



Khoja Ahrar Vali and the Philosophy of “Wahdat ul-Wujud”

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Abstract: This article delves into an in-depth exploration of mystical concepts within the spiritual legacy of Khoja Ahrar Vali, focusing particularly on his philosophical stance regarding “Wahdat Ul-Wujud,” or the unity of existence. Through meticulous analysis, the researcher endeavors to elucidate Khoja Ahrar Vali’s profound insights into the nature of humanity and existence, as informed by the principles of unity and interconnectedness. Central to the investigation is an examination of Khoja Ahrar Vali’s perspectives on the intricate relationship between the individual self and the cosmic whole, emphasizing the ontological unity that underpins all existence. Drawing upon Khoja Ahrar Vali’s spiritual teachings and philosophical reflections, the study aims to shed light on the profound wisdom embedded within his mystical worldview, offering valuable insights into the intricate fabric of human consciousness and the interconnectedness of all beings.

Keywords: existence, *ahad*, unity, *tawhid*, *wujud*, *vajib*, *wahdati wujud*, *kasrat*, *arif*, deity

1. Introduction

In the 14th and 15th centuries, Central Asia experienced a period of cultural upsurge - Renaissance, and made great progress in the creation of new cultural values in the entire Muslim East and in the world. One of the most important aspects of this global process is that secular and religious sciences developed equally, spiritually complemented and enriched each other. In highlighting the confluence of magic, religion, and science throughout this period, scholars like as Matthews et al. [1] have emphasized the shift from metaphysical religion to more secular and nonempirical ideas. This shift signaled a stage in the development of both religious and nonreligious thought, when abstract metaphysical conceptions merged with secular ideals.

Moreover, Hartson’s [2] writings illuminated the ways in which religious and secular areas blended together in the Renaissance, as churches transformed nonreligious venues into places of worship, signifying the erasing lines between the two realms. This phenomenon is a prime example of how secular and religious actions at that time were intertwined and mutually influential. Furthermore, Huringiin [3] and Puspitasari & Yuliana [4] examine the idea of the Islamization of science, which sheds light on how many cultural and religious viewpoints impacted scientific advancements throughout the Renaissance. The way that Al-Attas criticized secularism and how Islamic ideas were incorporated into scientific discourse are two examples of the many different influences that affected scientific thinking in this era.

There are many opinions about the place of the Khojagan (Naqshbandi) order in the history of spirituality and the high social significance of this order. It is worth mentioning about the aspects of divinity and worldliness, which are the basis of this order, about the unity and inseparability of these two important aspects. The Naqshabandi tradition’s focus on the oneness and inseparability of divinity and worldliness is consistent with more general ideas about the harmonious integration of spiritual and earthly

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components, inner change, and connection to nature.

By the 15th century, we are aware that the Naqshbandi order and teaching reached its highest point during the activity of Khoja Ahror Vali. The life and spiritual heritage of Khoja Ahror Vali has been of interest to historians, orientalists, source historians, literary scholars and philosophers for many years.

2. Khoja Ahror Vali and Sufi Existentialism

Khoja Ahror's spiritual-philosophical views, thoughts and opinions about existence and knowledge, which are among the current issues of contemporary philosophy, man and his perfection have been little studied from a philosophical point of view. Based on the above opinion, we researched the ideas of Khoja Ahror about existence, which is a field of his philosophical-mystical views, based on the sources.

In Sufism, the concept of existence is expressed by words such as *ahad*, *wahdat*, *tawhid*, *wujud*, *wajib*, and existing. One of the main themes of Sufism is the question of monotheism. Sufis believe that monotheism is indefinable, and they understand it in three ways:

- 1) Allah knows and expresses his uniqueness;
- 2) Allah has created in man the ability to perceive His uniqueness;
- 3) Man knows the uniqueness of Allah and the judgment about it [5].

Khoja Ubaidullah Ahror explained the concepts of *tawhid* and unity in his work *Faqarotu-l-arifiyn* [6]: "Tawheed is to cleanse and purify the heart from the memory of anything other than the Allah, and unity is to protect the heart from knowing anything other than the Allah". The issue of *Wahdat* is explained in Sufism based on three directions: *Wahdati shuhud*, *Wahdati qusud* and *Wahdati wujud* [7].

- 1) **Wahdati shuhud** refers to the spiritual state where an individual perceives the presence of Allah in all aspects of the world. This concept embodies a duality wherein both Allah and the universe are acknowledged.
- 2) **Wahdati qusud** entails aligning one's will with the will of Allah and recognizing His intention behind all occurrences. Similar to *Wahdati shuhud*, this notion underscores the duality between Allah and the universe.
- 3) **Wahdati wujud** represents a stage where unity is acknowledged in terms of existence, encompassing both will and observation. It posits that true existence is solely attributed to Allah, highlighting a unified perspective beyond duality [8].

Khoja Ubaidullah Ahror in his work *Faqarotu-l-arifiyn* [6] comprehensively covered the methods of the Naqshbandi order. He also approaches some issues creatively and tries to give a deeper philosophical tone to the design. That is, Naqshbandi order, which is between the views of unity and existence and unity, directed more towards unity and existence. Influenced by the theory of the famous Arab philosopher Ibn ul-Arabi, Khoja Ahror puts forward the ideas of unity and reflects it in his works in a Sufi style.

3. Wahdat

Wahdat is a concept deeply rooted in both philosophical discourse and Sufi teachings, denoting unity [9]. Within the framework of Sufism, it encompasses the comprehension of divine truth and encapsulates a nuanced understanding conveyed through *istilah*, representing its philosophical and Sufistic essence. Notably, according to insights from Naqshbandiya scholar Professor G.N. Navrozova, *wahdat* signifies unity and the process of becoming one. It stands in contrast to *kasrat*, signifying plurality. Meanwhile *wujud* denotes "existence." Thus, the compound term *Wahdat ul-wujud* encapsulates the concept of the unity of existence.

