

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology  
of Egypt / Egyptology

**THE PHILOSOPHY AND ONTOLOGY OF IBN ARABI IN CONTEXT OF  
ISLAM AND SUFISM**

**Dr. Shabana Nazar<sup>1\*</sup>, Najamul Hassan<sup>2</sup>, Dr Badshah Rehman<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Arabic, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur (PAK).  
[\\*shabana.nazar@ymail.com](mailto:shabana.nazar@ymail.com),

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Malakand (PAK)  
[dr.najmulhasan@uom.edu.pk](mailto:dr.najmulhasan@uom.edu.pk)

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Malakand (PAK)  
[badshahrehman@uom.edu.pk](mailto:badshahrehman@uom.edu.pk)

**Dr. Shabana Nazar , Najamul Hassan , Dr Badshah Rehman , The Philosophy And  
Ontology Of Ibn Arabi In Context Of Islam And Sufism , Palarch's Journal Of  
Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 18(10), 2509-2520. ISSN 1567-214x.**

**Abstract:**

Philosophy had always been an uprising theme and motif among Muslim scholars and Ibn Arabi was the most celebrated among them. Ibn Arabi was the pioneer of extending the meaning of philosophy just beyond the limits of faith and ideologies. This paper is aimed to discuss the philosophy and ontology of Ibn Arabi in context of religion Islam and Sufism. A brief discussion on the life and philosophical approach of Ibn Arabi for the religion of Islam and Sufism is elaborated in views of authors and researchers who have dedicated their work for the field of Islam and Sufism. This is a review paper that describes the biography of the great Sufi and Islamic scholar, Ibn Arabi in light of available literature on the life events of his personality. The literature review approach has been taken to analyze the ontology of Ibn Arabi as one of the most important and basic teachings of Ibn Arabi include the concept of Wahdat-ul-Wujud, which literally means the presence of something. This review paper discussed the three main ontologies elaborated by Arabi in context of religion Islam; the Wahdat-ul-Wujud, Repeatability and Delimitation and the Imagination. Second part of the literature review has presented the

discussion of the approach of Ibn Arabi on Sufism, this section answers the many controversies related to the religious and spiritual philosophies of Arabi. These findings of the paper are based on previous literature only as no primary sources and data is included to answer the research questions of this study. That is the main limitation of underlying study.

### **Introduction:**

Philosophy had always been an uprising theme and motif among Muslim scholars (Knysh & Hussain, 2016). Ibn Arabi was the most celebrated among them. He was born in 1165 at Murcia, Spain. Ibn Arabi was the pioneer of extending the meaning of philosophy just beyond the limits of faith and ideologies. This path later on was followed by many others which include Avicenna, Mullah Sadra and many more. Leading the same path as Ibn Arabi, (Salman Bashier, 2012) added up on philosophy that it's a broad spectrum terminology which initially if taken into segregated approach, reaches high up to the levels of mysticism. In the light of all his teachings, Ibn Arabi is now considered as a Sufi Saint by modern culture. But in reality, his sayings were not only limited to Quran and Sunnah rather covers a wide perspective of each and every aspect of daily life. Many others wrote in same genre but they were restricted to a specific categorization such as Al Ghazali. But Ibn Arabi's work was beyond any jurisdiction. He has written several books and excerpts in these genres and all of his works had discernment from each other. With all these qualities, he is called "Al-Shaykh-ul-Akbar" the greatest Master of all times. These titles correspond to the uniqueness of his work and add up to the fact that no one can reach up to his level of sanity and Sufism.

Initially his work was not celebrated as much in his era. But after his death, and with the evolution of Sufism, he widely became known as the greatest Sufi saint of all times who not only explained the teachings of Quran but taught people many things about the life in this world and hereafter. Despite of all this, his works remained confined to Muslims and was not encouraged by the western world. His teachings were difficult in general and required quite depth to be understood. Orient-lists without actually understanding these excerpts refused to accept his work and termed him a Sufi saint dealing with Islamic concepts only. "History of Islamic book" by Corbin, (1958) was the book which made his work being recognized as a master piece in his field among European scholars. He was seconded by books written by Isutzu, (1966). But these two philosophers did not cover his work entirely and were limited to one of his books "Fusus-ul-Hikam" (The ring stones of wisdom). This book covers pretty much of his teachings and gives an insight of his life but still has some areas being deficient. He wrote this book in Damascus and it comprises of 27 chapters. His other book "Al-Futuhah-ul-Makiya" (The Meccan openings) is a master piece in itself. It has 560 detailed chapters and can be considered as a detailed conclusion of his preaching throughout his life. The latest version of this book has more than fifteen thousand pages and is written in Arabic language. His entire work comprises of more than 350 books and educational excerpts but unfortunately a limited number of this books excerpts have been translated into English. Moreover, the copied text is still deficient in terms of its proper explanation and phrasing. Thus language is a major barrier among Ibn Arabi's teachings and the western world. Various Muslim scholars have identified similarities among his philosophical work with other scholars. Chiefly Eckhart and Cusanus were listed by Shah Kazemi (2006). Yousef, (2007) related his context to physics and Dobbie to modern philosophy. Ibn Arabi defined the term 'Barzakh' (limit) in clearly discerning words. This established a relation with both philosophy and the present world problems regarding relationship of Allah with worldly things and happenings. From Aristotle to modern philosopher, Rorty various people have made an

