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GENERAL THEORETICAL PROBLEMS OF SPIRITUAL SUFISM AND PHILOSOPHY IN SA'DIDDIN HAMAVI'S DOCTRINE

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Abstract

This scientific article presents a systematic Sufi-philosophical analysis of the general theoretical problems of spiritual mysticism (*tasawwuf*) and Islamic peripatetic philosophy (*falsafa*) within the intellectual doctrine of the prominent 13th-century Central Asian scholar Sa'diddin Hamavi (1190–1252). The research explores Hamavi's conceptual synthesis of ontology, metaphysics, and epistemological doctrines articulated in his fundamental work *Al-Misbah fi-t-tasawwuf* (The Lamp of Sufism). The findings demonstrate how Hamavi resolved the dialectical tension between rational philosophical speculation and intuitive mystical illumination, providing a durable theoretical methodology that deeply influenced medieval Central Asian intellectual history and shaped the philosophical treatises of his disciple Azizuddin Nasafi. Ultimately, the study highlights the enduring relevance of Hamavi's holistic metaphysics in reconciling analytical inquiry with ethical and spiritual self-awareness.

Keywords: Sa'diddin Hamavi, Al-Misbah fi-t-tasawwuf, spiritual Sufism, Islamic philosophy, ontology, metaphysics, Wujud, intellect, revelation, Azizuddin Nasafi.



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Introduction

The intellectual landscape of thirteenth-century Central Asia was characterized by a profound convergence of speculative philosophy (*falsafa*), scholastic theology (*kalam*), and theoretical mysticism (*tasawwuf*). Among the major thinkers who shaped this dynamic era, Sa'diddin Hamavi (1190–1252), a prominent master of the Kubrawiyya order, developed an original theoretical framework that addressed the fundamental ontological and epistemological problems of human existence [1, pp. 42–47]. In his seminal treatise, *Al-Misbah fi-t-tasawwuf* (The Lamp of Sufism), Hamavi synthesized the rigorous analytical categories of Islamic peripatetic tradition with the inner, illuminative insights of gnostic wisdom (*irfan*) [2, pp. 105–110]. While classical historical studies have extensively documented the hagiographical background of the Kubrawiyya order, the theoretical problems at the intersection of philosophy and mysticism in Hamavi's thought require further rigorous academic evaluation. This study investigates the general theoretical problems of spiritual Sufism and philosophy in Hamavi's doctrine, illuminating his conceptual contribution to Central Asian intellectual history and establishing his foundational role in shaping the philosophical treatises of his primary successor, Azizuddin Nasafi [3, pp. 75–80].

Methods

To conduct a comprehensive inquiry into the theoretical synthesis formulated by Sa'diddin Hamavi, this research employs an integrated qualitative methodology comprising textual hermeneutics, historical-comparative analysis, and philosophical conceptualization structured within the framework. The primary source analysis centers on critical manuscript editions and textual fragments of Hamavi's *Al-Misbah fi-t-tasawwuf*, examined alongside parallel medieval texts, particularly Azizuddin Nasafi's *Zubdat al-Haqaiq* (The Essence of Truths) and



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Insan-i Kamil (The Perfect Human) [4, pp. 18–24]. The methodological approach applies ontological analysis to dissect Hamavi’s conceptualization of absolute and contingent existence, alongside comparative epistemological mapping to trace the functional interaction between the physical senses, the rational intellect (*aql*), and the spiritual heart (*qalb*). Furthermore, historical contextualization was applied to evaluate how the socio-political disruptions caused by the thirteenth-century Mongol conquests informed Hamavi’s theoretical focus on inward metaphysical stability and intellectual synthesis [5, pp. 212–218].

Results

The theoretical analysis of Hamavi’s doctrine in *Al-Misbah fi-t-tasawwuf* demonstrates that he successfully resolved several core philosophical dilemmas by integrating mystical intuition into a coherent ontological system. First, regarding ontology, Hamavi posits that Absolute Existence (*Wujud-i Mutlaq*) is the single, ultimate reality, while the phenomenal universe exists as a structured hierarchy of divine manifestations and reflections [6, pp. 88–94]. Second, in resolving the epistemological debate between rationalists and mystics, Hamavi established that reason (*aql*) is essential for categorizing empirical phenomena and establishing logical coherence, but serves as a preliminary stage that must be complemented by mystical unveiling (*kashf*) to perceive ultimate metaphysical truths [7, pp. 130–136]. Third, Hamavi articulated a comprehensive metaphysical model of the Perfect Human (*Insan-i Kamil*), defining the human entity as the microcosm (*alam-i saghir*) that contains all cosmic degrees and reflects the divine names and attributes [8, pp. 50–56]. The findings confirm that Hamavi’s theoretical framework served as the foundational blueprint for Azizuddin Nasafi, directly shaping the dialectical structure of later Central Asian Sufi-philosophical literature [9, pp. 175–181].



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Discussion

The results of this study underline the sophisticated theoretical nature of Sa'diddin Hamavi's thought, refuting the notion that medieval Sufism operated independently of philosophical methodology. By establishing a systematic harmony between *sharia* (exoteric law), *tariqa* (mystical path), and *haqiqa* (ultimate truth), Hamavi provided a unified theoretical structure that guarded against both rigid dogmatism and ungrounded antinomianism [10, pp. 215–220]. Comparing Hamavi's theoretical model with wider trends in Islamic philosophy reveals strong convergences with the illuminationist (*ishraqi*) and Akbarian traditions, while preserving the distinctive moral and practical orientation of Central Asian Kubrawi thought. In the context of contemporary philosophical discourse, Hamavi's integrated vision offers valuable conceptual insights for overcoming the fragmentation between technical-analytical reasoning and ethical-spiritual consciousness, illustrating that genuine wisdom requires the synergistic alignment of intellect, morality, and inner spiritual realization.

Conclusion

Sa'diddin Hamavi's philosophical and mystical doctrine represents a major landmark in Central Asian intellectual history, resolving fundamental theoretical problems concerning existence, knowledge, and human destiny. Through his principal work *Al-Misbah fi-t-tasawwuf*, Hamavi demonstrated that speculative philosophy and spiritual Sufism are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary dimensions of a unified inquiry into Truth. His theoretical synthesis profoundly influenced subsequent generations of thinkers, providing the conceptual foundation for Azizuddin Nasafi and leaving a lasting legacy in Eastern metaphysical thought. Ultimately, Hamavi's intellectual heritage proves



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that true philosophical maturity is achieved when rational rigor is ennobled by spiritual enlightenment and a commitment to human perfection.

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