
The extremist Soofees and the Unity of Being [Wahdatul-Wujood]

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)¹: All of you must have heard of a group called the Soofees, and of a [type of] knowledge, or Soofee spiritual path [*sulook*] known as *tasawwuf*.

The people who ascribe themselves to this *tasawwuf* are of differing ranks, some of them have overstepped all limits and left Islaam in the name of Islaamic Soofeeism, left Islaam just as a strand of hair is pulled out of dough [i.e., totally]. Why?

Because their interpretation of aayahs from the noble Qur'aan [is so incorrect that it] and philosophy and apostasy are one and the same. In the eyes of the scholars of the Muslims they are known as the people who believe in *Wahdatul-Wujood* [lit: the unity of existence], the ones who say the same thing as the atheists, but their wording differs from that of the atheists, they say, 'There is nothing except one.' So [according to them] the universe that we see is Allaah. For this reason they are called people who believe in *Wahdatul-Wujood*.

The Muslims say that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah [*Laa ilaaha illallaah*], in this sentence there is an affirmation and a negation. There is a negation of whoever might interpret falsely (the presence of another god), then the affirmation that Allaah is the one and only God, the Most High.

As for those Soofees, then they say, 'There is no He but He.' They then paraphrase it and make it a form of remembrance which they repeat for themselves, [saying], 'He, He ...' This is a dangerous deviation as you can see, i.e., a denial of the true existence of Allaah, and following on from that, a denial of the legislation, no Islaam ... no Judaism, no Christianity—because there is no [differentiation between the] slave and the Lord, a Lord who obligates others to worship Him and a slave who is obligated to worship. For this reason one of them said:

*God [Rabb] is man and man is God
How I wish to know who the one ordered (to perform worship) is*

If you say man (is the one ordered), then that is a denial (of the presence of a God, based on the concept that God is man and man is God!)

And if you say God, how can He be obligated?!

[According to them] there is no He but He. So in the end: He is He!

There are words that emanate from Muslims who bear witness [by saying] *Laa ilaaha illallaah Muhammad Rasulullaah*, these people are not atheists but they will sometimes utter words which lead them to that false 'Aqeedah. This is something very dangerous and hardly any but a few are safe from it.

¹ (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

The extremist Soofees and the Unity of Being [Wahdatul-Wujood]

Now in our normal gatherings [you will hear] one of them say whether on a particular occasion or not, 'Allaah is present in all that exists,' [this statement of theirs] equals, 'There is no He but He.'

You will hear [this statement] many times, 'Allaah is present in all that exists,' and after close scrutiny of its meaning and purport and what it entails one can see that it equates to the saying of the Soofees—the extremists amongst them obviously—who openly declare that, 'There is no He but He.'

There are Two Existents Not One

Because if we were to ponder over the declaration of truth which is when a believer truly says, 'None has the right to be worshiped except Allaah,' [then we will find] that it establishes two existences.

'None has the right to be worshiped except Allaah,' negates the false deities which are worshipped other than Allaah, and they are present [as is mentioned, for example,] in the Qur'aan in the statement of Noah to his people, "And they have said, 'You shall not leave your gods, nor shall you leave *Wadd, nor Suwa', nor Yaghuth, nor Ya'uq, nor Nasr.*"² These were idols worshipped instead of Allaah, for that reason when Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, sent Noah (عليه السلام)³ to his people he ordered them to worship Allaah alone.

So, 'None has the right to be worshiped ...' is a negation of the false deities which are present. '... except Allaah,' is an affirmation of the existence of the Truth, i.e., Allaah the Blessed and Most High.

So there are two existences. It is not possible for a Muslim who, firstly, understands his Islaam and who, secondly, believes that Allaah created him, not to affirm two [separate] existents.

The scholars of Tawheed refer to the First Existent, i.e., that of the Creator the Most High, He exists in His Essence, i.e., is eternal, having no beginning. So His existence is termed as being the necessarily existent [*Waajibul-Wujood*].

As for the other existent then it is [called] the contingent or possible existent which is mankind and all creation. Allaah the Mighty and Majestic said to it, 'Be!' And it was. So it was preceded by nonexistence in contrast to the existence of Allaah the Mighty and Majestic—for He is the First having no beginning, as you all know.

Thus, when a heedless Muslim says that Allaah is present in all that exists he will intend one of two things by it, and they are totally contradictory: the true existent, i.e., Allaah, and the possible existent, i.e., the creation. If he intends this meaning, then he has fallen into a creed other than *wahdatul-wujood*, i.e., [he has fallen into] *hulool* [divine indwelling].

You know, for example, that some Islaamic groups believe that Allaah enters/dwells within certain esteemed—according to them—personalities.

You will see these Alawites or Ismailees for example, maybe you have read a lot about the Ismailees whose leader is the Aga Khan, every year he would be weighed in gold in America.

