

## AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE SUFI METAPHYSICAL CONCEPT “WAHDATAL WUJUD” IN ELIF SHAFaq’S NOVEL “FORTY RULES OF LOVE”

Ms. Zaib-un-Nisa Ahmed<sup>1\*</sup>, Ms. Mehwish Malghani<sup>2</sup>,  
Ms. Ayesha Ahmed<sup>3</sup> and Ms. Durdana Khosa<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ms., SBKWU Quetta, PAKISTAN [zx3ba.xoxo@gmail.com](mailto:zx3ba.xoxo@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Ms., SBKWU Quetta, PAKISTAN [mehwishmalghani@gmail.com](mailto:mehwishmalghani@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> Ms., SBKWU Quetta, PAKISTAN, [ahmed.ayesha81@yahoo.com](mailto:ahmed.ayesha81@yahoo.com)

<sup>4</sup> Ms., SBKWU Quetta, PAKISTAN, [dkhosa26@gmail.com](mailto:dkhosa26@gmail.com)

\*Corresponding author

### Abstract

The current study examined the validity of the assertion that whether the Sufi metaphysical concept of Wahdatal Wujud i.e. spiritual union with the Absolute which is the highest level of mystical elevation, is depicted in the novel Forty Rules of Love by Elif Shafaq. This study focused particularly on those aspects of the novel which are related to the specific concept given by Ibn ‘Arabi Wahdatal Wujud, as referred by Chittick (2005) which indicates that all human beings possess the Divine Spirit within themselves and if they ascend the ladder of knowledge and self-recognition with the motivation of love of Divine and acknowledge that Divine presence in them, they are set to a spiritual journey by God which elevates them. Hence, the secrets of world and cosmos are revealed to them by God.

The research was of subjective nature; therefore the researcher had adopted unstructured approach to carry out the study. Further, exploratory and descriptive research paradigm was used to gather required evidence from the text of the novel that related to the selected theory.

The study aimed to discover this spiritual aspect in the novel and also attempted to explore and describe each and every point where this Sufi metaphysical concept was reflected in the text of the novel. Through the content analysis and interpretation of the text of the novel, enough evidence was gathered to advocate and achieve the objectives of the research, as the character of Shams of Tabrez, who was an elevated dervish, showed the attributes of divinity and also through his character and his utterances majorly, the concept of Wahdatal Wujud or Unity of Being was put forward.

**Keywords:** Sufism, Oneness of Being, Forty Rules of Love.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Sufism, the mystic branch of Islam, is a very influential school of thought. It has been a source of inspiration

for many writers all over the world of all ages and its effects are traced in this modern era literature also. According to Muhammad (2007), on the basis of the contribution of Rumi to Islamic Mysticism, like other Muslim world Sufis, he is regarded as saint and well known Sufi Master. According to the biographers of Rumi, his poetry carries the idea of love for humanity which appeals his readers from every part of the world. His teachings are useful for the people of West and East both, as they are beyond any limitations of linguistics, cultures and geographical barriers. The tenet of universal and humanitarian love is rooted in every existing religion whether Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity or Islam (Muhammad, 2007).

The teachings of Sufism promote Spiritual wisdom, peace, love and hope for all the humanity without making any ethnic division and for this very reason the concepts of Sufism are adopted by many literary figures. Elif Shafaq is a Turkish writer whose work is deeply influenced by Islamic Mysticism and especially by Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi. Her third novel titled *Forty Rules of Love: A Novel of Rumi* (2010) is a semi-historic story of the spiritual journey of a Sufi poet Rumi and his friendship with an extraordinary dervish Shams of Tabrez, and parallel to it, she depicted a modern love affair of a middle-aged Jewish housewife and a Sufi author. Though both the stories show different kind of relationships between people of totally different time and age, but the corner stone of these relationships on which they are based is Love. This novel is the most celebrated work of Elif Shafaq as it a bridge between west and east at such time where there are a lot of misunderstandings and hatred among people due to the current political condition of the world. It is not only a source of delight for the readers but also a source to promote the beauty of the Islamic mysticism in a language and style which is easy to understand and comprehend. The study focused on those aspects of the novel which are related to the specific concept of Ibn 'Arabi which indicates that all human beings possess the Divine Spirit within themselves and when they acknowledge that presence in them, they are set to a spiritual journey by God which makes them aware of the realities which are not easily seen or understood by common people. The people, if they get elevated, they are able to see things which were previously hidden behind veils. The secrets of world and cosmos are revealed to them by God.

