

Martyrdom of Mansūr Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) and Oneness of the Being: The Supporters and the Attackers

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Abstract

Since time immemorial, the concept of *Waḥdat al- wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) has been considered a controversial and debatable topic throughout the world. This critical topic has created a vacuum between Orthodox Muslim scholars and *Sūfī* scholars. The orthodox Islāmic scholars considered it contrary to the Islāmic faith (*Shari'ah*). They admonished Ḥaḍrat Muḥy al-Din Ibn al- Arabī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1240 CE/638 AH) for recognizing the Creator with creation. On the other hand, the *Sūfī* scholars have given it due regard and praised Ibn al Arabī (رحمة الله عليه) for propagating the concept of Islāmic *Tawḥīd* (Oneness of Allāh) hidden in it. One of the significant figures of Islām considered to be positively associated with this controversial concept is the tenth-century Muslim saint Ḥaḍrat Mansūr al-Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 922 CE/309 AH). He was executed for blasphemy or for propagating the heterodox ideas by Abbasid rulers in 922 CE/309 AH. His martyrdom, which had religious and political causes, was considered a reference point in Sufism's chronicles.

Keywords: Al-Ḥallāj, *Taṣawwuf* (Sufism), *Waḥdat al- wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence), *Anal-Haqq* (I am Truth), blasphemy

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I. Introduction:

Abū al-Muḡīth al-Ḥusayn ibn Mansūr al-Ḥallāj al-Baydawi al-Wasiti (رحمة الله عليه) was a Persian *Ṣūfī* and teacher (Shaykh). He was born in the Persian region of Shushtar, Khuzistan, in the year 858 CE/243 AH. Initially, Shaykh Mansūr al-Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) spends his life in the great city of southern 'Irāq (Wāsīt), a business hub for textiles and trade. His father, who is converted from Zoroastrianism to Islām, had sustained his family by carding the wool. Therefore, through his father's profession (wool carding), he continued to be known, throughout the world, with the nickname al- Ḥallāj (means wool-carder).

At a very early age, Ḥaḍrat Mansūr al-Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) was inclined towards an intrinsic aspect of Islām (Spirituality). Instead of understanding Holy *Qur'ān* only through the apparent meaning, he views that it should be comprehended with its intrinsic and profound connotations. In his salad days (c. 874 CE/259 AH–894 CE/280 AH), when the science of spirituality (*Taṣawwuf*/Sufism) was getting constructed/shaped, he initiated to retreat from the world and seek/achieve God-consciousness from the men of Truth. He was trained by *Ṣūfī* stalwarts of the time including Ḥaḍrat Sahl al-Tustarī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 896 CE/283 AH), Ḥaḍrat 'Amr ibn 'Uthmān al-Makkī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 909/297 AH), and Ḥaḍrat Abū al- Qāsim al-Junayd al-Baghdādī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 910 CE/ 298 AH). Initially taught by Ḥaḍrat Sahl al-Tustarī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 896 CE/282 AH), who lived an ascetic life in the Tustar town of Khuzestān, Ḥaḍrat al- Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) eventually became a pupil of Shaykh of Basra Ḥaḍrat' Amr ibn 'Uthmān al-Makkī (رحمة الله عليه), who themselves was a disciple of Abu-l-Qāsim al-Junayd al-Qawārīrī al-Baghdadi (رحمة الله عليه). Meanwhile, he became the son-in-law of *Ṣūfī* Ḥaḍrat Abu Ya'qub al-Aqta' (رحمة الله عليه) by marrying her daughter, Umm al-Husayn. He finally completed his spiritual teaching under great intellect, Shaykh Junayd al-Baghdādī (رحمة الله عليه). Later, friction arose between Ḥaḍrat Mansūr al-Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) and his teachers because of al- Ḥallāj's (رحمة الله عليه) intense intoxicated behavior,¹ which eventually led to their dissociation.

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¹ "Ḥallāj [رحمة الله عليه], like other "lovers" of God, some of whom were his companions, nurtured a burning desire ('*ishq*) for God. Rather than the Koranic term *mahabba* ("love" between God and man), he favored '*ishq*,

Ḥaḍrat Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) spends the next years of his life, between 895 CE/281AH to 910 CE/297 AH, traveling and sermonising the religious commandments of Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) to a wider audience. He went on to pilgrimage Holy Makkah, where he maintained extraordinary discipline throughout his stay there. After returning from the various regions like Fars,² Khūzestān,³ and Khorāsān,⁴ al-Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) preached Islām's message enthusiastically and wrote about different ways to seek His (Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) nearness and attention. While propagating Islām's message in various regions during his extensive journeys, he got due attention from many people who later on became his disciples/followers and were with him in his second visit to Makkah. After returning from the second pilgrimage, al-Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) directly went to his family in Baghdād, where he traveled through the sea for a pious mission of propagating Allah's message to India and Turkistan which were un-Islamic territories at the time.

