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Research Papers
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April 1873 Vision of the Danish King
aug 12 1863
Aug 15 1864
August 21 1865
august 21 1865 (#2)
August 9 1865
December 27 1881 (pyramids)
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february 24 1865 gems of inspiration
Jan 6th, 1879
january 4 1865
july 4 1865
june 4 1865
march 1864
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november 1865
november 29 1864
october 10th 1876 high priest imprisoned
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chapter 6 - knowledge in mulla sadra and sufism

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Chapter 6 - The Question of Witnessing, Quiddity and Knowledge in Mulla Sadra and Sufism.

By Michael McCarron

"There is no Divinity but He; that is the witness of Divinity" Al-Qur'an al-Karim 3:18

INTRODUCTION:

Rumi wrote sometime ago a collection of his lectures on Sufi sama sessions (majlis) it was entitled "Fihi ma fihi", literally meaning "in it, what is in it". It was a symposium on the contents of the Sufi path, literally the what is it of Sufism, the contents. These contents are known as the quiddity (latin: quidditas; arabic: mahiyya or 'ayn) The question of what it is of the Path is a major question for the quiddity is the distinguishing characteristic between the unitarian[1] schools of sufism, wahdat al-wujud and wahdat al-shuhud.

Mahiyya is defined as

"... it is that which replies to the question: what is this? It expresses the genus (jins), while the question ayu shay' huwa (what kind of thing is it?) relates to the species (naw'). ... Ibn Sina writes with regard to the 'hadd': 'it is that which indicates the quiddity of a thing, this being the perfection of its existence in essence (kamal wujud al-dhati): it is composed of the genus and of the specific difference'. This question will be encountered again with regard to the inniya." (Arnaldez, EI Vol. VI, pg. 1261, "Mahiyya")

Another definition is given with a slight difference

"The mahiyya is that through which a thing is what it is (ma bihi al-shay' huwa huwa)....In this sense, the term is synonymous with essence (dhat) and with reality (haqiqah). This reality, like quiddity and essence is beyond the universal and the particular, the existent and the non-existent, meaning that it can express not only the genus but also the individual essence, not only that which exists in beings themselves (fi al-a'yan), but that which does not exist thus, while existing in thought (fi al-dhihni)." [2](EI Vol. VI, pg. 1261)

Whereas Mulla Sadra shows a different understanding of the quiddity or essence giving it a subsidiary role to Absolute Existence: «Existences (al-wujudat) are genuine [determinate] realities (haqa`iq) and essences (mahiyyat) are the eternal "thisnesses" (al-a'yan al-thabitat) which have never inhaled the perfume of real existence at all. These existences are merely the rays and reflected lights of the True Light and of the Eternal Existence-- Exalted Be His Sublimity!--, however, each of them has essential predicates (nu`uta dhatiyyat) and contains intelligible concepts (ma`ayn `aqliyyat) called essences (al-mahiyyat)." (M, pg. 43) Mulla Sadra conceived of the Quiddity of having two meanings [3] The Quiddity which is a universal and exists in the mind. And the Essence of "mahi ash-shay, huwa huwa" (What thing is it?). The concrete existing individual.

In the following I shall be examining the question of the quiddity in determining the relationship of Sadrian and Sufi doctrines in regards to existential unity. My starting point is to look at the theory of God's Knowledge in popular Islam. We shall see that it is the quiddity which lends itself as definer to the definitive separation amongst the different schools. We will see how the answer to five questions delineates the conception of Unity-of-Being and the Sadrian view of the quiddity. These five questions are:

1. Is Existence precedent over Essence?
2. Are Forms external to God?
3. Are Objects of Knowledge needed for God to have Knowledge or caused by God's Essential Knowledge?
4. Quiddities (mahiyya) are simultaneous or originated as posteriors or effects?
5. Is there substantial union (hulul) with Creator and created?

Knowledge ('Ilm):

Question 1: "Is Existence precedent over Essence?"

