

## BOOK REVIEWS

MUHAMMAD AMIN\*

*Book*                    ***Dimensions of Khawaja Farid's Metaphysics***

*Author*                Dr. Shahzad Qaiser

*Publisher*            Seraiki Adabi Board, Multan (Pakistan)

Dr. Shahzad Qaiser has been recognized as an expert in the metaphysical thought of Khawaja Ghulam Farid. Khawaja Ghulam Farid was born in 1845 at the small village of Chacharan. After the death of his parents he was brought up by his elder brother, Khawaja Fakhr-ud-Din, who was also his spiritual master. He was educated in the classical religious tradition. He attained great command on Persian and Arabic. In addition to these languages he knew Seraiki, Sindhi, Hindi, Urdu and Sanskrit very well. He died in 1901. He belonged to the Sufi tradition of Mansur Al-Hallaj and Ibne Arabi and preached their thought throughout his life.

Khawaja Farid is the poet laureate of Seraiki language. Much has been written about his poetry though some writers have made references to the mystical approach of his poetry yet the metaphysical aspect of his poetry has been ignored by the scholars which of course requires a much deeper and detailed study. The credit goes to Shahzad Qaiser who wrote his doctoral dissertation on the metaphysics of Khawaja Farid. After doing his Ph.D. in Philosophy he has dedicated himself to the dialogues of his spiritual meetings (Malfuza't) which are collected in the book "Maqabis-ul-Majalis". Shahzad also composes kafis in Punjabi and when he writes kafis he tries to live in Farid's tradition.

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His present book, *Dimensions of Khawaja Farid's Metaphysics*, is a remarkable contribution to Faridiyat. This is a compilation of author's own articles written on different occasions on various aspects of Khawaja Farid's thought. This collection of seven essays gives a study of Khawaja Farid's metaphysics from different angles. The pivot of all this metaphysical study is Wahdat-ul-Wujud which is sometimes wrongly interpreted by some scholars. Shahzad Qaiser has succeeded in redefining Wahdat-ul-Wujud in its true spirit in this book. The author asserts, "The metaphysics of Khawaja Farid is highly committed to the ideal of the individual One and Only and corresponding idea that the One and Only is the One and All."

Iqbal and Khawaja Farid on Man-God polarity capture the attention of the reader. This philosophical study needs a serious reading. Both Iqbal and Khawaja Farid believe in Man-God polarity. According to Iqbal, this [polarity] is absolute and categorical. But Khawaja Farid considers it relative which is transcended at a higher stage. In the last chapter man appears more metaphysical than anything else. It is his metaphysical status which determines his role and place in the universe. According to the author "Know thyself" is the royal road to the Absolute. Shahzad Qaiser himself has a metaphysical approach in all his studies. Thus, metaphysics has become his passion.

In this book, Shahzad Qaiser explores the metaphysical dimensions of Khawaja Farid's poetry and works in detail. I cannot say that this is the only book ever written on the metaphysics of Khawaja Farid, but it is a fact that I have not seen such a detailed study of the subject in English as well as in Urdu. I hope this book will receive a good appreciation from lovers and scholars of Khawaja Farid. The book has been published by Seraiki Adabi Board, Multan, with laudable efforts of its secretary, Dr. Tahir Taunsavi.

<i>Book</i>	<b><i>Metaphysics and Tradition</i></b>
<i>Author</i>	Dr. Shahzad Qaiser
<i>Publisher</i>	Gora Publishers (Private) Limited 25-C, Lower Mall, Lahore (Pakistan)

*Metaphysics and Tradition* is a study of books on metaphysics, Sufism and spirituality. Its author, Dr. Shahzad Qaiser, is a known scholar. He has good command on the subject with an impressive style. Our cultural tradition is metaphysical. Without tradition a country is a wasteland. This book is helpful for us to search out our lost metaphysical tradition. To talk of metaphysics in the society, which is hostile to knowledge and intellect and where cricket heroes are more respectable than scholars, is highly appreciable.

Shahzad's spiritual journey from existentialist separation to a Sufi metaphysical union can be clearly read through his books. Some short poems from the first collection of his poetry "Dooji Akh" depict his agony of separation and five volumes of his *Kafis* tell the story of his reunion.