The environment in which Ḥaḍrat Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) sermonized and inscribed was full of religious, political, and socioeconomic upheavals/strife, which are equally thought to be responsible for his subsequent arrest. His behavior had been undoubtedly offensive and had been wide open to various interpretations, which eventually led to him suspect in the eyes of religious, political, and civil authorities. It is pertinent to mention here that the *Ṣūfī* movement, in general, has rejected his activities on the pretext of heresy.⁵

The *Ṣūfīs* who honor Ḥaḍrat Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) observes in his comprehension an exciting indication of unobtrusiveness. "We accuse the mystic of aspiring to a lordly condition while, paradoxically, he is completely given over to speech which is foreign to him, he appears to be possessed, and he is literally insane."⁶ In the course of spiritual unification, such as al- Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) explains it, the dichotomy of man-Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) vanishes, remaining onliest the "divine" individual; the human soul is obliterated and immersed in the Exceptional One, i.e., Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى). He says:

*I have become the One I love,
And the One I love has become me!
We are two spirits infused in a single body!
Also, to see me is to see Him, and to see Him is to see us.*⁷

However, for the Islāmic Law (*Shari'ah*) authorities, to claim such unification with Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) means to ridicule the doctrine of the Transcendent. Possibly this understanding of al-Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) was a response to the extreme inaccessibility that Islāmic theology puts between the Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) and people.⁸ The advocates of Islām accused Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) with similar charges as those which they had formerly passed on against radical Shi'ites.⁹ These impeach were for advocating a concept of embodiment (*hulūl*) of Creator in creation, a concept for which Muslims had severely damned Christians, and for the significance provided to the interior meaning of the rituals instead of their exterior adherence, which was feared might lead to the eradication of the Islāmic law (*Sha'riah*).¹⁰

Al-Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) was presumed to be involved in hatching conspiracy with Shi'ite groups against Abbasid regimes who were threatening Abbasid might. The Shi'ite groups, namely the Zanj, black slaves transferred into southern Mesopotamia who had confronted Abbasids between 868 CE/253 AH and 883 CE/269 AH, and the Qarmathians, an Ismā'īli wing of Shia who was also revolted against them. However, Ḥaḍrat Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) was persistently propagating his ideas contrary to the Islāmic belief, adding fuel to the fire. He was

which implies a more dynamic reciprocity, but which other mystics perceived as a claim to elevate profane love to the divine level." See, Geoffroy, Eric, *Introduction to Sufism: The Inner Path of Islam*, World Wisdom, 2010, p. 70.

² Fars is a southwest Irānian province recognised for its rich Persian culture and history.

³ One of the thirty-one provinces of 'Irān. It is located in the country's southwest corner, on the border with 'Irāq and the Persian Gulf.

⁴ Khorāsān is a historical area that formed Greater 'Irān's northeast province. The name means "land of the Sun" or "Eastern Province" in English.

⁵ He was ridiculed and widely condemned by scholars of Islām for his statement "I am the Truth [God]! (*anā al-Haqq*)."

⁶ Ibid., p. 70.

⁷ Massignon, L., *Diwan al-Hallaj*, (edited & translated), Paris, 1981, p. 117.

⁸ Badawī, A., *Shatahāt al-sūfiyya*, Kuwait, 1978, p. 18-19.

⁹ who had been thought-out by centuries as the heresiarchs of the society.

¹⁰ For example, a so-called pilgrimage to the "Kaaba of the heart" exempted believers from going physically to Mecca.

arrested in Sūs¹¹ in 911CE and confined till 922 CE. His crucifixion, on 26th March 922 CE/309 A.H., thus had both religiopolitical grounds, in addition to those of security. It is mandatory to mention here that his contemporary, namely Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī¹² (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 874 CE/261 AH), in another province did not get the same fate/treatment as that of Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه).