attempt to explain the concept of limit but they could not reach upto his level (Bashier, 2004). Ibn Arabi's legacy did not only limit to Muslim world. But when China established a school in pre modern times in South Asia , they built "The Han Kitab" based on teachings of Ibn Arabi (Muratta, Chittick & Weiming, 2008). In addition to this , his philosophical concepts have been explained in " the journal of Muhiyyudin " established by Ibn Arabi society in 1983. His work is referred to as perennialism (Lipton 2018).

### **1.1. Objectives of Study:**

This paper is aimed to discuss the philosophy and ontology of Ibn Arabi in context of religion Islam and Sufism so the key question aimed to answer in result of this discussion are;

- The three onologies of Arabi; Wahdat-ul-Wujud, Repeatability and Delimitation and the Imagination.
- The controversies explored by Ibn Arabi like the status issues of prophecy vis-a-vis sainthood, concept of man' perfection (called as the supreme sufiand the pole of spiritual universe). This discussion is made through the review of literature on Sufism and teachings of Ibn Arabi for the concept.

### **1.2. Biography:**

Ibn Arabi belongs to an Arabic ethnicity. According to Arab traditions, his full name was " Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Al Arabi Al Ta'i Al Hatimi. The last three of his names, refer to his family and tribe. His tribe is "The Tay'a" and father's name was Ali . Ibn Arabi belonged to a well-off family of Mercia city. He was the grandson of Hatam Al Ta'i. Islam came to Arab in 7th century but Hatam died a few years ago (Homerin, 1986). He was a verywell-known person of his tribe, mostly known as one of the most generous and kind hearted people among his tribe. These two qualities were the most celebrated among Arabs especially at time when they were forced to become nomads in dry deserts of Arabia, with no water and shelter. Despite of being settled in such dry lands and living miserable lives, they had always shown hospitality towards guests and even to other homeless people. Arabs were known for the fact that even if they are visited by an unknown person, and food is scanty, they give their own food to that person. Such was the level of their self-lessens. All these qualities were the reason Ibn Arabi's grandfather was well known among the people of his tribe and was considered to be an ideal. And in today's worlds, "as generous as Hatim" is used as a simile for a person who helps others whole heartedly(López-Anguita, 2021).

Arabi's father initially worked for the predecessor of Mercia city, Muhammad bin Saud bin Mardanish. He was the founder of Saud dynasty and is considered to be leader of first Saudi dynasty. Later on he was employed for Mohd Caliphate. Since Ibn Arabi's father had worked with great people, this enabled him to get proper education and get into company of some of the greatest peoples of his time, including Ibn Rushd. With him, he explored his interest in Sufism since from a very early age. In addition to this, his mother also made sure to get him education from well versed women from around. Spiritual teachings were taught to him by his maternal uncles and this was the most interesting field for him. One of his uncle's was the ruler of Tlemcen but he left all this and devoted his life for the preaching of Islam. Despite of being influenced by such mystic people, Arabi lead life of a very common teenager who did not really seem to be interested in religion and its depth. But later on, he changed his motto of life and

opted Sufism as a way of life. According to Stephen Hirtenstein, Arabi devoted his life to Islam at the age of 18 and continued to live his life this way till end (Hirtenstein, 2003). At this time, he took bait and this illuminated his soul with the divine teachings. His father took him to meet Ibn Rushd (known as Averroes 1126 to 1198) at Cordoba, a Centre of great Islamic teachings. In this meeting, Arabi explained to him his mystical thoughts about definition of the indefinable. The Barazkh. Corbin mentioned this as a symbolic event between western and Islamic ideologies of faith and Sufism which ultimately lead to a difference of the definition of Sufism. But this wasn't given significant importance by Muslim scholars. However, Abu Seena, Suharwardi and many other scholars continued to read his mystical thoughts, but no one could actually get into the depths of his thinking. And Averroes was personally very much impressed and moved by Ibn Arabi's thoughts. To him such a young boy could not say such philosophical things and it indeed was divine's blessings (McGregor, 2014).

