



Article

The Dialectical Unity of Tawhid and Wujud in the Teachings of Musokhonkhodja Dahbidiy

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Abstract: This article analyzes the views of Musokhon Dahbidiy, a major theoretician of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya order, on the issues of tawhid (divine unity), waḥdat al-wujud (unity of being), and waḥdat al-shuhud (unity of witnessing). It also presents a comparative analysis of Musokhon Dahbidiy's interpretations of Ibn al-Arabi's doctrine of waḥdat al-wujud and Ahmad Sirhindi's views on waḥdat al-shuhud.

Keywords: existence, eternal, Ibn al-Arabi, essential attributes, oneness, singularity, tawhid, al-Futuhāt al-Makkiyya, Fusus al-hikam, mutakallim, Kun fayakun, Al-Ghazali, Ahmad Sirhindi, contemplation.

Introduction

Musokhon Dahbidiy, analyzing the concept of unity and divine light from a mystical (irfani) perspective, relates the following narration from the Prophet Idris: "It is narrated from Hazrat Idris (peace be upon him) that when the stars were made subject to him, he would converse with them. One day he asked the Moon: "Your light sometimes decreases and sometimes increases. What is the reason for this?" The Moon replied: "O Prophet of God, my essence is in fact dark, and I possess no light of my own[1]. When I stand opposite the Sun, I partake of its light, and I progress from the state of a crescent to that of fullness (the full moon). Just as objects (or people) see their reflection in a mirror, so my face becomes manifest like a reflection. The closer I draw to it, the more I advance from the peak of crescentness to the peak of fullness". Hazrat Idris then asked: "To what extent does the Sun maintain its companionship with you?" The Moon replied: "Whenever I look at myself, I see that I am standing before the Sun" [2].

Methodology

In this study, historical-philosophical and comparative methods were employed. The primary sources consisted of the works of Musokhon Dahbidiy, particularly Ad-durr al-maknun, as well as other manuscript materials[3]. In addition, a comparative analysis was conducted within the framework of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya tradition, examining the views of Ibn al-Arabi and Ahmad Sirhindi. During the research process, textual and conceptual analysis, along with a systematic approach, were applied to elucidate the interrelationship between the concepts of tawhid, waḥdat al-wujud, and waḥdat al-shuhud[4].

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Results and Discussion

The Naqshbandiyya–Mujaddidiyya order has been a proponent of the doctrine of *wahdat al-shuhud* (unity of witnessing). The views of Imam Rabbani Ahmad Sirhindi on *tawhid* serve as a clear example of this. The scholar of Sufism Annemarie Schimmel states: “The principal contribution of Ahmad Sirhindi was the revival of the doctrine of *wahdat al-shuhud*, which he set in opposition to the classical metaphysical doctrine known as *wahdat al-wujud*” [5].

According to Musoxon Dahbidiy, “Our master, the refuge of gnosis (by whom Ahmad Sirhindi is meant), was on several occasions intoxicated and utterly absorbed in the wine of *tawhid al-wujud*”. However, in the end, Allah through His perfect grace, elevated him beyond this station, led him onto the royal road, and delivered him from the constriction of this gnosis. One of his devoted followers, Abdulhaq, reports that about a week before his final illness, our master, Hazrat Imam Rabbani, said: “It has recently become certain to me that *tawhid* is a narrow lane, while the royal road is something else. I had known this before as well, but now a definitive realization of it has been granted to me” [6]. Thus, it can be understood that Imam Rabbani himself had, at one time, been an adherent of *wahdat al-wujud*.

The Turkish scholar of Sufism Osman Türer also supports the above view, stating: “In contrast to the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud*, which is closer to the monistic and pantheistic ideas of Ibn Arabi, Imam Rabbani’s doctrine of *wahdat al-shuhud* reflects a religious consciousness that is free from all pantheistic influences and preserves a clear distinction between God and the world” [7].

“Glory be to God and praise be to Him! Do they not know that all the calls of the Prophets (peace be upon them) are directed toward pure *tanzih* (affirming God’s absolute transcendence)? All the heavenly scriptures proclaim a transcendent faith. The Prophets (peace be upon them) reject the false deities in the external world and within the human soul, and they call people to reject them as well. They guide humanity to the oneness of the *Wajib al-Wujud* (the Necessary Being), who is free from *tashbih* (anthropomorphic comparison) and *takyif* (inquiring into the “how” of His nature). Have you ever heard that any prophet called people to a faith based on *tashbih*, or claimed that all creation is merely a manifestation of the Creator?!” [8].

