

A FORGOTTEN DEBATE ON WAHDAT
AL-WUJUD IN CONTEMPORARY
PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Apart from the debate on *Wahdat al-wujud* and *Wahdat al-shuhud* there has been an internal debate among the followers of *Wahdat al-wujud*. This debate was initiated by the reputed scholar Abdur Rahman Lucknowi (1161-1245 AH) from Lucknow, UP, India when he wrote *Kalimatul-Haq*. In this book he supported his viewpoint with various new arguments. Lucknowi has described two new dimensions of the thesis which were not adopted by anybody before: first, that the meaning of the *kalimah-e tawhid* is *Wahdat al-wujud* and second, that it is obligatory for the whole *Umma* to adopt the same meaning. He based his arguments on linguistic logic, interpretation of Quranic concepts in historical perspective and new interpretation of Quranic terms like *iman*, *shirk*, and *kufr*. The great mystic and scholar Syed Mehr Ali Shah born in 1859 AD/1275 AH (i.e. 30 years after Lucknowi's death), gave an analyses and critique of this thesis. In his Persian book *Tabqiqul-Haq fi Kalimatul-Haq*, first published in 1897, he refuted the arguments of Abdur Rahman Lucknowi.

Wahdat al-wujud and *Wahdat al-shuhud* are two schools of thought of Islamic *tasawwuf* (mysticism) with a historical background. Despite being unanimous on many issues, they have difference of opinion about the relationship of the Creator and His creation. *Wahdat al-wujud* says that all creation is the effect of *zil* (shadow) of *asma* (names) of Real Being, and this effect is being-less being. *Wahdat al-shuhud* says that the creation is a *khayal* (thought), but Real Being has made it manifest.

The relationship between the Creator and the creation has been described by Shaykh al-Akbar Muhyuddin Ibn al-Arabi in his *Futubat al-Makkiyya*, saying:

اوجد الاشياء وهو عينها¹

Here the word *ayn* used by Shaykh al-Akbar gives the detail of the relationship that exists between the Creator and the creation.

This word is excellently explained by great mystic and scholar Syed Mehr Ali Shah (1859-1937 AD) who said that the word *ayn* has two meanings:

Firstly, *ayn* means same, for example; everything is *ayn* of itself. It means that everything is same of itself. Secondly, it means a thing on which the other thing depends for existence. In this statement the second meaning is applicable. So according to the statement of Hazrat Shaykh al-Akbar, it means that if the contingents have no relationship with Almighty Allah, they will have no existence and in this case their being something or their nothingness will be equal. Furthermore, according to Mehr Ali Shah, Hazrat Shaykh al-Akbar says that this creation and universe is not the *ayn* of the Creator. He has explained this fact through many examples. In one of the examples he said that this universe has a relationship with its Creator as a relationship between a person and his image in the mirror. The image in the mirror is neither the *ayn* or same of the person nor *ghayr* or other of that person. We can say that the person has not advent (*bulul*) into the image in the mirror. He is neither in the image nor out from the image but even then there is a relationship between both of these ones and without that relationship the image in the mirror will not be able to exist.²

Hazrat Mehr Ali Shah in his book *Tabqiq ul-Haq* has adopted the same point of view regarding the interpretation and critique of the thought of Hazrat Abdur Rahman Lucknowi. He said that the point of view adopted by Lucknowi has created many contradictions and confusions in the thought of mystic tradition. He states that mystics' thought of *Wahdat al-wujud* is based on their spiritual revelation (*kashf*).

He has narrated that *Wahdat al-wujud* is the outcome of the spiritual revelation of perfect mystics of Islam, as explained by 15th-century famous Persian mystic and scholar Maulana Abdur Rahman Jami (1414-1492 AD) in his book *Lawa'ih* and by the famous Indian scholar Shah 'Abd ul-Haq Muhaddith Dehlawi (1551-1642 AD) in his book *Akbbar ul-Akhyar*. Another great Indian sub-continent scholar, Shah 'Abd ul-'Aziz Muhaddith Dehlawi (1745-1823 AD) wrote in his book *Fatawa-ye 'Aziziyya* – in response to the questions raised by Hafiz Sadr ud-Din Hayderabadi – that *Wahdat al-wujud* is correct and valid according to *sharia* because being has many levels of existence and every level of existence has rules and regulations. If someone interprets it in a hyperbolic way and applies the connotations relating to the Absolute Being to the creation, this will result in confusion and deviation.

