

SUFİ METAPHYSICS: AN APPRAISAL IN SUBCONTINENT PERSPECTIVE

* Dr. Khawaja Muhammad Saeed

ABSTRACT: The article starts with a definition of metaphysics both traditional and modern, giving a relationship between religion and metaphysics. There is also preliminary discussion on the nature of Islamic mysticism or Sufism as such. This followed by main body of the article i.e Sufi metaphysics and its various sections. In the account on Sufi concept of God a distinction has made between *wahdat al wujud* and *wahdat as shuhud*. Then there is a section on Sufi concept of soul. The Sufis lay immense emphasis on the purification of soul for Divine knowledge. Sufi concept universe is very comprehensive as it numerates and explains which different *Alams* are referred to by the Sufi. These *Alams* correspond to the (Seven heavens) of the Qur'an. Sufi concept of man describes a story of man attainment of greater and greater purification right from his creations onwards, briefly describing the concept of perfect manhood in Islam. The article ends with the Sufi concept of love or *ishaq* of Allah which in its intensity metamorphoses the spiritual personality of man

The term "metaphysics" is highly controversial due to its association with the various disciplines. Since the term metaphysics is associated with the various disciplines naturally it bears different meanings that are diversified in nature also. Therefore, it is not an easy task to define metaphysics. My intention is to delineate something about metaphysics at the out set and then proceed to discuss the subcontinent Sufi metaphysics. Historically it is conceived that the term metaphysics was used first in philosophy by Andronicus of Rhodes in 70 B.C. The main difficulty is that the different thinkers have used this term in their own ways and there is no universal criterion to apprehend metaphysics. Some have utilized metaphysics as a branch of philosophy, like epistemology, theology, cosmology axiology and so on. In ancient period philosophy ¹was generally equated with metaphysics* and there was no sharp boundary between these two subjects. Some have understood metaphysics as subject of supernatural or supra physical study, hence it is quite different from the study of the phenomenal objects. Its supernatural dealings differentiate it from the other subjects. But metaphysics does not

* Department of Philosophy University of the Punjab, Lahore

Even science and technology are not detached from metaphysical pursuit. There are many dazzling indications of metaphysical elements in the domain of science and technology. Its unavoidable presuppositions of laws and principles are undoubtedly metaphysical and these are not expressible on language.

Metaphysics generally means a subject of "Reality" which underlies everything. In the ages of pre-Sophists and Sophists the idea of metaphysics was also implicitly discerned. In the writings of Plato and Aristotle we have seen the element of metaphysics, but Aristotle was the first philosopher who discussed metaphysics in a systematic way and actually in his hands metaphysics subsequently began to stand for the philosophical understanding, and discussed about God, soul, Reality, Being, on-beings etc. Aristotle says, "there is a science which studies Being and qua -Being and the properties inherent in it in virtue of its own nature".¹ In present viewpoint it will suffice to say that metaphysics is concerned with the knowledge of the reality after assigning a place to supra rational knowledge, since it is a subject which mainly concerns about the complete apprehension of Reality. Aristotle in his philosophy used the notion of reality as a first cause about the highest wisdom.² This conception of reality has been discussed in the philosophy of Thales as the first and fundamental principle of every thing. In subcontinent philosophy the spiritual perception of reality is often discussed and it is believed that the main task of philosophy is to attain spiritual perception, meaning, a whole view revealed to the soul. In subcontinent philosophy the method of metaphysics is thus the observation of supernatural reality / truth. In broader sense metaphysics is accompanied by the elements of observation, deduction, analysis, induction, common sense, hypothesis, intuition, dialectic and synthetic vision. The scientific method that is something like the hypothesis of deduction-verification technique of empirical sciences does not fully

apply to metaphysical pursuit. Man is a knowledge-acquiring animal; he wants to know all things. Metaphysics is a subject that enlightens human expectations; it widens his intellect and helps to attain true knowledge of his life. In this connection we may further add that man, so long he is considered as a rational animal, cannot live without metaphysics. The entire universe is the clear indication of metaphysical elements that usually motivated him towards metaphysical thinking. He is bound to think about the reality explicitly or implicitly, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly and is unable to avoid metaphysics. Generally people rush from commonsense to science or scientific knowledge, but scientific knowledge is not fully devoid of metaphysics, as we have stated earlier. Many critics, like Positivists have tried to discard metaphysics on the ground that its problems and principles are not scientifically justifiable.

Aristotle rightly described metaphysics as the highest degree of universal knowledge and causes.³ Metaphysics cannot blindly accept its elements, rather it critically evaluates and examines its elements--even the elements of scientific knowledge and its presuppositions. On this ground Brutt rightly observes that sciences are also based on some specific metaphysical presuppositions.⁴ -though metaphysics is mainly concerned about the supernatural entities, it does not mean that it is a subject of anti-intellectualism. Its *intuitive knowledge* is treated as the highest category of knowledge by most of the recognized scholars. Both in subcontinent philosophy and subcontinent Sufism the intuitive knowledge is recognized as the very important kind of knowledge that cannot be gained by mere perceptions and observations of science.

