



## Problems of Ontology in the Heritage of Ali Safi

Umid Nasriddinovich Mavlyanov

Senior Teacher of the "Philosophy" Department of Gulistan State University, Uzbekistan.

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### **Abstract**

This article focuses on fundamental ontological and philosophical views of the representative of the Central Asian Renaissance Ali Safi, who in their writings have found a «consensus» between the official theology of Sunni Islam and the philosophical teachings of the «Greek Sciences» and their Eastern representatives. The fundamental features of the philosophical Outlook of the scientist are given: true commitment to Sunnism, objective idealism. In addition, the author seeks to show Ali Safi as a tolerant representative of his society.

The author found out that the entire medieval concept of Islamic philosophy, as well as the objective monism of Sufism based on idealism, was based on Ali Safi's worldviews. It is established that the scientist in his analyses was not limited to the definitions and conclusions of Sufis and philosophers, but provided his own conclusion in relation to being, cited materials from ancient Oriental works, expressing skepticism towards them.

**Keywords:** *Sufism; Doctrine, Hodjagon-Nakshbandia; Theology; Dogma; Islam; Ontology*

### **Introduction**

#### **To the Biography of Ali Safi**

Fakhruddin Ali the expert Safi Vaiz of al-Kashifi al-Beykhaki who lived and worked in the second half of XV – the first third of the 16th centuries, was the famous writer, scientific, religious and the statesman of the time. His family originally lived in Sabzavar (Khurasan). The father is Hussein Vaiz Kashifi was the famous theologian of the time, the author of a tafsir (interpretation of the Koran) under the name "Tafsiri Huseyni".

According to A. Miklouho-Maclay, Ali Safi was born on February 12, 1463 [9, 115]. He received his primary education at a rural school. His father, Hussein Voiz, a respected religious and secular scholar of Khorasan, influenced Ali Safi's formation as a great scholar. The works "Tafsiri Hussein" and "Akhloki Mukhsini" were used as basic textbooks in Herat madrasahs, mosques and schools. Ali Safi began to enter religious and social life in the 70s of the 15th century. He was the secretary of the

representative of the order of Khojagan\_nakshbandiy Khoja Akhrar in 1474-1489-90. After the death of Khoja Akhrar in 1490, Ali Safi was invited to Herat by Sultan Hussein Baykar and was declared the main preacher, orator of the state. He glorified the doctrine and practice of the teachings of Khojagan-Naqshbandiya. In "Majalis-un-nafais" Navoi pays special attention to Ali Safi, who was 22 years younger than him [10, 128].

Vigorous public and religious activity and blossoming of scientific creativity of Ali Safi – the most productive period of its biography – fall on the 30th years of the 16th century. Influence of this period on scientific creativity and the personal fate of Ali Safi consists in what was lived and created at this time by such figures as Hodge Akhrar, Dzhami, Navoiy which were its spiritual guides, mentors, giving it all support.

In 1507-1510 Herat was in the hands of Sheybanikhan, and Ali Safi, as during the reign of Hussein Baykar, continued his activities of Vaiz and Khatib. Nevertheless, due to the fact that he was a devoted follower of the Timurids, in the eyes of the courtiers of the Sheybanid dynasty, he was considered a dubious person. That is why Ubaydallah Khan, who took in 1528-1529, the reins of government in his own hands, found reasons for removing Ali Safi from Herat, first imprisoning him for one year, then sending him to Garjistan [12, 239].

There is little information about the date of Ali Safi's death, although sources and research say he ends his life in Herat. Nisari, in his book "Muzakkiri ahbob" states: "We did not know for sure, but they say that he was buried in Ubakh" [11, 96]. M. Hasani and B. Umrzok report that Ali Safi died in 1532 outside Herat, but was buried in the city [3, 12].

## **Sources**

In spite of the fact that the philosophical doctrines developing in the 15-16th centuries in territories of the Middle East and Central Asia represent huge interest, there are few serious researches in this direction. The lack of primary sources is considered the main reason: very few manuscripts were kept. The most part of the kept materials is stored in Institute of Oriental studies of Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan and also at Institute of Oriental studies and manuscript of the Republic of Tajikistan. It is worth noting the candidate dissertation "The problem of man in Naqshbandism" (2002) Z. Nabotova, scientific articles by M.G. Stepanyants "Historical Fates of Sufism" (1980) and "Problems of Cognition of Sufism" (1980), published in the journal "Problems of Philosophy", the work of S.N. Grigoryan "Medieval philosophy of the peoples of the Near and Middle East" (1966). In his Ph.D. thesis "Genre and artistic features of" Lataif-ut-tavaif "Ali Safi" (2004) B.Kh. Sayfutdinov examines one work of a scientist-philosopher from the point of view of its artistic value. Thus, a separate study on the philosophical views of Ali Safi has not been conducted.

