

Ibn Al-Arabi – A Prominent Representative Of Sufism

Mirzayev Axrorjon Azamovich

Senior Lecturer at the Department of “Social Sciences and Sports”, Fergana Polytechnic Institute

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*Correspondence: Mirzayev

Axrorjon Azamovich

Email: axrorjon.mirzayev@ferpi.uz

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Abstract: This study explores the life, teachings, and philosophical contributions of Ibn al-Arabi, a prominent figure in Sufism. The research aims to analyze his theological perspectives, particularly his concept of Wahdat al-Wujud (the unity of existence), and its significance in contemporary intellectual discourse. The study employs a historical-philosophical approach to examine Ibn al-Arabi's works in their socio-cultural context. Comparative analysis is used to contrast his teachings with other Sufi scholars such as Rumi and Jili. Additionally, a philosophical-anthropological method is applied to interpret his views on human existence and spiritual development. The findings highlight Ibn al-Arabi's profound influence on Islamic philosophy and spirituality. His works emphasize the interconnectedness of divine essence and the material world, shaping the Sufi intellectual tradition. The study also discusses the relevance of his ideas in modern times, particularly in the context of Uzbekistan's efforts to promote its intellectual heritage. By analyzing Ibn al-Arabi's doctrines, this research provides new insights into the philosophical and theological foundations of Sufism. It underscores the importance of studying classical Islamic thought to understand contemporary spiritual and intellectual movements.

Keywords: Sufism, Theology, Spirituality, Humanity, Philosophy, Society, Culture, Development, Strategy, Jurisprudence.

Introduction

Nowadays, studying Sufi philosophy based on new approaches, researching the Sufi works of great thinkers, and demonstrating their social significance to the wider public are among the pressing tasks of social and humanitarian research. In particular, Uzbekistan's new development strategy also emphasizes the importance of extensively promoting the rich scientific and spiritual heritage of our great ancestors. To this end, specific measures have been outlined, including the popular translation of 100 works authored by renowned scholars from our country, the creation of scientific and popular treatises based on them, and the in-depth study and broad promotion of this heritage. The importance of researching the scientific and spiritual heritage of the East is further highlighted by funding the work of organisations like the Centre for Islamic Civilisation, the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, and the international research centres of Imam Bukhari, Imam Termizi, and Imam Maturidi.

Studying the opinions of intellectuals who have achieved widespread renown in Islamic philosophy and theology, evaluating their findings, and incorporating their social

meaning into the course of national development continue to be top priorities. These academics' contributions to modern intellectual and cultural advancement are extremely noteworthy since they aimed to alter society awareness and worldview through their scientific study and thoughts.

In this regard, it is necessary to study the philosophical-anthropological aspects of the Sufi views of Ibn al-Arabi, a prominent representative of Sufi philosophy who elevated religious and sufistical thought to a new level. This includes examining the development trends of epistemological and theological perspectives in the Islamic world based on his ideas, as well as analyzing his social views as a representative of a culture that has interacted across centuries. Examining Ibn al-Arabi's beliefs, the elements that shaped his Sufi conceptions, and the influence of his social surroundings on his ideas would be a highly relevant course of action from the standpoint of philosophy history.

Methodology

This study's primary objectives are to examine the Sufi writings of eminent thinkers, research Sufi philosophy with modern techniques, and determine the works' social significance. The following strategies are part of the research methodology:

The Sufi theology and intellectual legacy of Ibn al-Arabi are examined from a historical perspective within the sociocultural environment of the Middle Ages. Examining the factors that influenced his beliefs is made feasible by this method.

In order to identify parallels and discrepancies between Ibn al-Arabi's teachings and those of other Sufi figures, like Jalal al-Din Rumi, Abd al-Karim Jili, and other Sufi representatives, analysis by comparison is used. Philosophical-anthropological analysis examines Ibn al-Arabi's theories about humans and the cosmos from both an anthropological and philosophical perspective. This approach explains his concept of "Wahdat al-Wuju" (the unity of existence) and how individuals arrive to ultimate truth.

The study of social significance looks at how Ibn al-Arabi's theories apply to contemporary society and how they impact the processes of national growth. The new Uzbek development plan is specifically reviewed, along with measures to widely promote the scientific and spiritual heritage of notable scientists.

Based on these methodological techniques, the study aims to provide objective and well-founded conclusions regarding the philosophical and scientific aspects of Ibn al-Arabi's Sufi ideas and their position in modern society.