There was undeniably a little provocation of Ḥallāj's (رحمة الله عليه) activities, but he was fully inclined with Sunni Islām. He may even have guided groups who belonged to the group of Hadrat Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (رضي الله عنه) and declared war against the Būyids. Ḥallāj's (رحمة الله عليه) personality remained hidden and unclear throughout his life. His personality was very much obscure to understand, but it is inevitable that he finally got martyrdom at Abbasids' hands. He, with very ease, accepted the physical torture/pain in his yearning to meet Him:

*Kill me, O my friends! For it is in death that my life is to be found,
and it is in life that my death is!*¹³

Some *Ṣūfī* saints, later on, would explain this claim of al-Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) as a spiritual death. As per Imām Ghazzālī, Ḥallāj was the prey of a misapprehension. Like Ghazzālī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1111 CE/505 AH), many *Ṣūfī* masters of his time believed the same. However, only some of them shielded Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) amidst investigation carried out in Baghdād, 'Irāq by Ghulām Khalīl, a *Ṣūfī* predicant who was hostile to the supporters of divine love. They admonished Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) for revealing the hidden mysteries of Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) to the common masses. After that, the Islāmīc preachers (*ulama*) view that a man is free to experience spiritual states only if he keeps them limited/secret to himself and does not offend the religious tenets/teachings or deviate the believers. Abu-l-Qāsim al-Junayd al-Qawārīrī al-Baghdādī (رحمة الله عليه), one of the greatest masters of *taṣawwuf* (Sufism), believes that only one can disclose secrets of religious mysteries in front of people if they can absorb and understand these mysteries or teachings.

His Martyrdom and Oneness of the Existence

Al- Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) was an ardent lover of Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) who bears gruesome torture and even sacrificed his own life only to safeguard his relationship with Him (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) and witness others of this sacred connection. In order to meet his Beloved, he even insists his fellow men to kill him earlier than later by saying that "all that matters for the ecstatic is that the Unique should reduce him to Unity."¹⁴ Al- Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه), who viewed himself in the pattern and character of Ḥaḍrat 'Īsā (عليه السلام), gave the supreme sacrifice for the community of *ar-Rahmatul lil-'Alameen*¹⁵ (one of the attributes of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ), believing that his martyrdom was "uniting his beloved God and His community of Muslims against himself and thereby bore witness in *extremist* to the *tawhid* (the oneness) of both."¹⁶ For his yearning for unification, people disparaged him as a 'crypto-Christian' for contorting Islām's teachings of Unity (*Tawhīd*) in the way of Christianity.¹⁷

His brutal death is beautifully illustrated by Ḥaḍrat Farīd ud-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1190 CE/586 AH) as an act of bravery, because when he is being taken towards the court, a *Ṣūfī* questions him about love as: "What is love?". He replies: "You will see it today, tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow." They killed him that day, burned him the next day, and threw his ashes to the wind the day after that. "This is love," Ḥaḍrat Farīd ud-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (رحمة الله عليه) says. His legs were cut off, he smiled and said, "I used to walk the earth with these legs, now there is only one step to heaven, cut that if you can." And when his hands were cut off, he painted his face with his own blood, when asked why, he says: "I have lost a lot of blood, and I know my face has turned yellow, I do not want to look pale-faced (as of fear) ...".¹⁸

Tracing Ibn al-'Arabī's (رحمة الله عليه) Concept of *Waḥdat al wujūd* (Unity of Being/Existence) in Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj's (رحمة الله عليه) Doctrine of God:

¹¹ Sūs is a village in 'Irān.

¹² popularly known as Sultān-ul-Ārifīn ("King of the Gnostics").

¹³ Geoffroy, Eric, Op. cit., 2010, p. 71.

¹⁴ Massignon, Louis, Gardet, Louis, "Al-Hallāj", *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Brill, 1986, 2nd edition, Vol. 3, p. 101.

¹⁵ Meaning "Merciful and Compassionate to the Universe (of all Creation)". See, *Qur'ān* 21:107.

¹⁶ Mason, Herbert W., *Al-Hallāj: mystic and martyr of Islam*, Curzon Press, Richmond, Surrey, 1995, p. 25.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Islam, Misbah, *Decline of Muslim States and Societies: The real root cause and what can be done next*, Xlibris, United States, 2008, p. 340.

