

# PARAMETERS OF SALVATION

*Twenty Points to Discern a Sunnī*



Imām Aḥmad Riḍā Khān al-Qādirī al-Bareilwī

Translation & Notes By Muhammad Kalim

*Umūr e 'Ishrīn Dar Imtiyāz e 'Aqā'id e Sunniyyīn*  
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First Edition

Shaykh al-Islām al-Mujaddid al-A'zam  
Imām Aḥmad Riḍā Khān al-Qādirī al-Bareilwī

Translation & notes by Muhammad Kalim  
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Translated by Muhammad Kalim (Preston, United Kingdom)  
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TheSunniWay is an organisation working towards the advancement of Sunnī Ṣufī Islām as outlined in the noble works of Imām Aḥmad Riḍā Khān. Our work includes using modern technology, such as mobile applications and the internet to provide much-needed authentic Sunnī material, as well as printing books and holding educational courses and classes. We have recently started a Dar al Ifta service where people can seek answers for their religious queries. We also aim to provide funding and support for our ‘Ulamā, giving them the perfect platform to work for the noble Dīn. Visit our website to find out more and support our work.

## **Ridawi Translations**

Imam of the Ahl al-Sunnah, Imām Aḥmad Riḍā Khān al-Qādirī has penned countless works, covering a wide array of topics and subjects, in many languages, including; Arabic, Urdu and Persian. Most of his monographs and books, however, are only accessible to those who can read and understand the Imām’s writings in their original language. Translations of the Imām’s expository and comprehensive works are not readily made available in the English Language for the English speaking public to read and benefit from.

Ridawi Translations is an initiative established by TheSunniWay to translate the important monographs of the Imām. The aim is to translate and make available in English works written by the Imām and also works written about the Imām.



## PREFACE

Al-Mujaddid al-A'zam, A'lā Ḥaḍrat, al-Imām Aḥmad Riḍā, the al-Imām of the Ahl al-Sunnah, requires no introduction. His praises and commendations are being sung in the heart of all gatherings and circles of knowledge. He is the one who taught us the true love of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, and he is the one who protected the faith of the Sunnī Muslims with his sword-like pen single-handedly in a time of devastation.

In the times of the illustrious Imām, many heterodox sects emerged claiming to be part of the Ahl al-Sunnah and preachers of the true message but, in reality, were far from it. A'lā Ḥaḍrat singlehandedly refuted these sects, leaving them utterly dumbfounded. They tried and tried, yet failed to reply; and until the day of reckoning – Allāh ﷻ willing – they will have no reply.

The concise treatise *Umūr ē 'Ishrīn Dar Imtiyāz ē 'Aqā'id ē Sunnīyyīn* is one of the Imām's many masterpieces. It was written by the Imām in 1318 AH upon the request of an admirer, who wished that A'lā Ḥaḍrat would write a few words regarding a particular scholar. The great Imām, however – as outlined in the introduction to the treatise – did not know the scholar particularly well; he listed twenty brief points which he requested to be presented to the scholar to affirm. The initial request for some words about the scholar were to appease the public, who had agreed to accept the scholar if the Imām endorsed him as a scholar of the Ahl al-Sunnah; and though the Imām did not know the scholar well enough to write anything with certainty, he wrote a list of creedal points that would serve the same purpose, if the scholar agreed to them.

It is the beauty of the Imam's work that it can be used universally as a means of differentiating a true Sunnī and a false claimant.

The original Urdu text (taken from al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwiyyah, published by Markaz ē Ahl ē Sunnat Barakāt ē Razā) does not contain any footnotes. Therefore, footnotes have been added to explain certain points. Furthermore, for the twenty points made by A'lā Ḥaḍrat, names of the treatises that he has authored on those particular points and matters have been mentioned in the footnotes, for further reading and reference purposes.

Muhammad Kalim (Preston, UK)

10th Shawwāl al-Mukarram

27th July 2015



کام وہ لے لیجئے تم کو جو راضی کرے  
ٹھیک ہونا مِ رضا تم پہ کروں درود



# بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب الانس والجنّة، والصلوة  
والسلام على نبينا العظيم والهنّة، المنقذ من  
النار والبطنى الجنّة الذى ذكره حرّموا جنة  
وعلى الوصبة وأهل السنّة-

Allāh in the name of – the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise is for Allāh ﷻ, the Lord of the mankind and Jinn. Blessings and salutations be upon our great and kind Prophet ﷺ; the protector from hell and granter of paradise; whose remembrance is protection and whose love is a shield; and upon his family, companions and the Ahl al-Sunnah.



