

## WAHDAT AL-ADYAN AND WAHDAT AL-SYUHUD SIRHINDI

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**Abstract:** This writing is a study Wahdat al-Adyan and Wahdat al-Syuhud in in al-Sirhindi perspective. This is a literary research peered from various agreeable sources. The result shows that : a) The wahdāt al-adyan of al-Hallaj and wahdāt al-syuhud of Sirhindi is a derivation of *lā Ilāha Illallah*; b) Wahdāt al-adyan tells that all religions are essentially identical and that they have one single purpose; worship to God; c) Wahdāt al-syuhud throughout tauhid syuhudi tells an idea that all the matters came from The One. The idea, however, does not mean that everything is none.

**Keywords:** Wahdāt al-adyan; Wahdāt al-syuhud; al-Sirhindi

### I. INTRODUCTION

*Wahdāt al-adyan* and *Wahdāt al-syuhud* are two terms derived from *al-wahdāt* (unity) in Tasawuf (sufism). Apart from that, there are also another concept known as *Wahdāt al-wujud* and *wahdāt al-ummah* in tasawuf. According to Amin<sup>1</sup>, these concepts are sourced from the implementation of *lā Ilāha Illallah*, the *tawhid*.

This *tawhid* has at least four different meanings. **First**, the acknowledge of the oneness of God; **Second**, the obedience of life following that concept; **Third**, the experience of being united and unified with God; **Fourth**, the theosophical construction about facts that comes from mysticism experience.<sup>2</sup>

From the sufism literature, the general term of the third meaning above, according to Ahmad Sirhindi<sup>3</sup>, is *tauhid syuhudi*. In a brief terminology, it means a perception (*syuhud*) of The One from the mystical experience, and ultimately unified with God. Whereas tauhid, as it mentioned in the fourth meaning, is often associated with *tauhid wujud* or *wahdat al-wujud*.<sup>4</sup>

*Tawhid* is a single most important concept to all muslim. It is because *tawhid* constitute to a universal concept of how we suppose to see ourselves, others, and nature regard to its relations with divinity. Therefore, God is a “unique” entity, even beyond. Unattached with natural being that only limits Him. This is why understanding Him must also be unique, because He is The One above all else. Hence, monotheism or polytheism type of worship should be acceptable. Logically, however, the distiction between them is the quantity; there is *one* divinity, and the other is *more than one*.<sup>5</sup> This assumption, in which it is basically the nature of many beliefs tends to the monotheism concept.<sup>6</sup> In the other words, everything is regarded as His creations and the signs of His mightiness.

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<sup>1</sup>Ahmad Amin, *Dzühr al-Islam*, juz II, (Kairo: Maktabah al-Nahdhah al-Mishriyyah, 1977), p. 65-66

<sup>2</sup>Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari, *Sufism and Shari'ah: A Study of Syaikh Ahmad Srihindi's Effort Sufism*, translated by Achmad Nashir Budiman entitled: *Antara Sufisme dan Syariah*, (Cet. I; Jakarta: CV. Rajawali, 1990), p. 147

<sup>3</sup>see *ibid.*, p. 1-34

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 147-148

<sup>5</sup>*Ibn al-Arabi, Wahdāt al-Wujud dalam Perdebatan*, (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995), p. 74-86

<sup>6</sup>see Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, vol. III, Translated by Herbert Massan, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 221

Sufism tells that the religions may vary, but they share similiar substance. It is because their source and purpose are the same, which is worshipping the Almighty.

This is what is known as the *wahdāt al-adyān* concept, or the unity of religions, introduced by al-Hallaj.<sup>7</sup> Many pro and against this concept since it is first introduced and become a controversial topic among intellectuals, particularly from the sufism.

