

Alireza Asghari

A Safavid Philosopher's Treatise on Oneness Uncovered: Lesser-Known Manuscripts on *Wahdat al-Wujūd*

The concept of the Oneness of Being evolved from the Timurid era into a fully formalized doctrine within the Shia world. In the Safavid era, prominent Shia scholars such as Dashtaki family, Sheikh Bahai (d. 1621), and Feiz Kashani (d. 1680), who held the position of Sheikh al-Islam in the Safavid government, championed this belief. This doctrine gained prevalence in the social fabric and public discourse to the extent that, during the Safavid period, it became a distinctive feature of Shia Islam in contrast to the Ottoman Sunnis, emphasizing the belief in the personal unity of existence. Sunni critiques of Shia during the Ottoman era often underscored the Shia emphasis on the unity of existence among Shia believers.

Ali Qoli Qarachaghay Khan (d. after 1097/1718) was a philosopher of the Safavid era, playing a prominent role in the realms of philosophy and mysticism. He left behind a considerable body of work, the majority of which exists in manuscript form and remains unexplored. Under the guidance of scholars in Isfahan, including Agha Hossein Khansari (d. 1099/1687) and Shamsa Gilani (d. 1064/1653), he delved into the study of wisdom, philosophy, and mysticism, acquiring knowledge of tradition from the very inception of his intellectual journey.

He authored a treatise on the Oneness of Being titled: "Treatise on Unity, Identity, and the True Essence of Singularization, the Manifestation, and the Origin of the Abstract Concept of Identity and Authentic Personality in the Sacred Essence, following the path of the prophets and divine sages", in Persian. A Persian version of this manuscript is available in the central library of the University of Tehran.

In this article, our focus will be on editing the text, translating, and researching the content of this treatise.



Alireza Asghari University of Leiden

Alireza Asghari is a PhD candidate at the University of Leiden researching divine knowledge and the Avicennan theory of representation in Islamic-Arabic metaphysics, with a focus on the writings of Mullā Shamsā Gīlānī (d. 1631). In conjunction with his doctoral studies, he has also prepared critical editions of philosophical writings on metaphysics and the philosophy of cosmology by looking at the unpublished works of Mullā Muḥsin Fayd Kāshānī and Mullā Shamsā Gīlānī. He has also worked with manuscripts in qur'anic studies especially in the field of exegesis.