## INTRODUCTION

In the month of Ramadan, 1318 AH, I [A'la Ḥaḍrat ﷺ] received a letter from Jaipur (Rajasthan) briefly as follows -

**Letter from Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad 'Uthmān Ṣāhib addressed to this faqīr [A'la Ḥaḍrat ﷺ]:**

“In the noble court of Mawlānā Molvī Aḥmad Riḍā Khān Ṣāhib Bareilwī, Muḥaddith and the Imām of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah.

After greeting you in accordance with the Sunnah, respectfully, I must inform you that our city, Marwar (Rajasthan), is profoundly fortunate that Mawlānā Molvī Aḥmad 'Alī Shāh Ḥanafī Naqshbandī Uwaysī has come to bless us. We have been blessed with his works and now we are being blessed with eloquent sermons, which dazzles the listeners as well as attracting their hearts [referring to the skills of Mawlānā Aḥmad 'Alī Shāh Ḥanafī]. Ghayr Muqallidīn and others with incorrect beliefs repent after listening to his speeches. There has not been one discourse in which he has not explained the evil of Nadwah<sup>1</sup>. The people here used to praise Nadwah; now they detest it as much as they despise an evil devil (Jinn). One Molvī of the Nadwīs has also arrived here. He says that if Molvī Aḥmad 'Alī Shāh opposes it [Nadwah], then he is an ignoramus and a deviant himself. Some people have been duped by his words. They say that if Molvī Aḥmad Razā Bareilwī writes something in praise of Molvī Aḥmad 'Alī Shāh, we will listen to him and repent from our ideologies. I thus respectfully request you to write what you think of Molvī Aḥmad 'Alī Shāh. These words of yours will be very beneficial for the rebels.”

العبد محمد عثمان  
*The servant, Muḥammad 'Uthmān*

[A'la Ḥaḍrat ﷺ writes]: Before this, I was not given a detailed introduction to the scholar, and the matter of bearing witness, especially for creed, is important and paramount. I therefore sent the following letter in reply -

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1 The Ṣulḥ-kullī movement in India. Nadwah (Nadwatul Ulema) is an organisation which was established in 1893 (1311 AH) under the leadership of Maulana Lutfullah of Aligarh. The aim of this organisation was to unite all sects under one banner, regardless of creed.

Letter from faqīr [A‘lā Ḥaḍrat ﷺ] addressed to Ḥāfiẓ [Muḥammad ‘Uthmān] Ṣāḥib:

“For the honourable observation of Ḥāfiẓ Muhammad Uthmān Ṣāḥib (may Allāh increase his kindness):

Assalāmu Alaykum Wa Raḥmatullāhi Wa Barakātuh.

I received your kind letter. I am grateful that you remembered me. Molvī Aḥmad ‘Alī Shāh Ṣāḥib blessed my lowly house with his presence, and it was the first time we met. After that, we met in Azeemabad (Patna Bihar), which was briefer than the first; besides Salām and a handshake, I did not get a chance to talk further. The matter of bearing witness (i.e. the request) is huge. I – Allāh forbid! – do not assume anything bad; in fact, the virtues of Mawlānā that I now know briefly [from the aforementioned Ḥāfiẓ ‘Uthmān], I wish to know (about him) in more detail. I am hopeful of Mawlana’s desire for the truth that he will be satisfied and pleased with my request. Nowadays, it is not only the tribulation of the Ghayr Muqallidīn<sup>2</sup> or Nadwah in India, but we face – Allāh Protect! – countless calamities. I present twenty points; if Mawlānā can write his attestation, it would be sufficient and satisfactory, which would clearly establish his acceptance, then adorn it with his stamp and have it sent back to me.”

فقیر احمد رضا قادری عنی عنہ

*Faqīr Aḥmad Riḍā Al-Qādirī, may he be pardoned  
Bareilly, 27 Ramadan 1318 AH*

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2 More commonly known and referred to as Salafīs in other parts of the world.

