 'Heart') and. Now you can walk on water, fly in the air and plunge into fire after annihilation with God; additionally, this one step is considered a big challenging task.<sup>11</sup>

#### 5.4 Shaykh Ali Jiv Gamdhani

Shaykh Ali Jiv Gamdhani (d. 1565) belonged to the genealogy of Shaykh Ahmed Kabir Rifai, who discussed the intricacies of the *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in his Hindi *diwan* (collection of poetry) titled *Jawahir Israr-Allah*. According to Mirza Muhammad Hassan, Ali Jiv Gamdhani's Dewan equates Ibn al-Arabi's Dewan owing to similar expression and meanings. He also wrote first *Siharfi* Urdu book in which he discussed the ideas of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*: "God is the greatest hidden jewel of pearl, and all mysteries reveal on Him."<sup>12</sup>

#### 5.5 Muhammad bin Fazlullah

Muhammad bin Fazlullah wrote a book *al-Tehfat al-Mursalah al-Nabi*, and its subject matter deals with *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. He explains *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in the light of Quran and *Hadith*. He wrote it in three volumes. According to his views:

"God has one *Wajūd*. Although, He is One but He appears in different forms. This *Wajūd* is the reality of the whole existence of cosmos and in this respect, this *Wajūd* cannot reveal on somebody and He cannot be comprehended because He is infinite."<sup>13</sup>

He wrote many verses to explain *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. For example, he says:

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 331.

<sup>12</sup> Najeeb Ashraf Nadvi, *Tarikh Urdu Adab* (Aligarh: Shamshad Market, 1962), 111.

<sup>13</sup> Zubiad Ahmed, *Arabi Adabiyat mein Pak-wa-Hind ka Hissa*, Urdu tr. Shahid Hussain Farooqi (Lahore: Idarah Thaqafat-I Islamia, 1991), 103.

“Sometimes I weep as lover (*Ashiq*); sometimes I repent as a worshiper (*Arif*)  
Sometimes I becomes *Mohed*; sometimes I investigator (*mohukuq*).  
Sometimes I know and sometimes I do not know.”<sup>14</sup>

### 5.6 Hazrat Miyan Mir (d. 1632)

Miyan Mir of Lahore was a disciple of Qadri sufi, Shaykh Khizer Siwistani, who belonged to Sindh. Hazrat Miyan Mir came to Lahore in the period of Emperor Akbar. He got popularity among the scholars and sufis. The great sufis like Haji Nimatullah Sirhindi, Mulla Khawaja Klan, and Mulla Shah Badakhshi were his *khalifahs*. Hazrat Miyan Mir was a great lover of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. He learnt by heart major parts of *Futūhat al-Makkiyya*, and he also learnt the commentary of Nur al-Din Abd al-Rahman Jami on *Fusūs al-Hikm*. Dara Shikoh was a great admirer of Hazrat Miyan Mir and he writes in his book:

“He hides the mysteries of *Wahdat* and *Kasrat* from people, and it was possible that people talk about the mysteries of ecstasy.”<sup>15</sup>

### 5.7 Shaykh Saif al-Dīn

Shaykh Saif al-Dīn was the father of Shaykh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith, who wrote *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar*. He was a disciple of Shaykh Amanullah of Panipat, who belonged to the Suhrawardi *Silsilah*. Shaykh Saif al-Din argued that God has reality of the Absolute *Wajūd*. God is One, and He is present; additionally, He always will be remain forever. God’s *Wajūd* is witness of the Reality. All possible things have limited existence for limited time, because they will disappear after a particular time. God’s attribute, the First and the Last, is

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<sup>14</sup> Anwar Rashid, *Urdu Adab ki Mukhtaser Tarikh* (Islamabad: Muqtadra Quami Zaban, 1991), 75-76.

