



The Parable Of Man

Dr. Ashiq Hussain Mir

Abstract:

This study examines the Sufi concept of unity of existence, emphasizing that while all creation reflects and depends on God, a fundamental distinction remains; God is eternal and unchanging, while creatures are transient and contingent. The metaphor of the bubble illustrates the fragile, illusory self—its existence relies entirely on Divine sustenance (symbolized by water), yet it never becomes the water itself. Similarly, the droplet embodies the human soul, sustained by the ocean (God), yet distinct from it; annihilation of the ego dissolves the illusion of separateness, but does not erase the Creator-creature divide. This poem combines natural imagery and spatial metaphors to construct a Sufi worldview: human life, like a bubble, is eternally anchored in the Divine Ocean. Through contemplation and remembrance, the soul engages in a dynamic, joyful dance of dependence, embodying both fragility and flexibility in its spiritual journey. A bubble is formed when the lover (God) blows water. It exists because of water, but water is not itself. Humans are like bubbles—created by God, sustained by Him, and ultimately returning to Him. But just as a bubble is not water, so too are humans not God. This reflects unity of existence, where creation is united in dependence with God, but identity is separate. In poem, Wheel/Whirlpool symbolizes efforts for sanctification of soul and Spiritual growth requires prayer, meditation, and good deeds (such as turning the water wheel). Then, a devotee is able to drink Wine which is Divine love or knowledge (gnosis). To drink it means to experience the presence of God and Wine Server represents God or the spiritual leader who drinks this wine. The soul becomes "intoxicated" due to gnosis, losing attachment to the material world. In Sufism, it does not matter how attached a devotee may be to the God, there remains a difference of God and servant. This emphasizes the unity of being, a fundamental idea. Sufi teachings clarify that creation is a shadow ظل or manifestation تجلی of God's attributes, not His essence—like waves arising from the ocean, they depend on it but remain distinct. Even in unity, God's transcendence persists: "You are the entire ocean in a drop" (Rumi) paradoxically affirms Divine immanence within the soul while upholding the eternal distinction between the Infinite and the finite. Thus, Unity harmonizes unity and difference: creatures exist through God, not as God, and the annihilation of the ego reveals not identity with the Divine but humble recognition of perpetual dependence.

Key words: Unity of existence, God, bubble, water, Whirlpool, self, wine and Wine Server etc.

Introduction:

Unity is a philosophical concept that is derived from the test of logic, which is a specific part of *Ibn Arabi's* philosophy. Where the true existence is God and the rest of creation is the manifestation of this existence. God's existence is contained in the entire universe, every particle of which is the manifestation of God. The purpose of this concept is to gain knowledge of the unity of God and to recognize this realization in the form of a concept even in the creation that in it there is no structural difference between the creation and the Creator. In it, everything is a manifestation of God and man should try to find and recognize its origin. Unfortunately, a number of exoteric scholars have considered this concept to be close to "pantheism" (the presence of God in creation), although prominent sufis speak of it as a manifestation of the attributes of God, and not as an alternative to God or something similar to Him. God is the Creator and there are creations besides God. Unfortunately, Due to our distorted understanding, the impression has been established in our minds that many Sufi scholars, such as *Ibn 'Arabī* and his followers, who have inferred the concept of unity from the Quranic verses which emphasizes Divine omnipresence and oneness, have been unfortunately criticized in some way or other allow the concept of unity of the essence of God with creation! Rather, they interpret such verses metaphysically, asserting that all existence is a manifestation of the Divine Reality, with creation reflecting God's attributes and nothing truly existing apart from Him.

This framework underscores a non-dual understanding of existence, where multiplicity dissolves into the singular essence of the Absolute. God says in the Quran:

إِذْ رَا نَارًا فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي أَنْسَتُ نَارًا لَعَلَى أَنْتُكُمْ مَتَّهَا بِقَنْبِسٍ أَوْ أَجْدُ عَلَى النَّارِ بُدْدَى فَلَمَّا أَتَهَا نُودِيَ يُمُوسِي . إِنِّي أَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاحْلُمْ تَعْلِيَكَ إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طَوَّيْ .

"When Musa (Moses) saw a fire (on his way back to Egypt from Madyan), he said to his family: 'Stay here. I have seen a fire (or I have perceived a flash of love and cordiality in a fire). Perhaps I may bring a brand from it for you (also), or I find at that fire the guidance (which I am searching for). So when he reached that (fire), a call was made: 'O Musa (Moses) Certainly, I am your Lord, so take off your shoes. Verily, you are in the sacred valley of Tuwa.'"¹

Farid-ud-din Attar inferred from this verse that if God could speak through a burning bush, declaring His divinity, why condemn Sufis like Hussain ibn Mansoor who express Divine unity? Just as the fire held God's voice, a sincere heart can reflect His presence. Attar questioned the hypocrisy: why accept God in a tree but deny His light in those who dissolve in Him? The story shows God's voice transcends forms—so why limits Truth to human judgments?

