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## **EXOTERIC THEOLOGY AND ESOTERIST ISLAM IN SHAH-I-HAMADAN**

Persian and its mystical mystique is really a bundle of contradictions especially to the outsiders. Kashmir shares this inheritance of a psyche which combines polar opposites. Hamadani, who is one of the important architects of Kashmir, is a mystic par excellence who could reconcile opposites of exoteric theology with its overemphasis. On how of things, rituals and exclusivist approach and the esoterist Islam which transcends all divisions and exclusions and even law sometimes, and is anti-dogmatic non-literalist and accommodative. This is not a contradiction really; it represents catholicity of heart combined with practical sagacity, or a state where because one contains multitude and thus is forced to contradict himself. If we give due cognizance to the fact of hierarchy of existence and levels of people, we can better understand apparently contradictory personality and thought of Hamadani. We can contextualize this phenomenon by taking a few examples of Islamic History – Ibni Arabi and Abdul Qadir Jeelani, I think are two most important examples who could be read as precedents to Hamdani in their appropriation of sublime heights and depths in flights of (mystical experience with very dogmatic exclusivist uncompromising legalism of exoteric theology. Abdul Qadir of “Ganyatul Taulibeen” (Sheriet theology) and “Fatuhatul- Gaab” (keys of the unknown).



Similarly Ibni Arabi the author of "Futuhāt-ul- Hikma" and "Fasos-ul-Hikam" (Bazels of wisdom) does not appear to be one who refused to compromise in his Taqlide legalism (he strictly followed only on school of law). Shah-i-Hamadan the "Wahdatul Wajood" mystic in Ibni Arabian vein does not seem easily reconcilable with Shah-i-Hamadan the writer of "Zakherat-ul Malooq" (especially with its political thoughts) and even Hamadani – the theologian, the guardian of Shariah. Hamadani who is so long with Dhimmis (Zummiz) and Hamadani who is some mystic moments deconstructs Kafir Muslim benalism and sees nothing but God every where and nowhere. He tried to reconcile monist God of whom Universe is a manifestation or attribute and not a creation in Ghazalian sense of the term (who is a champion of Islamic traditionalism and Orthodoxy.) and Unitarian monotheistic Quranic concept of God as creator. God of morality and Ibni Arabian amoral God of universe (who transcends categories of good and evil as ordinarily understood) are not reconcilable in Hamdanian terms. His ontology and perhaps not reconcilable at ordinary level. His mysticism with its Sulhkul (Place with all) and resolution of all dualities and conflicts is apparently contradictory to his political thought. Exoteric and esoteric dimensions of Islam are here apparently in conflict. A disciple of Ibni Arabi in metaphysics. Hamadani is a strict monist which is apparently alien to Quran and resembles more to shankara's Vedanta. For him God is very much immanent in the universe. He pantheistic views are presented in several treatises most notable among them are Risalai-on dusia and resalai – Wujudia. Absolute being alone knows his existence. It is devoid of all names (ism ) attribute (Wasf) and relations (Rasum) It is bare essence which has no predicates consequently, it is indefinable, unknowable, and incommunicable. He denies Hallajian fusion and Union of man with God. The Universe, according to him is a Big Adam



created by God in order to see Himself, while man is a small universe, reflecting like a well polished mirror the objects of nature or cosmos as they really are (Osho develops logical implications of this thesis and argues for transformation of values or transcendence of values and innocence of knowledge) Prophet or perfect man are logos. He seems to divinize perfect man (or all men potentially). No humanism or anthropocentrism could reach its heights. He has used such terms as following to designate perfect man – Aqli – awal Nuri – Mohammadi, Siraji, Munir (the luminous lamp) Ismi-Azam, Ruhi – Azam (Al Nuq) the Central Point) and Haqaiq-ul-Haqaiq) the reality of realities) Logos or the spirit of Mohammad is the Creative, animating and rational principle as such reality of realities. It is Gods consciousness and as such contains all the ideas of existing (or potential) objects Universe is perfect analytical manifestation of perfect man. He further holds that man is ‘the book’ in which every thing is written, that is, man is the manifestation of God. The universe can only be relished the rough Insani – Kamil, for every thing (in post) is his attribute. Every things is written, on the (Lauh Mahfooz) the tablet and the tablet is nothing but the inner aspect of the mighty spirit (Batini Ruhi Azam. In this way he is the cause of creation. A tradition suns as “I am from the light of God and the whole world is from my light

(But for you, I would not have created Universe) is a tradition quoted by mystics and here it can be understood as Logos is the first epiphany of God to whom God addressed Himself as the tradition of the Prophet has it.

According to Ali Hamadani:  
Sufis are not only spiritually the  
Most excelled and most near  
To Allah, the status which no  
Commence can achieve, but they are  
The reason of cosmic appositeness



And they are the axis round which

The whole Universe revolves  
Whatever descends from the ever-revolving heaven /  
Is only due to the grace of the men (of Allah of the existence of  
there men of sight were not there

The compasses of existence world cure to move around.