In Sadrian thought it is established that Existence is precedent over Essence as shall be demonstrated in the latter sections of this paper. Suffice it to say for now that Suhrawardi, along with Qutb ad-Din, held that essence was precedent over existence. This idea of existence precedent before essence was elemental in Mulla Sadras philosophical revolution. Sadrian thought was developed out of Ibn Sina's thought.

Ibn Sina writes regarding Mahiyyat and Wujud:

"That whose essence (mahiyya) is other than existence is not the Necessary Existent. It has become evident that existence has an accidental meaning for that whose essence is other than existence (anniyya). And it has also become evident that there is a cause for that which has an accidental idea (i.e. for that which has a contingent being). The cause of such a being is either the essence (dhat) of that entity in which it subsists or something else." (MA, pg. 55-56)

Question 2: "Are Forms external to God?"

To begin it is necessary to present an overview of the different perspectives regarding God's Knowledge in the traditional aspects of Islam. The main question is whether God has knowledge of things by His existence or by some outside external Existent to His existence.

Overview of Different Schools:

The Major conflict between the different schools of thought on God's Knowledge is that in regards to Forms of Knowledge as necessity for God to have Knowledge. In this way we have:

Theologians:

"Since theologian affirmed attributes super added to His essence, they found no difficulty with respect to the connection (ta'alluq) of His knowledge with things outside His essence by means of forms (suwar) corresponding to those things and super-added to Him." (DF, pg. 44)

Philosophers:

A. Ibn Sina:

1. "Since the first (al-Awwal) apprehends (`aqala) His essence by means of His essence and because His essence is the cause (`illah) of multiplicity (al-kathrah), it follows that He apprehends multiplicity because of His apprehension of His essence by means of His essence.

2. Thus, his apprehension of multiplicity is a concomitant (lazim) effected by Him (ma'lul lahu), and the forms of multiplicity, which are the objects of His apprehension (ma'qulat), are also His effects (ma'lulat) and His concomitants ranked in the order of

effects and therefore posterior to (muta`akhkhirah `an) the reality of His essence as an effect is posterior to its causes.

3. His essence is not constituted by them (mutaqawwimah) by them or by anything else. It is one, and the multiplicity of concomitants (al-lawazim) and effects (al-ma`lulat) is not inconsistent with the unity of their cause (`illah) of which they are the concomitants, regardless of whether these concomitants are established (mutaqarrirah) in the cause itself or distinct (mubayinah) from it.

4. Deduction: Therefore, the establishment (taqarrur) in the essence of the Self-Subsistent One, who is prior to them with respect to causality (al-`illiyah) and existence, does not necessitate His being multiple." (DF, pg. 45) [Emphasis and Numbering Added]

B. Sadra:

Knowledge, being a perfection, cannot be denied to God. For Sadra Knowledge is Existence.

"Knowledge is neither a privation like abstraction from matter, nor a relation but a being (wujud). (It is) not every being but that which is an actual being, not potential. (It is) not even every actual being, but a pure being, unmixed with non-being. To the extent that it becomes free from an admixture of non-being, it's intensity as knowledge increases." (Sadra quoted by Rahman, MS, pg. 213)

Sadra also holds that the Forms are internal as the existence of knower and known is one (cf. M, pg. 64).

C. Sufi:

"... His attributes, does not require a form superadded to Him. neither does His knowledge of the quiddities (mahiyat) of things or their ipseities (huwiyat), for their quiddities and ipseities are nothing but His transcendent essence (al-dhat al-muta`aliyah) clothed in these aforementioned considerations whose intellections are. There is no doubt that His knowledge of His essence and these considerations (al-i'tabarat) derived one from another." (DF, pg. 49-50)

Sadra Criticism of Different Schools:

Mulla Sadra refutes certain views of the schools of thought on the topic:

Mu'tazila: Essences subsist before their actual existence and in this state of subsistence (thubut) are known by God. All non-existents are, nevertheless, 'something' that can be talked about as referent of thought and hence 'subsist'. Sadra rejects this saying essences have no reality at all unless they are invested with real, external existence and that the non-existent cannot 'subsist' by itself whether real or mental.