Ibn Arabi studied Islamic science in Andalus - and North Africa. In 1201, he went to perform pilgrimage at Makkah and then never returned to his homeland. He traveled across Muslim world from Iraq, Anatolia and finally settling down in Damascus in 1223 and continued to preach there his entire life span (Qureshi, 2020). Damascus is considered to be the holiest city in Islam and was the hub of Muslim scholars. Preachers stayed there and not only taught local people but also wrote books in order to spread their message to far away people and to the people who will come after them. Thus, there he wrote several books, among which the most famous ones are "The Ringstones of wisdom" (Fusu-ul-hikam) and "the Meccan openings" (Al futuhat Al makiyya) (Knysh & Hussain, 2016). They were and are still used as a standard for teaching Arabi's philosophical understandings. The most important person who played a pivotal role in spreading his teachings was his step son Sadr-ud-Din Qunawi (1210-74). He set through a proper system to channelize these preaching to the world along with help of Nasir-ud-Din Al Tusi. The two had been in discussion over many important works of Arabi.

## **2. Literature Review :**

### **2.1. Ontology of Ibn Arabi :**

One of the most important and basic teachings of Ibn Arabi include the concept of Wujud, which literally means the presence of something. This was initiated by Avicenna. In Quranic terms, it has vast meaning and is used to describe concept of finding something, appreciating or enjoying ones presence. In short it implies the presence of something (Takeshita, 1982). Ibn Arabi defined it both in terms of Islamic and philosophical language. To him, it follows three steps; First to feel things, Second is to be aware of presence, Third to use all your concise to find it, These were basically the lessons of Avicenna and in terms of philosophical language, Wujud simply means the presence of mysticism and appreciating it.

In Quran, Allah is named as 'Al-Nur'. Which means the one spreading light? Qunawi, who is among one of the predecessor of Arabi, later explained it by saying that light and presence of something are similar since both of them can be felt and observed but cannot be touched (Todd, 2014). Thus Wujud can be felt at heart but you cannot see it. And this true feeling of presence of something is as real as light despite of its source. This can be clearly discerned from shadowed thoughts. Thus, true light is independent of its captivation and can spread to far away, termed in philosophy as "Wujud ul Mutlaq" and "Wujud ul Muqayyad" (Knysh & Hussain, 2016). This light intern enables an individual to find his or her own presence in this temporary world which

intern helps him to find god within his heart, himself and in everything around him . From the smallest of things to mighty happenings, he can picture that everything happening is with the will of Allah and he is the Supreme power, ruling of hearts radically (Shah-Kazemi, 2006).

Ibn Arabi explained the presence of divine with such majestically terms, he added, if it was not the inception of thoughts, and feelings, one would not be able to appreciate the existence of things. All the senses either taste, smell, sight or memory and imagination, are perceived through light. Thus, it can be referred to in a wide perspective. And to appreciate the presence of everything, light is needed. In similar terms, to celebrate the serenity of nature and its belongings, God needs to be believed. Thus to lead life in this world, the ultimate light is God. And if one gets to know him, he has reached utmost levels of mysticism. (Ibn 'Arabî, Al futuhat 1911)

In short, all this is termed as "Idrak", the sense if knowingness (Knysh & Hussain, 2016).Some of the most important works of Ibn Arabi regarding Islamic teachings revolve around the concept of Wahdat ul Wujood and Tawheed. Others he explained are repeatability and delimitation of the presence of God. The last one being imagination and thoughts. Moreover, he discussed the existence of soul and body and ultimately their return to Allah, referring to the concepts of Jannah andJahanum. And mentioned the rewards and punishments for the people according to their deeds. A detailed knowledge of all these topics is given in aforementioned context(Rosenthal, 1988).

### **2.1.1. Wahdat ul Wujud:**

Ibn Arabi's preachinghas enabled his readers and students to understand the nature of divine and appreciate his presence. Wahdat ul Wujud is the concept of believing that God Almighty is the one who alone is responsible for all the happenings of this world and every single being on earth ultimately belongs to him (Romadlon, Ihsan, & Istikomah, 2020). The presence of mighty mountains to flowing rivers, magnificent landscapes to beautiful orchards flying birds to crawling creatures , walking humans to fascinating animals , all these one way or the other reach out to presence of the Almighty. This in other words is called "Tawheed" and the basis of accepting Islam (Husin, Zin, Kasim, Kadir, & Sakat, 2012). Tawheed means acceptance of Allah as one and believing he is the Supreme power. This also believes that If he has ultimate powers, he controls the life and death of people. And gives rewards and punishments but he is extremely just in his acts and is unaffected by the nature of human characteristics.

