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Ibn Arabian notion of the Unity of Being: its Incompatibility with the emanationist Notion of God and the Lack of Distinction between God and the World

The notion of the unity of being and its self-manifestation as elaborated upon by Mahmood Dawud al-Qaysari, the illustrious interpreter of Ibn Arabi, assumes on the one hand an essential state of hiddenness and unknowableness of the ipseity whilst on the other, it permeates all being. Allah as the epiphanic self-recognition of the ipseity is the fullest expression of the ipseity to itself and is a source of all manifestations in forms of the unending names of Allah. However Allah as the fullest expression of the ipseity is curtailed to the domain of what the ipseity conceives of itself in relation to what it wishes to reveal of itself as God. Thus ipseity is simply is-ness whereas God is is-ness in manifestation.

Accordingly the name Allah is simultaneously a designation of the unknowable ipseity and of God who is the author of the world: its beginning and end, the apparent and its hidden. Therefore there is a distinction between the unknowable ipseity termed Allah and its self-recognition as Allah. The ipseity qua itself is beyond the notion of God whereas the Ipseity through the process of self-revelations and descents from the rank of Allah acquires the meaning of being God.

Through this distinction it becomes clear that the unity of being from the perspective of the ipseity is beyond the notion of God and does not recognise God-world distinction; it simply is all things and beyond all things. The distinction between God and the world only arises through a relationship that exists between Allah and the world which is in need of being governed (*ma'luh*).

This paper will explore how the lack of nuance between Allah depicting the Absolutely unknowable ipseity and Allah as the manifester of the ipseity within the emanationist scheme has led to ambiguity and conflation between descriptions of the Author of the world and the Absolutely unknowable in the thoughts of likes of Sadra. Thus at times the arguments from contingency to prove the Necessary being simply lead to the notion of Allah as God but not Allah as the ipseity which does not allow for any distinction. Similarly the idea of the proximity through emanation of the first intellect with Allah and the distance of prim-matter from Allah whilst maintaining that all are His reflections equally at once beyond the consideration of time, place and causality fails to clarify that proximity and distance is in relation to Allah as God and lack of distance and proximity is in relation to Allah as the hidden ipseity.

Additionally this distinction will be used to identify the differing ranks of God mentioned within the Quran and the spiritual literature of the Prophet and the Imams through the variety of functions and descriptions of God.



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