Therefore, this writing is trying to elaborate between these two terms; *wahdāt al-adyan* and *wahdāt al-syuhud*. The formulations of the problem are as follows:

1. What is *wahdāt al-adyan*?
2. And what is *wahdāt al-syuhud*?

## II. THE CONCEPT OF WAHDĀT AL-ADYAN

The concept of *wahdāt al-adyan* preceded by al-Hallaj is one of his teachings called *hulul* and *Nur Muhammad* theory. In *Nur Muhammad* theory, the *wahdāt al-adyan* has a direct relation, because *Nur Muhammad* is the path of all prophets. From that point, all the religions brought by the prophets are fundamentally identical, driven by al-Hallaj idea that all prophets are “emanated existence”, just as being written on his *hulul* theory. He concluded that all religions comes and will eventually return to one entity, because all of which are emanated from it. al-Hallaj also concluded that all religions may vary, both in names and their forms, but they are essentially similar; worshipping The Almighty.<sup>8</sup> They share one identical God, regardless of their names.

However, one astonishing idea from al-Hallaj is that there is no different essence between *monotheism* and *polytheism*. He said “Kufr (disbelief of God) and iman (faith) differ in names but not in essence, because both are indistinguishable.”<sup>9</sup>

His idea above underlined that people’s religion basically is a God’s will, not entirely preferred by the people themselves. Regarding to this case, Hick said that 99% of people choose their religion based on where they were born. A man being born in Thailand most likely to be a Budhist, and a man who is being born in Saudi Arabia would so much likely to be muslim.<sup>10</sup> However, to us, one’s religion is not a geographical determinaton. The urgent points are the place and people who gave them birth. In short, if their family is Christian, then they would probably to be a Christian. Also, if their family is Muslim, there is a high probability to them to be a Muslim either.

The concept of *wahdāt al-adyan* stated that all religions are sourced from a single divine, and that religions are just its physical form. God is “exist” in every religions.<sup>11</sup>

Hazrat Inayat Khan<sup>12</sup> expressed the same tone above, he mentioned that the variety of religions is just its shape. Like liquid, they have no solid shape, but they shape its

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<sup>7</sup>See B. Lewis, et. all. (ed), *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. III, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971), p. 99. See Louis Massignon, *op. cit.*, See Annemarie Schimmel, dalam *Dimensi Mistik dalam Islam*, translated by Sapardi Djoko Damono, et. al., [Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1986), p. 66. Al-Hallaj was born in 858 M / 244 H. See Ahmad al-Santanawi, et.all., *Dairat al-Ma’arif*, vol. VIII, (t.k., t.p., t.t), p. 17. In his early age, he often went to the prominent sufi figures. And by 16, he became a prominent sufi apprentice

<sup>8</sup>See Abd. al-Hakim Hassan, *al-Tasawuf fiy al-Syi’ri al-‘Arabi*, (Cairo: al-Anjalu al-Mishriyyah, 1954), p. 375

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*,

<sup>10</sup>John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 1-2

<sup>11</sup>See Fathimah Usman, *Wahdāt al-Adyān: Dialog Pluralismr Agama*, (Vol. I; Yogyakarta: LKis, 2002), p. 14

<sup>12</sup>Hazrat Inayat Khan, *The Unity of Religious Ideals*, (London: Barrie and Jerkins, 1874), p. 15

container. The liquid then turn into rivers, seas, lakes, streams or ponds. This concept corresponds to the religion itself. They are essentially similar, but different in many aspects.

Therefore, the al-Hallaj's *wahdāt al-adyan* does not mean to merge all religions. This is proven by his apprentice, Ibnu 'Arabi, by his idea; a universal religion, a mystical religion considers that God cannot be characterized, neither is limited to anything.