### **1.1 Statement of Problem**

The current study traced the elements of the Mysticism based on the concept of Oneness of Being given by Ibn 'Arabi i.e. *Wahdatal wujud* in the text of *Forty Rules of Love*. There are numerous points in the novel where this very concept can be seen and this study gives an opportunity to highlight those features through focusing on the Islamic Ideology regarding the concept of Oneness of Being.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

- How the Sufi Metaphysical concept “*Wahdatal wujud*” is depicted throughout the story in Elif Shafaq’s “*Forty Rules of Love*”?
- How the elements of divinity in the character of Shams of Tabrez can be elaborated in the light of Sufi metaphysics in the novel *Forty Rules of Love*?

### **1.3 Objectives**

- To explore the Sufi Metaphysical concept “*Wahdatal wujud*” depicted throughout the story in Elif Shafaq’s “*Forty Rules of Love*.”
- To elaborate the elements of divinity in the character of Shams of Tabrez of the novel “*Forty Rules of Love*” in the light of Sufi Metaphysics.

### **1.4 Operational Definition of Wahdatal Wujud**

The concept of *Wahdatal wujud* refers to the recognition of the existence of God as the only true existence and implies that all other beings and creatures of this physical world are his manifestation. Every human being has the Divine Spirit in him. His urge to search the omnipotent Spirit out of sheer love (*Ishq*) will set him on a journey which will lead to the merging of his soul with the Divine Spirit which elevates him from the level of an ordinary person to the level of a saint. That enables the spiritually elevated person to see things beyond the veil and do some extraordinary acts which a normal person cannot comprehend.

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Wahdatal Wujud (Oneness of Being)**

The concept of Unity of Being cannot be related to only one school of thought, philosophy or religion. According to Souad Hakim (2003) in his research paper *Unity of Being in Ibn 'Arabi- A Humanist*

Perspective, the various images of the Unity of Being can be classified into two categories which have different principles but share a similar essence of teachings partially. The two categories are of religion and philosophy. In religious realm, Brahmins, Buddhists and Taoists came up with various ideas regarding the concept of Unity of being while the philosophical formulae of it can be traced back from the Pre-Socratic Greece. Many philosophers passed their perspective regarding the Unity of Being in various theories. According to Kakaie (2007) the theory of Oneness of Being or the Unity of Existence is one of those topics which are focused on and discussed by many authors and also by the various mysticism schools. This is said to be one of the greatest mystery of mysticism. While in the process of explaining this theory of Oneness of Being, mystics basically discuss the identity of the mystic or the union of his soul with the Absolute One, i.e. God. The language used here is usually psychological, poetical and mystical and this Oneness is called introversive unity. On the other hand when the oneness or unity of all the things and cosmos with the identity of The Absolute is talked about it is called extroversive unity or oneness. The language used to express this type of unity by mystics is philosophical language (Kakaie, 2007).

Chittick (1994) described Ibn Arabi as the great mystic from the Islamic tradition and is known as Al-Shaykh Al-Akbar which means The Greatest Master. He was born in 1165 in Murcia which is situated in Spain. He is an extremely well known and prominent figure of Sufism. Ibn 'Arabi has written about hundreds of works and the range of the works estimates from 250 to over 800 and some of the works are considered to be classics even in today's modern era. Ibn 'Arabi' thinking ranged from scientific to practical, to the sublimely spiritual and to the metaphysical. He had the ability to expound upon and also weave the aspects of spirituality altogether which made Chittick to declare him as the most significant thinker and philosopher of the second half of the Islamic history (Chittick, 1994).