In philosophy his major interest is metaphysics particularly Muslim metaphysical thought popularly known as *Tasawwuf*. Modern orientalists like Titus Burckhardt, Martin Lings, Rene Guenon and Frithjof Schuon have great impact on his mind. He is very much influenced by their metaphysical thought. These orientalists have embraced Islam and they tried to rediscover the meanings of Sufi tradition in the dazzling light of modern scientific knowledge. They are of the opinion that only reliable source of knowledge is the innerself (Batin) of the individual. Only revealed is believable.

Shahzad also endeavours to discover our Sufi tradition in the light of modern philosophical thought in his books. His latest book, *Metaphysics and Tradition*, is marvellous one. The book consists of three parts with thirteen chapters and a bibliography. The first chapter is on the Mirror of the Intellect, which describes the metaphysical trends of Titus Burckhardt. According to him, no serious physicist can afford to ignore the metaphysical

foundations of science. All the modern cosmological theories are speculative. They are not as scientific as they are claimed to be. Man the created one has no knowledge of the creation before him and even after his creation because he has no access to it.

Shahzad supported Burckhardt's differentiation between reason and intellect. All the Muslim philosophers from Al-Kindi to Ibne Rushd have discussed intellect. But they never talked of reason. The modern philosophers erred to ignore this minor but important and meaningful difference between reason and intellect. According to Shahzad, Dr. Iqbal also committed this error. Intellect is combination of intuition, reason and thought. To him intellect and spirit are essentially one.

The second chapter is a detailed study of a book "Islamic Spirituality – Foundations" edited by a renowned Muslim scholar Seyyed Hosein Nasr. This book contains twenty essays on the topic contributed by famous writers, which include Muhammad Ajmal, A. K. Brohi and Saadia Khawar Khan Chishti from Pakistan. Next one is also a study of a book "Islamic Spirituality – Manifestations". Essays in this book discuss various aspects of Islamic spirituality. Eminent scholars illustrated various Sufi orders. This book provides good information about Sufism in various countries of the world. Religion of the Heart, edited by Hosein Nasr and Studdart, deals with traditional old wisdom of man.

Openings unto Self-Realization is a preface to Musa Pak's treatise on Sufism, Taiseer-ul-Shagileen. This preface introduced the book to the reader.

In his essay on Eclipse of the Hindu Tradition he put forward the thesis of Rene Guenon that Hinduism failed to develop its own metaphysical tradition. In Tradition and Democracy he maintains that democracy ignores the difference majority opinion, equality and freedom are not logically proved. No nation can progress without tradition because the absence of tradition is in fact the absence of a generation from its true vocation. Here the reader can find some resemblance with Iqbal's thought.

The modern man is proud of humanism. But, according to Shahzad, humanistic culture destroys the foundation of man. Man gets his real place only in traditional civilization. In the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter he criticizes Darwin's Theory of Evolution on the basis that it totally neglects Divine intellect. Islamic metaphysics of beauty illustrates that beauty and intellect is inseparable. Here he quotes; there is no real beauty, which does not have truth concealed in it and there is no real truth from which beauty does not emanate. Divine beauty is real one, ever shining, shines in every aspect of created beauties.

Last three chapters are related to the metaphysics of Khawaja Farid. Here Shahzad appears as pantheist, a Wahdat-ul-Wujidi. He vehemently supported the philosophy of Wahdat-ul-Wujud. His comparative study of Iqbal and Khawaja Farid on Man-God Polarity is remarkable, worth reading and opens new vistas to the metaphysical horizon.

Several concepts like humanism, democracy, scientism, evolutionism etc. which are considered the great achievements of the modern enlightenment are rejected and proved logically fallacious by the aforesaid orientalist. They are the attractive slogans of the modern man. Shahzad Qaiser does not accept them too.

In this book, Dr. Shahzad Qaiser made a comprehensive and detailed study of modern Muslim Orientalists along with the traditional Sufis like Khawaja Farid. His brevity, logical inferences and beautiful narration made his style impressive and appealing.