<sup>15</sup> Dara Shikoh, *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, 114.

essential for all possible things. All possible things of cosmos will disappear, and they will be deprived from their possible *wajūd*. This is the Absolute Reality in which cosmos exists because God exists with His essence.<sup>16</sup> He further says that this is faith of all Sufis and Muslims. God is the Absolute, and He is beyond counting and measuring; in addition, He cannot be limited for part, or whole; common and particular. Human reason can hardly ever access His *Wajūd*. The whole cosmos is the manifestation of God, and it is following the command of Allah.

He exists with His all opposites attributes: He is the First and the Last, and He is present in the consciousness of man as corporeal (*Zahir*) and incorporeal (*Batin*). He is the First to enter the Last, while He is the Last to enter the First. He is in *Batin*, because He enters *Zahir*; similarly, He is in *Batin*, because He enters in *Batin*. In brief, God is the First to become first from cosmos, and He is the Last when there will no existence after the non-existence of cosmos.<sup>17</sup>

### 5.8 Shaykh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlavi

Shaykh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlavi (d.1642) was great personality of South Asia who spread the teachings of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in South Asia. His father Shaykh Safud al-Din, grant parent Shakh Sayedullah, uncle Razakullah Mushtaqi were all supporter the teachings of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. Shaykh Abdul Haq wrote the *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, which is considered important source for the philosophy *Wahdat al-Wajūd*.

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<sup>16</sup> Abdul al-Haq, *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, 331.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

According to Khaliq Ahmed Nizami, when he started compiling the *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, he had amassed a huge plethora of Islamic literature on India.<sup>18</sup> Shaykh Abdul Haq writes in one letter about Ibn al-Arabi and his teachings:

“Shaykh Ibn al-Arabi’s books were worth able source to explain God and his *Rasul*’s teachings. This is real *tasawwuf* and apart from this, is ignorance. Our Shaykh’s *tasawwuf* defines the teachings of Quran and *Sunnah* in comprehensive manners. We cannot consider a Sufi who does not accept his teachings, because a real Sufi has remarkable status in the eye’s of God.”<sup>19</sup>

He says that everything in the cosmos is a manifestation of God. God is the light of heaven and earth, and His light cannot be divided and separated. If one lamp brightens thousands of lamps, it does not mean one lamp will lose its original capacity for providing light. On the account of this, Divine Essence appears in the cosmos, but it remains original in *Alam-i-Wahdāt*. His *Wajūd* is not more or less in *Alam-i-Wahdāt* after appearing in *Alam-i-Kasrat*.<sup>20</sup>

He illustrates the reality of souls. To him, the souls explain parts of *wajub al-wajūd*, which are divided into different essence (*māhiyyat*) of the things. This division is beyond the intellect or reason of human beings. He exemplifies the concept of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*: you will see a child when he makes many holes in a kettle and he put a bright lamp in it. After this, he observes that light is coming from one lamp but from many holes, and this

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<sup>18</sup> Aleem Ashraf Khan, *Shaykh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlvi: Heyat-i-Imi Khadmat* (New Delhi: Islamic Windrows Buru, 1994), 48.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>20</sup> Abdul al-Haq, *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar*, 393.

division of light cannot be comprehended. However, God's *Wajūd* in both *Alam-i-Wahdāt* and *Alam-i-Kasrat* cannot be comprehended by human intellect or reason.<sup>21</sup>

He writes about *Wahdat al-Wajūd* that whole cosmos is set up on behalf of the Real's existence. However, it is acceptable for heart. He states that there is nothing, but God. As God declares in the Holy Quran:

"Anything appears in the cosmos, comes from non-existence; however, it appears owing to God's existence. God is same in past, present, and He will remain same in future. All possible things of cosmos cannot be compared with Him, because they have no *Wajūd* whereas God has *Wajūd*."<sup>22</sup>

### 5.9 Shah Amir Abu 'Ala

Shah Amir Abu 'Ala (d. 1650) was the great Sufi scholar who wrote *Risala Fana wa Baqa*.