Peripatetic: Identify God's knowledge with Platonic Forms as separate from God's being. Sadra rejects this saying these forms are posterior to God's existence and His knowledge of them. How could they, in that case, be God's eternal and primordial knowledge? Sadra holds that the Forms are not separate from God's existence. Forms are identified by Sadra with the transcendental Intelligence's of the Peripatetics; they are not 'causes' by Him, nor 'emanate' from Him, but are with Him. Sadra does not accept the traditional view that God's knowledge, in it's 'simplicity' ensures knowledge of all things. He upholds the doctrine of simplicity-- a simple being is all things.

In Summation

Succinctly the issue at hand in the preceding was the question of whether God's Knowledge is dependent on an external Form for Him to Know. The Theologians say there is an external Form the Sufis and Sadra say that there is no necessity of an External Form, God's Knowledge is internal to Him. The next question regards the objects of Knowledge.

Question 3: "Are Objects of Knowledge needed for God to have Knowledge or caused by God's Essential Knowledge?"

The Argument of God's Simple Knowledge

The question at hand in this section is that regarding does God need objects of knowledge to Know. Is God a self-subsisting and knowing thing without need of outside objects for knowledge. In the normal sense, the sense we learn by, it is necessary to have objects of knowledge for knowledge. For instance this paper presents information it is the object of our knowing. We as subjects learn from the quiddities presented here in. The definitions provided of varying perspectives. The is of it, the contents. The question is is God a self-knowing knower? Thus what the distinguishing characteristic involves is that of the quiddities of God, the attributes or aspects. Are these attributes originated although co-extensive with God, or are they part of His eternal existence. Hence, we get in mystical discourse talk of things with an beginning and no end or things with no beginning and no end. This may seem an highly esoteric distinction. However, in more common terms the distinction is in regards to God's Essential Existence being above composition and connection to created things. For if the attributes are truly co-eternal with His Essence then there is connection and composition.

But if they are originated, although they be a part of His existence they cannot be a part of His eternality (no beginning and no end, azaliyyat). Thus it would seem we have two modes of

God's existence, the pre-cognitive and the post-cognitive.

This issue is addressed by Ibn Sina and Mulla Sadra. Mulla Sadra agrees with Ibn Sina on the simplicity argument of God's Knowledge although formulating a new perspective of his own. Sadra's arguments follow.

Mulla Sadra's Argument on Simplicity:

Mulla Sadra posits that existence and knowledge are co-extensive and to view existence as the original reality and knowledge as an 'abstracted notion'. For it is existence alone which in its all-comprehensiveness can contain everything in a simple manner. Once knowledge is disengaged from existence and is viewed per se, then one must talk of so many essences, concepts and ideas as mutually exclusive units that it is impossible to reduce them to any simple unity. The only principle of unity-in-diversity is the principle of existence as it is the only veritable reality, while attributes like knowledge, power, and will are derivative realities or notions.

This brings us back to Ibn Sina's view on Knowledge:

"Gods knowledge cannot derive from things since this would make Him dependent upon something other than Himself, and since there is a succession in temporal things, His knowledge would change from moment to moment. God's knowledge, therefore, is not produced by things; on the contrary, things are created by His knowledge. This instantaneous knowledge, however is ordered knowledge in accordance with the order of causes and effects. Thanks to this order, God knows priorities and posteriorities-even though He does not possess sense perception..." (Rahman, MS, pg. 151)

This naturally brings in the question of the Forms and God's Existence: If the forms are a part of His being, God is composite and the simplicity is nullified. If these forms exist independently they are Platonic Forms. If they are extrinsic accidents, God is not absolutely necessary. They likewise cannot exist in other beings. Therefore, these forms are necessary consequences or properties (lawazim) of His being.

Sadra's defense of Ibn Sina against al-Tusi, Abu'l Barakat, and Suhrawardi. These philosophers hold that God's knowledge is directly related to things and not through prior cognitive forms.

a) Abu'l Barakat writes that if the function of prior cognitive forms is to save God from being directly related to contingents then the same difficulty arises with regard to God's power and knowledge; some have tried to suggest that there is a differentiation between objects of power and knowledge: power need not have an object where knowledge does need an object; and whereas, knowledge needs a real relation to the object power does not.

