

## **A STUDY OF PANTHEISM AND ITS ROLE IN SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL PEACE**

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### **Abstract**

The present research studies pantheism and its role in sustainable global peace. The main aim of this study is to define and examine pantheism and its role in the universal sustainable peace. The views were summarized in this area and the jurists' ideas were also mentioned. It finally turned out that there is a relationship between pantheism and universal peace.

**Key terms: pantheism, peace, global peace**

### **Introduction:**

Pantheism is one of the major ontological issues emerging in the mystical atmosphere and slowly entering the philosophical area. The acceptance or rejection of this issue overshadows all the philosophical questions because by accepting it (in the strict sense), the world will have some other hue and the causality will be eliminated among the creatures and by its rejection, another interpretation of beings and their relationship with each other should be offered. It also offers a different interpretation of God's existence and the Sharia. Before Mulla Sadra, philosophers have argued in this regard; however, Mulla Sadra claimed proofs and an exact and accurate explanation for it. Before Ibn Arabic "pantheism" was not raised as a specific term. The term is not used in

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the works of Ibn Arabic; Qunawi also did not use it as a technical term, but since Forghani, this interpretation gradually turned into a specific term. Ibn Sabin and Nasafi used it to refer to the origin of things and in Jami's era, it became the characteristic of Ibn Arabic's thought.

Pantheism or unity of existence is a technical term in Islamic philosophy and -often- in Islamic mysticism. Throughout history, different interpretations of pantheism have been given by its supporters, its opponents, and most recently by the Western orientalist. The first detailed explanation of the term is often attributed to Ibn Arabic although Ibn Arabic himself did not use the term "pantheism" and scholars before him had said the same words as he did. According to Ghazali, the spiritual fruit of a Sufi's climb is "to testify that there is no entity but God and that everything is perishing except for God. (Poorjavadi, 1979) The first one who used "pantheism" as a technical term was Saeed-al-din Forghani belonging to the third generation of Ibn Arabic's school.

In the Islamic Thought, the issue of Unity (tawhid) in the sense of oneness and uniqueness of God has been posed from the beginning, but the issue of pantheism arrived rather later and played a significant role particularly in the development of philosophy which is often defined ontologically. The term "pantheism" is not found in any of the resources prior to Ibn Arabic's works, but many Sufi phrases refer to its content.

### **Meanings of pantheism**

Here are different meanings for pantheism. Only the last meaning is attended by the Islamic mystics:

1. Immanent unity: The truth of being is reincarnated in all things.
2. Alliance unity: The truth of being is united with all things. (Union)
3. Overall unity: The truth of being is in all things as a whole. (Pantheism)
4. Numerical unity: Existence or God is one in terms of number. (Superficial and popular recognition)
5. Conceptual unity: Whatever exists is spiritually the same in the sense of concept of existence. (Peripatetic school)

6. Minor real unity: Except for the true nature (God), nothing else (even His manifestations) is true or is fictitious. (Emerging mysticisms)
7. Doubtful true unity: The truth of the inherent essence's being has doubtful gradations (both the unity and the inherent multiplicity). (Transcendent Wisdom)
8. True predicated unity: the nature of true being (God) has manifestations (transverse plurality). (Islamic mysticism)

Among the mentioned concepts, the only pantheism intended by the Islamic mystics is the true predicated unity which means existence from the viewpoint of truth and the one and only essence (God) pluralized in His manifestations.

From Plato to Spinoza and from the Ibn Arabi to Mulla Hadi Sabzavari, numerous and sometimes conflicting stories have been told about the pantheism. From the Western philosophers' stance, what is stated, by the mystics, about pantheism conforms more to the pantheism and less to the concept of pantheism although in both, God is current in the universe and nothing exists but God. However, in pantheism God has a higher position and other creatures are His reflections and manifestations. From this perspective, Spinoza says: "All things in the universe are only one and that is all in all...the One that is all in all is the great God who is eternal, neither was born nor dies."