"I have not created a creative dearer to  
Me than thee" With thee I give and with thee I take and with  
thee I punish". Universe continues to be preserved so long as  
the perfect man is in it, according to Hamdani – Perfect Man is  
Khalifa-tullah (Vice gerant of God) Hamadani like Ibni Arabi  
behives in the identity between God and World as God is the  
only reality. He manifests Himself through his attributes which  
are identical to His Being. Things manifest God and God is  
manifested in things as world is the manifestation of the  
Devine attributes or names. Hamadani logically extrapolates  
Quranic Verse "God is the first and the last Zahir and Batin' to  
mean that God is in every things that exists God as creator is  
identical with his creation . He cannot deny world the  
existence and call it may like Shankara because by attributing  
world as the existential manifestation (Mazhari Khariji) of the  
names and attributes of God he affirms its existence.

Hamadani is his Chihil Asraar as in his mystical  
philosophy, transcends exoteric theologians exclusivist  
approach to other religions. He is through and through a  
humanist to respect any bonndaric of creed. He sees all  
religions as true especially regarding esoteric approach. Only  
God is beloved and all else is naught in his presence. In the  
religion of love narrow theological boundaries are hardly  
respected as is seen in Ibni Arabi and Rumi. All classifications  
or categorizations etc are transcended in mystic flight. But  
Hamadani for the sake of masses descends to theological level.



However, he always privileges Gnostics or mysteries over didacticism and scholastic ulema. He gives many concessions to legalistic and exoteric theological mentality which has always been dominating masses. In his classification of true believers and devotees he divides people into three categories:

01. The common Muslims who follow the external rules of religion, Hamadani calls them Arababi – Maimlat they perform the obligatory duties e.g. prayers, fasting, Pilgrimage to Macca to attain the saluation etc.
02. Those who purge there hearts from evils, Hamdani calls them Arababi Mujahadat and Muqtasideen ;
03. The mystics who travel to the court of the most high – Sairan – Hazarati – Samadayat as Hamdani calls them. They are nearest to God (most near to God)

Hamdani's political thought has been subject to severe criticism from various quarters. He has relegated Dhirmmis to 2<sup>nd</sup> class status and modern sensibility with its respect for human rights and rights of the monorities or the marginalized and its secularist credential can't digest Hamdani here. His Zakhirat-ul Maluk has passages of Sublima ethical Philosophy which from a foil to Machivelli as the best Sufi ethics is distilled in those passages. One is reminded of Ghazali whom he follows much to a great extant, but side by side are such passages in the book (especially those dealing with the rights of non-Muslims, which he defends by ascribing their authority to men (Umr) which isn't fully corroborated by historical evidence) are apparently contradictory to the tolerant spirit of Islam as well as to his own mystical philosophy (out look) and to human rights. Among the 20 rules which are to be followed by Dhimmis some are as under:

01. They will not reconstruct any new temples or places of worship in a state governed by Muslim ruler;



02. They will not reconstruct any existing temple which has fallen to ruins.
03. They will not dress like Muslims.
04. They will not carry arms.
05. They will neither sell nor drink wine openly.
06. They will not build their houses in the neighbour-hood of Muslims.
07. They will not moum their dead loudly.
08. They will not openly practice their heretical tradition and practices among Muslims.

Hamadani holds these rules universally applicable or valid for all times and places.

Now there has been attempted reinterpretation of these rules to show their humanist and practical spirit of Islam. Umer's authority to them has been disputed and even he has been veiled by criticized, though in a softer tone by modernist historians of Kashmir. Hindu authors have also taken a more critical approach to these rules.

But my point is neither to defend nor to criticize Hamadani either for his Islamic Orthodox credentials or for his contemporary relevance, but simply to point out tension or "contradiction" between age old exoteric legalism and esoteric Islamic as illustrated in Hamadani. Exoteric legalism has not appreciated temporal character of much of historically, socioeconomically conditioned form of Islamic law. Spirit of law has been relegated to the background. Whatever Umer did is assumed as if one under the influence of revelation, Fresh re-interpretation of Islamic law or ijihad has always been denied by exoteric theologians and jurisconsults. Hamadni belonging to medieval period where modernist humanist sensibility (which isn't contradictory to Qurani spirit) had not yet arisen (and became common) and therefore he could not but faithfully follow existing orthodox position. There is a contradiction between anti-authoritarian, humanist,



antihierarchical, antidogmatic, non-exoteric, metahistorical, spirit and legalist, exoteric, autoitiation or Zaqidi and non democratic, theological spirit, as has been always and Hamadani is no exception. If God is unknowable, and his attributes synonymous with the attributes of universe, there is little scope for being so dogmatic in interpreting this swill or appropriating his Sovereignty in the name of Islam. Either immanentism or transcendentalism is not compatible with Hamadani's political thought. Defending historical form of Islam, along with all its minor or secondary or accidental details is incompatible with Islamic and humanist universalism. Law can't be identified with Islam or given priority in dealing with interfaith issues.