Religion and Metaphysics:

Like metaphysics the term religion is also very controversial and complex due to its variegated nature. However, it bears some common

features that are recognized universally in all religious circles. Mr. E.B. Taylor defines religion as the belief in spiritual beings. Hence there is a close proximity between the goal of religion and the goal of metaphysics. In our previous discussion we have maintained that metaphysics is mainly concerned with the whole experience, including both religious and non-religious elements. But one significant difference between them is that metaphysics cannot accept the emotional method of enquiry; rather it lays emphasis on the intuitional part of it. Therefore, religion and metaphysics are complementary to each other and both are engaged seriously to obtain higher and true knowledge. Therefore, the metaphysical treatment of religious materials cannot be ruled out. Both religion and metaphysics are concerned about the knowledge of Reality. Though both religion and metaphysics are dealing with the knowledge of reality frequently, yet the approach of metaphysics is mostly theoretical, critical and intellectual, whereas the approach of religion is basically accompanied by feeling, emotion and is spiritual. But one thing is to be kept in mind that though metaphysics is mostly theoretical it should not mean that it is devoid of supra-natural or supra- intellectual elements. As we have pointed out earlier, the method of intuition is one of the best methods of metaphysics. Thus, we have seen that the relationship between metaphysics and religion is very deep and intimate.

Sufism:

Sufism is a mystic-philosophical trend in Islam. A Sufi always aspires to attain knowledge of the Reality through the unsurpassed love and friendship with Him. He believes that the main intention of the human being is to attain Divine wisdom (*marifah*) that elevates him to acquire Truth (*Haq*). Sufis claim these are highly metaphysical in nature. Like Socrates they propagate the view that knowledge of self means to

know thy self and that is the most valuable saying. In the course of time Sufism extended its wings and mixed up with other faiths, philosophy and literatures that ultimately changed the shape of Sufism. In the western region, many people accepted Islam-- those who belonged to Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Buddhists etc and they inhabited in the various towns of Persia, Syria, Egypt and Mesopotamia. At that period these regions were the main centers of Neo-Platonism. The influence of Greek and Christian thoughts and philosophies are discernible in the sayings of the reputed Sufis. It is worthy to mention that the Greek wisdom flowed towards the Muslim east through Harran and Syria. The Syrian took special initiative to accept Greek speculations, i.e. Neo-Platonism and transmitted to the Muslim society. Both Plato and Aristotle are popular in Muslim community even today. Now we perceive through the Arab chronicles where they recognized the superiority of thoughts on subcontinent medicine, philosophy, mathematics and astronomy. Sufis are not satisfied only for these thoughts they are similarly interested to gather knowledge on metaphysical subjects and that are the main concern of them. Ba Yazid al Bistami, a celebrated Sufi, learnt metaphysics and spirituality from his teacher Abu Ali Sindi who was of subcontinent origin. The pantheistic concept is originally Vedantic concept and the Sufi concept of *Fana* highly resembles to Buddhist *Nirvana*. Sufis are very much conscious to attain the know ledges of metaphysical elements, like God, soul, concept of love, mystery of the life and the Universe etc. They say the ideas of God's grace; goodness, beauty, truth etc. are metaphysical characters and the sole basis of our realization and apprehension. The concept of love is beautifully epitomized as "Love is not to be learned from me, it is one of God's gifts and comes of His grace".⁵

Therefore, Sufis are falling in dichotomy in defending their faith in one

hand on the other', they are reconciling it with Islam and that is a very difficult task for them.

Sufi Metaphysics:

On the basis of our previous discussion it is almost evident that Sufism is a mystical as well as metaphysical movement within Islam, where the knowledge of the ultimate Reality is their main concern. Metaphysics is designated in Islamic literature and philosophy as "*ma-ba'd- al- tabi 'ah*" (the philosophy beyond nature) or "*al- falsafat- al ula*" (the first philosophy) or "*ilahiyat*" (theology), or "*hikmah*" (wisdom) etc.⁶ Sufism covers many metaphysical elements in its fold and discusses about them in very logical way. It holds discussions about Reality, Being, non -Being, soul, love and so on. However its discussions are mainly routed through God, the Ultimate Reality of the universe as well as the source of all things. It also includes cosmology, epistemology, theology etc as the subject matter of metaphysics. Generally it says that God is the pure Being and is the subject of realization and He is above of all phenomenal thoughts and knowledge. We see the traces of Greek thought in the writings of al Farabi. (870-950AD.) The principles of Nur-e-Muhammedi of Ibn Fariz, the sainthood of Ibn Arabi and the concept of al *Insan al kamil* of Jilli can be identified with Greek Nous.? Sufis are divided into various branches in order to describe metaphysical entities. In regard to the existence of reality some Sufis believe in dualism whereas some others believe on pantheism. Generally their sense of apprehensions about Reality is to be described in three standpoints that are complementary to one another. Some Sufis conceive the essential nature of Reality as self-consciousness and conscious will. Some others describe it in the aesthetic sense and consider it as beauty of Divinity that underlies everywhere. Some other circles of thinkers hold