Rauf (1984) in his article Union and Ibn 'Arabi implied that in the case of Ibn 'Arabi or in the whole mysterious Sufi lore, the word Union is equated to the meaning of the word Tawhid. The word Tawhid means making into one or unification. This meaning doesn't imply of making into one of several things or unification of many things, rather the idea of that making into one when it is delved into the mystery is, that the word conveys is unifying into The One. That mystery of the word lies in the essential knowledge of Tawhid or unification. While Twinch (1997), in her symposium "The Beauty of Oneness Witnessed in the Emptiness of the Heart" described that fleeing to God, in the context of Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine on the unity of existence, is not a flight away from one thing towards another, since there is nothing in existence but God; fleeing to God is merely a way of expressing the flight from ignorance to knowledge and it is a theme which runs through all of Ibn 'Arabi's writings (Twinch, 1997). The knowledge shows that the only existence is the One and only and there is no other existence other than him. It is like the example of a prism, from which only one light passes but when it passes through it, diverse colors are refracted from it, but the source light is one (Rauf, 1984). Ibn 'Arabi also used the metaphor of light with which God is identified, as stated in Quran (24:35) that only thing that exists is Light—but this light becomes refracted and reflected into infinite rays of light which seem to be individual and all these individual rays also seem to have separate origin of existence. That objectivity of those rays have no reality and in that sense they are non-existent. They have no existence of their own except for the original light itself, which is the only thing which had existence in the first and also in the last place. Those refracted and reflected rays are in the veil of the manifestation of Allah in which they appear. As Ibn 'Arabi described the existence of God as He is and He is not, as it assists both the ultimate existence and nonexistence simultaneously (Miller, n.d.).

In the article The Quranic Inspiration of Ibn 'Arabi's Vocabulary of Love- Etymological Links and Doctrinal Development, it is held that in the Prophetic tradition, God makes it very clear that the entire process of the manifestation is universal and it starts from love. Through Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) God said, "I was a (hidden) Treasure; I was not known. Now, I loved to be known. So I created the creatures so that I might make Myself known to them. Then they knew Me." (Gloton, 1998).

In the article The Way of Walaya (Sainthood or Friendship of God) by Hakim (1995), it is emphasized that God in relation to himself created all the creatures equal so all creatures are his servants and they carry His Divine Secret which is the secret of his manifestation and creation. The author asserts that all of the beings that God has created enjoy certain aspect and a unique relationship with him who is Real and Omnipotent. The evidence and source of this unique aspect correspond with the instant of creation. That moment when the will of the God decided to fashion this creature so he becomes (Hakim, 1995). Another thing is that Sufism and religion are said to be two individual bodies as religion creates division among people and that is one of those reasons behind the disharmony among human being. It causes conflicts and clashes and categorizes everyone as Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Christians and many more while within those categories there are also ranks like Shia, Sunni, Barailvi or Protestant and Catholics etc. The major concept of Sufism

i.e. Oneness of being conveys the message of true love and narrows down that wide gap between spirituality and religion. The world's division into I and You, We and Them is the reason of all the suffering of the humanity. The separation and disconnection of creatures from the One has put human into malady. That linguistic misunderstanding is negated by spiritualism and has propagated the message that there is nothing like You and I rather we all are one because we all have one origin of our creation (Anjum & Ramzan, 2014).