## THE TWENTY POINTS



1. Sayyid Aḥmad Khān<sup>3</sup> of Aligarh and his followers are all Kāfir<sup>4</sup>.
2. Any Rāfiḍī<sup>5</sup> that says the Qurʾān is incomplete, or considers Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī عليه السلام or any other non-Prophet to be superior to any Prophet, is an infidel [*kāfir*] and apostate [*murtadd*].<sup>6</sup>
3. The Rāfiḍī Tabarrāʾī<sup>7</sup> are infidels according to the jurists; and there is a consensus that they are deviants [*gumrah*], innovators [*bidʿ atī*] and bound for hell [*jaḥannamī*].<sup>8</sup>
4. Whosoever gives Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī عليه السلام superiority over the Shaykhayn (Abū Bakr عليه السلام and Umar عليه السلام), in terms of closeness to Allāh ﷻ, is a deviant and is opposing the Sunnah.<sup>9</sup>
5. In the battles of *Jamal* and *Siffin*, the one on the truth and the follower of truth was Amīr al-Muʾminīn, Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī عليه السلام. However, the error of the opposing honourable companions was an *ijtihādī*<sup>10</sup> error, and to censure them for such is severely forbidden. Any phrase of disrespect to them is undoubtedly *Rifḍī* [being a Rāfiḍī] and is leaving the boundaries of the Ahl al-Sunnah. Whosoever utters a word of disrespect or insult upon any of the companions or considers any of them to be bad or transgressors [*fāsiq*], or

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3 Born 17 October 1817 and died 27 March 1898. He was a naturalist and considered to be a philosopher and pragmatist by his followers. He had highly corrupt and incorrect beliefs. He is more commonly known and referred to as Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. He rejected anything that opposed human nature and has rejected many explicit verses of the Qurʾān and also rejected the concept of miracles as well as holding many other false beliefs.

4 See *al-Dalāʾil al-Qāhirah ‘alā al-Kufrati al-Niyāshirah* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwiyyah, volume 15).

5 A subject of the Shīʿah group.

6 See *Radd al-Rifādah* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwiyyah, volume 14), *al-Adillah al-Tāʾinah fī Adhāni al-Malāʾinah* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwiyyah, volume 23) and *Aʿālī al-Ifādah fī Taʿziyat al-Hind wa Bayān al-Shāhādah* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwiyyah, volume 24).

7 “The Rāfiḍī Tabarrāʾī of today are generally [*alā al-umūm*] infidels and apostates. Amongst them, maybe there are a handful who have some portion of Islam in their hearts. Their common [*ām*] beliefs are that, this Holy Qurʾān which we have in our hands – all praise is for Allāh – did not remain complete after the time of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ; from it, either some chapters [*pāra*], subchapters [*sīrah*] or verses [*āyah*], were removed by the companions or others from the Ahl al-Sunnah – Allāh forbid. Also, it is believed by all their followers that Sayyidunā ‘Alī and other Imāms were much superior to the previous Prophets; these two tenets are absolute kufr [*khālīs kufrī*].” (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwiyyah volume 20, pg. 244)

8 Ibid.

9 See *al-Zulāl al-Anqā Min Bahri Sabqah al-Atqā* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwiyyah, volume 28).

10 Reasoning or judgement.

bears animosity for any of them, is undeniably a Rāfiḍī.