The oneness of being, or *wahdat ul-wujud*, is a profoundly ingrained philosophical and spiritual idea. The concept of *wahdat ul-wujud* has been studied by academics such as Chamankhah [10] and Xolmo'minov [11] in the context of Islamic philosophy, especially in connection to individuals such as Qāḍī 'Aḍud a-Dīn Ījī. This idea contrasts with *kasrat*, which denotes multiplicity and emphasizes the oneness and interdependence of all

things. Philosophical discussion and spiritual reflection during the Renaissance and beyond were enhanced by *wahdat ul-wujud*, which represents a holistic worldview in which the material and spiritual domains are perceived as one and the same.

The Andalusian Sufi Muhyiddin ibn ul-Arabi is credited with introducing a philosophical dimension to the concept of unity within Sufism. According to Muhyiddin Arabi, the human form serves as a manifestation of all beings in the world, encapsulating "the essence of the whole universe" or macrocosm (*olami kabir*). Additionally, an individual is considered a part of the world, constituting a unique microcosm (*alami saghir*) wherein a person represents a microcosm in relation to the macrocosm (*alami kabir*). Essentially, the human form is viewed as the embodiment of existence within the realm of the cosmos [12]. Moreover, the human heart is regarded as a "repository" of divinity, perpetually illuminated by divine light. Analogously, the human heart is likened to a mirror, wherein one must embark on a journey of self-improvement and self-awareness to truly perceive the reflection of Allah's countenance. This entails a process of self-discovery that facilitates a deeper understanding of the divine [13].

In the Islamic intellectual landscape, the influence of Muhyiddin ibn ul-Arabi's thinking persists to this day, permeating the works of numerous scholars and philosophers [14]. Subsequently, this philosophical concept underwent widespread development, leaving an indelible mark on various Sufi orders. Figures such as Khoja Muhammad Porso, Khoja Ubaidullah Ahror, Abdurrahman Jami, and Alisher Navoi explored diverse aspects of the unity concept in their writings, with some dedicating entire works or translations to this theme.

German scholar Jürgen Paul highlighted Khoja Muhammad Porso's role in disseminating Ibn Arabi's ideas to the Khojagan Sufi order [15]. He cited Porso's work *Fasl al-Khitab* as a pivotal text, noting its abundant references to Ibn Arabi's teachings. Western scholars Hamid Algar and Jürgen Paul observed that Porso's commentary on *Fusus al-Hikam* elucidated Ibn Arabi's concept of *wahdat ul-wujud*. The philosophical insights of Muhammad Porso laid the foundation for further elaboration by figures such as Khoja Ahrar Vali and Abdurrahman Jami.

4. Khoja Ahrar and *Wahdat-ul Wujud*

Khoja Ubaidullah Ahror explained his thoughts on unity of existence in his work *Faqarotu-l-arifiyn* as follows:

The essence of faith lies in sincerity and conviction, wherein an individual's beliefs should be as tangible and unquestionable to them as physical phenomena. This entails dedicating oneself to worship as if directly witnessing the presence of Allah during prayer. Upon reaching this profound state, the allure of worldly distractions dissipates, illuminated by the clarity of truth. Consequently, one's focus shifts entirely towards the ultimate Creator, transcending any other preoccupations. Simultaneously, the dichotomy between the *shahid* (the observer, or humans) and the *mashhud* (the observed, or Allah) dissolves, elucidating the concept of *laya'rifullaha illallah* – that true comprehension of Allah can only be attained through Allah Himself [16].

According to *Faqarotu-l-arifiyn*, in order for a person to be perfect, first of all, to know Allah, to know his qualities and characteristics, pleasure and charm are of great importance. Allah is known through the love produced by Jazba. A person finds comfort in such an acquaintance. He noted that such a pure heart always radiates light. That light always illuminates the human heart and gives life to the body. As soon as a person is cut off from that light, there is no trace of his life [13]. Khoja Ahrar Vali draws the following conclusion from this statement:

The intellect's wisdom emanates from it, while the heart's yearning

is illuminated by its radiance. The strength in one's hands, agility in their feet, sight in their eyes, and hearing in their ears are all imbued with its metaphorical influence. Ultimately, it is evident that everything derives significance from Him; devoid of His essence, everything is rendered void [16].

The relationship between Man and Universe, Man and Allah are discussed here.

In Khwaja Ahror's Sufi perspective, human beings, celestial bodies, and all other entities are considered manifestations of Allah. It is believed that Allah's will is expressed through various elements of the world, serving as demonstrations of His power. According to Sufi philosophy, this concept of the universe as Allah's manifestation lies at the heart of Khwaja Ahror Vali's work, *Faqarotu-l-arifiyn*. The text emphasizes that human language, within its limitations, receives divine grace as it is seen as a manifestation of Allah. The focus of one's heart is thus directed towards this divine light, with individuals constantly striving towards Allah. Analogously, Allah is likened to the sun, with all things and beings in the world representing His particles. Birth symbolizes the separation of a particle from the sun, while death signifies its return to the source.

5. Conclusion

In summary, Khoja Ahror Vali's interpretation of existence as a unity of being is expressed through mystical language. Uzbekistani president Sh.M. Mirziyoyev emphasized the importance of embracing the rich scientific and spiritual legacy of our ancestors as an ongoing source of inspiration and strength. Indeed, the philosophical perspectives of the wise Sufis not only enrich the study of the history of philosophy but also contribute to elevating the spiritual consciousness of the society, thereby promoting stability.

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