Main Poem: *Mehmood Gami* (1765–1855) was a revered Kashmiri Sufi poet, celebrated for his contributions to Kashmiri literature and Sufi mysticism. He prominent figure in this tradition, known for its asceticism and harmony with nature. He composed poetry in the Kashmiri vernacular, making Sufi themes of divine love and spiritual yearning accessible to local audiences. His works, blending mystical allegory with cultural nuances, often employed metaphors of earthly love to express spiritual devotion. *Mehmood*'s legacy endures through his influence on Kashmiri culture and his role in preserving the region's linguistic heritage, with his verses still cherished in Sufi musical traditions. The parable of Man is his luminous master piece of nine stanzas, this poem traces the soul's contemplative journey toward divine unity, beginning with *fikr* (thought and reflection) and remembrance of God—the sacred acts of turning inward to seek the infinite. Each stanza unfolds as a meditation on merging with the Divine, threading through paradoxes of longing and surrender, where the self dissolves into the radiance of the Sun, a metaphor for God's boundless presence. Yet, even as the poem ascends toward union, it grapples with the mortal anxiety of dissolution. This poem of *Mehmood Gami* talks about Sufi concept that Jins and humans have been created for the purpose of worship, which implies gnosis of God. He has a destiny is to go through all the stages that hinders and deviates him from the God. Creation is not separate from the Divine but sustained by it, like a droplet (individual soul) dependent on the ocean (God). Bubble (حباب) represents the fleeting and illusory ego. Just as a bubble exists only through water, the human self survives through Divine sustenance. The droplet symbolizes the soul's fragility; the ocean embodies absolute reality. Without the ocean, the droplet holds no essence—mirroring the soul's reliance on God, transcends the illusion of separateness. Spiritual awakening involves dissolving the ego (bubble) to recognize one's existence as a reflection of the Divine. In Sufi poetry, water signifies Divine essence, which is the source of life and consciousness. As the river merges into ocean, likely the soul also seeks union with God. It also emphasizes Spiritual survival depends on Divine grace, akin to water sustaining life. Unfortunately, critics conflate unity with pantheism, but Sufis like *Ibn Arabi* clarify that creation is a ظل (shadow) or (manifestation) of God's attributes, not God Himself. The droplet coexists with the ocean but does not become it. The path involves shedding the ego to realize unity with the Divine. In summary, the poetry of unity guides seekers to transcend material illusions, recognize their Divine origin, and embrace a harmonious existence sustained by the Infinite.

First Stanza: This Stanza gives the example of "drawing water from a well", where the "Arhat" (the wheel that draws water) is likened to the self. And by pulling it with a rope (piety), the water of knowledge (gnosis) is obtained. Here, the lowering of the self and adopting piety means turning towards the Divine essence, which in this philosophy is similar to the concept of "*fana fi Allah*". The last line of each stanza makes clear the mortal status of man by likening him to a bubble of water. In unity of existence, man must eliminate his individual identity (*anā*) and attain unity with God. This is the meaning of the cessation of self-identity. Sufis like *Ibn Arabi* called it the unity of existence, where the creature loses its separate status and merges with the Creator. The "rope of piety" in the stanza refers to this process, where knowledge is achieved by lowering the self, but here is no claim to unity with the Divine essence. It describes worldly pleasures as dreams to illustrate their impermanence. As in Islamic teachings, the purpose of man is to prepare for the Hereafter and to please God, not to achieve temporary pleasures. Sufis, who support the unity with God, also consider detachment from worldly relationships as a condition for spiritual progress. In the example of drawing water from a well, knowledge is likened to water, which can only be obtained

through piety and asceticism. For Sufis, this practice consists of self-struggle, such as fasting, remembrance, and seclusion. This stanza points to the philosophy of unity of existence, where man's effort leads to achieving unity with God. However, in the context of Islamic belief, this concept is controversial, because most scholars consider it to be against monotheism. But the truth is that scholars are unable to understand unity of existence. On the other hand, the theory of unity of witnesses is closer to Islamic teachings, where knowledge is achieved by recognizing the separate status of the Creator and the creation. The central point of both philosophies is that man must overcome his physical desires and journey towards spiritual heights about which God says in the Quran:

سُرِّيهِمْ أَيْتَنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِيْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوْ لَمْ يَكُنْ بِرِّبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ -

"We will soon show them Our signs all around the world and in their own selves, until it dawns on them that indeed this is the truth. Is your Lord not Sufficient (to confirm your veracity), for He alone is (also) witness to everything"?²

Second Stanza: It mentions two types of people: First, The seeker is committed to his goal (identifying God and oneness with Him). According to unity of existence, his commitment to the "book" refers to the Holy book of the universe, which is the manifestation of God's attributes. These people go beyond the outward (material world) and recognize the inward (true existence). Secondly, the heedless is lost in the play and entertainment (spectacles and worldly pleasures). These are confused in the multiplicity (different forms of the world) and forget the reality of oneness. In the line, the reality of man is described as "a bubble of water". In terms of the unity of existence, this simile points to the mortality of man and his true identity (oneness with God). Just as a bubble rises from water and dissolves in water, so too man's apparent existence is temporary, and his true reality is to perish in the essence of God. Here, the "bubble" is a symbol of individuality (egotism), which exists temporarily, but is actually part of the ocean (God). In this verse, the "book" is seen as the word of God (the Quran) in every letter of which the attributes of God are manifested. The seekers understand the inner meaning of this book and see the manifestation of God in everything, while the heedless are limited to only the external words (the material world). It speaks of consciousness, which consists of the knowledge (mysticism) of the unity of existence. When a person understands that his existence is as impermanent as a bubble and dependent on the essence of God, he breaks through the veil of heedlessness and reaches the destination of annihilation in God. In conclusion, I will say that the perspective of unity and multiplicity: I am the heedless one who is entangled in the "multiplicity" (the different forms of the world), while the seeker is in search of "oneness" (the essence of God). Then, moving on to the concept of annihilation and survival, the water bubble is a symbol of annihilation (annihilation in God), that is, the cessation of one's own existence and merging with God (in metaphorical sense). This verse highlights the basic principles of Unity—existential unity with God, the concept of annihilation, and the unity of the external and the internal. Seekers strive to achieve this unity, while the heedless are unaware of the fact that their existence is like a temporary bubble, with no permanent status. In the second line, the connection with the book as mentioned in *Sura an-naml* (the Ants) in the context of the Prophet Solomon is related with the acquisition of esoteric knowledge.³ It is more elaborate in *Sura al-kahf* (the Cave) which leads man to the unity of the external and the internal. Three transcendental incidents took place in the observation of Hazrat Musā, and the doer is the same person "Khidr", but one thing is creating confusion in the minds of people that after performing these activities, why Hazrat Khidr used three types of pronouns for himself. The answer is simple that *Awliya* at the initial stage of *wilāyah* have a feeling of his self by using "فَأَرَدْتُ" [so I decided]⁴, secondly (فَأَرَدْنَا) [So we intended]⁵, It is a stage of *fanāiyat* and thirdly (فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ) [So your Lord willed].⁶ A prestigious stage of "baqā", here he is not conscious about his self, but engrossed in Almighty's Divine self, as is evident from the event of *Hussain bin Mansūr hallāj*.

Third Stanza: The central concept of Unity is the wine of knowledge and unity with the Divine essence. "Drinkers of the wine of knowledge" refers to those Sufis and mystics who find the truth of their existence (i.e., unity with God). This wine is actually the symbol of "Divine love", which takes those who drink it beyond outward worship to reach the inner reality. The mystic is the one who sees God in everything; because he has come to know that every existence is His existence. Here, "the revelation of secrets and realities" refers to the inner light that the mystic receives when he annihilates his individuality (inna) and