### **Pantheism in Islamic mysticism**

Pantheism, the key theory of Islamic Mysticism, in the famous definition, indicates that "the nature of existence is one (unique) and its instance is God and all the other beings are His epiphany and manifestations." Anything intrinsic has true unity that is not only is one, but is also unique. The essence of being has true unity and as a truth inevitably possesses oneness and uniqueness and its instance is the one and only essence of God. Since the truth of pantheism, apart from its mental all understanding concept, will be understood only by mystic intuition, it is epistemologically called intuition unity.

### **Theories of manifestation and emergence and of unity and multiplicity**

The mystical worldview is based on manifestation and emergence order. The true Being is God and His essence and all of the other things, because of the intensity and perfection of His being, are manifestations and emergence of His existences. And therefore, the true being simultaneously has essential unity and transverse plurality (unity in diversity and diversity in unity). As a result, the theory of pantheism is meaningful according to the theory of manifestation and emergence and unity in diversity.

Mystics believed unity to be inherent and multiplicity to be incidental and non-essential. From their perspective, an extensive and integrated being has uniformly filled the universe. This being who has not left any other room for another being, is God Almighty, and whatever other than Him has no true share of existence; they are only His manifestations and exist accidentally, non-essentially, and virtually. (Kakaie, 2002)

Mystics relying on their wisdom and understanding see their own annihilation and destruction of the world and, on the other hand, believe that apart from the God that is absolute being, there is nothing else and the divine nature is innocent of any plurality. On the other hand, through their senses\_what they cannot deny\_they perceive multiplicity. In this conflict, the intellect should judge whether plurality is true and unity is only fabricated by our minds; or vice versa; or both are true. (Kakaie, 2001)

### **Mystical perspectives on unity**

The best example brought by the Sufi sect to convey accurately and illustratively what they mean, is the example of sea and wave. They say the sea has same waves and waves are the sea. The relationship between all creatures and God is the same as the example of waves and the sea: Which means that all phenomena are the very essence of God and not separated from him, but somehow an emergence of God's manifestations.

In more scientific terms: God's essence that is the mere existence has turned into creatures through determination and formability; consequently, contingent beings exist as the Divine Essence and they are His emerged forms. There is no difference between the creator and the

creature other than application and determination (limited and unlimited); it means God's essence is the exact being and unlimited while, this very being has been applied, determined, and limited in things.

Some Sufis believe that pantheism is a principle rather than a philosophy. J. Noorbakhsh, on pantheism's being a principle, says: Sufis do not separate the universe from God's being. ... Interpreting the Verse "Allah is the light of the skies and the earth", Sufis assert that God is the heavens and the earth and the reality of their existence. Accordingly, the knowledge and insight based on this basic principle that is "In the universe, there is nothing but an absolute existence, and every contingent being relies on this being" is called pantheism. But, we do not call this philosophy because philosophy is something made by intellect and is changeable while, this insight is made by heart and is eternal and imperishable. ... the insight of pantheism is connected to love and discovery and intuition; so, we would rather call it "principle of pantheism: than "philosophy of pantheism". (Noorbakhsh, 2002)

### **Opposition to pantheism**

Some among the jurists and theologians have opposed the idea of pantheism and called it polytheism; from their point of view, the existence of God is separated from the presence of objects and the purity of His existence cannot come to together with the pollution of material things. It seems that the severe opposition of some scholars to pantheism theory originates particularly from the heaviness and depth of the issues presented in mysticism and in particular of the aforementioned theory so that some pretenders of mysticism have not been able to efficiently answer the controversy, and some, for their poor knowledge, have not been capable of accepting it accurately. One aspect of opposition to pantheism is the suspicion of identifying the Creator and creation, while the mystics know God as the only true existence, and all the others as mere manifestations of Him and in some cases, they implicitly consider no existence for other entities but Him. And if they consider any fulfillment for entities other than Him, it is more delicate than the ratio of the accident and contingency to the essence; rather, it is explanation of the ratio of reality and virtuality. In other words, they accuse the mystics of attributing objectivity to the creator and creature and quote and criticize some famous phrases from mystics such as "By pantheism, we mean the objectivity of the land and sky's existence and that of the Almighty",