He described about the *Wahdat al-Wajūd*:

"*Salik* should not associate anything from other apart the *al-Haq*. According to a group of Sufis, it would be sin if someone does it. *Fana fi Za'at* means that the seeker would consider his *Zat* to the *Zat* of *al-Haq*. He try to explore the self whatever one sees all is *al-Haq*. One should believe in Allah Who is revealing in different forms of cosmos. There is no *wajud* apart from His *Wajud*. The seeker considers the cosmos as a mirror, and he sees the beauty of *al-Haq* in the mirror. Furthermore, he should not forget from the beauty of *al-Haq* for a moment from his heart and mind. The seeker should progress from this status for higher status where he can see *al-Haqq*."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Zahor Hasson Sharib, *Tazkaray Uliay Paki-i-Hind* (Lahore: al-Faseel Nashran Publisher), 301.

### 5.10 Dara Shikoh

Dara Shikoh (d.1656) was a great proponent of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in South Asia like his spiritual mentor Mulla Shah Badhekshi. He was free a thinker and according to Shaykh Muhammad Akram, “it is hard to differentiate between Hindu *Vedanti* and Dara Shikoh.”<sup>24</sup> The prime source of Shikoh’s ideas regarding *Wahdat al-Wajūd* is *Risāla-i-Hak Namā* (the Compass of the truth). It deals with the various stages of spiritual development and also discusses the ways and means through which one can attain spiritual perfection. The author has directed that no one should read that *Risāla* unless he is under the supervision of someone perfect (divine).<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, Dara Shikoh wrote a compendium of *Futūhāt*, *Fusūs al-Hikam*, *Lawā’ih*, *Lama’at* and other works of Sufism, that deals with the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. Besides that, Shikoh examined the religious works of the Hindus, which deal with monotheism with reference to the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. To him, the Hindus did not negate monotheism, and the verses in the four Vedas and the Upanishad are an ocean of monotheism.<sup>26</sup> He collected and translated these works with help of the Pandits and the Sanyāsis of Benares.

He says:

“Any difficult problem or sublime idea that came to his mind and was not solved with help of this in spite of his best efforts, becomes clear and solved with the help of this ancient work, which is undoubtedly the heavenly book and the first

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<sup>24</sup> Baloch, *Shaykh Akhbar Muhuddin Ibn al-Arabi*, 221.

<sup>25</sup> Dara Shikoh, *Majma-ul- Bahrain*, tr. Mahfuz-ul-Haq (Karach: Royal Book Company, 1990), 9.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

fountain-head of the ocean of monotheism, and in accordance with or rather an elucidation of the Quran.”<sup>27</sup>

In addition, the Persian translation of *Bhāgvat Gītā* is also a worthy source to elucidate the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*.<sup>28</sup> He has analyzed the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in Hinduism and Islam with an enlightened approach. All major religions accept the basic notion of oneness of God, and all religions give the message of this Supreme Reality. He gives the message of peace and humanity; he says “Truth is not the monopoly of any one religion.”<sup>29</sup> The *Majma ‘ul-Bahrain* is of supreme importance and explains all major aspects of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. In this book, the following features of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* can be traced.<sup>30</sup>

1. The Elements
2. The Senses
3. The Religious Exercises
4. The Attributes
5. The Wind
6. The Four Worlds
7. The Fire
8. The Light
9. The Beholding of God
10. The Names of God, the Most High
11. The Apostleship and the Prophetship
12. The *Barmānd*
13. The Directions
14. The Skies
15. The Earth
16. The Division of the Earth
17. The *Barzakh*
18. The Great Resurrection
19. The Mukht

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> The manuscript copy of this work is prepared in the India Office Library.

<sup>29</sup> Shikoh, *Majma-ul- Bahrain*, 27.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 30.