This topic is now singled out as one of the most important teachings of Ibn Arabi because Tawheed and Wahdat were his main mottos of preaching (Romadlon, Ihsan, & Istikomah, 2020). Ibn Arabi was considered to be the descendant of Avicenna's teachings and their teachings intern were followedby Qunawi and many other Muslimscholars. All of them were strong believers of the concept of oneness of Allah. For he alone is the ultimate leader of this entire universe, everything belongs to him and all human beings bow down before him. But these concepts have been entitled to alot of controversial talks (Qureshi, 2020). Hanbalite polemicist Ibn Tamiyya referred it to as their cannot be a boundary line between world and God. Many different meanings were given to the concept of Wahdat ul Wujud especially by western scholars and thus it became a topic of high controversies(Romadlon, Ihsan, & Istikomah, 2020). Despite of the fact that Ibn Arabi had taught many other concepts and ways of living, concept of Wujud was solely attributed to Arabi and he is referred to as inventor of mysticism. Thus the negative meanings to all these concepts were brought about by westerns.

In the nutshell it can be said that even if on one end, orientalist portrayed it negatively, Muslim scholars embraced this concept whole heartedly and preached "Oneness of Allah". This is the ultimate way of life of specifically for Muslims and in general the entire mankind. Ibn Arabi in his "Treaties of unity" referred to oneness of Allah and Muhammad (SAW) being the last prophet of Allah. And it has been sent in this world to preach Islam and Allah's words (Rosenthal, 1988). He diversified this in his book "Fusus ul Hikam" that if we pay attention to the nature, this corresponds to his presence. Everything depicts presence of Allah and shows his majesty.

Alexander Kanyesh referred to it by saying that Ibn Arabi's teachings make the presence of God a diversified feel. And it cannot be just limited to a specific entity. For everything you look around corresponds to him. Thus one who understands nature and its miracles must believe in the presence of God for this vaguely depicts presence. And without world, the divine would not be called Ultimate creator of everything. Thus both are necessary to each other (Sells, 1984). And ultimately spiritual teachers are the people who are bestowed with great dealings with God and they reflect his utmost presence to people and convey his words and teachings to ignorant ones, which ultimately guide them to righteous path and create a religious and social harmony among people (Romadlon, Ihsan, & Istikomah, 2020).

### **2.1.2. Repeatability and Delimitation:**

Allah Almighty is the ultimate ruler of the entire universe who reflects himself solely in belongings of this world. But he is the ultimate one who has no sharing and is extreme discrete in his reflections since he never repeats his presence in things. Each and everything in this vast and mighty universe refers to his discerned. And the things of this universe keep fluctuating in its existence. Thus referring to divine presence (Balci 2015). Ibn Arabi made a simile between the heart of a human and discerned of Almighty. Just as a heart keeps beating and its rhythm fluctuates, this heart is being controlled by Allah. He resides in the heart of a man and for this purpose it is not contended with specificity rather it needs diversified and vast perspectives to live with (Cili and Akay 2016). Thus accepting the oneness and presence of Allah by heart is the ultimate faith of a man. If it were limited to a specific thought and emotion, it could never reach ultimate levels of mysticism (Bulaq 1911).

Allah almighty is non-delimited in his presence and is not dependent on any other being for his atrocities. Like light, he is felt but cannot be discerned. His presence can be sensed but not seen. Thus he is "Noor" and the people who follow his path and seek guidance only from him, he bestows them with his Illumination (Tajalli) (Balci 2015). God Almighty is summoned by creatures with many names but he chose "Allah" as his ultimate one. Each alphabet of his name refers to him even if called independently and refers to the radical idea of his oneness and unity. For he is the one controlling the entire universe and his name depicts this. Thus this uniformity and discernity is of utmost importance when referring to him (Morris, 1986). Thus, there exists no repeatability in Allah's atrocities and attributes and he is discerned. This is one of the main teachings of Ibn Arabi.