One can clearly trace the glimpse of *Waḥdat al wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) from these sayings of Ḥaḍrat al-Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه):

1. *Ana al-Haqq* (I am the Truth). [Apparently, this saying seems to be most responsible for al-Ḥallāj's death because al-Haqq is one of the attributes of Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى)].¹⁹
2. *You know and are not known; you see and are not seen.*²⁰
3. *"Your Spirit mixed with my Spirit little by little, by turns, through reunions and abandons. And now I am Yourself, Your existence is my own, and it is also my will."*²¹
4. *"I find it strange that the divine whole can be borne by my little human part, Yet due to my little part's burden, the earth cannot sustain me."*²²
5. *"I have seen my Lord (rabbī) with the eye of my heart, and I said: Who are You? He said: " You."*²³
6. *"I do not cease swimming in the seas of love, rising with the wave, then descending; now the wave sustains me, and then I sink beneath it; love bears me away where there is no longer any shore."*²⁴

It is relatively popular among the majority of the Muslims to acknowledge *Tawhīd* (Unity) in the connotation that Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) is without any partner, hence, inaccessible to man, but al-Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) believes that *Tawhīd* (Unity) could be declared solely by Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) and no one else. He believes that "Love means to stand next to the Beloved, renouncing oneself entirely and transforming oneself in accordance to Him."

Meaning of *Waḥdat al wujūd* (Unity of Being/Existence):

Ibn al-ʿArabī's (رحمة الله عليه) work is considered as a foundation for the theory of *Waḥdat al wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) that emphasizes the existences of Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) and his creation and believes that all the realities/existences of the earth are fake simulations (*Bātil*) which exist only by the existence of Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى), who is Real Existent (*Haqq*) and Eternal. In other words, Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) alone exists, and the rest of the creations borrowed their existence from Him.

Scholars Perspective on the concept of *Waḥdat al-wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence)

The concept, *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence), has caused a great deal of approval as well as rejection among the scholars of Islām. Scholars who were approving it and sharing the same thought as that of Ḥaḍrat Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) includes Ḥaḍrat Abū Yazīd Ṭayfūr b. ʿĪsā b. Surūshān al-Biṣṭāmī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 874 CE/261 AH), Ḥaḍrat ʿUmar ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Fārid (رحمة الله عليه) (d.1234 CE/631 AH), Ḥaḍrat Ibn al-ʿArabī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1240 CE/638 AH), Ḥaḍrat Mowlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1273 CE/671 AH), Ḥaḍrat Siti Jenar (رحمة الله عليه)²⁵, Ḥaḍrat Hamzah Fansūrīr (رحمة الله عليه) (d. c. 1590CE/998 AH), Ḥaḍrat Shams al-Din al-Sumatra'i / Sumatrani (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1630CE/ 1039 AH) and so on. One of the most significant examples of love and support is shown by Ḥaḍrat Mowlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (رحمة الله عليه) through his poem where he talks about Ḥaḍrat al- Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه).

"HALLAJ"

*Hallaj said what he said and went to the origin
through the hoe in the scaffold.*

*I cut a cap's worth of cloth from his robe,
and it swamped over me from head to foot.*

¹⁹ Hassan, Nazima, *The Concept of Light in the Philosophy of Ishraq*, Department of Philosophy, Aligarh Muslim University, India, 2015, p. 67.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., p. 68

²² W. Mason, Herbert, *Al-Hallaj*, Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group), London & New York, p. 70.

²³ Ibid., p. 71.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 73.

²⁵ He is also known as Shaykh Lemah Abang.

Years ago, I broke a bunch of roses
from the top of his wall. A torn from that
is still in my palm, working deeper.

From Ḥallāj, I learned to hunt lions,
but I became something hungrier than a lion.

I was a frisky colt. He broke me
with a quiet hand on the side of my head.

A person comes to him naked. It's cold.
There's a fur coat floating in the river.

"Jump in and get it," he says.
You dive in. You reach for the coat.
It reaches for you.

It's a live bear that has fallen in upstream,
drifting with the current.

"How long does it take!" Ḥallāj yells from the bank.
"Don't wait," you answer. "This coat
has decided to wear me home!"

A little part of a story, a hint.
Do you need long sermons on Ḥallāj!

Mowlānā Rūmī (رحمة الله عليه), in the *Critique of Rules*, regrets Ḥallāj's (رحمة الله عليه) death and says: "...when the pen is in the hands of a traitor, unquestionably Mansur (al Ḥallāj) is on the guibbet".