Contrary to the practice of his predecessors, Abdur Rahman Lucknowi said that the interpretation of *Wahdat al-wujud* in the sense of *La ilaha illa 'llah* is obligatory and this meaning is valid according to the *sharia*. As per Lucknowi's interpretation – according to the *sharia* and the teachings of Quran and Sunna – the meaning of *La ilaha illa 'llah* is *La manjud illa 'llah*. So according to him, anyone who does not believe in this meaning of *La ilaha illa 'llah* is not a true believer. If this opinion is accepted as valid, the majority of the *Umma* will become non-believers. That is why it is widely believed and accepted that the phenomenon of *Wahdat al-wujud* is a matter of personal mystical experience. Therefore, a common man (Muslim) is not bound to understand or follow it.³

Hazrat Mehr Ali Shah negated the opinion of Abdur Rahman Lucknowi with many convincing and authoritative arguments. Shah said that as far as belief in Almighty Allah is concerned, it is fulfilled and attained when someone says *La ilaha illa 'llah* with a view that none other than Almighty Allah is qualified for worship. It means *La ma'bud illa 'llah*, because He is the Absolute Being, He is the Creator, He is the Sustainer of all creations and He and only He is to be worshipped. And this is the perspective of Oneness (*tawhid*) of Almighty Allah for which an oath was taken by all the creations on the day when God asked: *الست بربكم (A-lastu bi-rabbikum)*, i.e. "Am I

not your Lord?” (Quran 7:172). The same was sowed as the seed in the nature of humanity and the same Oneness was the objective of the interpretation, propagation and teachings of all the prophets who came to guide humanity and who addressed non-believers to guide them. It is not correct for Hazrat Lucknowi to say that this universe and its parts – like angels, stars, spirits, idols and other things – are not other than Almighty Allah. If the same point of view is adopted, the idolaters would easily find an argument to worship their desired idols along with the worship of Almighty Allah, because all of those would not be other than Almighty Allah. Another confusion attached to the point of view of Lucknowi is that if the same interpretation is adopted, then there would be no discrimination between legitimate and illegitimate, between the valid and invalid and between the permissible and impermissible. And if we take it further, then there is no necessity to follow the teachings of the *sharia* while it is evident from the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) that till his last moment he followed each and every commandment of the Almighty Allah.⁴

Abdur Rahman Lucknowi has given many arguments which are taken from the logic of linguistic and grammar to establish his point of view. Some of his arguments are given below:

Religious scholars say that the word *manjud* is implied in *La ilaha illa 'llah*, they interpret *ilah* as a Being qualified to be worshiped and interpret *illa* as other one instead using it for exception. In that way the meaning of *La ilaha illa 'llah* becomes “There is no god to be worshiped other than Almighty Allah”. While all of these three interpretations of *ulema* are incorrect, Lucknowi says that the word *ghayru'llah* is implied in the phrase *La ilaha illa 'llah*, and this was the belief of the idolaters of Makka. In this sense, the meaning of *La ilaha illa 'llah* will be: No god is other than Allah – i.e. the gods that you consider other than Allah (*ghayru'llah*) are His *ayn*. Proceeding forth, Lucknowi says that since gods are contingents and all the creation is also contingents, so the identity (*ayniyyat*) between Almighty Allah and all the creation is established.⁵

After proving rationally that it is not legitimate to imply the presence of the word *manjud* in the *Kalima Tayyiba* (i.e. in the Islamic creed *La ilaha illa 'lla*), Lucknowi gives arguments from traditions, some of which are given hereunder:

1. The saying of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) *La ilaha ghayruke* (no god except Allah) is an interpretation of the *Kalima Tayyiba* (the formula of Islam) and there is no possibility of considering the word *manjud* (existing) in it. Because the word *ghayruke* (except You) in this narration is in *halat-e rafei* (a grammatical structure

showing subject) and it is the *khabr* (detail) of *la* (Arabic word meaning No). Therefore, it will be wrong if someone considers the meaning of *ghayruk* as *siwak* (except You) and considers it an adjective of the word *ilab* (god) which is common or *mankur* (which is common noun) since, in this structure of the sentence, an adjective follows the *irab* vowel symbols of Arabic (of its noun or *mansuf* (noun of adjective), so *ghayruk* will be read as *mansub* (with symbol of object) and in fact the word *ghayruk* is *marfu* (with symbol of subject). So, *La ilaha ghayruk* means: no god is *ghayr* or 'other' than Almighty Allah. ⁶

2. Almighty Allah says in the Holy Quran (23:23): *ما لكم من اله غير ه*; i.e. there is no God for you except Almighty Allah, and the similar fact is described in many other verses of the Holy Quran like: *لو كان فيهما الهة الا الله لفسدنا* (22:21). These verses describe conclusively that there is no otherness between Almighty Allah and other *ilab* and it is consensus of the *ulema* and scholars that the words *La ilaha* have to be interpreted as 'other than Almighty Allah'.

The tradition of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and the verse of the Holy Quran *لو كان فيهما الهة الا الله لفسدنا* mention the meaning described in the arguments given before. One would have to consider the word *manjud* implied in *La ilaha illa Allah*, which is against the understanding of the addressees, i.e. the idolaters of Makka, who were of the view that there is otherness (*ghayriyyat*) between idols and Almighty Allah. Therefore, in the light of the argument taken from linguistic analysis and the tradition, it is proved that the consideration of the word *manjud* or *mumkin* as implied is a mistake of the scholars. ⁷

Lucknowi says that the word Allah and the other words which are part of the *Kalima Tayyiba* are also an argument for *tawhid* because the alphabetical structure of these words also indicates this meaning. The oneness of the being can be inferred and described from the four words which are found in the *Kalima Tayyiba: La ilaha illa Allah*.

Except for the word *Allah*, the other three words of the *Kalima Tayyiba* are: *la*, *ilab* and *illa*. All of these three words are taken from the word Allah by omitting the other alphabets. For example, if the alphabets *alif lam* is omitted from the word *Allah*, it results into the word *la* and if the alphabets *ba* is omitted from the word *Allah* and *kasra* is given to *hamza* it results the word *illa*. So the inclusion of all the words *la*, *ilab* and *illa* in the word *Allah* shows that nothing exists except Him. Similar is the case that nothing exists in anything except Almighty Allah. Hence we have found the oneness even from the words which are found in *La ilaha illa Allah*. This interpretation of

the words of the *Kalima Tayyiba* is a figurative aspect of the narration.⁸

After interpreting the *Kalima Tayyiba*, Lucknowi explains the term *shirk*. He says whenever the word *ilah* is used as *mankur*, i.e. a common word, it represents two kinds of *shirk* (associating partners with God): *shirk* in existence and *shirk* in worship. So *shirk* can be of two kinds: *shirk fi'l-wujud* and *shirk fi'l-'ibadat*.

The word *ilah* includes both of these kinds of *shirk* because the idolaters of Makka believed that the being of idols is other than the Being of Almighty Allah. They were committing the *shirk* in the existence of Almighty Allah and since they were worshipping the idols so they were also committing *shirk fi'l-'ibadat*. In the *Kalima Tayyiba* both of these *shirk* were negated with the one negation and it was not possible but with the statement of *La ilaha illa 'llah*. To negate both of these *shirk*, two negations were required; one for *shirk fi'l-wujud* saying *La mawjud illa 'llah* and other for *shirk fi'l-'ibadat* saying *La ma'bud illa 'llah*. Here, according to Lucknowi, Almighty Allah expressed both of these negations with the statement *La ilaha illa 'llah*.

