

Seyed Amir Hossein Asghari

From Text to Transcendence: Exploring Khwāja Khurd's '*Risāla-yi Nūr-i Waḥdat*' and Its Influence on Shia Sufism

This study delves into "*Risāla-yi Nūr-i Waḥdat*" (Treatise of the Light of Oneness) by Khwāja Khurd (b. 1010/1601), a seminal work in the Naqshbandi Sufi tradition that has also been influential in the Sufi School of Najaf within the Shia Seminary. Renowned for its eloquent yet accessible language, Khurd's treatise advocates the Akbarian doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* (Unity of Being) over Sirhindī's *Waḥdat al-Shuhūd*.

A central tenet of the Sufi School of Najaf is the understanding of self-knowledge as the gateway to the Gnosis of God. Khurd's treatise deeply explores this concept, suggesting that the journey (*Suluk*) to recognizing the Real Being in the universe is through understanding the self, which is inherently intertwined with the Divine. Through his poetic language, Khurd captures the essence of this transformative realization, offering insights into the relationship between lover and beloved, and their union in the divine context.

Under the influence of figures like Sayyid 'Alī Qāḍī Ṭabāṭabā'ī (1866-1947) and 'Allāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī (1321/1904-1402/1981), the Sufi School of Najaf has integrated Khurd's treatise into its spiritual pedagogy. This work serves as one of the foundational texts for spiritual development, emphasizing meditation, memorisation, and the internalization of its teachings. It guides disciples in practices such as *Muraqabah* (meditation), *Khalwah* (seclusion), and *Arba'in* (the forty-day spiritual retreat), facilitating their journey in embracing the concept of Unity and transcending the self within the framework of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*.

Finally, this paper examines the role of "*Risāla-yi Nūr-i Waḥdat*" in the Sufi School of Najaf, its impact on the spiritual formation of practitioners, and its broader implications in expanding the Akbarian doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* in the Shia Irfān.

Keywords: *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, Khwāja Khurd, 'Alī Qāḍī, Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Shia Irfān, Sufi School of Najaf



Seyed Amir Hossein Asghari

Baylor University

Seyed Amir Hossein Asghari is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Baylor University, focusing on interreligious understanding and the Islamic Intellectual tradition, notably Sufism and Shiism. His postdoctoral project involves a collaboration with Dr. Paul Martens on "Natural Law: Islamic and Christian Approaches." Also serving as a Senior Fellow at the Center for the Study of the Middle East at Indiana University, where he earned his Ph.D., Asghari's upcoming academic publication, "Scholars and Mystics," examines the dialogue between philosophy and Sufism in Shia Seminary.