"His zeal did not left any other in the world and He necessarily became all of the objects", and "Glory be to Him Who made things appear and is their very essence." But, here, sameness or identity, is a mystical and technical term and does not have its common and conventional sense. This means that there is no realization of the objects without God and of they have no independent determination and this, in no way, means the unity of the Creator with the objects. Obviously, this is, in Islamic mysticism, heresy and heterodoxy too. It shows the poor and superficial understanding of the opponents of mysticism. Mystics, as well, assert that believing in multiple beings is definitely polytheism and assume the plurality not as diversity of beings, but as realized manifestations of being. Just like the reflection of someone in the mirror that is his\her sameness but, not united with him\her and the reality and fact is the person not the reflection in the mirror.

From the perspective of mystics, the path to God and to pantheism is not through reason and thought, but through self-knowledge, intuition, and self-reflection, and they point to words attributed to the Prophet of Islam who says: "He who knows himself knows his Lord as well." (Kakaie, 2001)

### **Global peace**

Global peace is an important issue in the world today. Our thinking has long been limited to our own country and especially among those who think it is less often seen to have addressed global issues; the dominant impression is that the problems of the world is not our business and we have to think about the interests of our own society. The restriction of our thinking has made us neglect the important global issues and although we are not aware these issues are very effective in our destiny.

Whenever in our country, issues such as human rights; equal rights for women and men; minority issues; freedom of religion and speech; and democracy are posed, our viewpoint is usually restricted. We deal with these issues legally or morally or philosophically and are unaware that they have dimensions that if not more important, at least are at the same level as religion, ethics, and philosophy.

Eight years ago, a population of Muslims and Christians, at the invitation of the Higher Institute of St. Gabriel in Austria (Vienna), gathered together to collect the main tenets of people's approaching to each other and of the reduction of human hatred towards one another.

The found tenets include:

**First principle:** sustainable global peace is not possible without justice and justice is not possible without sustainable global peace. This principle refers to those who only speak of justice in the world or merely of peace.

**The second principle:** Sustainable global peace cannot be realized in a world where there are social inequalities and poverty and hunger.

**The third principle:** Sustainable global peace cannot be realized without an absolute rejection of violence.

**The fourth principle:** Sustainable global peace cannot be fulfilled without recognition of the innate dignity of all members of the human family and without a legal system as the guarantee of human rights.

**The fifth principle:** Sustainable global peace cannot be realized unless the foundations of social pluralism are recognized.

**The sixth principle:** Dialogue.

**The seventh principle:** No lasting peace can be realized without readiness for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and preventing future conflicts.

**The eighth principle:** Sustainable global peace cannot exist unless higher education is shaped based on human and religious values, not on imitation and tradition.

**The ninth principle:** Sustainable global peace cannot be fulfilled unless women, with equal rights, are present in all areas of human life.

**The tenth principle:** Sustainable global peace cannot be fulfilled unless the rights of minorities are properly recognized.

The concept of global peace and collective spirit is still unknown to some nations because these people are strongly influenced by the limited religious, sectarian, environmental, and climatic teachings of their past. When a person or a nation separates them from the rest of the world,

they get away from the idea of universal peace; becomes zealous; and has to fight to keep their range.

### **Conclusion:**

Pantheism has always been important in the Islamic thinking. The basis of Islamic thought and practice is testimony; admitting that there is not any Gods but Allah (There is no God except Allah.) The term pantheism cannot be found in any of the resources prior to the works of Ibn Arabic and many Sufi phrases are similar to it. It is quoted that Balkhi was the first person who recounted the testimony as it has been often seen in later centuries: There is nothing, but God in the universe. God says in the Holy Quran in Surah Saff: Islam of Mohammad is a brilliant light from Allah; the infidels of the Book wish to turn it off, but God makes this light perfect and Islam of Mohammad will prevail over all religions, although the pagans don't like it. Mohammad (PBUH) is the messenger whose coming Jesus, son of Mary (peace be upon him), promised the Israel. Thus, it is the believers' duty to obey him, strive hard, and fight, in the way of Allah, with their property and their lives to help the Messenger of Allah in his religion. Allah, in return, gives them happiness; helps them; and grants them victory in this world and the hereafter.

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