that Reality is essentially thought as light (*nur*) that illuminates all things in the universe. All these three terms except *hikma* seems derived from the Greek equivalent and the Muslim philosophers have used these terms to express their supernatural phenomena. A notable Muslim philosopher Al-Kindi explains first metaphysics as the science of first Reality (*al-Haq*) that is the main and source cause of all things and logically knowing a thing requires knowing its cause.⁸ Muslim philosophers hold that reality as supernatural and immaterial in nature (*fawq al tabiah*) is a subject of unexplained entity⁹, generally contrasted to material objects. According to them, from first cause all things are derived, because it is permanent and all other things are impermanent. First cause is one, it is neither motion nor soul nor intellect nor it will be treated like any other things but is the source cause of all other things. In the eyes of the Sufi mystics, metaphysics is a discipline of the heavenly bodies. Al-Farabi a reputed philosopher as well as celebrated Sufi mystic explains that metaphysical essence does not belong to natural things, which are falling under the realm of categories. He maintains in his short epistle *ma bad al tabi 'ah* that metaphysics is a universal science (*'ilm- e -kulli*) which is different from theology (*elahiyyat*) as an indispensable part of metaphysics. After determining the exact subject-matter of metaphysics the reputed philosopher Ibn Sina (Avisenna) designated this discipline as '*ilahiyyat*' and made its sharp distinction from the traditional metaphysics. He synthesized many supernatural views in his philosophy and propagated the view that metaphysics is a part of science and its main purpose is to obtain wisdom (*hikmah*). He also claims that this science is the best and truest science which can only give certain knowledge about the universe. ¹⁰ However; Ibn Sina makes the distinction between the subject matter of science (*mawdu*) and its object or goal (*matlub*). According to him the subject matter of

anyone science is taken for granted (*musallam*) in that science which merely investigates its mode (*ahwal*). In Islamic metaphysics God is the goal and not the subject matter. Both Al Farabi and Ibn Sina's views highly resemble the view of Aristotle. They have not appreciated the view of Ultimate Reality of the Neo-Platonism. They opine the notion of One is above and beyond phenomenal being and intellection, it is the first principle. In Islam One is Absolute (*Wahid*), all knowing (*'Alim*), wise (*Hakim*), real (*Haq*) and living (*Hayy*).¹¹ They again maintain that from first principle all other beings and the heavenly world are emanated (*fayad*)

In the 9th century A.D. Sufism deviated something from its traditional viewpoint and understood reality as beauty that is merely the part of apprehension. Both *Ma'ruf alKarkhi* and *al Qushayri* laid emphasis upon the metaphysical reality and adopted the Neo Platonic idea of creation. They abandoned the theory of emanation and adopted the view that the Ultimate reality is an eternal beauty, whose very nature mainly consists in seeing its own face reflected in the universe as mirror. They hold that the universe is the reflected image of the eternal beauty and not emanation. In this regard Mir Sayyid Sharif says, created world and things are the manifestation of His beauty and the first creation of love. The apprehension of this beauty brought universal love (*Ishq-e-haqiqi*) that was the main goal of all later Sufis. To discharge the loving fellowship Jalal al din Rumi proclaims-

o thou pleasant madness Love

Thou physician of all our ills

Thou healer of pride

Thou Plato and Galen of our soul. 12

Sufi Concept of God:

Sufism as a metaphysical philosophy primarily concerns about God as

pure Being and the object of realization. Knowledge of Him cannot be obtained by theory that is mostly metaphysical in character. As a metaphysical philosophy Sufism guarantees redemption of human miseries and attainment of perpetual peace. It needs to establish loving relationship between the devotee and the Divinity. Some Sufis say God purely transcends while some others say He is both transcendent as well as immanent. As we have indicated earlier that Ultimate Reality can be conceived from three angles, such as Reality as self-conscious entity, Reality as beauty and Reality as essentially thought or knowledge.¹³ The first section conceives the whole universe as the will of Ultimate Reality that is essentially monotheistic in nature. The followers of this section are much conscious in intense longing for God due to the consciousness of their sins. The second section lays emphasis upon the apprehension of Divine Reality. Avicenna (Ibn Sina) comprehends Reality basically as an eternal beauty, whose very nature consists in seeing its own face reflected in the universe mirror which is different from emanation. This concept of Reality stressed the point that Reality is absolutely free from limitation and devoid from the beginning and end, right and left, high and low. All feeling of separation, therefore, is ignorance and all otherness here is mere and appearance or a dream or a shadow. ¹⁴ The distinction of essence and attribute does not exist in the Infinite Substance. IS This sense of beauty is related to the Sufi concept of universal Love. The third section conceives Reality as Thought / Knowledge. They identified knowledge with the light (*nur*) that illuminates all things. Al Ishraqi as a supporter of the theory of illumination propagates the view that the Ultimate principle of all existence is "*Nur -IQahir* (the primal absolute light) whose essential nature consists in perpetual illumination. He says, nothing is more visible than light and the essence of light is manifestations.¹⁶The universe is a manifestation of the illuminative