6. For centuries, no one has reached the stage of *Muṭlaq Ijtihād*<sup>11</sup>; *Taqīd* is *Fard*<sup>12</sup> upon the one who has not reached the level of *Ijtihād* – The *Ghayr Muqallidīn* are deviants.<sup>13</sup>
7. For centuries, the Ahl al-Sunnah has remained within the four groups (Ḥanafīs, Shafī'īs, Mālīkīs and Ḥanbalīs). Whosoever is not from one of these four is an innovator, deserving of hell.<sup>14</sup>
8. The first teacher of the Wahhābīs, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb Najdī and their second teacher, Ismā'īl Dehlwī, author of *Taqwiyyat al-Īmān*, were both extremely misguided deviants.
9. The books authored by Ismā'īl Dehlwī: *Taqwiyyat al-Īmān*, *Ṣirāt ē Mustaqeem*, *Risālah Yakrōzī* and *Tanwīr al-'Aynayn* contain explicit misguidances, deviances and phrases of *kufr*.<sup>15</sup>
10. The book *Mi'ata Mas'āl* of Molvī Iṣḥāq Dehlwī is full of incorrect and disapproved matters, opposing the Ahl al-Sunnah and the majority.
11. To seek help and aid from the Prophets ﷺ and Awliyā' ﷺ, to call upon them or use them as a medium at the time of need saying: 'Yā Rasool Allāh ﷺ', 'Yā 'Alī ﷺ', 'Yā Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī ﷺ' and to believe them as a means of attaining blessings from Allāh ﷻ, is definitely correct and permissible.<sup>16</sup>
12. The authority of the Prophets ﷺ and the Awliyā' ﷺ is powerful in their physical life and also after their demise, and – through the bestowal of Allāh ﷻ – their river of blessings will continue to flow until *Qiyāmah*.<sup>17</sup>
13. The general deceased can see the living, hear their speech and also understand it. The hearing of the deceased is true; and the status of the Awliyā' are much greater than this. (If the general deceased can hear, then why would the

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11 Complete authority of reasoning. Conducted by the Mujtahids, such as the renowned: al-Imām al-A'zam Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Shāfi'ī, Imām Mālīk and Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

12 *Muṭlaq Taqīd* (general *Taqīd*), which is to follow the Prophet ﷺ, is *fard* upon all. *Taqīd-e-Shakhṣī* (following one of the four Imāms) is *wājib* upon all. [See *Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍawiyyah* volume 6, page 703-704 for details on *Muṭlaq Taqīd* and *Taqīd-e-Shakhṣī*].

13 See *al-Nahy al-Akīd 'an al-Ṣalāt Warā' 'Udī al-Taqīd* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍawiyyah, volume 6), *al-Nayyirah al-Shihābī 'alā Tadhīr al-Wahhābī* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍawiyyah, volume 27) and *Aṭāyib al-Sayyib 'alā Arḍ al-Ṭayyib* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍawiyyah, volume 27).

14 Ibid.

15 See *al-Istimḍād 'alā Ijyāl al-Irtidād*.

16 See *Barakāt al-Imḍād li-Ahl al-Istimḍād* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍawiyyah, volume 21) and *Anwār al-Intibāh fī Ḥilli Nidā' Yā Rasūl-Allāh* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍawiyyah, volume 29).

17 See *Munyah al-Labīb 'An al-Tashrī bi-Yad al-Ḥabīb* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍawiyyah, volume 30).

Awliyā', whose stations are much higher, not be able to?).<sup>18</sup>

14. Allāh ﷻ has divulged the knowledge of every single atom from the first day until the day of reckoning [*qiyāmah*], that which was and that which will be<sup>19</sup>, to His most beloved ﷺ. The knowledge of the Prophet ﷺ encompasses all these unseen matters.<sup>20</sup>
15. The possibility of Allāh ﷻ lying [*Imkān e Kidhb*], as believed by Ismā'īl Dehlwī in *Risālah ē Yakrōzī* and now by Rashīd Gangōhī in his (attestation of) *Barāhīn ē Qāṭi'ah*, is explicit misguidance. The lying of Allāh ﷻ is undeniably and consensually, intrinsically impossible [*muḥāl bi al-dhāt*]. The matter of *Khalf e Wā'id*<sup>21</sup> has no relevance whatsoever to these polluted thoughts.<sup>22</sup>
16. To believe the knowledge of Shayṭān to be greater and more vast than the knowledge of the Prophet ﷺ, as stated in *Barāhīn ē Qāṭi'ah* of Gangōhī<sup>23</sup>, is explicit misguidance and insulting the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.<sup>24</sup>
17. The gatherings of *Milād* (also known as *Mawlid*) and the stand [*qiyām*] in his honour, as has been widely practised and established for centuries in the two holy sanctuaries (al-Makkah al-Mukarramah and al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah), are permissible.<sup>25</sup>
18. Food of 'Gyarahwī Sharīf'<sup>26</sup>, *Fāṭiḥah* for the deceased, 'Urs of the Awliyā' etc. that are free from music and other wrongdoings, are all permissible and recommended.<sup>27</sup>

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18 See *al-Wafāq al-Matīn Bayna Simā' al-Dafīn wa Jawāb al-Yamīn* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwīyyah, volume 9) and *Ḥayāt al-Mawāt fī Bayān Simā' al-Anwāt* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwīyyah, volume 9).