transforms it into unity with God (*baqi*). In this stanza, *Zahid* is motivated by the desire for outward acts of worship, reward and paradise. His aim is external activity of worship, but he remains unaware of the inner goal of it (i.e., oneness with God). On the other hand, *Arif* is one who considers worship as a means to reach the Divine essence. For him, the aim of worship is not reward, but "*fana fi Allah*" (annihilation of one's ego in God). The stanza says that the ascetic's illusions and thoughts do not even include the mysteries that are revealed to the *Arif*. This difference reflects the principle of unity which has two levels, outward and inward. The poet also talks about that "Lovers do not fear punishment." According to the philosophy of unity of existence, in the eyes of the lover (*Arif*), even punishment or trials are an expression of God's love. He believes that every pain brings him closer to God. In fact, even punishment for the lover is a gift of his love, because he knows that everything comes from Him. Even, if the lover is sent to hell, as mentioned in the exegesis of the verse of *Baqarah* in *Musnad Abu Yala* about lovers of God, who considers themselves this a reflection of his beloved's self. This concept also matches the Quranic philosophy of (Neither shall they fear, nor shall they grieve). At the end of this stanza, it is said: "Man is from a drop of water, this drop must join the river to save his self." which symbolizes the limited and mortal status of man. While, the River is the infinite reality of the Divine Essence. According to unity of existence, as long as the drop (man) insists on his individuality, he is in fear of annihilation, but when he merges with the River (God), his status becomes infinite. This is the Sufi concept of "annihilation in God and survival in God." Some Islamic scholars (such as *Mujaddid alif-thani*) disagree on whether "merging in the river" is a true union with God or just a spiritual closeness. According to *Wahdat al-Shahud* (unity of witness), man does not perish in God, but perishes in His commands. The Proponents of unity say that "merging in the River" is a metaphor, which does not mean that man becomes God, but rather becomes subject to His will. Therefore, unity encompasses all those concepts that focus on "love, knowledge, and annihilation". According to him, man's salvation is not possible, until he abandons his limited identity and attains unity with the infinite reality (the Divine essence).

Fourth Stanza: According to the Oneness of Being, love is the fundamental force that moves the universe. The poet says, "Because of love, the lover blew on a drop of water," which actually means "giving into existence" or "manifesting." The lover (God) gives existence to the drop (the human soul) because of His love. But, since the drop tries to return to the river (the Divine essence) even after being separated from it, this is the central principle of every Sufi philosophy that everything returns to its origin. When the drop merges into the river, the question is raised in the stanza that who died and who remained? The individuality of the drop (man) is destroyed. Here, "dying" is actually "the cessation of that (self), which is *Fana fi Allah*. On the other hand, the reality of the drop survives in the river (the Divine essence). That is, the true status of man lies in unity with God, which is *baqa billah*. This is the place where all concepts of "self" ends and only "absolute reality" remain. At the end of the stanza, it is said: "The origin of man is said to be from a drop of water. The symbol of the drop is the material existence of man, his limitation, and perishes ability. The symbol of the river is the infinity and eternity of the Divine essence.

"صَبْعَةُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنْ مِنَ اللَّهِ صَبْعَةً ۖ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ عَبْدُونَ".

"(Say that we have taken on the colour from) Allah's own colour, and whose colour is better than Allah's? And we worship Him alone."⁷

According to the unity of existence, the origin of man is not in the "drop" that perishes, but in the "river" that has always existed and will always exist. The Holy Quran says: "Everything on it will perish, and only the Face of your Lord will remain."

"وَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا أَخَرَ ۚ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ بِالِّكْ أَلَّا وَجْهَهُ ۖ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ".

"And never worship any other (self-made) god besides Allah. None has the right to be worshipped except He. Everything has to perish but He. His is the command and to Him you (all) will be returned."⁸

The verse underscores Allah's absolute oneness and the transient nature of creation, implying that all existence is fundamentally dependent on His eternal, unchanging reality. By stating "Everything has to perish but He" and affirming His sole authority, it aligns with the concept of unity of existence, suggesting that creation is not separate from God, but a fleeting manifestation of His Divine attributes and will. Since, nothing exists independently or permanently except Him, all perceived multiplicity and temporal forms ultimately dissolve into His singular, everlasting essence, reflecting the idea that creation is a shadow of His boundless presence, sustained by His command and destined to return to Him. (Everything is destined to perish, and only the Face of your Lord will remain). This verse also points to this reality. According to the Oneness of Being, when a drop merges into a river, the separation of "I" and "You" ends. Therefore, the question asked in the passage "Who died and who remained?" is actually a philosophical challenge. The answer is: "I" died: "The limited self of man was destroyed." "You" remained: "The infinite Self of God is the reality. Most scholars object to this concept, saying that if "meeting in the river" is taken literally, it is against monotheism. But according to Sufism, it is a "metaphor", which does not mean that man becomes God, but rather that he perishes in His will and attributes. For example, just as a mirror is lost in the light of the sun, but the mirror does not become the sun. In other words, it describes the profound concept of oneness of being, where there is no boundary between love, annihilation, and permanence. The origin of man is not in that "drop" that is mortal, but in that "river" that is eternal. As long as man insists on being a drop, he fears death, but when he merges with the river, he realizes that true death is separation from the river. This is the mystical truth which mystics have repeatedly discussed in their philosophies.