In our view, Imam Rabbani adhered to the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* for much of his life and referred to it in his “*Maktubat*”. However, toward the end of his life, he moved away from this view and came to regard the doctrine of *wahdat al-shuhud* as the correct one.

According to Musoxonxoja Dahbidiy, another error is the claim that everything is He, and that all these distinct things are the product of a single essence and merely symbols of one another. Those who hold such views are deemed unbelievers, for they effectively posit hundreds of thousands of gods. In reality, the Lord of the universe, exalted and sanctified, is pure and transcendent above all composition and the multiplicity of created things. He is *Ahad* (the One), to whom no other has any access. No matter how much the earlier Sufis strove, they were unable to attain full knowledge of the divine mysteries of God Most High. Yet many uttered statements such as “*Ana al-Haqq*” (“I am the Truth”), “*Subhani*” (“Glory be to me”), and “*Laysa fi jubbati illa Allah*” (“There is nothing in my cloak but God”). The question of *tawhid* had not been fully systematized or clearly articulated by the earlier Sufis. Then the turn came to the great Shaykh Ibn Arabi (may his secret be sanctified). As a possessor of perfected gnosis, he examined this matter and provided a detailed exposition of it [9].

Musoxonxoja Dahbidiy also described the proponents of unity in later centuries as being on an erroneous path, despite their altering the wording of their expressions: “Some of the later thinkers advance the view that the world is not identical with the Real (*al-Haqq*); they abandon the expression “identical with Him” and censure those who employ

it. For this reason, they reject Shaykh Ibn Arabi and his followers, referring to them in disparaging terms. Nevertheless, they do not affirm that the world is other than the Real; rather, they claim that it is neither identical with Him nor other than Him. This statement, however, is far removed from the truth" [10].

Ibn Arabi lived for a long time in the Near East. Therefore, the influence of Manichaeism can be observed in his theological thought. According to the Sufi thinker, the Divine is a single ultimate reality possessing two aspects: the inner (batin) and the outer (zahir). The inner is such that it cannot be comprehended or perceived and admits no multiplicity. The outer, however, manifests in many forms, in all things, and in the way created beings are fashioned in its likeness. According to pantheistic philosophy, God is the one Creator who brings the world into being in His own likeness; therefore, it is impossible for Him to exist separately from existence, or for existence to exist apart from Him [11]. God is the "Absolute", which cannot be grasped by human thought or consciousness. Thus, in the view of Ibn al-Arabi, existence is the manifestation of the "divine essence" in the material world, a boundless and ever-changing mirror. At the same time, the "Absolute" itself becomes a mirror in which the material world appears in various qualities and forms. This idea is expressed in his doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* (the unity of being).

Among the works of Musokhon Dahbidiy, an analysis of "Ad-durr al-maknun", which is primarily devoted to the issue of *tawhid* (divine unity), indicates that he held a favorable view of the ideas of Ibn al-Arabi. The German researcher Jürgen Paul has noted that the ideas of Ibn al-Arabi are not found within the Khwajagan-Naqshbandiyya tradition in the period prior to Muhammad Parsa [12].

Dahbidiy devoted considerable attention to this issue in his works and held Ibn Arabi in high regard as a thinker. He wrote: "The question of *tawhid* had not been fully elaborated or clarified by earlier Sufis. The great shaykh, the accomplished knower of divine realities, Muhyiddin ibn al-Arabi, may his secret be sanctified, investigated this issue and provided a detailed explanation. The greatness of the shaykh and the depth of his knowledge can be understood from his treatment of this matter" [13]. Musokhon Dahbidiy sought to further develop and strengthen Ibn al-Arabi's teachings.

The ontology of Sufism expresses, through the philosophy of *wahdat al-wujud* (the unity of being), the idea found in the philosophy of *'irfan* that the foundation or essence (substance) of Being is God Most High, the Absolute Existence, the Absolute Essence, the One Essence, the Real Existence, the True Being. Within the framework of Sufi ontology, attention is also devoted to the creation of the world and its structure, as well as to the relationships between Real Existence and the world, between the Creator and created beings, the cosmos and the human being, namely, the macrocosm (*'alam al-kabir*) and the microcosm (*'alam al-saghir*).