Ḥaḍrat Ḥallāj's (رحمة الله عليه) idea was propagated by many other scholars who were not usually associated with the notion of *Wahdat al-wujūd*. They defended this concept of *Wahdat al-wujūd* with zeal and zest and considered him one of Allāh's (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) great friends. These scholars include Persian *Ṣūfī* Ḥaḍrat Abu 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn al-Khafīf (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 982 CE/372 AH),²⁶ Ḥaḍrat Shaykh Abū Bakr al-Shiblī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 946 CE/334 AH),²⁷ Ḥaḍrat Abu al-Qasim al-Nasir Abadi (رحمة الله عليه), Ḥaḍrat Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī al-Naysābūrī (رحمة الله عليه) (d.1073 CE/ 465 AH),²⁸ Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Aṭā Allāh al-Iskandarī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1310 CE/709 AH),²⁹ Ḥaḍrat Moḥammed ibn al-Ḥājj al-'Abdarī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1336 CE/737 AH),³⁰ Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Aqīl (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1119 CE/513 AH),³¹ Ḥaḍrat Imām Ibn Qudāmah (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1223 CE/620 AH),³² Ḥaḍrat Najm ad-Dīn at-Tūfī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1316 CE/716 AH),³³ Ḥaḍrat Imām Ibn al-Mulaqqin (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1401 CE/804 AH),³⁴ Ḥaḍrat Zayn al-Dīn al-Ḥaddādī al-Munāwī al-Ḳāhirī al-Shāfi'ī (رحمة الله عليه)

²⁶ He frequently visited Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) during his decade long imprisonment/confinement at Baghdād.

²⁷ He was a great *Ṣūfī* of Persian ancestry, and an adherent of Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه) and Junayd Baghdādī (رحمة الله عليه).

²⁸ He was an erudite scholar and *Ṣūfī* saint who was known for his great work *al-Risala al-Qushayriyya*.

²⁹ He was a Mālikī jurist, *muhaddith* and the third *murshid* (spiritual mentor) of the Shadhili *Ṣūfī* order, from Egypt.

³⁰ He was an Egyptian Moroccan Mālikī fiqh intellectual and cleric whose significant work is *al-Madkhal*.

³¹ Islāmīc theologian and academician of the Ḥanbalī school of thought who wrote *Juz' fi nasr Karamat al-Hallaj* (Opuscule in Praise of al-Hallāj's gifts).

³² Ibn an-Najjar depicts him as: "The Imam of Al-Hanabilah in Damascus Mosque, he was a trust worthy, noble figure, extremely generous, of a clean character, a cautious worshipper, follower of the Salaf methodology, emitting light (of knowledge and piety) and respectful. One may benefit from his sighting before even hearing his speech".

³³ Ḥanbalī legal expert, particularly in *uṣūl*, recognized in contemporary times especially and explicitly for his *maṣlaḥa* theory.

³⁴ He was a Shāfi'ī jurist acknowledged for his spacious expertise on *ḥadīth* and *jurisprudence*.

عليه) (d. 1621 CE/1031 AH),³⁵ Ḥaḍrat Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha'rāni (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1565 CE/973 AH),³⁶ Ḥaḍrat Shaykh Abdel- Halīm Mahmoud (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1978 CE/1398 AH),³⁷ and so on.

Some scholars agree with the concept of *Wahdat al-Wujūd*, but they try to side-step this concept in their pedagogies only to evade conflict between the followers and opponents of this theory. These scholars include Ḥaḍrat Imām Sayyid' Abd Allah ibn 'Alawī al-Hadda'd (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1720 CE/1132 AH), Ḥaḍrat Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Alawī al-Maliki (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 2004 CE/1425 AH), and several others. They instructed the students of *taṣawwuf* (Sufism) to remain distant from the deliberations and complexities of *Wahdat al-wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) and get engaged in the discussion of this concept because only prominent intellectuals and *Ṣūfīs* can deliberate upon such an intricate concept to prevent confusion and conflict in their way to Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى).

Among other scholars like al-Junayd al-Qawārīrī al-Baghdādī (رحمة الله عليه), 'Amr bin 'Uthmān al-Makkī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 903 CE/279 AH)³⁸, Abū Zakariyyā Yahya ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1277 CE/676

³⁵ A religious scholar and *Ṣūfī* from Egypt who wrote *Fayd al-Qadir Sharh al-Jamī al-Saghir* (Commentary on the Jami' by Imam al-Suyuti).

³⁶ A Shāfi'ī illuminati and *Ṣūfī* from Egypt, who was a prime mover of an Egyptian order of *taṣawwuf* (Sufism), appellatively known as Ša'rāwiyyah.