power that constitutes the essential nature of the primal light. Not all manifestations are eternal, there are some manifestations which are faint like an appearance of which depends on the combination of the other illuminations and rays. The existence of these is not eternal in the same sense like the direct or pre existing parent illuminations. I? Al Jili expresses the Reality as thought. According to him, the essence of God is pure thought and that cannot be understood completely; no words can express it, for it is beyond any relation. 18 In later Sufism, the Ultimate reality is apprehended in its essence as attributeless, nameless, indescribable and incomprehensible. His names and attributes are traced only in the phenomenal aspect. His essence is unknowable through deduction and logic but can be realized directly through intuition. In this regard the greatest thinker of Islam and Sufism al Ghazali maintains that higher in grade is the knowledge of the learned based on deduction and reflection, but the highest is gained through *Mukashafa* (direct knowledge) 19. Self-manifestation is His nature, for some he is a knowable entity but to others he is an entity of love and friendship. According to the Sufis his first will for self-manifestation is known as His first love done by God Himself with his Own Self. As due to the principle of love, human life is an emanation, it emanates from Him and ultimately returns to Him. Almost all later Sufis have accepted the doctrine of emanation. According to them the Divine element indwells in every being that emanates from Divinity. This doctrine got high impetus in the hands of Ibn Arabi and al-Jili. Ibn Arabi as a champion of this view propagates the doctrine of *wahdat-al-wujud* (unity of being) which advocates God manifest Himself as the universal consciousness, the First Intellect that is the Reality of all Realities (*haqiqat al haqaiq*) and as the phenomenal world as universal body (*al-jism al-kulli*) and as prime matter (*hayula*).²⁰ He maintains that there is no significant difference

between *dhat* (essence) and *sf/ate* attributes) of God in the metaphysical and transcendental level but this differentiation is only phenomenal and in the lower stage of knowledge. So he says, "There is no other existence for any other than He ... He whom you think to be other than God, He is not other than God but do not know Him and do not understand that you are seeing Him. He is still ruler as well as ruled and creator as well as created. He is now as He was. As to His creative power and as to his sovereignty, neither requiring a creature nor a subject."²¹ In supporting the pantheistic view Ibn Arabi further says, "when you know yourself, your I-ness vanishes and you know that you and God are one and the same".²² Ibn Arabi says that God, as it were, takes on human nature interpreted as the state of supreme union; Divine nature (*al-Lahut*) becomes the content of human nature (*an-nasut*), the latter being considered the recipient of the former and from another angle man is absorbed and he is enveloped by Divine Reality. This is truly mystical a metaphysical in nature, where god is mysteriously present in man and man is annihilated in God. These are the two aspects of one and the same state which are neither merged together nor yet added one to the other.²³ The transcendental and immanent aspects of the One, *Haq* (Reality) and *Khalq* (creation) are in essence one and they are co-eternal. Thus the universe is not the creation of God. One does not create the many. Creation (*takwin*) is merely the manifestation of already existing being, here creation means the eternal existence passess from the state of latency to the state of temporal existence in external appearance (*zahur*). The universe that is coeternal with God is not the universe, as we know it. The perpetual universe is not a form but an essence, the latter is originated and contingent in character and not the being.²⁴

This view of Ibn Arabi is highly criticized by the Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi. He propagates the view of *wahdat as Shuhud* in contrast to

wahdat al wujud doctrine

Sufi Concept of Soul:

The main intention of Sufism is to attain metaphysical knowledge of the Reality. Sufis are human beings and the object of human being is the acquisition of knowledge about Reality. The knowledge of the soul and the things of the world is an essential step to acquire divine knowledge. How this knowledge can be obtained? There are some procedures for attaining knowledge, such as, common sense, tradition, revelation, observation, logical reasoning, contemplation etc. They also believe, human beings possess two elements, material and immaterial. The material element of human being is related to his body and the immaterial element is basically associated with his soul. Generally a question can emerge; who is able to know? Body is material in nature not possessing any ability to know, the multiplicity of the bodies is due to the multiplicity of the material forms but does not indicate the multiplicity of the soul. Body is a composition of various parts and elements hence its nature is compound. Dissolution and decay is a property of compound object and not the simple element. Soul simple and fully devoid of any part and conscious. Therefore, soul is only remains and he is able to know the things. Soul is immediately self-conscious, he is self conscious through itself and its essence is quite independent of any physical accompaniment. Sufis also graded soul primarily into two kinds, i.e. Animal soul (*nafs*) and the rational soul (*Ruh*). The *nafs* is associated with the material life and carnal desires of human beings whereas the *Ruh* is potentially Divine intelligence and related to inner aspect of human being. The rational soul in its essence is potentially divine and good as well as pure and therefore it is always motivated to kill the carnal soul. One of the important mottos of the Sufis is "*mutu kabla antamutua*" i.e. die before you die. 25 Sufis are

like the *mujahids*, they are engaged in the constant struggle against their evil soul. In their eyes, there are two types of struggles in Islam, i.e. *ai-jihad al akbar* (greatest warfare/struggle) and *al-jihad al- asghar* (the lowest warfare). Those who are slain for the sake of religion undertake *ai-jihad al-asghar* and those who always engaged in the inner struggle against of his evil soul is called *al-jihadal akbar*. This means a Sufi gains power to control his *nafs* and is able to regulate it. This helps to establish link between the divinity and psycho-cosmic dimension of human being, through it a man can be aware concerning the cosmic dimension of his beingness in a qualitative and symbolic sense but not in a quantitative sense. These correspondences restructure his *nafs* and elevate it to the *Ruh*. In this process a finite soul becomes united with its origin. In the Quranic aspect human being possesses three types of soul, like *alnafs al- ammara* (evil soul), Qur'an Says:

“I do not say my self was free from blame. The self indeed commands to evil acts – except for those my Lord has mercy on. My Lord, He is Forgiving, Merciful “26

al- nafs -allawwamma (soul in the state of purity), Qur'an says:

No! I swear by the Day of Rising! No! I swear by the self-reproaching self.²⁷

al-nafs- al- mutmainna (satisfied soul) (Qur'an says:

‘O self at rest and at peace, return to your Lord, well-pleasing and well-pleased!28

Sufis believe the pure and satisfied soul is the illuminated soul and only the illuminated soul has the right to cure the soul of others. Anyone who demands to have this right is ignorant. The men who have achieved illumination possess certain metaphysical powers that are capable to emancipate other soul. Moreover, such a man does not live in a compartmentalized existence; rather, his thoughts and actions are based on the series of immutable principles that reflect upon everybody

like the rays of the sun. In this stage he does not act or think but contemplate and meditate upon all things with his most intense and purest activities so that the other soul may enjoy its fragrance and beauty. Sufis proclaim, one cannot do well unless he himself is good, nor one can save others unless he saved himself first. Hence, the illuminated personality acts not only for the sake of individual but works for all those who is affected and casts its light upon the entire mankind. The illuminated soul means the realization of One and the transmutation of the many in the light of the One.²⁹ Sufi metaphysics has some distinctive characteristics. It means that it is to be practiced within the society and not in the monastic life. In support of this we can mention the Prophetic Hadith that bears the attestation, as- "*la ruhbaniyata fil Islam*", i.e. there is no monasticism in Islam. Here the spiritual and the worldly life both are integrated in a systematic order. Sufi's *faqr* (spiritual poverty) within him elevates himself to the richest position of the world. Sufism can guide the people from phenomena to noumena, from the forms to the essences where alone a religion can truly be understood and be appreciated.

Sufi Concept of the Universe:

Sufis believe, from the metaphysical and cosmological viewpoint there are several elements of permanence in the relationship between man and the universe. The foremost element is the cosmic environment that depicts the idea that a man is not an ultimate Reality and merely possesses the character of relativity. Logically it is evident that things are not absolute; they must be relative. There is another logical point that emerges here that how this relativity can be apprehended? Relativity can only be apprehended through the knowledge of Absolute. In the universe, the absolute is always absolute and the relative is always relative and no amount of significant change is

possible to each other.

The changing pattern of the universe implies logically its permanent feature and change can only be apprehended in terms of the permanent. Sufis say, Absolute (*mutlaq*) can be understood in the notion of relative (*muqayyad*) or vice-versa. It is the nature of the universe that it is mutable and in a state of continuous movement/ motion. The very realization of the universe is that the changing pattern of created order (*al-khalq*) implies the awareness of truth (*al-haq*) that transcends it generally. To realize the relativity of man needs metaphysical and phenomenal distinction of the things/subjects. Another most important element of permanence is the relation of man in the universe as the manifestation of the absolute in the relative as the form of symbols (*rumuz*). The symbol is not to be understood as a man made convention, rather it is an ontological reality manifested by God (Absolute) to man. This symbol bears hierarchic order of the universe and the multiple structures of beings. Man seeks to ascertain permanence in his life through inward evolution. He believes in the evolution of his mind and sees his position as the mere reflection of his divinity that is permanent and unchanged. Sometimes it is called the uniformity of nature that integrates time and the process of creation in the image of eternity. The knowledge of the universe illumines soul of the devotee, which yearns for union with God. This universe is the emanation of God and man seeks the real not reflection of the real.

Sufis understand the entire universe as a totality of seven skies or heavens, in their terminology that is called **Sab Sama** (seven skies or heavens). They are: 1) *Alam -eHahoot* (Realm of He-ness). It can also be supposed of as the Realm of pre-existence, i.e. the condition of the universe before its formation. It is equated with unknowable God's essence and named *Alam-l-Hahut*, the world of "He-ness"; etymologically, Arabic root word for God with attributes of manifest

Absolute is al-Lah or "the Divinity" and *Hu* ("He") for Unmanifest Absolute is naked essence of Godhead, nothing can be said about Him.

2) *Maqaam-e-Mehmood* (Place of the extolled) .The residing place of Prophet Mohammad (Place be upon him). Beyond this lies the unperceivable. 3) *Alam - e- Lahoot* (Realm of Divinity). The Realm of Divinity is that region where incalculable unseen tiny dots emerge and expand to such a large circles that engulfs the entire universe. This realm is also known as *Tajalliat* (The Beatific Vision) of the Circle of the Beatific Vision. These countless circles are the bases of all the root causes of the universe. These very circles give rise to the species (or kinds of non living) of the universe. This whole circle is known as the *Ghaib-ul-ghaib* (Unseen of the Unseen). The final boundary of the human knowledge and understanding is called *Hijab-e-Mehmod* (The Extolled Veil), which is the extreme height of the *Arsh* (Supreme Empyrean). It is that ascent for which the human perception could train itself for the cognition of the Extolled Veil and beatific Visions of the attributes of God that are operative in there *Nehr-e-tasweed* (The Channel of Black draught / Darkness) whose last limit is in the Realm of Divinity, is the basis of the unseen that feeds *Rooh-e-Azam* (The Great Soul). 4) *Alam -e-Jabaroot* (Realm of Omnipotency). The stage when the universe is constituted into features is known as the Realm of Omnipotency. *Hijab-e-Kibria* (The Grand Veil) is the last limit of this realm. *Nehr-e-tajreed* (Channel of Abstraction) whose last limit is The Realm of Omni potency feeds *Rooh-e-Insani* (Human Soul) with its information. 5) *Alam - e- Malakoot* (Angelic Realm). When the characteristics of the species and their individuals descend from the Realm of Omni potency, separate consciousness comes into being; this stage is called the Angelic Realm. Its last limit is called *Hijab-e-Azmat* (The Great Veil). *Nehr-e- Tasheed* (Channel of Evidence) whose last limit is Angelic Realm, feeds *Latifa-e-Qalbi*. Ibn Arabi a celebrated