## 20. The Night and Day

In *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, he says, “God be praised. Now my speech is identical with their speech. My spiritual aspiration is fulfilled.”<sup>31</sup> Bikram Jit Hasrat states that Dara Shikoh’s approach towards Hindu Philosophy was an appreciable effort to explain the unity of God. However, it was a critical issue for the orthodox theologians, who were not happy with the idea of unity of all religions on one platform.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, Shikoh explains the spiritual experience of Husayn ibn Munsur al-Hallaj, which is considered the foundation stone of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. He admires the passion of al-Hallaj which annihilated his mortal self, and absorbed him into **Godhead**. This is ecstatic intoxication or drunkenness (*sukr*), and it is characterized by loss of sanity and self-control. In *sukr*, al-Hallaj said “I am the Truth” and lost his self-control owing to excess of longing and extreme love.<sup>33</sup>

### 5.11 Hazrat Sultan Bahoo. d. 1691

Hazrat Sultan Bahoo was also an eminent Sufi of South Asia who stressed the *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in a remarkable manner. He beautifully explained God’s two aspects: transcendence and immanence.<sup>34</sup> He writes about *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in his book *Ayn al-Faqr*, “my *wajud* mixed with oneness of God where I could not witness apart from Allah.”<sup>35</sup> He quoted the views of Hazrat Ali and Holy Prophet (SAW) “Hazrat Ali said: “Without God, I could not see anything.” And the Holy Prophet said: “I am with my lover’s imagination (Guman).

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<sup>31</sup> Bikrama Jit Hasrat, *Dara Shikoh: Life and Works* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1982), xxii.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>33</sup> Shikow, *Sakinat-ul-Auliya*, 184.

<sup>34</sup> Sultan Altaf Ali, *Abiyat-e- Bahoo*, Urdu trans. Hazrat Qulam Dastgeer Akami (Lahore: Nashad Publishers, 1995), 48.

<sup>35</sup> Hazrat Sultan Bahoo, *Ain-ul-Faqr*, Urdu tran. Malik Fazel Deen (Lahore: Nadard Sons, 1996), 3.



How one has imagination about Me, I shall be found in one's imagination." Who perceives God as omnipotent; he or she can see the light of God everywhere; anyone who wants to see the truth he or she has to purify his heart.<sup>36</sup> Sultan Bahoo says, "He communicates with me intuitively, and I enjoy with His essence to annihilate myself as *Fana Fillah*."

He further says:

"*Arif* Mola! Do not wish apart from *Allah* and forget everything from his heart while you should be associated with *al-Haq* in every time."<sup>37</sup>

An *Arif* sees God every day, and He achieves this status from *Anul Yakeen*. He stresses that to see *Zaat al-Haq* is integral part of life of *Arif*.<sup>38</sup> To know one's self, Baho has the same approach as that of Ibn al-Arabi. He writes in *Risala Rohee*:

"An *Arif* in Divine Union, whichever direction he looks he cannot see anything other than view of *Elahi* and he eliminates all sign of otherness from his being and with Absolute becomes absolute."<sup>39</sup>

### 5.12 Mulla Khawaja Bihari

Mulla Khawaja Bihari (d. 1747) was *Khaleefa-i- Mureed* Miyan of Hazrat Miyan Mir. He was a good poet and a scholar of *Hadith*, *fiqa* and mysteries of the Divine names.

According to Dara Shikoh,

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.,13.

<sup>37</sup> Hazrat Sultan Baho, Muhakul Fakher, Urdu trans Ameer Khan Niyazi ( Lahore: Al-Arifeen Publications,2007), 198-99.

<sup>38</sup> Hazrat Sultan Baho, *Ameerul al-Konan*, Urdu trans Ameer Khan Niyazi (Lahore: Al-Arifeen Publications, 2007), 320-21.

<sup>39</sup> Sultan Ahmed Ali, *Ishyat Khas*,(Lahore: Mirratul Arifeen, 2011),823.