### **2.1.3. Imagination:**

Ibn Arabi started his writings and preaching by attributing to Almighty Allah, his oneness, atrocities, attributes and blessings (Ibn 'Arabî, 1911). Corbin quoted this imagination is one of the foremost topics of Arabi's writings. Ibn Arabi has referred to 'Aqal' as one of the utmost

blessing of Allah. For one can use it not only to seek guidance but to ensure the presence of things in his surroundings. He has criticized scholars for not recognizing its importance in sound knowledge of things. Imagination is a vast field and has no limits. And if used in a disciplinary manner, lightens the man with perception and existence of Allah. And this is the purpose of the life of a human being is using all of senses to appreciate presence of Allah and worshipping him by whole heart (Dobie, 2010).

In Quran, the focal point of understanding is referred to as heart, for it is the ultimate source of light and presence of Allah. Heart is referred to have two senses, one is reason and the other is imagination. But the two are contradictory to each other. If one dominates, other distorts. One can become aware of Allah's presence by listening to his heart's own beats and rhythms. These are intern the revelations of Allah upon a person and are termed as 'Kashf' (C Chittick & Mutahhari, 2003). The revelation of a true concept to a person even before its happening. And all this occurs by Allah's will. And this happens to only those people who keep their hearts and souls pure and with no evil near to them. They reach ultimate levels of mysticism. And things have been revealed to them in order to seek betterment of the people who have less knowledge around them, all these have been mentioned in Quran (Eickelman & Piscatori, 2013).

Al Quran referring to "one bringing together" which means that it brings all the teachings of Allah in one book. They have been implicated by Muhammad (SAW) by his Sunnah in his family life and later on, Sufis and saints wrote many books in order to make more clear understandings to people. Quran is also referred to as "Al Furqan" meaning "the one which differentiates". Stating the fact that Quran has already mentioned and differentiated the path which leads to good or evil (Ibn 'Arabî, 1911). Allah has been given 99 names in Quran and Ibn Arabi referred to it as Oneness belongs to Allah and his atrocities are shown in multiplicity of his names which diversified his presence (Knysh & Hussain, 2016).

Thus, imagination enables one to seek guidance through things and imagining the presence of Allah whereas reason helps them to accept Allah as the divine one and setting logics to it. Ibn Arabi mentioned in his book Al Futuhat that though people have made many gods and worship them. Diversified into various ethnicities and religions. Divided themselves among tribes but the ultimate image of mankind is believer of Allah who accepts that Supreme leader is Allah, he has been called upon by many divine names in holy Quran (Eickelman & Piscatori, 2013). Though Ibn Arabi has used many philosophical terms in his excerpts to refer to attributes of Allah. But unlike philosophers of early times, he used similes and examples from daily life such as referring to heart with two eyes, imagination and reason. Similarly, he referred a mirror reflects object and shows presence of both. Dream depicts soul and images show the nature. Thus all these things either exist or are just illusions. Reason gives logic to their existence and imagination perceives them (Qureshi, 2020).

On a larger scale, imagination can cover up all aspects and visualize the presence of everything except God. This is referred to as khayal mutliq. Thus Allah has revealed himself in certain ways and has a Hijab in others. On the day of judgment he will lift up the veil for his believers in Jannah and give them the ultimate knowledge and understanding of his blessings and his Tajalli will be utmost divine gift for the virtuous people" (Ibn 'Arabî, 1911). Alam ul khaayal refers to the knowledge of one which is not known. And only Allah knows what happens there, no man has been revealed with its truth and astounding (Romadlon, Ihsan, & Istikomah, 2020). The

physical world is called Shahada and when one dies, the soul transcends to the Alam e Ghaib. Quran has many times mentioned that the ones who believe will be bestowed with heaven and disbelievers will go to hell. Thus all the clarities have been already mentioned and everything in this world and hereafter belongs to Allah.

Imaginations believe the descend of an angel Jabriel for the guidance of prophets. From Hazrat Adam (AS) to last prophet Muhammad (SAW) Jabriel has conveyed message of Allah to them. The existence of Jannah and Jahannum, good and evil, angels and demons, blessings and fire, rewards and punishments all have been vaguely mentioned in Quranic teachings and verses. Thus, all the existential and non-existential perspectives of life have been described in Quran and if one reads it with whole heart, can transcend upto levels of spirituality. Thus only then he will appreciate presence of things around him and believe in world hereafter(Eickelman & Piscatori, 2013). The world of imaginations is not confined to any specific definition or understanding rather it is diversified. Ibn Arabi quoted it in terms of nafs. The point where soul and body meet , arises nafs. It is nafs which is responsible for good and bad deeds of an individual. It can either guide them to good path or make them traitors. Ones who control their nafs are considered to be the good ones and are given blessings in this world and after wards. Those who get distracted are given many options to get back to the path of virtue but if till their Last breathe, they do not accept oneness of Allah, are given punishment on the day judgment(López-Anguila, 2021). And while in this world, get swoon away towards evil and darkness ultimately.