19 *Mā kāna wa mā yakūn*

20 See *Khālīṣ al-Itiqād* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwīyyah, volume 29), *Inbā' al-Muṣṭafā bi-Ḥālī Sirr wa Akhfā* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwīyyah, volume 29), *Izāḥat al-'Ayy bi-Sayf al-Ghayb* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwīyyah, volume 29) and *al-Dawlat al-Makkiyah bi al-Māddat al-Ghaybiyyah*.

21 *Khalf e Wā'id* refers to the concept of whether Allāh can renege on his promise of punishment. The Deobandī elders used this idea to attempt to prove that Allāh can lie, which is incorrect as there is no correlation or relevance whatsoever between *Khalf e Wā'id* and *Imkān e Kidhb*. See *Subḥān al-Subbūḥ 'an 'Ayy Kadhib Maqbūḥ* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwīyyah, volume 15:404)

22 See *Subḥān al-Subbūḥ 'an 'Ayy Kadhib Maqbūḥ* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwīyyah, volume 15), *Dāmān ē Bāgh Subḥān al-Subbūḥ* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwīyyah, volume 15) and *al-Qamī' al-Mubīn li-Aamali al-Mukadhibīn* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwīyyah, volume 15).

23 Written by Khalīl Aḥmad Ambhervī and endorsed by Rashīd Gangōhī.

24 See *Tamhīd e Īmān ba-Āyāt ē Qur'ān* and *Ḥussām al-Ḥaramayn*.

25 See *Iqāmat al-Qiyāmah 'alā Ṭā' in al-Qiyām li-Nabī al-Tihāmah* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwīyyah, volume 26) and *Izāqat al-Āsām li-Māni' Amal al-Mawlid wa al-Qiyām* (written by the father of A'īlā Ḥaḍrat and the marginalia written by A'īlā Ḥaḍrat).

26 11th Rabī' al-Thānī. The demise date of Sulṭān al-Awliyā' al-Ghawth al-A'ẓam al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī.

27 See *al-Ḥujjat al-Fā'iḥah li-Tayb al-Tā'ayyūn wa al-Fāṭiḥah* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍāwīyyah, volume 9).

19. Sharī'ah and Ṭarīqah are not separate. Without following the Sharī'ah, reaching Allāh ﷻ is impossible. Whichever grand station a person reaches, as long as he is sane, he is not exempt from the laws of Sharī'ah. False Ṣūfīs [*mutaṣawwif*], who consider it their excellence in opposing the Sharī'ah, are all misguided and the playthings of Shayṭān. *Waḥadat al-Wujūd*<sup>28</sup> is true and [the false belief of] indwelling [*hulūl*], as uttered by some false Ṣūfīs [*mutaṣawwif*], is explicit *kufr*.<sup>29</sup>
20. Nadwah is the capital of misguidance and the collection of innovations. Associating and uniting with deviants is *Ḥarām*, and respecting them causes the anger of Allāh ﷻ. To stop refuting them is inviting the curse of Allāh ﷻ. To make them the leaders of an Islamic conference is destroying the religion. The lectures and conferences of Nadwah are filled with those things that have nothing to do with Allāh ﷻ and his Messenger ﷺ, and things which displease them. May Allāh ﷻ grant us refuge from all the deviant and corrupt sects; and keep us steadfast on the true, pristine Sunnah.<sup>30</sup>

**Mawlānā Shāh Aḥmad 'Alī agreed and endorsed these twenty aforementioned points outlined by the Imām. He wrote:**

“The twenty aforementioned points are very well and correct. *Waḥadat al-Wujūd* is true; however, it is best not to debate and discuss it according to this faqīr (referring to himself). Such things are from spiritual unveilings [*kashf*], and only the saints of Allāh understand it well. This faqīr does not have a stamp and therefore, only signed it.”