² Soorah Nooh [71:23]

³ (عليه السلام) (alaih-salaam) Peace be upon him

The extremist Soofees and the Unity of Being [Wahdatul-Wujood]

So they believe that the one worshipped transmigrates into him, indwells in him; this is called *hulool*. It is less than *wahdatul-wujood* which we just spoke about.

Wahdatul-Wujood is referring to something which cannot be separated one from the other, in *hulool* Allaah is separate and distinct from His creation as the scholars say but, according to them [i.e., the extremist Soofees] obviously, He has indwelled and transmigrated into a person.

So when this person who says that Allaah is present in all that exists means that there are two existents, then that means that one of them entered the other, instead of entering a person He entered the entire universe. This, of course, is disbelief and absolutely no Muslim doubts that it is.

And if by [the statement], 'Allaah is present in all that exists,' he intends the first meaning, i.e., there is no Creator or created, there is only one thing, then this disbelief is much more severe.

You see these Muslims who fast and pray along with us and we pray behind them etc., if you were to say to one of them, "[Your statement that] Allaah is present in all that exists,' does it mean one of these two meanings?! Does it mean the total unity of existence that the Soofees refer to, i.e., that there is no Creator or created, or does it refer to indwelling [*hulool*], i.e., that Allaah created the creation then entered it?'—I do not think that a Muslim can believe such a creed as either of these.

So, why do you use this statement? Why don't you emulate the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)⁴ who said, 'None of you should say, 'My soul has become evil [*khabuthat*],' but he should say, 'My soul has become remorseless [*laqisat*].' The meaning of [the Arabic word], '*khabuthat*' is the same as '*laqisat*,' '*laqisat*' means '*khabuthat*,' but the Prophet wanted us to talk about ourselves with kind words even though the meaning is the same.

So what is wrong with us? When we talk about our Lord the Blessed and Most High it is not allowed for us to say a word which can give an impression of disbelief or misguidance.

In reality, when such topics are discussed and most of the people present take heed [of the point being made], as though some of them had hitherto been in heedlessness, some of them will say, 'We don't mean that Allaah the Blessed and Most High has entered all of His Creation Himself,' and we didn't say that they did intend that, for if they had—and this is another topic—it would be disbelief, but the point being discussed now is about refining the terminology [being used].

So, [we ask these people], 'What do you mean by, 'Allaah is present in all that exists?' [They reply, saying,] 'His Knowledge.'

How beautiful!

Without doubt, Allaah has encompassed all things in His Knowledge, He has encompassed all things, the Blessed and Most High—but the wording used is incorrect.

You want to talk about Allaah's Knowledge, then say, 'Allaah surrounds (comprehends) all things in (His) Knowledge.'⁵ A text from the Noble Qur'aan [itself], 'Allaah surrounds (comprehends) all things in (His) Knowledge.' [Say], 'Not a secret in the earth or the heavens is hidden from Him.' [But] don't say that Allaah, the One who is worshipped and possesses every characteristic of perfection and Who is free

⁴ (صلى الله عليه وسلم) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him

⁵ Soorah Talaq [65:12]

The extremist Soofees and the Unity of Being [Wahdatul-Wujood]

from every shortcoming—don't say that, 'Allaah is everywhere,' [or] 'Allaah is present in all that exists,' instead say, **'He surrounds (comprehends) all things in (His) Knowledge.'**

So this discussion [that we're having] is concerning refining such wording—so clarify what you mean.

From the goals that the Legislator laid down is a refinement of the terminology used, so when referring to Allaah's Knowledge, instead of us saying, 'Allaah is present in all that exists ... Allaah is present everywhere,' we should say, **'Allaah surrounds (comprehends) all things in (His) Knowledge,'** because the first expression, i.e., 'Allaah is present in all that exists,' is connected to the 'Aqeedah of the extremist Soofees who say, 'There is no He but He,' so [according to them] there is no [distinction between] Creator or created, as one of them said:

*When the Magians worshipped the fire
They worshipped nothing but the One, the Irresistible Subduer [i.e., Allaah]*

Because [according to these people] Paradise, the Fire, the Creator, the creation, all of these things have no reality, and in summary [they say], 'There is no He but He,' they say, 'Everything that you see with your very eye is Allaah!'

Thus it does not befit a Muslim to say a word which he will be compelled to explain afterwards. [So] make a clear statement—and there is nothing clearer than the Qur'aan, **'Allaah surrounds (comprehends) all things in (His) Knowledge.'**

As for you saying a sentence and then saying after it [having being compelled to explain it], 'By Allaah! I mean such and such ...' then [in answer to this] the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said ... and this was part of his disciplining us and teaching us manners, manners which if we followed we would have succeeded, [he said], **'Do not say something which you have to make an excuse for before the people.'**⁶

And in another shorter narration there occurs, **'Beware of that which you must seek an excuse from.'**

So don't say, 'Allaah is present in all that exists, Allaah is present in all that exists,' because you will face many objections and much criticism which you will have no way of answering.