Lucknowi further narrates that the *Kalima Tayyiba*, i.e. *La ilaha illa 'llah*, implies the incapability of all beings except Almighty Allah to be worshiped, and in this way it is proved that nothing (or no being) exists other than Almighty Allah and that nothing except Almighty Allah is able to be worshiped.⁹

After establishing that there is no otherness between Almighty Allah and other things, Lucknowi says:

1. The reality of Almighty Allah and His beingness is not existing beyond the existence, but it is concentrated in the existing ones. If the reality of Almighty Allah is not concentrated in the existing ones, then it will be other (*ghayr*) of the existing ones, and it is not possible.
2. Similarly, no being can exist beyond the reality of Almighty Allah, but its existence is concentrated in the reality of Almighty Allah if any existing one has no existence in the reality of Almighty Allah, then it would be considered as other to the reality of Almighty Allah, which is impossible. So the existence of all existing ones is concentrated in the reality of Almighty Allah and the reality of Almighty Allah is concentrated in the existing ones and in this way all the creatures are identical in their existence with the Almighty Allah.

Giving the arguments about the identity between the creations and Almighty Allah, Abdur Rahman Lucknowi says that the reason for the concentration of the existence of reality of Almighty Allah in

manjud – or the reason of the concentration of the *manjud* in the reality of Almighty Allah – is that *manjud* and *wujud* are identical and they are equal. Similarly, *manjud* and *wujud* are equal and neither of these two can exist beyond the other but instead, *manjud* and *wujud* both are the same, and no *wujud* can exist without *manjud* as it is a principle that *شئ ما لم يجب لم يوجد*. It means nothing can exist until its existence is necessary since the contingent is also included in the existent things. So when the contingent was equipped with the attribute of existence or *manjudiyyat*, it became equal to the necessary; but the necessary can't exist beyond the reality of Almighty Allah. Therefore, the contingent, whose existence is considered besides the reality of Almighty Allah, is actually found in the reality of Almighty Allah and nothing was found beyond it. Furthermore, the definition of contingent – i.e. that its existence or non-existence is not necessary – is based on the principle that the Absolute Reality is described in three kinds: necessary (*wajib*), contingency (*imkan*) and impossibility (*imtinā'*) and it is considered that *wujud* (being) is one of the attributes of the Absolute Reality while the analysis of this principle proves that this classification is not correct.¹⁰

Here the four fundamental formulae of mystics, which are the origin of all their thought and principles, are established as true because they are inferred from one formula *La ilaha illa 'llah* and these four formulae of mystics are:¹¹

لا وجود الا الله، لا موجود الا الله، لا واجب الا الوجود، لا وجود الا
الواجب

Hazrat Mehr Ali Shah gave a detailed analysis of the arguments presented by Abdur Rahman Lucknowi in *Kalimat ul-Haq* by stating the following basic points in his reply *Tahqiq ul-Haq fi Kalimat ul-Haq* (Research about *Kalimat ul-Haq*).

1. Maulana Abdur Rahman Lucknowi is not divergent from the mystical tradition in the sense that he has belief in *tawhid-e wujud*.

2. He is divergent from the tradition in two perspectives: first that, according to the Holy Prophet (PBUH), the meaning of the *kalimat-e tayyiba* (also called *kalimat-e tawhid*, i.e. *La ilaha illa Allah*), is *tawhid-e wujud*, and second, that it is obligatory for the entire *Umma* to believe in this meaning of the *kalimat-e tayyiba*.

After introducing the conceptions of Abdur Rahman Lucknowi, Hazrat Mehr Ali Shah gave a detailed analysis of Lucknowi's arguments, concluding that they are not valid.¹²

Mehr Ali Shah says that according to the Arabic language the word *ilah* is used for all those things which are worshiped – whether *wajib* or *mumkin* (necessary or contingent) – and according to the sharia this word is specifically used for Almighty Allah because the

human nature (*fitrat-e salima*) denies to worship such a being who is not equipped with all the perfect attributes like ‘sustaining’ and ‘giving life’ and ‘death’ etc. And these can be inferred from the verses of Holy Quran which are as following:

ام جعلوا لله شركاء خلقوا كخلقه (13:16)

Or do they assign to Allah partners who created the like of His creation, so that the creation (which they made and His creation) seemed alike to them.

ام اتخذوا آلهة من الارض هم ينشرون (21:21)

Or have they taken (for worship) gods (*alibah*) from the earth who raise the dead?