Sadra's Reply: relations in both cases are real. Therefore, the argument is not a valid analogy. It is sufficient for God's knowledge and power to have a form through which He both knows what will be and intends what He will do but the existential counterpart of this form is not necessary.

b) Suhrawardi says this renders God into a subject characterized by so many inherent qualities and accidents that a substratum must be affected by these. Whether or not the first form contemplated by God precedes or follows or is simultaneous with the first external effect, God, in His own being, will not be complete cause since He needs a form to cause the first external effect; and finally, that the first form will have a dual role in giving a form to God's being and helping cause the external effect and in it's former role, at least, will be an agent of God's perfection. (cf. Rahman, MS, pg. 153)

Sadra's Reply: Qualities or attributes change or affect a subject only when the former are extrinsic to the latter, not when they necessarily arise from it as in the case of the necessary attributes of a simple essence. And the first form necessarily precedes the first external effect, otherwise God's providence ('inaya) will be as nothing, these forms being related to different contingents have to be different. Lastly, there is nothing wrong in the dual nature of the first form, since necessary consequences (lawazim) of God's knowledge do not constitute His perfection's which is rather the principle and source of these forms, which is God's being. (cf. Rahman, MS, pg. 152)

In Summation:

Summarily the arguments can be thought in the following way. Al-Tusi and Suhrawardi, who hold the same belief, say that God's knowledge of things are the things themselves. They say this direct knowledge is of universals and particulars. Sadra criticizes this view on the grounds that at the level of pure unity (ahadiyya) according to them God is denied all knowledge-since they do not recognize prior cognitive forms- and that His knowledge is derived from things. By this they are denying God Providence ('inaya)[4], prior knowledge, thus denying order or purpose in creation, thus everything is up to luck. It is additionally important to understand that the cognitive forms are posterior in existence to God's Absolute Unity, although latent within It as undifferentiated existence.

Finally one last point in this connection is that of the defining of the three stages of God's knowledge by Sadra. He states that God's knowledge exists on three levels as well there are three levels of existence (cf. M, pg. 51-52):

a) Absolute Unity (ahadiyya)

b) Godhead (uluhiya) where distinct attributes appear in the stage of unity, usually known as wahidiya. Cognitive forms belong to the level of Divinity (uluhiya), where God's Attributes appear. They are latent in the level of Absolute Unity or absolute unseen (ghaib al-ghaib).

c) Form Ideas, every form exists by itself and which he calls the stage of distinction. (i.e. the locus of manifestation, 'jamiyah' in the station of Jabarut)

The Shuhudi Perspective on Union (ittihad) with God

Shuhudi Sufism has its origin in the early Sufi Mansur al-Hallaj the martyr of Baghdad. In its first manifestation it was severely persecuted by the 'uluma of the times. Later it was the orthodox 'uluma that revived this doctrine among the Sufis of Persia (i.e. Kubrawiyya, Nurbakhshiyya, Dhahabiyya, Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya). The Wujudi sufis take their precedence from Ibn 'Arabi, although it is clearly not a doctrine he personally supported. The Wujudi stream was an interpretation of the Great Shaykhs writings. The main issue at hand between the two interpretations of fana wa'l-baqa' is in regards to the station of passing away: is it within the existence of God or within a lesser mode? This is answered in wujudism by an affirmation and by shuhudism by a negation—our passing away and subsisting is on this side of the absolute reality paradigm. Mulla Sadra a student of mystics and Ibn 'Arabi combined intuitive knowledge of Sufism with the dialectical wisdom of the Philosophers. Thus he produced his Shuhudi doctrine in the following.

Question 4. Quiddities (mahiyya) are simultaneous or originated as posteriors or effects?