## **2.2. Ibn Arabi and Sufism:**

Sufism is referred to as Islamic asceticism. It is a pathway through which Muslims attain nearness to Allah Almighty by belief and practice. Though it is a vast field, it still has many incomplete teachings and understandings. It can be traced back to the times of early Muslims of Arab and back then to era of Muhammad (SAW). In initial times, it depicted simplicity and less complicated means of piousness. They included generosity, kind heartedness, self-maintenance and discipline. In present times, Sufism has diversified alot but when it initially came out, all the Muslims had similar qualities and no one looked different. Everyone was simple and pious and worshipped Allah with their whole heart. Thus, they were also referred to being as similar to Sahaba's, the companions of Muhammad (SAW). Their piousness attracted and admired everyone (Almond, 2004).

But with time, many new trends and concepts were brought into Sufism which is referred to as theology and was clearly understood and unified during era of Ibn Arabi. (Landau, 1959;Corbin, 1983; Arberry, 2008;Zarrabi-Zadeh, 2016). This is the hall mark of mysticism is Wahdat al Wujud, which was the main upstream of Ibn Arabi's teachings and thus he is referred to as one of the most celebrated Sufi saints of all times. Later, the path way was followed by other Muslim scholars and laid down key features of Sufism. Among them are , Ibn al Faridh (1181-1253) , Ibn Sab'in (1217-1269) and Al Afi'fal telem'nsani(1213-1219). Al Samani (2017) added to the concept of Wahdatul Wujud. He said that everyone accepts the oneness of Allah but they interpret it either in pantheism or pane-theism. These two are certainly discrete terms. Pantheism refers to unity of god and this universe whereas pane-theism refers that universe and god are discrete and separate from each other (McGregor, 2014).

Thus in wide terms, it cannot be agreed upon whether concept of Wahdat ul Wujud is a part of Sufism or not. But it is practiced widely in its studies and followed by people who devoted their

lives to divine. Theophysics follow the concept of pantheism which is that divine and reality is one. On the other hand, Sufis follow panentheism which affirms that God and universe are diversified and distinct. And thus on nature of differences among beliefs, theophysics have received criticism from Muslim scholars and Sufis (Arberry, 2013). But despite of all these differences, the concept of Wahdat ul Wujud is similar in practice. Both are based on prayers, observance of Taqwa and beliefs.

Though Ibn Arabi was one of the Sufi saints but his teachings cannot be confined only to the orders of Sufism. Rather the most influential Muslim mystic and spiritual leader is considered to be Al Ghazali (1058-1111). He was of Persian origin and referred to as Imam Ghazali for his sound knowledge regarding Sufism. He was the most influential Sufi saint and is known as "Sunni Sufi". Sunnis are members of one of the two major branches of Islam. And Imam Al Ghazali is considered to be their best advocate and he introduced Avicennism into Islam (Arikewuyo, 2020). Ibn Arabi himself even did not consider his beliefs and teachings to be restricted to domains of Sufism. Rather to him, Islam is a diversified religion and its teachings are universal, not restricted to any particular ethnicity or culture. And Sufism is only a part of Islam, it does not possess completeness in itself. Ibn Arabi referred saints as Awliyah "people really close to Allah" and believed that most pious and determined of them ultimately reach to higher hierarchies of Islamic beliefs and divine (Bilqies, 2014).

Thus, in the nutshell it can be said that Ibn Arabi was a sage and wise spiritual leader of Muslims. Whose work created a wave among Sufis and led to the description of a number of facts. The most prominent of which is Wahdat ul Wujud. In addition to this, he was a philosopher and a poet. He explained oneness of Allah, Tawheed, nature, human and their relations to each other with utmost clarity. He believed that if one stays true to himself, this ultimately unites all the paths of his life. This is the force which binds various ethnicities and cultures together and leads to Muslim brotherhood which is way far superior to any worldly relation (Arberry, 2013).