قل اتخذتم من دونه اولياء لا يملكون لانفسهم نفعا ولا ضرا (13:16)

Say (O Muhammad PBUH): Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth? Say: (It is) Allah! Say: Have you then taken (for worship) protectors other than Him, which, even for themselves, have neither benefit nor hurt?

These Arabs believed that idols are not creators; they also had no belief in life after death.

Hazrat Mehr Ali Shah says that in the Holy Quran and Hadith, the word *ilab* is never used simultaneously for Almighty Allah and the idols which were worshiped by the Arab idolaters. It is used only in a very specific meaning, which is called *makhsus mafhum kulli*. This principle states that if a word is coined for a broad, inclusive meaning (*mafhum kulli*) and is used for any part of that meaning, this use will be figurative or *majazan*. When we say اياك نعبد (*iyaka na'budu*) the understanding of *ilab* would be in the sense of its entirety which is referred only and exclusively to Almighty Allah.

Similarly, in the verse لو كان فيهما آلهة الا الله the word *alibah* (Plural of *ilab*) refers to the beings which are considered worthy of worship, and these are idols as considered by non-believers and idolaters. Since the idolaters of Makka believed that idols are capable of being worshiped, here *ilab* refers to them too. But it is wrong to say that here the word *ilab* has *ishtirak-e lafzi* (applying the same meaning to two things) because in this case it is to be established that the same word is coined and used for two different things. If a word is used for more than two things in the context of *ishtirak-e lafzi*, then we have to establish that same word is coined for those different things and is attributed to them.

Hence, the view of Maulana Lucknowi that the word *ilab* is used with the same meaning for Almighty Allah and for the creation with the principle of *ishtirak-e lafzi* is not supported with the evidence given. If Maulana Lucknowi derives this point from the verses which he quoted, it is not understandable because the description of *tamhid*

and eligibility to be worshiped and the being worshiped proves that the word *ilab* is not coined for the idols but it is and can be used in its entirety for the Absolute Being who is Almighty Allah.

After analyzing the arguments and statements of Abdur Rahman Lucknowi, Mehr Ali Shah says that the meaning of the *kalimah tayyiba* is belief in the oneness of Almighty Allah as it is given by the *sharia*. It means that no one can share the right of worship with Almighty Allah. It cannot be an argument for identity because identity, according to Lucknowi, is based on three things: *ishtirak-e lafzi*, *ishtirak-e ghayriyyat* and the status of *mankur* for the word *ilab*, which according to him refers to idols. But all of these three things are not established here. Afterwards he analyses the verses of the Holy Quran quoted by Abdur Rahman Lucknowi as evidence for his opinion.¹³

Discussing the verse *هو الاول والآخر والظاهر والباطن* (57:3), Mehr Ali Shah says the immediate meaning of this verse is that the absolute and perfect beginning or *anwalīyyat-e kamila* is with Almighty Allah. It refers to non-beginning, i.e. no one is before Him. Similarly He is attributed with absolute and perfect ending or *akhirīyyat-e kamila*. It means that none is after Him, whether someone has reached annihilation (*fana'*) or any other stage. In His absolute and perfect manifestation (*ẓubur-e kamil*) none is *ẓahir* more than Him and He is entitled for the attribute of absolute and perfect hiddenness (*butun-e kamil*); and none is more *باطن* (*batin*) than Him and no human intellect or reason can recognize His *butun*. Therefore, all of these things refer to the Oneness of Almighty Allah and there is no possibility to establish an identity between Almighty Allah and creation.¹⁴

Discussing the verse *إينما تولوا فثم وجه الله* (2:115), Mehr Ali Shah says that this verse explains omnipresence (*'umum-e kayanat*) and not the identity that the creation is identical with Almighty Allah.¹⁵