It will be said to you, 'The place which a Muslim is forced to go to two or three times a day, a place which he wishes he wouldn't have to enter, is your Lord there too?' Likewise, with [places such as] sewers etc., a Muslim does not say this.

So take back this statement of yours. Do not say it.

This is complicated, so what should we believe and what should we say? [What should we say] instead of, 'Allaah is everywhere?' Namely, when we speak about the One who is worshipped Himself, i.e., Allaah, [which is] the Name of Supreme Greatness [*Ismul-Jalaalah*], known amongst all Muslims, [what should we say?]

We know that the saying of some of them that 'Allaah is everywhere,' is a mistake and that what is meant is His Knowledge, so we say [to these people]: when referring to Divine Knowledge let your wording be correct, say, **'Allaah surrounds (comprehends) all things in (His) Knowledge.'**

⁶ Compiler's note: Reported in *Saheeh al-Jaami'* no., 742 with the wording, 'And do not say something which you have to seek an excuse from ...'

The extremist Soofees and the Unity of Being [Wahdatul-Wujood]

But when we speak about Allaah the Mighty and Majestic, about the Divine *Dhaat* what should we say?

It has been reported from one of the Salaf, Abdullaah ibn al-Mubaarak (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ), who is from the major Shaykhs of the Imaam of the Sunnah, Imaam Ahmad (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ), ... he said in a statement which gathered and included [a summary of the topic at hand], he said, 'Allaah the Blessed and Most High is above His Throne in His Essence [*bi dhaatih*]. Separate and distinct from His Creation. And He is with them in His Knowledge.'

The previous discussion [that], 'Allaah surrounds (comprehends) all things in (His) Knowledge,' is an explanation of this last sentence, 'And He is with them in His Knowledge.'

But at the beginning of this statement [of Ibn al-Mubaarak (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)] he spoke about the Diving *Dhaat*, he said that Allaah the Blessed and Most High is above His Throne in His Essence [*Dhaat*], he based this statement upon many aayahs from the noble Qur'aan, [such as], 'The Most Gracious rose over the [Mighty] Throne [in a manner that suits His Majesty],'⁷ 'To Him ascend (all) the goodly words, and the righteous deeds exalt it (the goodly words i.e., the goodly words are not accepted by Allaah unless and until they are followed by good deeds),'⁸

And in the famous hadeeth, 'Have mercy on those on earth and the One above the Heavens will have mercy on you,' it is as though this hadeeth is an excerpt from His Saying, the Blessed and Most High, 'Do you feel secure that He, Who is over the heaven (Allaah), will not cause the earth to sink with you, then behold it shakes (as in an earthquake)? Or do you feel secure that He, Who is over the heaven (Allaah), will not send against you a violent whirlwind? Then you shall know how (terrible) has been My Warning?'⁹ Imaam Abdullaah ibn al-Mubaarak (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ), the Shaikh of Imaam Ahmad (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ), is expressing [the meaning of] these aayahs [quoted above] and others [in that statement of his].

The Haafidh of Damascus, adh-Dhahabee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ), collected such statements in a book particular to this topic, which is printed and is called 'The Ascendancy of the Most High, the Oft-Forgiving' [*Al-Uluww lil-Aliyyil-Ghaffaar*]. In this book, he collected those aayahs which talk about this characteristic of the Divine *Dhaat*, i.e., the characteristic of being totally and absolutely above all creation.

The aayahs, hadeeths, sayings of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم)¹⁰, narrations from the Salaf, amongst whom are the four Imaams, [which adh-Dhahabee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) collected in that book] all talk about what Abdullaah ibn al-Mubaarak (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) gathered in that one sentence, 'Allaah the Blessed and Most High is above His Throne in His Essence, separate and distinct from His Creation ...' so he nullified the belief of indwelling [*hulool*], Allaah being the One in no need of any of His Creation.

But this ascendancy which it is not possible for the human intellect to grasp or imagine does not mean that any secret is hidden from Him, Abdullaah ibn al-Mubaarak (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said, 'And He is with them in His Knowledge.'

So this brief sentence has collected [the meaning contained in] tens of aayahs and hadeeths and sayings from the Salaf, so that the creed of the Muslim can be correct and far removed from that of 'the Unity of Existence' [Wahdatul-Wujood] and far removed from [believing in] 'indwelling' [*hulool*] which some of the misguided sects affirm.

⁷ Soorah Taa Haa [20:5]

⁸ Faatir [35:10]

⁹ Soorah Mulk [67:16-17]

¹⁰ (رضي الله عنهم) (rad iyallahu 'anhum) May Allaah be pleased with them

The extremist Soofees and the Unity of Being [Wahdatul-Wujood]

Allaah the Blessed and Most High is above His Throne in His Essence, separate and distinct from His Creation and He is with them in His Knowledge.¹¹

¹¹ Al-Hudaa wan-Noor, 69.