## 2.2 Work around the Novel

In the modern era of globalization where societies are connected through internet, highways and digital media, Elif Shafaq is one of those multicultural and traditional writers who are instantly inspired by the life of Rumi. According to Anjum & Ramzan (2014), Elif Shafaq is one of the most acclaimed and recognized writer hailing from Turkey. The themes of mysticism and Sufism are treated mostly in her most celebrated works. She has a Turkish and an Islamic background along with a mode of Western thought, which makes it easy for her to explore and communicate Sufism in a way which is easily comprehensible by the western society. And according to her the traditions of mysticism hold a similar essence in all religions. She got awarded with the Rumi Prize in 1998 for her first novel 'The Mystic'. In her second novel 'Mirrors of the City', she attempted to bring Islamic and Jewish mysticism together and in 'The Forty Rules of Love' she brought West and east, Present and Past, mundane and spiritual elements all together. The story of Rumi and his companion is narrated through the perceptions of different characters in the novel. Thus in the research paper The Sufi Phenomenon: The Case of Elif Shafaq's the Forty Rules of Love, the novel is declared to be a depiction of a phenomenon of Sufism, as there is a correlation that is drawn between two centuries i.e. thirteenth and twenty-first, through a corresponding narration of the transformation of a renowned scholar into a mystic poet through his development of friendship with a wandering dervish and the love affair of a house wife with a mystic writer. Out of the boundaries of time, space and religion, Shafaq managed to promote the concept of Spirituality that is of universal nature and the corner stone of which is love. The relation and communion of human race has a mutual platform of that universal spirituality and love is the binding force whether it is east or west and through love the unity is attained (Anjum & Ramzan, 2014).

In the research paper, Historicizing Influence of Ottoman Mysticism and Mawlana Jalal Al-Din Rumi Through Contemporary Turkish Literature by Anadolu-Okur (2013), it is illustrated that Shafaq writes in two languages i.e. English and Turkish and she used a unique technique to build a bridge among the various and diverse international audiences, both non-Muslims and Muslims through her opinion pieces and novels. The stages of Rumi's life and his journey both spiritual and geographical are traced in her novel The Forty Rules of Love and the plot revolves around the story of Rumi and another ordinary love affair crisscrossing two continents. Shafaq also seem to be very well aware of today's modern human's frantic pursuit for love, kinship and meaning in life. According to Anadolu-Okur (2013), Shafaq elaborated Global flânerie in this semi-historical context. According to the said author, this Global flânerie was conceptualized by Charles Baudelaire who was a French poet and it a kind of wandering or search in the world which is virtual, where people can relate to each other regardless of time, distance or location. The risks and challenges do not bother the flâneur or the flâneuse and the protagonists of Shafaq's novels are sort of classic flâneurs, The prospects of distant lands fascinate them and their desire for the search of love and friendship drives them (Anadolu-Okur, 2013).

In the research paper, Forty Rules of Love as a Bildungsroman, Firdous (2014) implied that the novel The Forty Rules of Love is particularly an impressive novel which is of formation. It narrates the famous story of a pair of 13<sup>th</sup> century i.e. Rumi and Shams of Tabrez opposite to the story of Ella- a Jewish middle aged house wife with Aziz Zahra, whose book she is reading as an editor to write a review about it. Hence, this novel is a complete study on opposites like heart versus brain, risk versus foundation, youth versus wisdom, acceptance versus perspective, love versus reason and spontaneity versus discipline. Along with that it is also an immaculate bildungsroman as in bildungsroman the main motive is development in the protagonist's nature and maturity. The protagonist goes through an inward journey to find the actual meaning of life and also grows psychologically. The protagonist also gets an opportunity to discover the equality he or she lacked in society through the basis of love (Firdous, 2014). This book is analyzed from few different perspectives but no one yet has analyzed it by specifically focusing on the Sufi metaphysical concept of Wahdatal Wujud.

## 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is of subjective nature; therefore, the researchers have adopted unstructured approach to carry out the study. The qualitative research method is utilized to seek suitable answers to the research questions. Exploratory research design along with descriptive research design is used to gather required information from the text of the novel that relate to the selected theory. The text is carefully analyzed and interpreted in

order to get the desired end. In the study the textual evidence is used rather than any numerical data. The research paradigm that the researchers selected for this study is exploratory and descriptive.