### **Conclusion :**

Aim of this paper was to discuss the philosophy and ontology of Ibn Arabi in context of religion Islam and Sufism by including the three ontology of Ibn Arabi; Wahdat ul Wujud, Repeatability and Delimitation and the Imagination. Secondly, the controversies explored by Ibn Arabi like the status issues of prophecy vis-a-vis sainthood, concept of man's perfection (called as the supreme Sufi and the pole of spiritual universe). The literature states that one of the most important and basic teachings of Ibn Arabi include the concept of Wujud, which literally means the presence of something. In Quran, Allah is named as 'Al-Nur'. Which means the one spreading light? Qunawi, who is among one of the predecessor of Arabi, later explained it by saying that light and presence of something are similar since both of them can be felt and observed but cannot be touched (Todd, 2014). Thus Wujud can be felt at heart but you cannot see it. And this true feeling of presence of something is as real as light despite of its source. This can be clearly discerned from shadowed thoughts. Thus, true light is independent of its captivation and can spread to far away, termed in philosophy as "Wujud ul Mutlaq" and "Wujud ul Muqayyad" (Knysh & Hussain, 2016). In second ontology of Repeatability and Delimitation, Ibn Arabi made a simile between the hearts of a human and discerned of Almighty. Just as a heart keeps beating and its rhythm fluctuates, this heart is being controlled by Allah. He resides in the heart of a man and for this purpose it is not contented with specificity rather it needs diversified and vast perspectives to live with (Cili and Akay 2016). Thus accepting the oneness and presence of Allah

by heart is the ultimate faith of a man. If it were limited to a specific thought and emotion , it could never reach ultimate levels of mysticism (Bulaq 1911). For third ontology under discussion of paper, the imagination, that is one of the foremost topics of Arabi's writings. Ibn Arabi has referred to 'Aqal' as one of the utmost blessing of Allah. For one can use it not only to seek guidance but to ensure the presence of things in his surroundings. He has criticized scholars for not recognizing its importance in sound knowledge of things. Imagination is a vast field and has no limits. And if used in a disciplinary manner, lightens the man with perception and existence of Allah. And this is the purpose of the life of a human being is using all of senses to appreciate presence of Allah and worshipping him by whole heart (Dobie, 2010). Further in context of Sufism, from the review of Arabi' work, it cannot be agreed upon whether concept of Wahdat ul Wujud is a part of Sufism or not. But it is practiced widely in his studies and followed by people who devoted their lives to divine. In addition, for the concept of Sufism in Islam, Ibn Arabi was one of the Sufi saints but his teachings cannot be confined only to the orders of Sufism. Rather the most influential Muslim mystic and spiritual leader is considered to be Al Ghazali (1058-1111). He was of Persian origin and referred to as Imam Ghazali for his sound knowledge regarding Sufism. He was the most influential Sufi saint and is known as "Sunni Sufi". Sunnis are members of one of the two major branches of Islam. And Imam Al Ghazali is considered to be their best advocate and he introduced avicennism into Islam (Arikewuyo, 2020). Ibn Arabi himself even did not consider his beliefs and teachings to be restricted to domains of Sufism. Rather to him, Islam is a diversified religion and its teachings are universal, not restricted to any particular ethnicity or culture. And Sufism is only a part of Islam, it does not possess completeness in itself. Ibn Arabi referred saints as Awliyah " people really close to Allah" and believed that most pious and determined of them ultimately reach to higher hierarchies of Islamic beliefs and divine(Bilqies, 2014).

### **Limitations of Paper:**

The paper is based on the literature from almost time frames that includes the original times of Ibn Arabi writing and the Islamic scholars of that time like from 1000-1100 centuries and most of the literature for review is gathered from the work of authors who have worked on the philosophy and ontology of Ibn Arabi. The time frame and accessing the original books in English and Urdu language was major challenge for the author therefore including the findings of other authors was the only option left. It is evident that new research on his work is difficult or nearly impossible but still there are areas of research which encourage future researchers like investigating the views of current Islamic scholars and Sufis across the world about the teachings and writings of Ibn Arabi in context of Islam and Quran.

### **References:**

- Akbar, A. (2016). Looking at Ibn 'Arabi's Notion of Wahdat al-Wujud as a Basis for Plural Path to God. *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture*, 4 (1), 45-51.
- Almond, I. (2004). *Sufism and Deconstruction: A comparative study of Derrida and Ibn'Arabi*. London: Routledge.
- Alsamaani, N. (2017). *An analytic philosophical approach to Ibn Arabi's conception of ultimate reality (Doctoral dissertation)*. Birmingham: University of Birmingham.