Sufi inserted a sphere between *Alm-e- Jabarut* and *Aim -e- Malakoot* as a sphere called '*Alam al Mithal*, where the existentialization takes place into the high ambition (*himma*) and the prayers of the Sufi devotee reach in the high in order to set spiritual energies that bring the possibilities into actual beings. 6) *Arsh-e-Mulla* (The Divine of Throne). The limiting boundary through which no one but the very nearest to God can pass. The above-mentioned realms (*Alam-e-Malkoot*, *Alam-e-Jabroot* & *Alam-eLahoot*) are its levels of functioning. 7) *Alam -e-Nasoot* (Realm of Humans). When the features further descend and come out of the limits of the angelic realm, foundations of the tangible world of matter are being laid, which is known as *Alam-e-Nasoot*. It includes the material realm (most of which humans can see) and all the normally visible cosmos is included in it. *Nehr-e-Tazheer* (Channel of Manifestation), whose last limits *Alam-eNasoot*, feeds *Latifa-e-Nafsi*. Human Realm is categorized as under: One *Kitab-althousand Hazeere* (Galaxies), each one has 13 billion Solar systems, out of which 1 billion solar systems have life on one of their planets Each star has 9,12,13 planets around it. On every planet (that has life on it), life exists in three different planes of existence. These include Plane of Angels, Plane of *Jinns*, and Plane of Humans. On the other hand it is surrounded by another realm known as *Alam-e-Araf* or *Barzakh* (Astral plane) where humans stay after they die (when the connection of soul breaks with the physical body). Humans can also visit astral realm during sleep (in dreaming state) or during the period of meditation.

These *Sab 'a Samawat* (The Seven Skies) are similar to the Seven Valleys in the *Bahai* Faith, these are the boundary of material Realm. The seven skies can be thought of as 7 energy levels or 7 levels of enlightenment. At the end of 7th sky is the height known as the *Baitul mamoor* (Inhabited Dwelling). After which the station *Sidartul*

Muntaha (Lote Tree) can be attained, which is the last limit of the flight of the most angels. The most important element in man's relation with the universe is his existential situation in the hierarchy of universal existence (*maratib al wujud*). This notion depicts from the Holy Qur'an as - 'inna lillahe wa inna ilaihe raje 'un" i.e. Indeed! We are from Allah and indeed we are returning to Him. With respect to the absolute and all the states of being which comprise the universe; Man is what he has always been and always will be, an image of the Absolute in the relative that cast into the wave of becoming in order to return this becoming itself to Being. The ontological existence of man in the total scheme of things is forever the same and all other aspects of him in the universe as studied in the cosmology may change either apparently or violently. The perfect man is he who has realized in himself all the possibilities of being and becomes the model for everybody. The descent of the universal spirit into matter and the purgative ascent of man out of matter have been the beliefs of the Sufis throughout the ages. Jili says, successive stages of divine manifestation are *ahadiya* (oneness), *huwiya* (he-ness) and *aniya* (I-ness). In essence man is a cosmic thought, which assumes flesh and connects Absolute Being with the universe. The perfect man is present at all times under different names. He is intermediate between the creator and the creatures, in him all divine attributes are manifested and become a pure soul (*ruh al quds*).

Sufi Concept of Man: -

Man and his position In Islam as well as in Sufism is a subject of endless controversies. Some say man is considered as the *vicegerent of God* (*khalifah tullah*) in the world. Some others also are saying that man is a *slave a/God* (*bandah*), hence, he is nothing but an instrument of eternal fate. According to the Holy Qur'an man was created by the