### 3.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that supports this study is "Wahdatal wujud" given by an Andalusian Muslim thinker commonly called Ibn Arabi. According to Arabi as referred by Chittick (2005) Tawhid is the basic formula that explains this concept very briefly that, "There is no god but God." God is wujud and everything other than Him is "nonexistence". Wujud is that Hidden Treasure, from which everything derives their existence from as they don't possess any existence of their own. Ibn 'Arabi made a point clear that God is the creator of all beings and he created human beings and universe (cosmos) in his own form. Both of these display the traces of the divine attributes. Wujud describes not only the ineffable and incomparable Reality of the Real, but also the presence of God which is immanent in the knower's consciousness. Ibn 'Arabi also to made it easier to understand that love of Divine plays a vital role in achieving that level of Unity with the Absolute, as seekers of truth go up the ladder to God chiefly by means of self-recognition and knowledge, but they cannot neglect the element of love. As when somebody is in love, they encounter a desire to achieve union or nearness with the one they love. As Chittick (2005) quoted Ibn 'Arabi that, "The love of the lover becomes attached only to that of the person which is non-existent at the moment. He imagines that his love is attached to the person, but this is not so. Love incites him to meet and see his beloved" (pg.39).

### 3.2 Method of Data Analysis

The Researchers have regarded content analysis as a very flexible method for analyzing textual data (Cavanagh, 1997). Content analysis is a commonly used qualitative research method and as the selected paradigm for the dissertation of the research is qualitative, therefore, the researchers have adopted the same technique for the present study. The researchers used this technique to explore and describe the underlying meaning in the text of the novel. The units of content that are analyzed are words, phrases and paragraphs from the text of the novel. Firstly the text of the novel was carefully explored and then thorough interpretive analyses of the text are done.

## 4 DATA ANALYSIS

Following is the analysis of some of the excerpts taken from the novel Forty Rules of Love by Elif Shafaq (2010).

**"I'm not looking for something different. I'm looking for God," I said. "My quest is a quest for God."**

**"Then you are looking for Him in the wrong place," he retorted, his voice suddenly thickened. "God has left this place! We don't know when He will be back."**

**My heart flailed away at my chest wall upon hearing this. "When one speaks ill of God, he speaks ill of himself," I said. (Forty Rules of Love, p.27)**

There is a dialogue between an innkeeper and Shams of Tabrez. In these lines, Shams of Tabrez is giving the concept of oneness of being by saying that if one speaks foul about God he actually speaks foul of himself, as God is nowhere but within a person's own soul to be found. When he said that he is looking for God, he did not mean that he is looking for God in that particular place rather within himself through self-discovery, through traveling and interacting with different beings. Through this it is concluded that these lines indicate the concept of Oneness of Being propagated through the character of Shams.

**"Doesn't God say, I am closer to you than your jugular vein?" I asked. "God is not someplace far up in the sky. He is inside each and every one of us. That is why He never abandons us. How can He abandon Himself?" (p.27)**

These lines are also part of the dialogue that occurred between the innkeeper and Shams and these lines refer to the saying of Allah himself that I am closer to you than your jugular vein, which is directly related to the heart. What could be even closer to a person only that which is within the heart? It is denoting again the same concept of Oneness of being, that God is to be found within a person deep seated in his heart, not only in the connotation of organic heart (Qalb) but something which is more spiritual and alive; that part which remains even after the heart stops beating just as Bulleh Shah said it's not me in the grave but someone else. He believed in Wahdatal wujud and his thought relates to the very same concept. It is also a conventional thought that God is a being who lives high up in the skies, but this concept of Sufism negates that thought. God isn't separate from our being rather each of us has God in ourselves and these line point

towards that very notion.

**“There are people who have never traveled anywhere and yet have seen the world.”(p.37)**

The line is another example of the text's relation with the concept of Oneness of Being, as it tells of those men of God who are able to see through the eyes of God and see everywhere and whatever He wills the man to see, even if the man is not there physically. That is when He shares a spec of His Divine Knowledge with the chosen one.