Discussing the verse *قل هو الله احد* (112:1), he says that this verse and Sura is not favoring Lucknowi; rather it is an argument against him. Here *احد* refers to *abadiyyat fi-ẓ-ẓat wa-'s-sifat*, and *لم يلد ولم يولد* (112:3) refers to *ghayriyyat* since these verses are *ayat-e mubkamat* so no *ta'wil* is permissible here. When the meaning of the *ayat-e mubkamat* is obvious, these are not permissible for *ta'weel*. Then he comes to *ما يكون من نجوى ثلاثة* (58:7) and says that this verse refers to omniproximity (*'umum-e ma'riyyat*). If, number given is three, the fourth is Almighty Allah, and number given is five, the sixth is Almighty Allah, and so forth. Hence here too the relationship with Almighty Allah to the three or the four or the five is of proximity

(*ma'yyat*) and not of identity (*'ayniyyat*). Shah concludes that this verse doesn't support the opinion of Abdur Rahman Lucknowi.¹⁶

Mehr Ali Shah then discussed the Hadith *qurb-e nawafil* and established that this is also an argument for *ghayriyyat*, not *'ayniyyat*. This Hadith gives the meaning of *taqarrub* (vicinity), and whenever we talk about *taqarrub* it is between two different things because duality (*ithnayniyyat*) is always in *ghayriyyat* and not in *'ayniyyat*. So when the Hadith narrates that كنت سمعه then this is *taqarrub* – maybe in its ultimate level. If instead of *taqarrub*, we consider that Almighty Allah Himself becomes ear and eye and hand and foot of the man, common sense doesn't support and appreciate it, because it becomes an evidence of fractioning the One (*juziyyat-e Wahid*). Therefore, we have to go for *ta'wil*. Here it means that these parts of the body of *mard-e mu'min* get the vicinity (*taqarrub*) of Almighty Allah and they are given – a sort of divine – force through it.

At the end, Mehr Ali Shah gets back to the *Surah al-Ikhlās* and states that in response to the question of the idolaters of Makka, Almighty Allah asked the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to explain to them the meaning of *tawhid* through the *Surah al-Ikhlās*, saying that, when people asked “Who is Almighty Allah?”, say: قل هو الله احد (He is alone in His being and attributes) الله الصمد (He is *al-Samad*, the Transcendent, the Far-Superior). لم يلد (He has given birth to none) لم يولد (He is born from none) ولم يكن له كفوا احد (and no one is equal to Him in his attributes).¹⁷

The word *wujud* can be understood in two ways: first in the meaning of fruition (*tabaqquq*) and resultant (*busul*), and this is relating to mind entities, i.e. beings which exist only in the mind. In this sense, *wujud* does not exist outside of the mind. Secondly, *wujud* is taken as ‘Real Being’, and it means ‘the being whose existence is in itself, and none exists except Him’ – all other creation is a gradual manifestation of the Real Being. The word *wujud* is used for Almighty Allah only in the latter sense, i.e. He is the Being Who exists in His Self.¹⁸ Here, *wujud* is the Absolute Reality. No knowledge of any human being can understand Him. The significance of the word ‘*wujud*’ in this meaning is neither universal (*kullī*) nor fractional (*juzi*), neither absolute (*mutlaq*) nor restricted (*muqayyad*), neither one nor of multiplicity. Instead, all these meanings are the exponents of different levels of His *ta'ayyunat* and the word رفيع الدرجات shows the same meaning. There is no intermediary between Him and nothingness. There is no contradiction (*naqiz*) or similarity (*mumathil*) of Him. He is above estimation of our senses, as the Holy Quran says (42:11): ليس كمثله شيء:¹⁹

The Real Being is everlasting (*azali*) and eternal (*abadi*). Otherwise it may have some creator or inventor and thus an end. This distinction of the Real Being is in itself, and it is a base or origin for all *tajalliyyat-e asma'iyya* and *sifatiyya* as well as *mazahir-e 'ilmiyya wa 'ayniyya*. There is Real Oneness for this being which is not due to any multiplicity against Him.

When it is established that none exists except the Necessary and Real Being, the meaning of *خلقكم* is the manifestation of attributes (*sifat*) as *ta'ayyunat-e kawniyya*. In other words, the annihilation of beings – i.e. *fana'* or *'idam-e manjudat* – means the reversal of that manifestation from *ta'ayyunat-e shahadiyya* to *savar-e ghaybiyya*. So in the Reality of the Real Being (*nafs-e haqiqat*), there is no contention (*tashkeik/tafawat*), because this exists only in the descending levels of manifestation. Also, there is no contention in the essence of humanity (*nafs-e insaniyyat*), which is in all human beings, but it exists in its manifestation in different human beings.