hands of God (*khalaqal Adama beyadehi*) and he gave him life and spirit by breathing into him with His own breath. He (God) created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood. 16 In another verse He again depicts the same idea as Man We did create from a quintessence of clay then We placed him as a (drop of) sperm in a place of rest firmly fixed; then We made the sperm into congealed blood; then of that clot we made a (fetus) lump; then We made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh. The lowly origin of the animal in man is with the high destiny offered to him in his intellectual, moral and spiritual nature by his most bountiful creator. Again the holy Qur'an says, and we will show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves. In the Tradition the Prophet maintains, He (God) created Adam in His image (*Khalaqal Adam' ala suratihı*) and He taught Adam the names and he became master of all creatures. He is composed of body, mind and soul and each need to be integrated on its own free will, love and the power of individuation. Although, the body is a most outward aspect of man, having its own objective existence and mode of action, it is not the greatest obstacle to obtain integration. Man is usually contemplative as well as active creatures that possess spiritual and phenomenal capabilities. Both state that man is a microcosm in the universe. Islam has indeed assigned a very high place to man and Sufism, however dwelt intently upon the various aspects of man. They believe the operations of divine omnipotence are carried out on man. Moreover, he comes to realize the cosmic dimension of his being, not in quantitative but in a qualitative and symbolic sense. Generally, Sufis apprehend world as a veil (*hıjab*); it needs unfolding through will power, experience and self-awareness. According to Sufism, existence of human being is therefore, harmonious order that is endowed with life, will, sensation and purpose, just like a vast and absolute man (man accompanied with the attributes of God). To put it

differently, if we take a man endowed with awareness, creativity and purpose, exemplary to the utmost degree in all of his aspects, and then enlarge him to the utmost degree, then he will appear to us as a pious personality.

Man whenever attains divine attributes becomes Godlike and then his all activities are to be considered as the activities of God. Generally, the relationship of man with God is natural and meta-natural and same as that of light with lamp that emits it. It is also the same as the relationship between individual's awareness of his limb and the limb itself; his perception is not separate from limb, and still less, the limb itself. At the same time, the limb itself, without his consciousness of it, is meaningless corpse. So Sufi does not believe in pantheism, polytheism, Trinitarian outlook or dualism, but only in strict monotheism (*Tawhid*). *Tawhid* represents a particular view of the world that demonstrates a universal unity in existence, a unity between three separate hypotheses God, nature, and man - because the origin of their entire is the same. All have the same direction, the same will, the same spirit, the same motion, and the same life. Prophet Muhammad says, God resides in the hearts of the faithful and that is the real throne of Him (*qulubul mumenina arsh Allah*). Another popular tradition is 'God says, heaven and earth contain Me not, but the heart of my faithful servant contains me. In cosmological viewpoint, *Tawhid* being divided into two relative aspects: (a) the unseen and (b) the manifest. These two terms correspond in current usage to the sensible and the supersensible. The supersensible object is beyond observation and experiment and is hidden from our sense perception. This does not indicate the form of dualism; rather it is a relative classification. It is an epistemological and logical interpretation, not only accepted but also applied by science too.

The materialists believe in the primacy of matter as the primordial

substance of the physical world, and regard energy as the product and the changing form of matter. The energist claim, energy is the primary source and substance of all things and matter is the changed and compressed form of energy. In response to this view Einstein proclaimed that an experiment in a darkened room proves that neither matter nor energy is the primary and true source of the world of being. The two interchange with each other in such a way as to prove that they are the alternating manifestations of an invisible and unknowable essence that some times shows itself in the form of matter and some times in the form of energy. The only task of physics is to examine these twin manifestations of the one super sensible being.

The worldview of Sufism is naturalistic. They say the manifest world, is composed of a series of *signs (ayat)* which possess various *norms (sunan)*. The use of the word sign depicts various meanings. Here the oceans and trees, night and day, earth and sun natural beauty and man himself are the sign of the Reality. The term sign is the sense of tangibility it represents manifestation, not only in physics but all the sciences concerned it as the tangible world- phenomenon, translated in Persian *padida or padidar* and in Arabic as *Zahira*, phenomenology. Both are based upon Absolute Truth. What IS knowable, and accessible to our experience, knowledge and sense perception, IS appearance and not being. It consists of the outer and sensible manifestations and traces of a primary, unseen and supersensory Reality. Physics, Chemistry and Psychology can examine, analyze and render knowable these outer manifestations and sensible indications of the true essence of the world and the soul. Science deals with the signs, indications and manifestations of being, because sensible nature is the amalgam of these signs and manifestations. The concept of this sign in Sufism is closer to the approach of modern science as well as the ancient mysticism. Sufi concept of *wahdat al wujud* (unity in being)

and *wahdat as suhud* (unity in witness) are very analytical. Sufis interpreted it in the sense of unity of nature and Meta- nature. It linked between phenomenal aspect as well as heavenly aspect of the universe the Light verse of the Holy Qur'an. Qur'an says:

God is the light of the Heavens and earth. 30

It also depicts the same notion, illustrates this concept of being, since it illustrates the special relationship between God and the world. There is a contradiction between man and nature, spirit and body, matter and mind sensible and super sensible, but it is inevitable and normal to apprehend the contradictory categories as a whole.