The Sufi thinker also paid special attention to the concepts of the macrocosm (*'alam al-kabir*, the great world) and the microcosm (*'alam al-saghir*, the small world), as well as to the realms of *amr* (command) and *khalq* (creation).

He wrote: "A person should know that the microcosm (*'alam al-saghir*) is composed of ten components (*ajza' 'ashara*), whose principles (origins) are found in the macrocosm (*'alam al-kabir*), and that it is constituted from the totality of the universe. Five of these belong to the realm of creation (*'alam al-khalq*), which consists of the self (*nafs*) and the four elements (*'anasir al-arba'a*). The four elements are earth, water, air, and subtle vapor. The remaining five components belong to the realm of command (*'alam al-amr*): they are the heart (*qalb*), the spirit (*ruh*), the secret (*sirr*), the hidden (*khafi*), and the most hidden (*akhfa*). Just as the principles of the four elements exist in the realm of creation, so too the principles of these subtle faculties (*lata'if*) exist in the realm of command; they are associated with the Throne (*'arsh*), are known as non-spatial (*la-makaniyya*), and are fully realized. Above the Noble Throne and beneath the other principles lies the origin of the

heart; for this reason, the heart is called a barzakh (isthmus), and it is said to stand between the realm of creation and the realm of command. The limit of the realm of creation is the Noble Throne; thus, the Throne belongs to the realm of creation while facing toward the realm of command. It is therefore called a barzakh: its foundation is the heart; above it is the principle of the spirit, above it the principle of the secret, above it the principle of the hidden, and above it, finally, the principle of the most hidden" [14].

According to ancient philosophers and our Sufi masters, the spirit (ruh) is not merely a subtle (extremely fine) substance, but also a higher vital force, a merciful breath (nafas al-rahman) that has descended from the realm of command ('alam al-amr). Life and vitality arise from the harmonious relationship between the body and the spirit [15]. In other words, the harmony between the body and the spirit can be observed in the process of development.

In the anthropological doctrine of Abdulkhaliq Gijduvani, the human being is described as both the "macrocosm" ('alam al-akbar, the great world) and the "microcosm" ('alam al-asghar, the small world). That is, in a spiritual and metaphysical sense, the human is a vast world not bound by time and space, an immense inner universe, while at the same time encompassing, in a condensed form, the entirety of the physical and natural world. While acknowledging that the human being is composed, on the one hand, of spirit and, on the other, of a physical body, the Sufi thinker's views on the human are grounded in ideas found in his spiritual legacy.

Musokhon Dahbidiy examined the whole of existence as a coherent and integrated system, dividing it into categories such as the eternal and the transient, the abiding and the perishing, the realm of command ('alam al-amr) and the realm of creation ('alam al-khalq), as well as the realm of existence (wujud) and the realm of non-existence ('adam). Professor G. Navro'zova, discussing the concept of the human being in the Naqshbandiyya teaching, presents the following statement: "The human being consists of two elements. One is the body, which belongs to the realm of creation, represents the outward aspect of existence, and is bound to space. Its nourishment is derived from this same realm. The second is the spirit, which belongs to the realm of command and constitutes the inner aspect of existence. Its nourishment likewise comes from that realm". In essence, the human being is composed of two elements: first, the body, which pertains to the realm of creation, represents the external form of beings, exists within space, and derives its sustenance from that realm; and second, the spirit, which pertains to the realm of command, represents the inner dimension of existence, is not bound by space, and likewise derives its sustenance from that realm.

Conclusion

1. Ahmad Sirhindi was initially among the proponents of the doctrine of wahdat al-wujud (the unity of being).
2. This doctrine comprises ideas that, in the history of Sufism, became the subject of debate, ideas that led Mansur al-Hallaj to proclaim "Ana al-Haqq" ("I am the Truth") and that also formed the basis of the teachings of Ibn al-Arabi.
3. An analysis of Musokhon Dahbidiy's views shows that he, too, was a proponent of the doctrine of wahdat al-wujud. However, he proposed interpreting Ibn al-Arabi's teaching not as the merging of creation with the Truth (God), but rather as a manifestation of His divine power.
4. In his Maktubat, Ahmad Sirhindi rejects and criticizes the views of the proponents of wahdat al-wujud, stating: "This group regards those who turn toward pure oneness (ahadiyya) as deficient and assumes that affirming unity without consideration of multiplicity constitutes a limitation".

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