Fifth Stanza: The veils between man and God are actually the "invisible veils" that seem to separate the creature from the Creator. The number "seventy thousand veils" in Sufi traditions refers to the infinite obstacles, which are the delusions of man's limited intellect, sensual desires, and the material world. They mention of another seventy thousand veils within each veil indicates that even deeper mysteries lie behind each misunderstanding. In real sense, there is no real division between God and creation; these veils are only due to our own ignorance. Crossing the veils is actually equivalent to passing through 'spiritual stages'. When a person eliminates his own self (desires, pride, and ego), these veils are lifted one by one. In the stanza, 'entering the veil of God' refers to the point where the servant crosses all his limitations and reaches the 'Divine essence'. This is the point where the 'servant sees the King' (God) along with the 'Nawab' (servant). Here, 'seeing' is not with the external eye, but with 'inner knowledge', where the distinction between the Creator and the creation is eliminated. The stanza says: "Go forward, do not fear His wrath and punishment." According to the deep philosophy of Islam, when a person realizes oneness with God, the concept of fear and hope disappears for him. He knows that "anger" is also a form of love", because everything emanates from the essence of God. According to unity of existence, when the drop (man) merges with the river (God), his individuality disappears, and he becomes one with his origin (the river). This is the Sufi concept of "annihilation in God and survival in God". The stanza makes it clear that the true success of man lies in his "drop" status being annihilated in the river. Actually, meeting in the river is a metaphor, which does not mean that man becomes God. This stanza describes the profound concept of unity where man transcends all the limitations of his existence and reaches the infinite reality called "God". The act of crossing the veils is actually a journey of "death of self" and "life of truth".

Sixth Stanza: In the Quran, Hadith, Sufism, and in general 'water' is considered a symbol of life, mercy and Divine knowledge. Just as physical life is impossible without water; spiritual life is also incomplete without the mercy and guidance of God. The 'ship' is a symbol of this guidance, the system of prophet hood, or the community of the righteous that saves man from drowning in the 'sea of trial' of the world. 'Water in the ship, ship in water': This is an indication of mutual dependence and unity. A ship floats on water, but the entry of water into the ship can destroy it. Similarly, the essence of God (water) is manifested through the Holy Prophet ﷺ is like (the ship). In the essence of the Prophet ﷺ is the light, wisdom and heavenly law of God, but this manifestation is in (the shape of a ship) so that the servants can understand it. Similarly, the righteous ones are successful in keeping the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ (the boat) in their own existence (water). "God and the Prophet (peace be upon him)": The Quran says:

"مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَ الَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحْمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَهُمْ رُكُوعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَ رِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوبِهِمْ مِنْ أَثْرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التُّورَاةِ وَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَرَزَعَ أَخْرَجَ شَطْهَةً فَأَزَرَهُ فَاسْتَعْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَى عَلَى سُوقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَاعَ لِيغِيَطُ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّلِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا".

"Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah. And those with him are hard and tough against the disbelievers but kind-hearted and merciful amongst themselves. You see them excessively bowing and prostrating themselves. They simply seek Allah's grace and pleasure. Their mark is an impression of prostrations on their faces (prominent on the foreheads as light). These traits of theirs are (mentioned) in the Torah and the (same) qualities are also (described) in the Injil (the Gospel). These (Companions) are like a cultivated crop (of Our Esteemed Beloved) which (first of all) brought forth its thin shoot, then made it powerful and strong, and then it thickened and stood straight on its stalk. (And when it flourished, bloomed and danced,) it delighted and charmed the cultivators. (Allah has, likewise, made the Companions of His Beloved strong, grown up trees of faith,) so that by means of them He would inflame the hearts of the disbelievers (that burn in the jealousy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad [blessings and peace be upon him]). Those who believe and do pious works, Allah has promised them forgiveness and an immense reward."⁹

The Prophet ﷺ is the perfect manifestation of the names and attributes of God, whose water reflects the light of the sun. The Prophet ﷺ and the righteous ones": The Hadith says: "Al-Ulama' are the heirs of the Prophets" (The righteous ones keep the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ alive, whose boat is propelled by the waves of water. This chain creates a "spiritual unity" which the Quran calls the "rope of God" which according to Ibn Abbas: "the Muhammad". (al-shifa, Qadhi Ayaz Maliki). The God Says in the Quran: "And hold fast, all together, to the rope of God."¹⁰ The Quran says: "And We made from water every living thing."¹¹ Man was also created from a "drop of sperm" (a drop of water), and his survival depends on water. This material water also points to a spiritual reality: First is material level, where the drop of water symbolizes man's weakness and dependence on God. Secondly, spiritual level refers Water refers to God's mercy, knowledge, or the "light of the Prophet Hood." Just as the body dries up due to water, the soul also dies due to the remembrance of God and the love of the Prophet ﷺ. God says:

"وَ الْفَتَّ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَا الْفَتَّ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَ لِكَنَّ اللَّهَ أَلْفَتَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ".