**[Thereafter, A'lā Ḥaḍrat wrote the following, signed and stamped it]:**

Many people today claim to be Sunnīs, and the innocent common folk fall for their deception. Some, taking advantage of the moment, utter things with their tongue and then retract it when they get the opportunity to do so. These twenty points are sufficient – Allāh ﷻ willing – as a test in most situations. Those who are truly Sunnīs – through the aid of Allāh ﷻ – will sign it without hesitation; otherwise if they shy away, it will inform you of the extent of their misguidance.

28 Oneness of Being. See Appendix A.

29 See *Maqāl al-'Uraḍā' bi-I'zāzi Shar' wa 'Ulamā'* (Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍawīyah, volume 21).

30 See *Fatāwa al-Ḥaramayn bi-Rajf Nadwat al-Mayn*.

فَمَنْ نَكَتْ فَأَتَمَّ مَا يَنْكُتُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ

*And whoever breaches his oath,  
only breaches it to the detriment of himself.<sup>31</sup>*

وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا

*And whoever turns back on his heels will  
never cause any harm to Allāh.<sup>32</sup>*

وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

*And whoever turns away - then indeed,  
Allāh is the Independent, the Praiseworthy.<sup>33</sup>*

**And all praise is for Allāh, the Lord of all the worlds.**

*‘Abd al-Mustafā Aḥmad Riḍā Khān al-Qādirī al-Bareilwī*



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31 Qur’ān 48:10.

32 Qur’ān 3:144.

33 Qur’ān 57:24.

## APPENDIX A

### *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*

Taken from Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍawiyah<sup>34</sup>:

There are three things [to consider] here: monotheism [*tawḥīd*], oneness of being [*Waḥdat al-Wujūd*] and pantheism [*ittihād*]. *Tawḥīd* is the essence of faith and to doubt in it is disbelief [*kufr*]. *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* is the truth; it is proven from the Qurʾān, Aḥadith and the dictums of the pious predecessors, and to label those who believe in it as *kāfir* is, itself, a disgraceful and evil utterance of *kufr*. What remains is pantheism [*ittihād*]; it is unequivocally heresy and apostasy, and the utterer of such is most definitely a *kāfir*. *Ittihād* means [to believe] that Allāh ﷻ is the Lord and you too are the Lord; everyone is the Lord (al-iyādhu bi-llāhi taʾāla).

Allāh ﷻ is Allāh ﷻ (i.e. the only one worthy of worship) and the servant is a servant. Neither can the servant be Allāh ﷻ nor can Allāh ﷻ be the servant. *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* means that only He ﷻ is existent and all else is shadows and reflections. It is stated in the Qurʾān:

كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ

“Everything is perishable except His Entity<sup>35</sup>”

It is recorded in Bukhārī, Muslim and Sunan Ibn Mājah from Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

“The most truthful saying stated by any poet is that of Labīd: take heed! Everything except Allāh is unreal.<sup>36</sup>”

It is in many books, such as *al-Isābah* and also in *Musnad*, that Sawād ibn Qārib said to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ:

“I bear witness that there is no Lord except Allāh, and you (O Messenger of Allāh) are entrusted with all unseen matters.<sup>37</sup>”

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ did not object to this.

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34 Al-Fatāwa al-Riḍawiyah, volume 14:641-645.

35 Qurʾān 28:88

36 Bukhārī, Qadīmī Kutub Khāna, Karachi 2:908.

37 Stanza. Al-Mustadrak, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut 3:609.



I say [*aqūlu*], there are three sects here:

First - the foolish literalists, who are completely deprived of truth and realities. They think that existence [*wujūd*] is shared between Allāh ﷻ and the creation.

Second - the people of truth and realities, who believe in *Wahdat al-Wujūd* with the aforesaid meaning.

Third - the people of heresy and deviance, who reject the difference between God and the creation, and deify every person and object. Their ideologies and sayings will become clear from the following parable.

An honourable king is present in a house of mirrors, in which different types of mirrors with special attributes are hung. A person who has seen these mirrors knows how many different ways the reflection of a single object is projected. In some, the image is clear, in some unclear; in some, the image is straight and in some, upside down; in some, the image is large, and in some, the image is small; in some, the image is thin and in some, the image is wide; in some, the image is pleasant and in some, the image is ugly.