³⁷ He worked as a Grand Imām of al-Azhar and was called as “avuncular and beloved” by masses. He was recognised for his rationalizing and contemporizing style to teaching at Al-Azhar University Cairo, Egypt, sermonizing moderateness and accepting wholeheartedly advanced/new science as a religious obligation. Shaykh `Abdel Halim Mahmud initiated a discussion about the concept of *Wahdat al-wujūd* in his exegesis of *al-Munqidh min al-dalal* (Deliverance from Error) by Abu Hamid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111 CE/505 AH) (رحمة الله عليه). He argued the notion of *Wahdat al-wujūd* (the Unity of Existence/the Unity of Being that is the Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى)) is completely opposite from the concept of *Wahdat al-mawjūd* (the oneness/ unity of the creations/existents). The number of creations/existents (*mawjūd*) is abundant and incalculable such as animals, birds, earth, humans, heaven, mountains, oceans, trees, and much more, and it is not evident from any *Ṣūfī* who claim such absurd concept of *Wahdat al-mawjūd* which actually is contrary to the Islāmic belief. It is pertinent to mention here that the *Ṣūfīs* are friends of Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) who will never commit *shirk* (in religion Islām, *shirk* is the sin of idolatry or polytheism), and anyone who claims such an absurd concept would not be treated as *Ṣūfī* but *Mushrik* (the one who practice *shirk*). The concept of *Wahdat al-wujūd* originated from the antediluvian Hellenistic philosophers, which later on had been admired by thinkers of the last period. They argued that the Creator (Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى)) and creations are one entity or the same existence. One of them is Heraclitus of Ephesus, a pre-Socratic philosopher from Ancient Greek, who stated that “*God is day and night, winter and summer, war and peace, surfeit and hunger.*” We could also witness the same thought from another modern scholar like Shelly, who stated that “*God is the sweet smile on the lips of cute babies, wind that blow during the sunset, and the star that shine in the dark of night.*” But alas, some scholars believe that both these concepts *Wahdat al-wujūd* and *Wahdat al-mawjūd* are one which is share injustice on part of them towards the notion of *Wahdat al-wujūd*. The adherents of this propaganda of mixing of two different ideologies as one has been continued since time immemorial till this date. They connected this unIslāmic idea of *Wahdat al-mawjūd* to luminaries like al-Ḥallāj (رحمة الله عليه), I Ibn al-‘Arabī (رحمة الله عليه), ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī ibn al-Fārid (رحمة الله عليه), and many others without any justification. They, without any evidence, connected the term *Wahdat al-wujūd* with *Wahdat al-mawjūd* and created a rift among the Muslim Ummah (Community). It is a fact that none of these scholars have used any such term in their books. The only term evident from their works is *al-Wujūd al-wahid*, which means one existence, that is Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى). In other words, these scholars’ works carry the term which actually propagates the Oneness of Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) /monotheism (*tawhīd*), which had been the mission of Prophets of Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) as well. So, one should not have any problem with this concept. See, Mahmud, ‘Abd al-Halim, *Al-Munqidh min al-dalal li Hujjat al-Islam al-Ghazali wa abhath fi al-Tasawwuf*, Edition 4th, Maktabah al-Anjalu al-Misriya, Cairo, Egypt, 1964, pp. 269-271.

³⁸ Abū ‘Abd Allāh ‘Amr bin ‘Uthmān al-Makkī a pupil of al-Junayd who lived in Baghdad in 916 CE/ 279 AH. See, Arberry, A.J., *Muslim Saints and Mystic*, Episodes from the *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā of Farīd al-Dīn ‘Attār*,

AH), Ibn al-Ṣalāh (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1245 CE/643 AH), and various others considered Hallāj (رحمة الله عليه) insane, given his inappropriate behavior which was revealing secrets/hidden mysteries of religion Islām to masses through his teachings and writings. They rejected the concept of *Waḥdat al-wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) because of its complex connotations. Instead of teaching it to ordinary people, they believed that this concept should be taught among advanced *Ṣūfīs* as its apparent meaning may lead one astray.

Scholars like Shaykh Aḥmad al-Fārūqī al-Sirhindī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1624 CE/1034 AH) also differ with Ibn al-ʿArabī (رحمة الله عليه) on the existence of Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) and the universe. Probably the most significant aspect in which Alf Thānī Shaykh Aḥmad al-Sirhindī (رحمة الله عليه) contradicts with Ibn al-ʿArabī (رحمة الله عليه) is his theory in which he discusses Allāh's (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) existence and the existence of the wondrous world. Sirhindī realizes that Shaykh Ibn al-ʿArabī (رحمة الله عليه) repudiated any independent reality of the world and believed that it is the mere imagination that existed among the masses. Shaykh Aḥmad al-Sirhindī (رحمة الله عليه), undeniably, shares the same view that the world, certainly, is simply imagination but adds that Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has given it a measure of firmness and perpetuity. It is not illusory in the way that it only exists in people's minds (*wahm*), but rather in the way that Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) made it that way. As a result, it has an independent existence, though it is not equivalent to Allāh's (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) existence. This independence is significant because it enables the Muslim concept of reward and punishment to flourish. In this elucidation, Shaykh Aḥmad al-Sirhindī (رحمة الله عليه) sees himself as occupying a middle ground between the 'orthodox scholars,' who believe the world "actually" exists, and Ibn al-ʿArabī (رحمة الله عليه) and his adherents, who believe the world does not exist at all.