"And He (is the One Who) awakened mutual love amongst the hearts of the (Muslims). If you had spent whatever exists in the earth, you could never have inculcated this (love) in their hearts (with all these material resources). But Allah roused that love amongst them (through a spiritual relation). Allah is indeed Almighty, Most Wise."¹²

Man is commanded to connect with this unity of God, the Prophet ﷺ, and the righteous, which is like a river: "God": the source of the river. "The Prophet ﷺ" is like the flow of the river and the righteous are the streams of the river. The poet wants that Man must add his "drop" to this river, otherwise he will dry up. This is the secret of "survival". The relationship between water and the boat is a metaphor for nature, guidance, and survival. As long as a person remains attached to the rope of God (the Prophet ﷺ, ahle-bayat and the righteous), he remains spiritually alive, otherwise he gets lost in the storms of the world. Just as life is not possible without water, similarly, spiritual life is also impossible without the light of prophecy.

Seventh Stanza: This stanza highlights the spiritual aspect of human creation. It does not mean that God has a physical form, but rather it points to man as a manifestation of the "attributes of God". For example, God's attributes of mercy, knowledge, wisdom, and creativity are seen to be manifested in man on a limited level.

"قَالَ أَبُو سَلَمَةَ قَالَ أَبُو زَيْدٍ قَتَادَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: 'مَنْ رَأَنِي فَقَدْ رَأَهُ الْحَقْ'".

"Abu Salmah said, Abu Qatadah, may Allah be pleased with him, said, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever saw me has indeed seen the Truth."¹³

The Sufis conceive of him as a "perfect man", who recognizes and manifests the Divine attributes of his being. A rose is inseparable from its fragrance, just as the relationship between a servant and the Creator is natural and essential. The fragrance is an expression of the realization of the rose, which is the means of human existence to know God. The Sufis say that as long as a man remains entangled in his external self (self), he is unable to feel the fragrance. However, when he turns to his inner self, his spiritual sensitivity awakens, and he recognizes his origin (relationship with God). In Sufi teachings, "*niqab*" refers to the material world, sensual desires, and the veils of negligence that keep a man away from his realization (closeness to God). When a servant embarks on a spiritual journey and illuminates himself with the light of knowledge, these *niqabs* are lifted one after another. Finally, at the moment of *Wisal* (meeting with God), all the veils are removed, and man sees his true nature revealed. God says in the Quran refers to as

وَإِلَهُ الْمَسْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ * فَإِنَّمَا تُوَلُّوْ فَتَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلَيْهِمْ

"And the east and the west (all) belong to Allah alone. So whichever direction you turn to, there is the presence of Allah (i.e., the essence of Allah is radiantly manifest in all directions). Surely, Allah is Infinite, All-Knowing."¹⁴

The Sufis consider this as an indication of both the outward creation and the inward realization. It reaches at the state, where man emerges from his limitations and is absorbed in the infinite. According to Sufi teachings, the creation of man is a journey: "From the outward to the inward:" from material existence (a drop of water) to spiritual realization (the ocean). "From annihilation to permanence:" to eliminate one's ego and find permanence in the presence of God. "From the veil to the separation:" to remove the veils of ignorance and meet the true Beloved (God). The purpose of this whole process is for man to recognize his "origin", which is the mirror of God's attributes. This interpretation of human existence emphasizes that our realization is not limited to the material body, but that our soul possesses a Divine essence. The purpose of our life is to recognize this essence, to connect with it, and to fulfill the purpose of our creation (worship and gnosis of God). This is the essence of the teachings of the Sufis.