Result and Discussion

Abu Bakr Muhammad Ibn Arabi is still known as "Ash-Shaykh al-Akbar" (the Great Master) because he created a systematic framework of Sufi ideas. There is little information about Ibn al-Arabi's personal life. It is known that he received his early education in Murcia and later studied under renowned Sufi scholars in cities such as Alexandria (North Africa), Cairo, Damascus, and Baghdad. His teachings were studied in medieval times and, particularly in later periods, were taught in European higher and religious educational institutions. References to his philosophy can be found in the works of modern-era philosophers such as Sinposa and Toland, who attempted to evaluate and systematize his philosophical views.

It is well known that Muhyiddin Ibn al-Arabi is one of the greatest thinkers in Islamic history, leaving behind a rich scientific and literary legacy. Abdulwahhab Sha'rani estimated the number of his works to be over 400, while Abdurahman Jami stated that he authored more than 500 works. The author of "Hadyat al-Arifin" recorded 475 of his works. According to the German orientalist Carl Brockelmann, his writings amount to 150 volumes. Meanwhile, the Iranian Sufi scholar Mohsin Jahangiri compiled a list of 511 of Ibn al-Arabi's works.

All of Ibn al-Arabi's followers and devotees who lived and created until the 13th century belonged to various jurisprudential schools (fiqh madhhabs) and different Sufi orders. This very fact indicates that Ibn al-Arabi was not confined to any specific fiqh or theological school. Otherwise, scholars and sufis from diverse orders and schools would not have shown interest in his views. According to the information provided in "Jāmi' Karāmāt al-Awliyā'" by Yusuf bin Ismail al-Nabahani (1265–1350) and "Wafayāt al-A'yān" by Ibn Khallikan, Ibn al-Arabi belonged to the Maliki school of jurisprudence [4]. However, Ibn al-Arabi's views on jurisprudence and theology, especially his bold claims regarding faith, contradict this information. He may have shown an inclination toward the Maliki school (since in the 12th century, as well as today, a portion of North African Muslims belong to the Maliki madhhab), but he did not follow any particular school of jurisprudence or theological doctrine. On the contrary, as a scholar who had attained a high level of knowledge, he exercised "ijtihad" and evaluated every issue related to jurisprudence, theology, and sufism from his own perspective. However, his understanding of "ijtihad" differed from that of the Sunni scholars, who defined it as deriving legal rulings through analogy based on the Quran, Sunnah, and consensus. For Ibn al-Arabi, "ijtihad" meant "developing inner faculties to receive divine inspiration in a manner akin to the prophets".

Ibn al-Arabi's teachings not only established him as a great figure in Islamic theology but also made a significant contribution to the spiritual and cultural development of the entire Islamic world. In his philosophical worldview, the concept of existence is interpreted in a "pantheistic" spirit. According to him, everything in existence possesses an inherent "purposefulness". Thus, existence and the universe have been created and structured based on "preordained harmony and systematic order" since the beginning of time.

Ibn Arabi's works "Al-Futuhāt al-Makkiyya" and "Fusus al-Hikam" are recognized as his most significant writings. Analyzing these works provides a correct understanding of "Sufi philosophy".

Ibn al-Arabi's Sufi doctrine is based on philosophical anthropology. According to this idea, the primary reason for the creation of the universe is the human being. This concept has been the source of thought and spirit for all Sufis. The great Shaykh Ibn al-Arabi remained faithful to this idea and sought to prove that the ultimate purpose of human existence is the central axis of the universe's creation.

In modern scientific terms, this means that "Allah and the universe manifest in an anthropomorphic form" – that is, "Allah appears in the form of a human being". At the same time, humans resemble both Allah and the created world. Therefore, Ibn al-Arabi

advanced the Sufi doctrine that through “self-awareness, a human being can attain knowledge of both Allah and the universe”.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Ibn al-Arabi's works reflect ideas about the relationship between divine essence and countless realities, the connection between spirit and matter, the primary foundation and its less significant attributes, and the various levels of existence. His thoughts also explore the role of movement and existence in the created world. What is striking is that his depiction of the universe's creation and existence is not mythical but presented as a complete reality. He does not limit his perspective to subjective consciousness alone but extends it to objective reality, which in his imagination constantly manifests itself.

In this regard, his views on imagination and perception are particularly significant. According to Ibn al-Arabi, great imagination is as real as sensory perception. Only those whom the Prophet and Allah have granted a supreme soul, consciousness, and perception can fully detach themselves from the material world and their surrounding environment.

In the realm of imagination, spiritual essence and emotions take on the nature of visible reality, while material objects, in contrast, acquire a divine nature. In short, from Ibn al-Arabi's perspective, the world is nothing more than Allah's self-perception – meaning that it lacks independent existence and true reality.

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