Scholars like Shaykh Aḥmad al-Fārūqī al-Sirhindī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1624 CE/1034 AH)³⁹ also differ with Ibn al-ʿArabī (رحمة الله عليه) on the existence of Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) and the universe. Probably the most significant aspect in which Alf Thānī Shaykh Aḥmad al-Sirhindī (رحمة الله عليه) contradicts with Ibn al-ʿArabī (رحمة الله عليه) is his theory in which he discusses Allāh's (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) existence and the existence of the wondrous world. Sirhindī (رحمة الله عليه) realizes that Shaykh Ibn al-ʿArabī (رحمة الله عليه) repudiated any independent reality of the world and believed that it is the mere imagination among the masses. Shaykh Aḥmad al-Sirhindī (رحمة الله عليه), undeniably, shares the same view that the world, indeed, is simply imagination but adds that Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) has given it a measure of firmness and perpetuity. It is not illusory in the way that it only exists in people's minds (*wahm*), but rather in the way that Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) made it that way. As a result, it has an independent existence, though it is not equivalent to Allāh's (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) existence. This independence is significant because it enables the Muslim concept of reward and punishment to flourish. In this elucidation, Shaykh Aḥmad al-Sirhindī (رحمة الله عليه) sees himself as occupying a middle ground between the 'orthodox scholars,' who believe the world "actually" exists, and Shaykh Ibn al-ʿArabī (رحمة الله عليه) and his adherents, who believe the world does not exist at all.

Shah Waliullah was the first scholar who tried to resolve Ibn al-ʿArabī's (رحمة الله عليه) *Waḥdat al-wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) and Shaykh Aḥmad al-Fārūqī al-Sirhindī's (رحمة الله عليه) *Waḥdat al-shuhūd* (Unity of Perception) doctrines, which seemed to be mutually exclusive. Ḥaḍrat Shāh Walīullāh Dehlawī (رحمة الله عليه) (d. 1762 CE/1175 AH) conveniently settled the dispute by referring to the disagreements as "verbal controversies" that arose from ambiguous terminologies. He claims that if we ignore all metaphors and similes used in the presentation of two doctrines, the seemingly opposing viewpoints of the two *Ṣūfī* scholars would agree. Ḥaḍrat Shāh Walīullāh's (رحمة الله عليه) attempts at reconciliation yielded two promising outcomes: it brought the two competing classes of *Ṣūfī* scholars together in peace, as well as legitimizing the doctrine of *Waḥdat al-wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) among orthodox scholars (*ulema*) who had previously rejected it.

In other words, he verified the long-held belief that the disparity between *Waḥdat al-shuhūd* (Unity of Perception) and Unity of Being *Waḥdat al-wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) in *Ṣūfī* doctrine was merely a matter of speech, the latter doctrine is viewed as a lower-level stage of projection.

Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1966, pp. 214-217; O'Leary, De Lacy, *Arabic Thought and its Place in History*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1954, p. 191.

³⁹ Shaykh Aḥmad al-Fārūqī al-Sirhindī (رحمة الله عليه) was born in Sirhind, Punjab, in the year 1564 CE/971 AH. He finished his *Ṣūfī* education mainly under the supervision of Shaykh Bāqī Billāh (رحمة الله عليه) after studying religious sciences (*'Ulūm al-Dīn*) from several different teachers. Maktūb, a set of letters written to his deputies (*khalīfa*) and disciples (*murīd*), is his most valuable work. Shaykh Aḥmad al-Fārūqī al-Sirhindī (رحمة الله عليه), who had a close relationship with then-political leaders and played a crucial role in re-establishing religious life in the region, died in Sirhind in 1034/1624. For further information about his life, see Hamid Algar, "Imām-ı Rabbānī", *DİA*, v. XXII, pp. 194-199; M. Abdul Haq Ansari, "The Life and Mission of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī", *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad, April 1985, v. LIX (59), no. 2, pp. 95-116.