**Then the strangest thing happened. He stood up, straightened his spine, and slowly, deliberately began to walk toward the door, all the while looking in my direction. It was as if he somehow knew I was spying on them. It was as if he could see through the wooden door. My heart pounded like mad. I wanted to run back to the kitchen but couldn't see how. My arms, my legs, my whole body froze. Through and beyond the door, the dark eyes of Shams of Tabriz were fixed upon me. As terrified as I was, I also felt a tremendous amount of energy rushing through my body. He approached, put his hand on the door handle, but just when I thought he was about to open the door and catch me, he stopped. (p.42)**

These lines are uttered by the novice who is another minor character, through whom the story of Shams of Tabrez is narrated. The character is shown to be strongly attracted to the intimidating personality of Shams and he cannot help spying on him by trying to peep through a crack in the door and listen to his words of wisdom. While doing so he comes across a fact that invokes further awe in him. The fact that Shams had a Divine attribute in him and he could see him through the wooden door something which any ordinary man with an ordinary vision could never have done. Thus, revealing the secret of Divine powers of the men united with God in spirit. The Union with the Absolute reveals a man to the secrets of the cosmos and this attribute of seeing through walls is very usual for such elevated people.

**“One of the rules says, You can study God through everything and everyone in the universe, because God is not confined in a mosque, synagogue, or church. But if you are still in need of knowing where exactly His abode is, there is only one place to look for Him: in the heart of a true lover. There is no one who has lived after seeing Him, just like there is no one who has died after seeing Him. Whoever finds Him will remain with Him forever.”(p.43)**

Elif Shafaq has promoted many concepts of Sufism through the forty rules and this is one of those rules which again associate with the concept of Oneness of Being. These lines indicate that a person can long for the Divine no matter to what religion or sect he belongs to. That flame of love can kindle in anyone's heart. If his longing and thirst for God is pure and true then he doesn't have to constrict himself to any special or particular worshiping arena, rather he has to take a plunge in the ocean of love. Then that stage is when there is no You or I, there is just One. As a human is a part of God and he is the fragment of that whole, his Union with his real origin will put him above these divergences and digression of religion and beliefs.

**“God is busy with the completion of your work, both outwardly and inwardly. He is fully occupied with you. Every human being is a work in progress that is slowly but inexorably moving toward perfection. We are each an unfinished work of art both waiting and striving to be completed. God deals with each of us separately because humanity is a fine art of skilled penmanship where every single dot is equally important for the entire picture (p.69)**

During a conversation with a peasant Shams of Tabrez presented another of the rules. A very important point is revealed that the presence of God exists within and without the human body. And in a systematic and incomprehensible way leads this great work of art by God Almighty to its eternal completion. It does not matter what work which path or what journey Allah has decided for his creature. What is important is that the creature submissively fulfills its duty without frustrating the plan by transgressing the principles given to him by God. This also warns men of God not to think less of anyone or any being whatever his status maybe. As everybody is the reflection of God's artwork Himself and it points towards the concept of Unity of Being.

**“Hasan it is, then.” The dervish nodded. Then, to my surprise, he gave me a silver mirror. “Keep it,” he said. “A good man in Baghdad gave it to me, but you need it more than I do. It will remind you that you bear God within you.” (p.82)**

**Upon saying that, he took out a silk handkerchief from the inside pocket of his robe. "Keep it," he said. "A good man in Baghdad gave it to me, but you need it more than I do. It will remind you that your heart is pure and that you bear God within you." (p.91)**

**Upon saying that, he took out a silver flask from the pocket of his robe. "Apply this ointment to your wounds," he said. "A good man in Baghdad gave it to me, but you need it more than I do. However, you should know that the wound inside you is deeper, and that is the one you should worry about. This will remind you that you bear God within you." (p.93)**

The lines above are from three different conversations that occurred between Shams of Tabrez and three other characters of the novel. Although the discourse occurred with three different people and each in a different situation but they promote the same message of Oneness of Being. First lines are a conversation that took place between Hassan the beggar and Shams of Tabrez. Shams gave him a mirror. As the beggar was a leper and due to his deformed face and body people avoided him as much as possible that had made him very resentful and hopeless. Shams wanted to make him aware of the fact that no matter what condition he was in, he should know that God had not abandoned him because of his disability rather he himself was unaware of the Divine presence in him.

