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The Wish to Be Known: An Existential Reading of Soul and Knowledge in Akbarian and Ṣadrian Thought

Ma'rifa, the gnosis at the heart of Sufi wayfaring, finds its most precise formulation in the Prophetic statement: "one who knows his soul knows his Lord." When read through the Akbarian *waḥdat al-wujūd* and Ṣadrian existential dynamism, this statement discloses not a cognitive but an ontological event: one who existentially realises his soul realises his Lord, where self-realisation is not a movement toward God but the emergence of the Divine through the realising subject. This paper is a constructive philosophical argument rather than a historical exposition: Ibn 'Arabī, read through his own texts and the commentarial tradition of Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, and Mullā Ṣadrā serve as philosophical interlocutors, each doing work the other cannot do alone, within the governing context of the athar of the Hidden Treasure: "I was a Hidden Treasure and wished to be known, and so I created creation that I might be known."

Drawing on Qayṣarī's systematic articulation, the paper traces the eternal yearning from Ipseity (*huwiyya*) as absolute hidden awareness, through undifferentiated unity (*aḥadiyya*) where all divine beauty lies undistinguished, to differentiated unity (*wāḥidiyya*) where the *a'yān thābita* emerge as the intelligible self-determinations of divine possibility — all embedded within the single field of outpoured being (*wujūd munbasit*).

Within this field the human soul awakens as simple awareness mirroring Ipseity, contracts through embodiment into an egoic identity, yet simultaneously carries a deeper yearning toward its absolute ground. The paper's central thesis follows: each being's self-awareness is essentially the Absolute's self-awareness and only accidentally its own — such that the soul's interior dividedness marks not merely a moral struggle but the commencement of divine self-knowing through a locus of genuine otherness.

From this tension arises the soul's twin trajectory. The inward reversion through *tazkiya*, *dhikr*, and *fanā'*, traversing *qalb*, *lubb*, and *sirr* toward the station of the *insān kāmil*, is where the Akbarian framework supplies the structure of *kashf* and *tajallī* by which divine beauty is disclosed through the purified locus. The simultaneous outward becoming through *ḥaraka jawhariyya* and *ittiḥād al-āqil wa-l-ma'qūl*, is where Ṣadrā grounds ordinary cognition and transformative *kashf* within the same ontological structure. What distinguishes the *insān kāmil* whose egoic identity and hence the duality of the knower and the known is effaced from the Absolute is not the essential character of the knowing but its scope of absoluteness and restriction alone.

Together these movements constitute the ontological basis of Sufi epistemology: knowledge as the experiential intensification of self-awareness through which the Hidden Treasure knows itself through its human mirror — the primordial wish, at last fulfilled.



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