### III. THE CONCEPT OF *WAHDĀT AL-SYUHUD*

The teaching of *wahdāt al-syuhud* comes from Syekh Ahmad Sirhindi in his in-depth learning distinguishing between *tauhid rasuli* and *tauhid wujud* of Ibnu al-'Arabi. He then tried to arrange a philosophy based on the highest level of sufism about divinity transcendence referred to the Prophet's teachings. This philosophy is known as *wahdāt al-syuhud* or *tauhid syuhudi*; the experience of being united with God, but limited to a subjective perception (*syuhudi*) experience only.<sup>13</sup>

They figured out that there were two kinds of tauhid in main people, they are *tauhid syuhudi* and *tauhid wujud*. *Tauhid syuhudi* believes only in one Substance; the object perception of sufism is that there is nothing but The One. On the other hand, *Tauhid wujud* believes that there is only Him, and the rest is void. Therefore, *tauhid wujud* offers a knowledge framework (*'ilm al-yaqin*), while *tauhid syuhudi* offers a perception framework (*'ain al-yaqin*).<sup>14</sup>

*Tauhid syuhudi* is an essential part of sufism. A sufi will never feel *fana* and achieve the goal (*'ain al-yaqin*) without passing the *maqam* of the path. If the perception of The Almighty approves their sight, then they will disremember everything. In the other words, *tauhid syuhudi* is enough for *fana* (forgetfulness), and create *ikhlas*, which is the highest level in sufism. Sirhindi said "About *fana*, we only need to perceive The One (*tauhid syuhudi*), so we can forget everything but Allah (*ma siwa Allah*)". Whereas *tauhid wujud* is not part of the sufi path. It is because the perception (*ilm al-yaqin*) can only be obtained without following the doctrine.<sup>15</sup>

Another ideas from Sirhindi is that God solely secluded from our world. He is a stand-alone entity. God is neither part of this world, nor His existence. God is Himself, excluded from our world, and both are different.<sup>16</sup>

This is resulting that the trueness comes from the substance of dualism (*itsnainiyat*). Sirhindi said that the highest level is dualism. The reason is that even if the world is apart from God (*hama'ust*), but it emerged from God (*hama az-'ust*). The existence of our world is incomparable with His existence. This is because God existence is an absolute reality, while our world is an illusion (*khayali*) and not real (*mauhum*).<sup>17</sup>

Sirhindi believed that the existence of God is not identical to the existence of our world. It consequences that the existence of the world, to God, is not paradoxical with the "reality" that is mentioned earlier. There is only Him, The One. Our world is nothing but an image illusion, and this illusion obviously does not distort the oneness of God.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Lihat Muhammad Abd. Haq Ansari, *loc. cit.*, h. 162

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 308

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*,

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*,

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*,

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 164

The image of our world is not an existence of an object, because an object is a solid matter in a space. It is unreal and only exist in perception (*khis*) and imagination (*wahm*), in the shadow dimension (*kharij dzilli*). Therefore, the existence of the image is the existence of a shadow (*wujud dzilli*) that is utterly different from the reality existence of an object.<sup>19</sup>

Sirhindi, through his non-existing concept (‘*adam*’), explains about the existence of unrealistically shadow world. In his philosophy, the non-existence (‘*adam*’) has a fully different connotation and meaningful.<sup>20</sup>

That is why the world, according to Sirhindi, is an essence instead of substance, not-existing, and unrealistic. It is only a shadow but equal in reality. It emerges from an absolut nothingness that eventually gains stability and permanence from the existence of God. It is a magical projection, an object that for a glance looks real, but in reality, it is nothing but an imagination.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The *wahdāt al-adyan* concept by al-Hallaj and the concept of *wahdāt al-syuhud* by Sirhindi is a derivation formulation from the *tauhid, lā Ilāha Illallah*.

The teaching of *Wahdāt al-adyan* tells that all religions are essentially similar and have the same purpose; worshipping the Almighty. They are different just in names.

*Wahdāt al-syuhud*, through the concept of *tauhid*, teaches about a perception that all that exists is only God, but it does not mean that the other things does not.

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<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*,

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 165

*Wahdat al-Adyan and Wahdat al-Syuhud Sirhindi*

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