“from *Alam-i-Wahdāt* point of view, Allah is equal for cosmos, and He cannot be discriminated. He is light for everything; however, He is relatively discriminated from *Alam-i-Kusrat* point of view.”<sup>40</sup>

### 5.13 Shah Abdul al-Latif Bhitai

Shah Abdul al-Latif Bhitai (d.1752) was a well known personality of Sind. His approach towards the Islamic mysticism was a kind of reconciliation between the deeper mystical ideas of the Muslim and Hindu thought.<sup>41</sup> H.T. Sorely states that the *Risala* is regarded as a major source of love between the Hindus and the Muslims. Bhitai emphasized the oneness of God which explains the unity of all experiences and the need for sinking into the ocean of the divine union. It is the subject of the following lines from the Sur Asa:

*“Across Life’s oceans no one yet  
With “I” as guide his foot hath set:  
God indeed who is one  
Adoreth oneness alone.  
Take twoness off to burn with fire:  
Existence may man’s tears require.  
This weeping should be done  
Before oneness alone.”*<sup>42</sup>

He explained *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in the Sur Maizuri:

*“Restrain myself howe’er I try  
I cannot stay unless I see  
Beloved’s face. Unbounded grief  
Without my love assilehth me.  
Avant tomorrow: I’ll not bide  
By promise that tomorrow tells.  
I cannot wait tomorrow’s day.  
Or meet me, love, or kill me, else.  
Bring union to a wretched girl  
Or kill her: only show her eyes*

<sup>40</sup> Dara Shikow, *Safeenat Ulia*, 290-91.

<sup>41</sup> H.T.Sorley, *Shah Abdul Lateef of Bhit: His Poetry, Life, and Times* (New Dehli: Anish Publishing House, 1966), 216.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 227.

*The I'riend she loves. Sad soul, dismiss  
The sorrow from the memories.*"<sup>43</sup>

#### 5.14 Bulleh Shah

Bulleh Shah (d.1757) is considered iconic figure in the Punjabi literature of South Asia, who has a living critic of Punjabi literature. Tirlochman Singh states that Bulleh Shah's approach towards Sufism is "introductory and rudimentary."<sup>44</sup> He has comprehensive approach to explain all major key features of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in poetry.

*"A for Allah who has my heart,  
I have no knowledge of B  
nor do I know what it means,  
while A savour sweet to me.  
I can't tell between O and Q,  
It makes me dither and delder;  
Bulleh, look after the first,  
The rest will take care of itself."*<sup>45</sup>

He further says in his poetry:

*"One is enough. Break the counting frames,  
Forget hell's terror and its flames,  
Purify your dreams and desires,  
Belief and unbelief are just names.  
Truth stands in the hall.  
One point settles it all.  
In prayer why abrade your forehead?  
Away with it, tear down the façade  
Of morality. Causing people pain  
is the only sin you should dread.  
Truth writing is on the wall.  
One point settles it all."*<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, he says in poetry:

*You are the Fast and the Last.  
The universe tells*

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Taufiq Rafat, *Bulleh Shah: A Selection* (Karachi: Oxford University Press), 1-16.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.,40.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.,62.

*There is You and none else.  
But who stands there  
in the wall's shadow?  
Does anyone know?*<sup>47</sup>

### **5.15 Shaykh Muhibb-Allah Ilahabadi**

Muhibb-Allah Ilahabadi (d.1831) was a famous Sufi of Chishti order, and his family tree belongs to Baba Freed Gung Shakr. He was the disciple of Shaykh Abu Seed Gonghi and studied the teachings of Ibn al-Arabi. He got fame in India owing to his deep understanding of Ibn al-Arabi's ideas, and got the title "*Hindi Ibn al-Arabi*". He also wrote *al-Maratabul al-Araba* that was a commentary of the Quran. In that commentary, he discussed *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in detail. He wrote a commentary on *Fusūs al-Hikam* and also wrote *Infasul al-Khawhis al-Fasus* which is a comprehensive detail about *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. It is a significant source for a better understanding of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 72.