Mulla Sadra on Existential Monism:

The question of existential unity, which Mulla Sadra affirms, is not equal to that of substantial unity which is known as "hulul". The qualification of existential unity in this way is what has become to be known as "wahdat ash-shuhud"—a created entity may realize its absorption in the One and the One's encompassment by the One, however, the created entity is not substantially united with the One, union is a matter of conception not actual. The defining separation between the unity-of-being in terms of a substantial unity and that of a conceptual unity is attributed to the role of the quiddity. There are four perspectives on the quiddity:

1. Quiddity is dual with existence
2. Quiddity is prior to existence
3. Quiddity is posterior or an effect (ma'lul) from the Necessary Existent (wajib al-wujud)

Mulla Sadra affirms the third view, although differing from al-Tusi on the terminology where Tusi says "posterior", Sadra says "effect" (cf. M, pg. 53; M, pg. 28-29). Additionally, Sadra holds that what is originated is in actuality existence not essence/quiddity. The Quiddity is united with this existence (cf. M, pg. 46) The Necessary Existent is prior to all existents (cf. M, pg. 24).

The Cause is Allah's Oneness-- Ahadiyyat. The effect is Allah's singularitiness-- wahidiyyat. It is Allah's self knowledge of "Be" which begets the unfoldment or "tashkik" (systematic ambiguity) of existence. Mulla Sadra's thought might correctly be termed "wahdat-i tashkik al-wujud" Thus, the substantialist wahdat al-wujudis have argued that if God is in need of an external form for knowledge then the quiddities must be unoriginated. They do not recognize forms (aswar), potentialities (qabilliyat), realities (haqa'iq), and quiddities (mahiyya) as being created (hadithah). Their argument has been stated colloquially: "Originated things come into being, the quiddities have always existed since knowledge ('ilm) needs an object of knowledge (ma'lum) as an essential attribute (sifat al-dhatiyya). Therefore, if potentialities have a beginning then we would be asserting ignorance or need within God's essence (dhat)."

As Jami has made reference to this conception in non-absolute terms, using a subjective context between two modes:

"The gist of this is that He knows things in two ways. One of these is through the chain of succession [of causes and effects] (silsilat al-tartib) in a manner close to that of the philosophers. The other is through his oneness (ahadiyah), which encompasses all things. It is obvious, of course, that His knowledge of them by the first way, for the first is absentational knowledge ('ilm ghaybi) of them prior to their existence, and the second is presentational knowledge ('ilm shuhudi) of them during their existence. In reality, however, there are not two knowledges, but rather there attaches to the first knowledge through (bi-wasitah) the existence of its connection (muta'alliq), that is, the thing known (al-ma'lum), a relation (nisbah) in consideration of which we call that knowledge presence (shuhud) and attendance (hudur). It is not that another knowledge has originated. Should you say that this implies that His knowledge by the second way is limited to presently existing things (al-mawjudat al-haliyah), I should answer yes, but all existents in relation to Him are present, since [all] times are the same in relation to Him as well as present (hadirah) with Him, as has just been mentioned in the quotation from one of the verifiers (ba'd al-muhaqqiqin)." (DF 44, pg. 52-53)

The issue encountered here for Wahdat al-Wujud is that objects of knowledge in time are participating in the formation of God's Knowledge. This is how Shuhudis have interpreted such passages, whether rightly or wrongly it is the issue taken up in this discourse. Al-Jami takes up the issue of temporality here as means to disuade criticism of the doctrine. He suggests that due to God's being above temporality He encompasses all time and therefore is not dependent on the created things. However, this would make God posterior to the objects of knowledge even if God were above the level of temporality since that which is in time is forming the Knowledge, Knowledge would be an eternal attribute yet conditioned by temporality, this is a contradiction. The argument of non-substantial unitarians[5] is that God is the source of the objects of knowledge within Himself and not dependent on Objects for Knowledge, He is Nafs al-Amr the thing itself which gives it's own objects of knowledge. The Created objects of knowledge are in fact, effects from the One's Cause.

Question 5. Is there substantial union (hulul) with Creator and created?