Eighth Stanza: Love (especially true love or Divine love) is called a problem because it is beyond the reach of reason. Reason, due to its natural limitations, can neither fully understand the depths of love, especially the realization of spiritual love, nor can it be expressed in logical formulas. "Questioning is forbidden": Making love the subject of analysis or reasoning undermines its sanctity. It is a mystery that can be felt, not understood. Some sufi has rightly said: "Love is the ocean in which reason drowns." When reason tests love by the criterion of accounting (logic, analysis, or scientific principles), it is plunged into endless doubts and doubts. For example, reason asks: "Where is God?", "What is the source of love?", but the answers to these questions remain incomplete without the experience of love. Leaving reason behind and focusing on love means that the person should come out of the net of his mental troubles, doubts, and "crows" and "crow's nest" and enter the realm of pure feeling and faith. Reason limits man to the "external", while love descends into the depths of the "inner" and reaches the Reality (the essence of God). This is the state that the mystics call "*Fana fi Allah*" (annihilation in God). "The example of the *Kaaba*": When a person enters the *Kaaba*, he is surrounded on all sides, there is no direction left for him to turn, because he himself stands in the "center". Similarly, when a lover enters the *Kaaba* of love, the question Where is God? becomes meaningless to him. He finds his beloved (God) everywhere, as *Ibn Arabi* says: "Wherever you appear, there you are." Just as a drop of water becomes weightless and unstable after being separated from the ocean, so too man remains troubled by being separated from his true self (separation from God). The drop's joining the ocean is not annihilation, but survival. Similarly, man's connection with his origin (returning to God) is his salvation. This connection is not possible through reason, but through love, because reason maintains the difference between "you" and "you", while love erases this difference. Love is called a problem because it is a father for the intellect, but for the heart, it is the straight and true path. Just as a person entering the *Mecca* finds God everywhere, similarly the lover sees the manifestation of the Beloved in every particle of his being. God says in the Quran:

"وَ فِي أَنفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تَبَصِّرُونَ؟"

"And in your selves (as well). So do you not notice?"¹⁵

Man was created from a drop of water, and his survival is in this water (God's mercy). Therefore, abandoning the doubts of reason and following the path of love is the only way to reach reality.

Ninth Stanza: It says that I am anxious about when I will meet the sun before it is finished, despite being a small particle. This sentence of *Soz-e-Ishq* reflects his helplessness and spiritual thirst. The particle is a reflection of the limitations, farts, and physical limitations of man. Just as a particle shines in the sun but its light is not its own, so too is the existence of man a reflection of the light of God. The essence of God, who is the source of all existence, light, and survival. As long as the lover is separated from his beloved (God), his heart remains restless. This anxiety is actually the call of nature that guides us towards "the recognition of the self and its annihilation in God". A bubble of water is temporary, weightless, and empty. This is a symbol of the impermanence of the world and the mortality of man. The bubble addressing the drop is actually a sign of "self-knowledge" (recognizing its own reality). The reality of the drop is that he never "exists separately". His survival is only possible if he is reunited with the river or ocean (his origin). This phrase refers to "reunion with God", which according to the Sufis is the true purpose of life. The God says in the Quran:

"كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا قَانِ . وَيَقْعِي وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلْلِ وَالْأَكْرَامِ ."

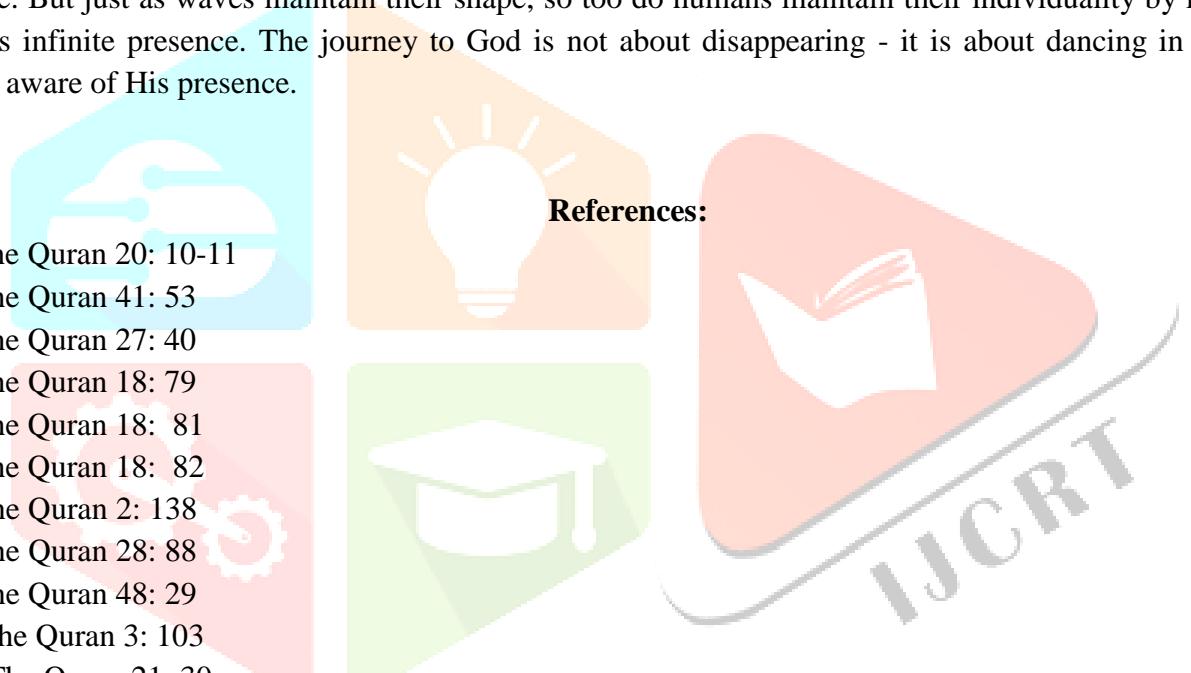
"Whoever is on the earth will perish. And the essence of your Lord, Who is the Master of glory and splendor and the Master of bounty and honor, will remain."¹⁶