Based on a comparative study of the sources and results of modern studies of the life, activities, heritage and worldview of Ali Safi, we managed to find out the following list of 11 titles of the scientist's works: 1. "Rashakhotu ainil-hayat" ("Drops of the source of life"); 2. Latoif-ut-tavoif (" Stories of different strata of the population "); 3. "Mahmud and Ayaz"; 4. Anis-ul-arifin fil-mawaiz (" The speaker's friend in sermons "); 5. "Tuhfat ul-khani" (Gift to the khan); 6. "Hirz ul-amon min fittan uz-zamon" (Talisman of liberation from the atrocities of time); 7. "Odob ul-ashob" (Etiquette of friends); 8. "Kashf al-asror" (Discovery of secrets); 9. "Naqshbandiya Methods"; 10. "Farasnamai Safi" (Safi Horse Breeding Book); 11. Ali Safi's dictionary.

Some of these works of Ali Safi reached us in many copies ("Rashakhot", Latoif, "Odobul\_askhob"); about some we recognize only by stories of sources, and some ("Farasnamai Safi", "Hirz St.-amon of mines фиттан bonds-zamon") reached in single copies [7].

### ***Ali Safi's Doctrine of Being***

Consider ontological and gnoseological views of the scientist, based on Ali Safi works published now in the Uzbek, Russian, Tajik languages now and also on materials of researches and sources.

Based on the analysis and research of Ali Safi's works, one can come to the conclusion that he was engaged, on the one hand, in secular sciences - metaphysics, philosophy, Sufism and ethics; on the other hand, by religious and mystical sciences: theology and Sharia as the main directions, as well as the schools of the Sufi doctrine of Khojagon\_nakshabdiya.

Investigating Ali Safi outlook, it becomes obvious that it could transfer the reasoned certificates on philosophy, policy, secular sciences, on their problems in the works. It gave the whole complex of logical receptions, philosophical methods of a number of currents and schools in spite of the fact that in the Muslim East at that time there was under a ban logic, and scientists who were engaged in "the Greek sciences" were waited by persecutions [2, 47-169]. Here it is enough to recall how Gazzali, Jami and others sharply criticized the schools of thought, especially the philosophy of Avicenna [5, 251-263]. As Shakhruzuri wrote, "Philosophy is the source of unbelief and madness. Logic is the threshold of philosophy ... The use of logic is evil" [Quoted. according to: 8, 95]. Only in the "Introduction" to "Rashakhat ainil Hayat" Ali Safi gives information about more than one hundred outstanding representatives of science and religion of his time and predecessors. The author not only lists the names of scientists, but also carefully analyzes their worldview, gives a list of works, philosophical trends and problems they dealt with.

Especially interesting things are the names of such representatives of Sufism as: Junaid Baghdadi, Mansur Hallaj, Hakim Termizi, Muhiyiddin al-Arabi, Najmiddin al-Kubra, Jalaliddin Rumi and others.

Valuable materials are given on such schools and directions as: "Ahli Haqq", "Assembly of Mawlavi", "Avomulloh", "Wahdat ul-wujud", "Wahdat ul-mavjud" and others.

In issues of life (ontology), Ali Safi proves to be as the true, reliable Muslim of the Sunni direction, considering that Allah's life – true, eternal, being an ultimate goal, and other life – everything that is created by It, changeable, passing, in a different way – invalid life. Speaking in other words, Ali Safi claims that he murid – sufiya has to be sure that everything that we perceive, all material life – temporary and therefore the person has to be interested not in this (wordly), but eternal life (Allah), puts forward the thoughts based on pantheistical theology of Sufism [3, 44-47].

The following main features of Ali Safi's philosophical worldview can be distinguished. First, despite the strong influence of Sunni Islam, its worldview is based on the provisions of objective idealism. He does not delve into his theological convictions, being a tolerant representative of his society. Secondly, the scientist does not hide the influence of Sufism on his work, on representatives of orthodox religion and secular sciences, as well as on representatives of the authorities [3, 71; 83, 144-146, 151].

It would be appropriate to list names of several such persons which according to if Ali Safi are not obvious representatives then the persons acting under influence a hadjagan-nakshbadiya: Abul Mansour Maturidi, Sharif Djurjhani, Zaniddin Tayobodi, Mirzo Ulugbek and others. Thirdly, Ali Safi shows in terms of ethics that secular sciences, even the philosophy and logic are useful to personal

development and society [2, 47-179; 14]. Fourthly, he offers deep theoretical-methodological approach to the solution of problems of religious and mystical schools, the scientific and philosophical, spiritual and ethical directions.

Ali Safi's ontological views largely coincide with the official teaching of the theology of Islam. He unquestioningly accepts an objectively idealistic solution to the problem of being, consistently observing this teaching. At the same time, the scientist combines the dogmas of Sunnism with the teachings of the Sufis - followers of the Hajagan Naqshbandi. Ali Safi demonstrates his acquaintance with such movements as "Wahdat ush-shukhud" and "Wahdat ul-mavjud", incl. acquaintance with "vojib ul-mumkin" and "mumkin ul-wujud", which were divided into two parts [14].