- Arberry, A. (2013). *Sufism: An account of the mystics of Islam*. London: Routledge.
- Arikewuyo, A. (2020). A Comparative Study of al-Ghazali's and Ibn Taymiyyah's Views on Sufism. *International Journal of Islamic Thought*, 17, 15-24.
- Balçı, A. (2015). Knowledge, Repetition and Power in Ibn al-‘Arabi’s Thought: Some Preliminary Comments on Methodology. *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace*, 4 (1), 39-50.
- Bashier, S. (2004). *Ibn al-‘Arabî’s Barzakh: The Concept of the Limit and the Relationship between God and the World*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Bashier, S. (2012). *The Story of Islamic Philosophy: Ibn ‘Arabî, Ibn Tufayl, and Others on the Limit between Naturalism and Tradition*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Bilqies, S. (2014). Understanding the concept of Islamic Sufism. *Journal of Education & Social Policy*, 1 (1), 55-72.
- Būlāq. (1911). *al-Futūhât*. In I. Arabi, *al-Futūhât*. Turkey: Būlāq.
- Cili, A., & Akay, A. (2016). *Fütūhât-ı Mekkiyye Şerhi*. Turkey: Çelik Yayınevi.
- C Chittick, W., & Mutahhari, M. (2003). Ibn ‘Arabi’s Philosophical Mode of thinking. *Existence and Knowledge*, 5, 149-165.
- Dobie, R. J. (2007). The Phenomenology of Wujud in the Thought of Ibn ‘Arabi'. In *Timing and Temporality in Islamic Philosophy and Phenomenology of Life*, A. T. Tymieniecka (pp. 313–22). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Dobie, R. (2010). *Logos and Revelation: Ibn'Arabi, Meister Eckhart, and Mystical Hermeneutics*. Washington, D.C.: CUA Press.
- Eickelman, D., & Piscatori, J. (2013). *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, migration and the religious imagination*. London: Routledge.
- Hirtenstein, S. (2003). *The Brotherhood of Milk: Perspectives of Knowledge in the Adamic Clay*. The Muhyiddin Arabi Society .
- Homerin, T. (1986). Ibn Arabi in the People's Assembly: religion, press, and politics in Sadat's Egypt. *The Middle East Journal* , 462-477.
- Husin, A., Zin, M., Kasim, J., Kadir, M., & Sakat, A. (2012). The Practice Of Islamic Educational Thought. *Advances in Natural and Applied Sciences*, 6 (3), 467-472.
- Izutsu, T. (1966). *A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts in Taoism and Sufism*, Tokyo: Keio University; second edition, *Sufism and Taoism*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Knysh, A., & Hussain, A. (2016). *Ibn al-‘Arabî*. Oxford: Oxford.
- Lipton, G. A. (2018). *Rethinking Ibn Arabi*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- López-Angueta, G. (2021). Ibn 'Arabī's Metaphysics in the Context of Andalusian Mysticism: Some Akbarian Concepts in the Light of Ibn Masarra and Ibn Barrajān. *Religions*, 12 (1), 40.
- McGregor, R. (2014). *Sanctity and Mysticism in Medieval Egypt: The Wafa Sufi Order and the Legacy of Ibn'Arabi*. New York: SUNY Press.
- Morris, J. (1986). Ibn 'Arabi and His Interpreters Part II: Influences and Interpretations. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 106 (4), 733-756.
- Murata, S., Chittick, W. C., & Weiming, T. (2008). *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi: Islamic Thought in Confucian Terms*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Qureshi, J. (2020). Ibn 'Arabi and the Akbarī tradition. In *Routledge Handbook on Sufism* (pp. 89-102). London: Routledge.
- Romadlon, D., Ihsan, N., & Istikomah, I. (2020). Ibn Arabi on Wahdatul Wujud and it's Relation to The Concept of Af'alul'Ibad. *TSAQAFAH*, 16 (2), 10.
- Rosenthal, F. (1988). Ibn 'Arabī between 'Philosophy' and 'Mysticism'. *Oriens*, 31, 1–35.
- Shah-Kazemi, R. (2006). *Paths to Transcendence: According to Shankara, Ibn Arabi, and Meister Eckhart*. Bloomington: World Wisdom.
- Sells, M. (1984). Ibn 'Arabī's Garden among the Flames: A Reevaluation. *History of Religions*, 23 (4), 287-315.
- Shah-Kazemi, R. (2006). *Paths to Transcendence: According to Shankara, Ibn Arabi, and Meister Eckhart*. Bloomington: World Wisdom, Inc.
- Takeshita, M. (1982). An Analysis of Ibn 'Arabī's inshā' al-dawā'ir with Particular Reference to the Doctrine of the "Third Entity". *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 41 (4), 243-260.
- Todd, R. (2014). *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Ṣadr Al-Dīn Al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology*. Netherlands: Brill.
- Yousef, M. H. (2007). *Ibn 'Arabi—Time and Cosmology*. London: Routledge.