The lines following are the part of dialogue that took place between the harlot Desert Rose and Shams of Tabrez. People despised her for being a prostitute but contrary to that they made it sure to make it impossible for her to repent. She considered herself filthy and thought she deserved the hate but Shams gave her a handkerchief to remind her that outward filth is nothing comparative to the filth of heart. Bodily filth can be cleansed by worshiping and fasting but the hatred and pride in a person will contaminate the soul of one. It can be purified only by love. Desert Rose's body might be tormented by the lust seekers but her heart had love for the Divine and therefore she was considered pure by Shams. Shams wanted to remind her that she has the Divine in her heart, she is just not aware of it.

The lines in the end are conversed by Shams to Suleman the drunkard. Suleman was whipped very badly for drinking by a guard and Shams told him that as an enlightened man he didn't judge people from their outer appearance rather their inner realm which he could see. He also assured him that he also had God in him if he had love in his heart. All these lines point to the same context that God resides in all his beings.

**"He thinks I don't know him, but I do," said the dervish a little while later. "While he was crouching with his ear to the door, watching me through peepholes, I was watching him, too." (p.109)**

These lines point to the same fact mentioned in the theoretical framework that these highly elevated souls are bestowed with special powers and Divine attributes to see and know and do things impossible by ordinary humans.

**Then I took one of the bottles of wine. I knelt beside a climbing rose tree that stood thorny and bare in the snow, and I started to pour the wine on the soil beneath it. Rumi's face brightened as he smiled his half-thoughtful, half-excited smile. Slowly, stunningly, the bare rose tree came alive, its bark softening like human skin. It produced a single rose in front of our eyes. As I kept pouring the wine under the tree, the rose revealed a lovely warm shade of orange. Next I took the second bottle and poured it in the same way. The rose's orangey color turned into a bright crimson tone, glowing with life. (p.160)**

The narration of this incident again is not meant to show any magical trickery or impress the on lookers or the readers but to show the importance and role of faith, trust and submission. The event was a result of a very trying test for Rumi, the great scholar with a high reputation as he was asked to go to the tavern spend some time there and buy liquor ruining everything he had earned so far. It did not end here as when he brought the liquor back to Shams he also ordered him to drink it shattering all the knowledge of the religion he had ever acquired. As Rumi was about to put the cup to his lips, Shams took it from his hands and poured it down. The blossoming of the rose was an indication that Maulana Rumi had passed the test by submitting to the will of the One who was the giver of the shariah and yet above it, the Quran and all the respect that Rumi ever had. And it was God speaking through Shams and that was what Rumi acknowledged by submitting and acknowledging the concept of Unity of Being.

**"This is what losing your beloved does to you," my father says. "It dissolves your king-self into dust and brings out your dervish-self. Now that Shams is gone forever, I**

**am gone, too. I am not a scholar or a preacher anymore. I am the embodiment of nothingness. Here is my fana, herein my baqa.”(p.219)**

The aforementioned lines were uttered by Maulana Rumi after he suffered the crushing pain of the loss of his beloved Shams. The experience crushed him into nothingness as love and the loss of it eventually does to every lover in order to shatter him into dust because only in this demise is hidden the secret of the eternal life being merged with the One. This point comes with the realization that the apparent object of love was actually also nothing but the light of God that shone through him and this is the only consolation for the broken heart to deny his self also into nothing and be a part of that very light only then everything dissolves into One.