This difference is according to their worth; otherwise, that which is reflected in the mirrors is, in reality, one. The thing being reflected is free from the state of the reflections. It is no fault of the one being reflected that the reflections are upside down, ugly or unclear.

وَلِلَّهِ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ

*“And the Majesty of Allāh is Supreme.”<sup>38</sup>*

The viewers of these mirrors are of three types:

**1. Naïve children** - They have thought to themselves that in the same way that the king exists, the reflections in the mirror exist as well - for they appear to us just like the king. Yes, indeed, they all follow him, for when the king stands, so do all of the reflections; when he walks, they start walking too and when he sits, they all sit; so he is original and they too are, but he is the one who dictates and the rest are compelled. Due to their naivety, they did not understand that only the king is present and the rest of the images are his reflection. If he is veiled, then they would no longer exist. Let alone perishing, even now, they do not have a trace of real existence, for in reality, only the king is existent and the rest are merely his reflections.

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38 Qur’ān 16:60.

**2. The people of insight and sound intelligence** – They have reached the conclusion and made it their belief that in reality, only the one king exists – only him. The rest are shadows and reflections, but they are not truly existent in their essence. Cut them off from the reflected and see whether any of them remain. There is nothing but complete non-existence! When these images are non-existent and transient in their essence, and the king is existent in his essence, then the images are dependent on him and he is independent of them. They are defective and he is perfect; they do not even own a particle but he is the owner of a kingdom; they hold no special quality: they are bereft of life, knowledge, hearing, sight, strength, will, speech, but he bears all of these attributes; so how can they be him? Undeniably, it is not that all of them are him, rather he is himself and they are merely reflections of His ﷻ manifestation. This is the truth and the reality. This is *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*.

**3. Those with no intellect and flawed understanding** – They are worse than those naïve children (mentioned above). They have seen that the reflections are the same as that of the king, and the actions of the king are also the same as theirs. Just as the crown is on the head of the king, in the same way, it is on their heads too. They have turned their backs to intelligence and wisdom, and have started to talk nonsense that “they are all the king” and in their imprudence, they have labelled the king the cause of all of the defects and imperfections, which were present in the reflections due to their deficiency. When they are him, and since the reflections are defective, weak, dependent, reversed, ugly and blurred, then these flaws are decisively attributed to the one who is the source of these reflections – Allāh ﷻ is much greater and beyond the sayings of the oppressors. Man is dependent on a mirror to see his reflection, whereas the Truly Existent [*Wujūd e Haqīqī*] is free from dependence. There, that which is called a mirror is in itself a shadow. And in the mirror, only man’s outer surface is reflected and man’s attributes such as speech, hearing, sight, knowledge, will and life are not even slightly reflected; however, the manifestations of the *Wujūd e Haqīqī* have reflected these qualities as well as its essence [*Nafs e Hastī*] on many of their shadows. These reasons have further confused the children and strayed these intellectually challenged individuals, and those who have received the guidance of Allāh have realised that:

یک چراغ ست درین خانه که از پر توآں  
 هر کجای نگری انجمن ساخته اند

*In the house, there is only one lantern:  
 through its radiance, every place is illuminated.*

They have made two types of these attributes and of *wujūd* itself: *Haqīqī Dhātī*, which is specific for Allāh ﷻ and *Zillī ‘Atāyī*, which is for the shadows. Allāh ﷻ

forbid this categorisation; mutual in meaning but, in fact, actually corresponding in words. This is the reality of the truth and the absolute recognition. And all praise is for Allāh ﷻ.

**Translator's note:** This is a concept that laymen are incapable of comprehending. *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* is only truly understood by the saints of Allāh ﷻ, due to their powerful insight and spiritual unveilings [*kashf*]. Thus, the general public should believe it is correct and true, without delving too much into this intricate matter<sup>39</sup>.



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39 For further details, see *Sirāj al-Awārif fī al-Wasāyā al-Ma'ārif*, Urdu translation, al-Majma' al-Misbāhī, Mubarakpur, pages 64 & 65.

*The Sunni Way*  
*Ridawi Translations*