When a drop of water is mixed with the ocean, it is freed from its limitations and becomes infinite. Similarly, when a person annihilates his ego and merges in the essence of God, his true existence begins. In this stanza, there is a Journey from anxiety to dissolution

1. Identification of Self: In the first stage, a person should understand that he is a drop, not an independent entity, nor the center of the universe.
2. Accepting truth: This incessant cry is actually the call of the soul, which should be understood instead of suppressed.
3. Beyond Reason: Reason does not have the ability to take the particle to the sun. Here only love can be the guide.
4. The path of separation: When a person recognizes his realization, he removes the veil of the world and disappears into you. This is the place where anxiety turns into peace. The world is a bubble of water, which will burst if it shines. Therefore, recognize the essence and do not run after perishable things. All the restlessness, anxiety, and search of man end at the point where he recognizes his reality (a drop of water) and meets his essence (the essence of God, the ocean). Just as a drop loses its identity when it meets the ocean, but finds its true identity, similarly, man also attains eternal existence only by destroying his ego. Because that is the "reunion" to which only the path of love can lead, not reason.

Conclusion: The poem relies on the paradox of the living bubble of air, which symbolizes humanity's dependence on the Divine. Just as the bubble exists in and through water — despite its apparent fragility and inconsistency — humans exist solely and exclusively through God's infinite provision. This metaphor is consistent with Sufi traditions, where the "ocean of being" represents Divine infinity, and the individual soul is a temporary but inseparable part of this cosmic unity. The bubble's admonition — "grasping the rope of thought, / pulling on the pulley of memory" — portrays spiritual discipline as mechanical tools (rope, pulley) that sustain the soul. These metaphors suggest deliberate effort: contemplation (deep contemplation) and *dhikr* (remembering the Divine, an important Sufi practice) serve as mechanisms for maintaining connection. "The wheel of the soul turns in the dance" evokes the Sufi spinning, a physical meditation that symbolizes the laying down of arms and union with the Divine. The bubble emerges from the water but maintains its distinct form, reflecting the dual state of humanity: created by God yet individual. This tension reflects a mystical theme — unity — where creation is both separate and

inseparable from the Creator. The poem resolves this paradox by emphasizing dependence: the bubble's survival in the water parallels the existence of humanity in the Divine sustenance. The recurring question—"How do you live in water?"—functions as a meditative refrain, urging readers to reflect on their existential dependence. The dialogic structure (question and answer) mimics Sufi turban dialogues, where contrasting imagery provokes deeper understanding. The fragility of the bubble illustrates human fragility, yet its permanence in the water is a symbol of eternal Divine support. It invites both humility (resigning to death) and fear (trusting in the remaining sustenance). In short, the goal is not to "become" God, but to realize that you are already connected to Him. A devotee has to think like a fish that realizes it is always in the ocean. The soul is close to God, not absent from Him. Like a bubble and water: close, yet separate. Closeness to God, not absorption. The poet propagates that human remains separate even in unity. He recognized dependence of man on God, Just as a bubble needs water, humans need God. A man can use spiritual tools (prayer, meditation) such as a water wheel or water watch to draw closer to God. A bubble comes from water and returns to it, but is not water. Similarly, humans come from God, live through Him and return but remain His creation. He emphasized on embracing Divine Love. The "wine" of God's knowledge brings joy and purpose. The poem uses everyday images (bubbles, wine) to illustrate deep Sufi thoughts. Unity teaches that everything is connected to God in the same way that waves in the ocean maintain their shape. But just as waves maintain their shape, so too do humans maintain their individuality by relying on God's infinite presence. The journey to God is not about disappearing - it is about dancing in His light, fully aware of His presence.



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