Many Islāmic scholars considered ibn al-‘Arabī (رحمة الله عليه) as a pantheist. These include Fazlur Rahmān (d. 1988 CE/1408 AH), A.E. Affifi (d. 1966 CE/1386 AH), Hamka (d. 1981CE/1401 AH), and Ahmad Daudy. Fazlur Rahman claims that ibn al-‘Arabī’s (رحمة الله عليه) teachings are a monistic and pantheistic ideology that contradicts Islāmic orthodoxy.⁴⁰ A.E. Affifi also considers the ibn al-‘Arabī’s (رحمة الله عليه) doctrine of *Waḥdat al- wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) as perfect pantheism. Hamka⁴¹ and Ahmad Daudy⁴² hold the same viewpoint on this issue.

Some contemporary scholars deny that *Waḥdat al- wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) is associated/linked to pantheism, such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr (b. 1933 CE/1351 AH-present), Mir Valiuddin (d. 1975 CE/1395 AH), and Titus Burckhardt (d.1984 CE/1404 AH). Nasr, for instance, believes that the terms monism and pantheism cannot be used interchangeably with *Waḥdat al- wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence)⁴³ because, as per ibn al-‘Arabī’s (رحمة الله عليه) doctrine, Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) transcends nature. However, the nature and level of its manifestation, *tajali* cannot be entirely different from Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى). Mir Valiuddin,⁴⁴ who equally shares the same opinion as that of Nasr, believes that *taṣawwuf* (Sufism) maintains a distinction between Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) and nature, including humans. He believes *taṣawwuf* (Sufism) continues to believe in Allāh’s (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) transcendence. As a result, Valiuddin strongly refutes claims that ibn al-‘Arabī (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) is a pantheist. Titus Burckhardt also is not convinced that pantheism and *Waḥdat al- wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) are synonymous.⁴⁵ According to Titus, in this doctrine, Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) remains distinct from others and incomparable to nature. Harun Nasution (d. 1998 CE/1419 AH) also does not consider *Waḥdat al- wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) as pantheism, which, he believes, is obviously against Islāmic teachings.⁴⁶

To conclude, *Waḥdat al- wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) is one of the prominent aspects of *taṣawwuf* (Sufism) that has been recognized in Islām. Until now, many of the problems surrounding this important doctrine of ibn al-‘Arabī (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) have been triggered by social confusion and misunderstanding, which has led to *taṣawwuf* (Sufism) being portrayed negatively and suspected of being part of Islām. Many scholars mistakenly conflate *Waḥdat al- wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) with pantheism, which holds that the life of two (Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) and nature) merges into one. Scholars have proposed evidence that *Waḥdat al- wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) is not pantheism since the 12-17th century AD. Two brilliant works that entirely deliberate on these two important concepts such as pantheism and *Waḥdat al- wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) are Abdul Gānī al-Nāblusī’s *Idāh Maqṣud min Waḥdah al-Wujūd* and Abdurrauf ibn Ali al-Jāwī al-Fansūrī’s *Kifāyat al-Muhtajin ilā al-Muwahḥidīn Mashrab Qā’ilīn bi Waḥdah al-Wujūd*. These two works depict that ibn al-‘Arabī (رحمة الله عليه) doctrine of *Waḥdat al- wujūd* (Unity of Being/Unity of Existence) is not anyway associated with pantheism. Both of these scholars have also rejected pantheism, which they believe has no basis in Islamic practices and teachings.

⁴⁰ Rahman, Fazlur, *Islam*, The Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1978, n.d.

⁴¹ Hamka, *Tasawuf Perkembangan dan Pemurniannya*, Yayasan Nurul Islam, Jakarta, 1984, p. 156.

⁴² Daudy, Ahmad, *Allah dan Manusia dalam Konsepsi Syekh Nurudin ar-Ramiry*, Rajawali Press, Jakarta, 1983, p. 80.

⁴³ Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, *Ideal and Reality of Islam*, Onwin Paperback, London, 1979, p. 137.

⁴⁴ Valiuddin, Mir, *The Qur’anic Sufism*, Motilal Bannarsidas, Delhi, 1981, p. 48.

⁴⁵ Burckhardt, Titus, *An Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, Thorsons, England, 1976, p. 81.

⁴⁶ Nasution, Harun, *Filafat dan Mistisisme dalam Islam*, Bulan Bintang, Jakarta, 1983, pp. 92-95.