The creation of man is the essence, spiritual destiny and attributes of the human race; in this regard the Holy Qur' an says, man in the biological sense, it uses the language of the natural sciences, mentioning sperm drops of clotted blood, fetus etc that are mentioned earlier. The Quranic statement signifying that man is compounded from the spirit of God and putrid clay that is similar to the assertion of Pascal in his book *Two Infinities*, that man is a being intermediate between two infinities: infinity of lowliness and weakness and infinity of greatness and glory. The similar idea is also found in the Holy Qur'an , like -"*laqad khalaqnal insana fi ahsane taqwim , summa radana hu asfala safelin*" i.e. We have indeed created man in the best moulds then do we abase him (to be) the lowest of the low. 21 In the existential view point man as free and responsible will occupying a station intermediate between two opposing poles-God and Satan. The combination of these two opposites, the thesis and antithesis, which exist both in man's nature and his fate, create motion in him, a dialectic, ineluctable and evolutionary movement, and a constant struggle between the two opposing poles in man's essence and his life. In the world of the mind, it is impossible for 'an object to be hot and cold at the same time or to be large and small at a time. In Meta -

nature, however, this is not only possible, but actually obtains. The intellect cannot conceive of a being simultaneously dead and alive, because death and life cancel each other out, but in Meta-nature death and life exist with each other and within each other, they are the two side of the single coin. Hence Hadrat Ali the 4th caliph of Islam and the door of Sufism says, "The breath of life itself is a progress toward death."

And in fact we see that man known to us as risen so far in brilliance of spirit, splendor, beauty, awareness, virtue, purity, courage, faith and generosity, and integrity of character, that he leaves us amazed. No being material or immaterial, angel or jinn, has the capacity for similar growth. At the same time, we see other men who in their vileness, impurity, weakness, ugliness, cowardice and criminality have descended lower than any beast, microbe or demon. Man may attain the infinite in vileness, ugliness and evil just as does in perfection, nobility and beauty. One extremity of man is that he touches God, the other, the devil whatever he prefers. Man is situated between two absolute possibilities, each situated at two extremities. He is a highway leading from "minus to the power of infinity" to "plus to the power of infinity." Facing him, traced out across the plain of being, is a highway leading from an infinitely vile minus to an infinitely exalted plus. He is a free and responsible will; he is both a will obliged to choose and the object of his own will and choice. To use the terminology of Brahmanism, he is the way, the wayfarer and the wayfaring. He is engaged in a constant migration from his self to clay to his divine self that is why, God ordered the angels to bow down to man (Adam).

Man, this compound of opposites, is a dialectical being, a binary miracle of God.

In his essence and life-destiny, he is an "infinite direction," either toward clay or toward God. The holy Qur'an repeatedly discusses the

creation and composition of man, as it is scientific and not philosophical. No element of God exists in him. God exists in him as a *potentiality for which man can reach perfection*. So the holy Qur'an says, truly we are God's and to Him we shall return." 31 On account of man's dualistic nature he is in the continuous motion. His life is the stage for a battle between two forces that results in a continuous evolution toward perfection. Men have a choice and engage in constant becoming. He is in infinite migration, a migration within himself. Religion is, therefore only a path not an aim, its aim is to attain truth only. We are using religion as an aim, hence it is creating problem in the society.

Sufi Concept of Love:

Love is the first creation of God says notable thinker Tarachand. It is generally considered that Sufism is mainly based on the philosophy of love and Sufis have mainly utilized it as the main source of their realization of Truth/ Reality (*haq*). They have considered their relation with God just like the relation of the lover and beloved. In their eyes, a Sufi is a lover (*'ashiq*) and God is the beloved (*ma'shuq*). Sufi wants to unite himself with God to denote his concept of love as metaphysical element that cannot be articulated in the particular language. The feeling of love is purely mystical and metaphysical that is a matter of apprehension and realization only. The idea of love presumably borrowed by the Sufis from the holy Qur'an, where the terms *mahabbah*, *hubb*, *wudd*, *muwaddah* are present that depict the various types and gradations of love. The *hubb* and *mahabbah* are inter-related and represent as a super category of love or overflowing love (*ashaddo huballillah*). Qur'an says

"Some people set up equals to Allah, loving them as they should love

Allah. But those who have iman have greater love for Allah. If only you could see those who do wrong at the time when they see the punishment, and that truly all strength belongs to Allah, and that Allah is severe in punishment. 32. Prophet Muhammad also clearly expressed about the concept of love several times. In a Hadith he says- "My servant draws nigh unto Me by works of devotion. And I love him, I am the ear by which he hears, and eye by which he sees and the tongue by which he speaks."³³ The greatest Sufi and thinker of Islam al Ghazali in his *Ihya Ulum uddin* maintains that love is a natural desire, which produces pleasure but when that desire assumes an intense form, it is called passionful love or *Ishq*.

Sufis say whenever love goes beyond extreme in affection and becomes intense it is called *Ishq*. Sufis regard Love is the essence of their metaphysics. A true Sufi is a lover of God as well as the lover of the whole universe. Whenever a Sufi is deeply fused in the love of God he sees all as his own without any discrimination of caste and creed, even in the highest ecstatic moment whenever a Sufi is fully intoxicated he sees nothing except God and all the distinction between mine and thine disappears here. In this stage he proclaims *anal haq* (I am the Reality) as *man sur al Hallaj* uttered. Here a Sufi proclaims- "*ishq ashīq hai ishq hai mashuq khud ke upar khud fida hai ishq*" i.e. Love is the lover and love is the beloved and love is fondly in love with itself. Again reputed Sufi *al Jami* says- "*ishq awwal , ishq akhir , ishq zahir was batin ishq hi se tu banaeh har dar wa diwar hai ishq*" i.e. love is the beginning, love is the end. Love is the manifest and love is hidden. Love is that sustains the world.

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