## Conclusion

The spiritual experience of unity with the Supreme Being has been experienced by many sufis in South Asia and beyond; however, the credit goes to Ibn al-Arabi, who theorized such experiences, and consequently, developed the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. *Wahdat al-Wajūd* is all about the relation between God and the cosmos. God and the cosmos are interdependent and cannot be understood in separation from each other. The relation of spirit and matter can be explained by this statement: everything is reflection of God, but it is not God. *Wahdat al-Wajūd* is explained with reference to the allied concepts of *tanziah* and *tashbih* regarding God's incomparability and God's comparability to cosmos respectively. The divine names and attributes—the First and the Last, explain God as Manifest (*Zahir*) and Non-manifest (*Batin*).

Even before the teachings of Ibn al-Arabi were disseminated in South Asia, different notions of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* existed in various religious traditions of India. In ancient India rich knowledge regarding philosophy, astronomy, and mathematics was produced. The ideas of non-dualism in Advaita Vedanta serve the same purpose of exploring the Oneness of God. The medieval Indian sage, Adi Shankara provided similar views as Ibn al-Arabi had about God and the cosmos. The Hindu Vedantists believed in One Supreme Reality. According to Vedanta, soul is nothing but God. It is transcendent from human reasoning. The Upanishads frequently explain that all is Brahma (God or the Supreme Deity). The traces and signs of the cosmos are manifestation of the Brahma (God). There is not two but one. All things are the expression of the unity of the One. The

Absolute is Unlimited and Infinite. Renowned sufis like Bayazid Bastami and Husain ibn Mansur al-Hallaj came to Sindh to learn these Vedantic ideas.

The concept of *Anātman* (No-Self) in Zen Buddhism can be equated with the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. Buddha preached that human beings suffer on account of dualism. He propagated that one should get rid of delusion by focusing the One Truth. According to him, meditation is not the only but the best way to liberate from suffering and hardship.

The Suhrawardi sufi scholar and Persian poet, Fakhr al-Din Ibrahim 'Iraqi was the first person to introduce the works of Ibn al-Arabi in South Asia. Similar ideas already existed in Sufi literature, though not in the form of a coherent doctrine. Saiyyid Ali al-Hujwiri explained similar notions about God in his famous work *Kashf al-Mahjub*. Many sufi *silsilahs* such as Chishti, Suhrawardi and Qadri had close affiliation with the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. In the pre-Mughal era, Khawāja Saiyyid Mu‘in al-Dīn Chishti of Ajmer, Qāzi Hamid al-Dīn Nāgauri, Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn Ganj-i-Shakar, Shaykh Hamīd al-Dīn Sūfī, Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Bu Ali Qalandar, Shaykh Nizām al-Dīn Awliyā, Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Yahyā Maneri of Bihar, Shaykh Ali Muhaimi, Saiyyid Ali Hamadani, Khwaja Masud Bakk, Saiyyid Ashraf Jahangir Simnani, Saiyyid Muhammad bin Jafar, Shaykh Abū'l-Mahāsīn Sharaf al-Dīn, Abd al-Karim bin Muhammad of Lahore, Khawāja Saiyyid Muhammad Gēsūdirāz, and Shaykh Ali Jiv Gamdhani were great supporters and propagators of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*.

In Mughal India, many poets, and Sufi scholars got engaged in debates and discussions about *Wahdat al-Wajūd*. The list includes eminent sufis like Shaykh Abd al-Quddus Gangohi, Shaykh Abd al-Razzaq, Shaykh Amanullah, Hazrat Miyan Mir, Shaykh Saif al-Dīn, Shaykh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith, Shah Amir Abu ‘Ala, Dara Shikoh, Hazrat Sultan Bahoo, Mulla Khawaja Bihari, Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, Bulleh Shah, Shaykh Muhib-Allah Illahabadi and many others, who spread the ideas of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* in South Asia. In a nutshell, the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd* had been an important issue of debate among the scholars and intellectuals of South Asia. Generally, the Naqshbandi sufis, particularly Naqshbandi Mujaddidi, the followers of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, opposed the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wajūd*, and tried to counter it with the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Shahūd*. Despite their opposition, *Wahdat al-Wajūd* has so far remained the most popular philosophy among South Asian sufis.

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