Almighty Allah has made three categories of *Wujud-e zilli*. One is this temporal world, second is the mediatory world (*barzakat*) which is *'alam-e mithal* and *'alam-e malakut*. Third is the coming world i.e. *'alam-e akhirat*. It is *'alam-e jabarut*. Almighty Allah has made man all-encompassing (*jami'*) of all these worlds. The different roles of the best creation of Almighty Allah, i.e. *Mard-e mu'min*, signifies different aspects of these worlds. For example, the body represents this temporal world (*'alam-e asbab*), the *nafs* represents *'alam-e mithal* and *'alam-e malakut*, and the soul represents *'alam-e jabarut* and *'alam-e amr*. This resemblance of man with the rest of the worlds is an indication that if man is able to transcend from his illusionary being (*hasti-ye mawhum*), then there is none except the Real Being i.e. *الملك لمن غلب*.

Mystics unanimously agree that if *qurb* means 'approaching Almighty Allah', then it is impossible. Wherever mystics talk about 'observance of the Absolute Being' (*mushahida-e Zat*) it means the subtraction (*zuhul*) of the presence of any being other than Real Being. And the Real Being is beyond the perception of senses. So the way of achieving proximity to Almighty Allah is:

تو مباحث اصلا کمال این است و بس
رودر و گم شو وصال این است و بس²⁰

You must remove the sense of your illusionary being (*hasti-ye mawhum*), and this is the real perfection (*kamal*). You must annihilate the barriers of self-existence in a spiritual journey (*suluk*), and this absorption and annihilation (*istighbraq*) is, in real sense, the proximity (*wasl*) to Almighty Allah.²¹

The contemporary relevance of Mehr Ali Shah's interpretation is multidimensional. It fulfils the doctrinal necessities and also qualifies for a protocol of self-development with reference to *Wahdat al-wujud*. The negation of the illusionary self and the assertion of Absolute Self can enable *salik* to materialize the doctrine of *sibghatu'llah* which is a criterion of spiritual elevation for *Mard-e mu'min*.

NOTES AND REFERENCE

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³ Shah, *Tabqiq ul-Haq*, p. z-s.

⁴ Shah, *Tabqiq ul-Haq*, p. s.

⁵ Khan, Muhammad Asadullah, *Tanqih al-Tawhid*, Khwaja Syed Mehr Ali Shah, Lahore, Androon-e Taxali Darwaza, 1956, p. 17f; 22.

⁶ Lucknowi, Abdur Rahman, *Kalimat ul-Haq*, Lahore, Allah-wale ki Qomi Dokan, p.83.

⁷ Lucknowi, *Kalimat ul-Haq*, p. 83.

⁸ Lucknowi, *Kalimat ul-Haq*, p. 179.

⁹ Lucknowi, *Kalimat ul-Haq*, p. 180.

¹⁰ Lucknowi, *Kalimat ul-Haq*, p. 182.

¹¹ Lucknowi, *Kalimat ul-Haq*, p. 183.

¹² Shah, *Tabqiq ul-Haq*, p. 4.

¹³ Shah, *Tabqiq ul-Haq*, p. 5f.

¹⁴ Shah, *Tabqiq ul-Haq*, p. 42.

¹⁵ Shah, *Tabqiq ul-Haq*, p. 43.

¹⁶ Shah, *Tabqiq ul-Haq*, p. 45.

¹⁷ Shah, *Tabqiq ul-Haq*, p. 46.

¹⁸ Shah, *Tabqiq ul-Haq*, p. 80.

¹⁹ Shah, *Tabqiq ul-Haq*, p. 81.

²⁰ Fareedudin Muhammad bin Ibraheem Attar, *Mantiq Ter, fi al-Towheed Bari Tala*, Verse-130

²¹ Shah, *Tabqiq ul-Haq*, p. 92-95.