By Ali Safi definition, Allah is the real life, substance, and the world which we feel is accident. He argues that there are disagreements between Sufis and philosophers in resolving the question of being [3, 224].

According to philosophers adherents of the doctrine of Aristotle from the countries of the Middle East, there is an impassable barrier, border between Allah's life and this world. One of them is the reason, other world – a consequence. The first reason – driving (fojit), and the second – passing, is in the movement. The first reason is not connected with possible existence, it was eternal and will be eternal. And the consequence cannot be without the primary cause, which is associated with the substance, does not exist without it. That is, the consequence - material existence is changeable, it can collapse at any moment at the request of the original cause. Here Ali Safi subtly solves one of the most difficult questions of the philosophy of being. In his opinion, “some Sufis and most theologians and philosophers are convinced that our world, material existence is an emanation (fayz, sudur, tajalli) of Allah” [3, 224]. Ali Safi also claims that God exists in the existence of beings and expresses his point of view on their essential unity: Everything in the world is perceived as plural. In other words, everything is one, although it is felt as multiple [3, 46].

This approach, in a sense, corresponds to the ideas of Farabi. Farabi writes: "... the things present belong to a certain category and, thus, achieve unity" [13, 89].

According to Ali Safi, the being of God is true, it is identical to life of the world and never cannot be that. The quality of an identifying (mabda ocap) is a basis of all other life, in other words, material life of the world [3, 163-164, 224].

Besides, Ali Safi provides the information on such types and steps of life as "this world" and "that world"; "Qadi" (God's being) and "Hodisot" (world of the phenomena); "the physical world" and "inner world", "universal light" and about other problems of life.

The author provides valuable material on the Sufi perception of the universe, arguing that a feast, a sheikh, who has reached the proper level, loses its being, arrives in a separate from our everyday concept of being. As important information given by Ali Safi in his writings, one can cite such special problems of theological perception of life as "Vahdati shukhud" (unity of the obvious, All), "Shukhudi ahadiyat dar hasrat", "Vujuhi Hakk va hastiyi mutlak", "Shukhudi Hakk va khalk ", "Mavzhudi shukhudiy", "Zham ul-zham", "Sohibi Vazh va Khol", "Vasl va ja'm" and much more [3, 44, 222, 371]. Here we will be limited only to the list of these concepts as a special research, interpretation and an explanation of such concepts demands time, special researches. We consider that in this article to give definitions to all these and other concepts, the concepts specified in works of the author it is impossible. Therefore, only we list them for the purpose of the appeal of scientific community to these problems.

In his work "Rashakhotu Aynil Hayat" Ali Safi demonstrates his acquaintance not only with the ontological concepts of Sunnism and Kalam, but also with the philosophical trends of the Muslim East and their representatives - Farabi, Ibn Miskaveikh, Ibn Sina, Omar Khayyam and others. The problems cited in the work "Olami mulk" (the world of the Almighty), "olami malakut" (the world of angels), "olami jabarut" make it clear that the author was well acquainted with the works and ideas of Abul Hamid Gazzali, in particular, with his work "Iha ulum ad din" (Resurrection of the sciences of faith) [6]. Ali Safi in this work gives an overview of the levels and structure of being, puts forward a personal concept of being, based on his theological, idealistic, monistic worldview [3, 264]. He does not limit himself to enumerating the views of his predecessors, but tries to clarify the categories and structure, stages of being given to them, based on a comparative analysis of the views of philosophers and Sufi thinkers [3, 265].

It turns out that Ali Safi's worldview is based on the medieval concept of Islamic philosophy - the objective monism of Sufism, based on idealism. The author does not limit himself to the definitions and conclusions of Sufis and philosophers, but gives his own conclusion about being, cites materials from the works of al-Arabi, expresses distrust of the interlocutor who asserts his point of view on the views of al-Arabi, and writes that "I was familiar with the teachings of Hazrat Muhiyiddin (al-Arabi), and I got uncertain about the truth of the judgments in this conversation" [3, 193].

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we will note that, first, Ali Safi is the outstanding representative of the Central Asian Renaissance which found "consensus" between theology of official Islam of Sunni sense and philosophical doctrines of "The Greek sciences" in the works, their east representatives and also some ideas of Sufism. His works reflected the teachings of representatives of all directions and trends. Secondly, in the field of ontology, he adopted and developed the philosophical and theological views of his predecessors, the Sufis. Ali Safi's position is distinguished by adherence to the postulates of objective idealism, combined with the dogma of Sunni Islam. Thirdly, in solving the problem of being, Ali Safi retained the concepts of thinkers of the past, and also put forward his own definitions of this problem [3, 231-232]. As a result of the development of the theoretical foundations of Sufism in subsequent eras, it became possible to conduct discussions on the problems of existence, which in the past could not even be discussed. Ali Safi is the "connecting thread" of the kindred peoples of Maverannahr, Khorasan and Iran. Born in Khorasan, who learned the basics of science in Maverannahr, Ali Safi is equally dear to the peoples of Central Asia, Afghanistan and Iran.

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