## 5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The present study examines the validity of the assertion that whether the Sufi metaphysical concept of Wahdatal Wujud i.e. spiritual union with the Absolute which is the highest level of mystical elevation, is depicted in the novel *Forty Rules of Love* by Elif Shafaq. As Elif Shafaq is a Turkish writer and is deeply influenced by Sufism wrote a novel which comprises the story of the spiritual journey of the well-known mystic poet Rumi and his companion Shams of Tabrez an elevated dervish. The novel consists of the major theme of Sufism but the study focused more on those aspects of the novel which explicitly reflect the concept of Oneness of Being given by Ibn ‘Arabi. The concept of Oneness of Being refers to the level of spirituality that one attains after he goes through a journey in the search of the One. And the person, who strives to find God, is motivated by love for the Divine. The Divine Spirit is present in every human being, and he is just not aware of it. The seeker ascends the ladder of knowledge and self-recognition in order to achieve the level of Unity with the Real in which love plays a vital role. The Love is not some ordinary feeling rather it is a huge ocean where the heart of a seeker floats in the boat of patience and submission from the point of view that “Know Thyself” to “Know Thy God”. And after that, the human gains unification with the Real Being and also gains some Divine attributes which unveil the secrets of the universe to him. It makes him look at the world beyond its limits and he is able to do some extraordinary things which are difficult to perceive and understand by the senses of an ordinary person. The study aimed to discover this spiritual aspect in the novel and also attempted to explore and describe each and every point where this Sufi metaphysical concept is reflected in the text of the novel. Through the content analysis and interpretation of the text of the novel, enough evidence is gathered to advocate and achieve the objectives of the research, as through the character of Shams of Tabrez, who was an elevated dervish, the study manifested the attributes of divinity and through his character and his utterances majorly, the concept of Wahdatal Wujud or Unity of Being was put forward. Thus, keeping in mind the data analysis it can be safely concluded that the research successfully achieved its goals and objectives.

## REFERENCE LIST

- Anadolu-Okur, N. (2013). Historicizing Influence of Ottoman Mysticism and Mawlana Jalal Al-Din Rumi Through Contemporary Turkish Literature. *World*, 3(3), 134-142.
- Anjum, M. R. (2014). The Sufi Phenomenon: The Case of Elif Shafak’s *The Forty Rules of Love*. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science Research*, 14(7).
- Cavanagh, S. (1997). Content Analysis: Concepts, Methods and Applications. *Nurse Researcher*, 4(3), 5-16.
- Chittick, W. C. (2012). *Ibn‘Arabi: Heir to the Prophets*. One world Publications.
- Chittick, W.C. (1994). *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn al‘Arabī and the Problem of Religious Diversity*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Firdous, S. (2014). *Forty Rules of Love as a Bildungsroman*. *Language in India*, 14(7).
- Gloton, M. (1998). The Quranic Inspiration of Ibn ‘Arabi’s Vocabulary of Love- Etymological Links and Doctrinal Development. Muhyiddin ‘Arabi Society, Vol XXVII. Retrieved from: <http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/glotonvocabulary.html>
- Hakim, S. (1995). *The Way of Walaya (Sainthood or Friendship of God)*. Muhyiddin ‘Arabi Society, Vol 18. Retrieved From: <http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/wayofwalaya.html>
- Hakim, S. (2004). *Unity of Being in Ibn ‘Arabi- A humanist Perspective*. Muhyiddin ‘Arabi Society, Vol 36. Retrieved From <http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/unityofbeing.html>



- Kakaie, G. (2007). The extroversive unity of existence from Ibn 'Arabi's and Meister Eckhart's viewpoints. *Topoi*, 26(2), 177-189.
- Miller, S. (n.d). Ibn al-'Arabī and the Oneness of Being. Retrieved from:  
[http://sufism.critstudies.calarts.edu/Oneness\\_of\\_Being%20ibn%20arabi.pdf](http://sufism.critstudies.calarts.edu/Oneness_of_Being%20ibn%20arabi.pdf)
- Muhammad, S. (2007). *A Comparative Study of Jalal-Ud-Din Rumi and William Blake as Mystical Poets*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. International Islamic University, Islamabad.
- Rauf, B. (1984). Union and Ibn'Arabi. Muhyiddin 'Arabi Society, Vol III. Retrieved from:  
[http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/union\\_ibnarabi.html](http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/union_ibnarabi.html)
- Shafaq, E. (2010). *Forty Rules of Love*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Twinch, C. (1997). The Beauty of Oneness Witnessed in the Emptiness of the Heart. Muhyiddin 'Arabi Society. Retrieved from: [www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/twinch.html](http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/twinch.html)