Mulla Sadra notes that even though everything is existence that we cannot delineate from this that hulul (substantial union) is attributed to his vision of Unity-of-Being he writes:

"Beware that you may be swept out from your listening to these phrases, and imagine that the relation among contingencies and Him-The Exalted- is incarnation (hulul) and union (ittihad), and relates to these two [modes]! Lest [this notion is seriously entertained, for] this would necessitate the duality in the foundation of existence. When the true sun has arisen and its light shines on the contingencies which are spread in the forms of essences (mahiyya), it becomes clear and evident that whatever has the name of existence is nothing but a form of [ever] persisting unity and a radiance of the Light of Lights." (M, pg. 67)

The conception of an ordered level of existence is maintained by Mulla Sadra which draws out the idea of the differentiation between creation and Creator:

"That which is of simple nature is everything (basit al-haqiqah kulli al-ashya'). Existence, then inherently manifest itself in existents ordered according to existential priority and posteriority and in terms of intensity and diminution of existence. Since these manifestations are a consequence of the very nature of existence itself and are not due to any extrinsic factor, each and every existent is unique and irreducible. It is, therefore, impossible that a contingent be analyzable into two constituents: an essence and an existence, and the latter be simply 'given back' to God, the Primordial and Original Existence." (Rahman, MS, pg. 39)

Fadl ar-Rahman explains the difference most eloquently as:

"In this simple, primordial sense, then, everything witnesses God and proclaims the existence of its Maker. The question is, if existence is known directly and if God is nothing but existence, why not admit a full and total knowledge of God on the part of His witness and a complete union of the latter with the former? This is because everything else besides God is finite, determined, and determinate and, no matter how much it develops, it cannot transcend this finitude. It is true that in mystic experience the experient can lose sight of his finite self and fix his gaze entirely upon God and 'be lost' in Him, but losing sight of his finitude is not the same as losing his finitude. A drop, as part of the ocean, may enjoy the ocean, but cannot cease to be a drop as the Persian verses quoted by al-Sabzawari on the point have it. It was this finitude and its inalienable otherness (or, was it, rather, its consciousness?) with which al-Hallaj was so impatient when he exclaimed: 'Between You and me 'I am' is in constant struggle with me; Lift this 'I am' from the middle by Your Grace!'

On this interpretation of the mystic experience, Sadra's view is close to that of al-Ghazali and identical with that of his Indian contemporary Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi who declared the unity experienced by the mystic to be a unity of perception (wahdat al-shuhud) rather than unity of

being (wahdat al-wujud). Yet, this immediate knowledge of God vouchsafed to everything is the universe and immune from error is not the basis of religious and moral obligation, says Sadra. For that, a more conscious knowledge is required, which is, by its nature, liable to error, is capable of degree and qualitative differences, and becomes immune from error only in rare and exceptional cases which constitute the logical limit of the form of knowledge and where the truth is 'revealed' to the human agent." (Rahman, MS, pg. 131-132)

What can be seen is that there is a difference of opinion regarding the idea of Existence as Prime Reality and the idea that the Existence is only one entity without mode or differentiation. Al-Lari a wujudi commentator on al-Jami writes: "...in the opinion of the unveiled (al-makshufin) who say:

'There is nothing in existence except a single individual ('ayn wahidah). These are the verifying Sufis (al-sufiyah al-muhaqqiqun), who assert the unity of existence (wahdat al-wujud), may God sanctify their souls." "...Subsistence (hulul) is not impossible is that in reality there is no real quality of being subsistent (halliyah) or being a substratum (mahalliyah), but rather, a single really existent reality....In reality, no multiplicity or change hovers around its real and essential unity. It is now as it was. Neither adoration nor really being adored...nor are real, and actual proximity, distance, union and separation, as you see and observe with all their characteristics (al-khususiyat) occurring in the universe (al-'alamin), incompatible [with it]." (DF, pg. 135)

In contradistinction to this assertion of one existence where "hulul" is not an impossibility there is Sadra's doctrine which details:

"Existence has three ranks (miratib). The first of these is Existence which does not depend on other things and is not confined to any species, and this is the most deserving to be the source (mubda) of everything. The second is: existence which depends on other things, such as intelligences (al-'aql), souls (al-nafus), natures (al-taba'i), celestial bodies (al-akram), and [sublunary] matter (al-muwad). The third is: the prevailing existents whose comprehensiveness and extension on [formal] structures and extension on [formal] structures [of] individuals and essences is not like that of universal natures and the intelligible essences, but rather is like that [known] by gnosis to the mystics and called the merciful soul, derived from His-The Exalted- Saying "but My Mercy extendeth to all things." [7:156] This is the first being among the contingents issued from the First Cause [Which is] the True [Reality], and which is called the Truth which [fashions] the creation." (M, pg. 51)

Clearly in Sadra's doctrine there is an intermediary between existences. In each rank of existence existence itself is the primordial thing and essence is a subsidiary and abstracted thing. Due to the Rahmani Spirit, which would seem to equivocate to Substantial Form there is no "hulul" of the Absolute Reality. Thus Ittihad (union) with it is an existential impossibility. The Union is a perceived union and thus shuhudi. It is interesting to see the perspective manifested in the Kubrawiyya Sufi master, al-Simnani.

Answer Schema:

Here we encounter the string of question which leads us to the understanding of the difference between simple witnessing of Oneness and Union with Oneness. Again the questions are:

1. Is Existence precedent over Essence?
2. Are Forms external to God?
3. Are Objects of Knowledge needed for God to have Knowledge or caused by God's Essential Knowledge?
4. Quiddities (mahiyya) are simultaneous or originated as posteriors or effects?
5. Is there substantial union (hulul) with Creator and created?

Wujudis and Shuhudis agree on Question #1 Question #2, when they say existence is precedent over essence and that the forms of Allahs Knowledge are internal not external. However, they diverge from this point. On Question #3 the wujudis answer Yes, when the Shuhudis answer No: "Are Objects of Knowledge needed for God to have Knowledge or caused by God's Essential Knowledge? The Wujudis say "there must be objects". The Shuhudis say "objects of knowledge are derived from God's Knowledge as effects." This brings us to Question #4, "are quiddities originated?". Wujudis say no, Shuhudis say Yes. And Question #5 "is there substantial union?". The wujudis answer Yes and Shuhudis answer "no".

Question	Wujudis	Shuhudis
Existence over Essence?	Yes	Yes
External Forms?	No	No
Objects of Knowledge?	Yes	No

Quiddities originated?	No	Yes
Union with Creator?	Yes	No

CONCLUSION:

As it can be seen the difference between Wujudi and Shuhudi Sufism are:

1. According to the Sadrian Shuhudi tradition of `Irfan and Tasawwuf. God is not in need of objects of knowledge. 2. God is the source of all knowledge. 3. Although there is existential unity in the Godhead (uluhiya), the quiddities are originated as effects by the Absolute Existent (ahadiya). 4. Contingents cannot subsist (baqa') in Allah.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] I consider both the Shuhudi and Wujudi unitarians in the sense of testifying to God's unity and maintaining the same symbolic cosmologies with the only difference the question of the origination of the quiddity.

[2]That through which it s by it's own power is 'truth-in-itself' (nafs al-amr) this pertains to God's Divinity. According to al-Qaysari, repeated by Mulla Sadra, "the thing itself (nafs al-amr) is an expression for God's essential knowledge, which contains the forms of all things whether universal or particular, large or small, in general or in detail, cognitive or concrete" (Qaysari quoted in DF, pg. 82, Para. 51, note 1)

[3] See pg. 180-181, Mehdi Dehbashi's "Mulla Sadra Theory of Transubstantial Motion: a Translation and Critical Exposition", University Microfilms: Ann Arbor (1984)

[4] "Providence is therefore the full comprehension which the First[God] has, in his science, of all and of the necessity for all to rest on Him so as to be according to the best order. [He fully understands also] that this comes necessarily from Him and from the total grasp which He has of it". (Ibn Sina quoted in "'Inaya", EI Vol. V, pg. 1203)

[5] Sadra notes in M 138, pg. 81 that the Substantial Form is the veil between Creator and Creation.

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