Mohammed Rustom. *Sufi Metafiziği* [*Sufi Metaphysics*]. Translated into Turkish by Kadir Filiz. İstanbul: Nefes Yayınevi, 2014. 160 pages. ISBN: 9786055902452.

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Mohammed Rustom, a faculty member at Carleton University, Canada, is an eminent scholar of the younger generation known for his studies of Islamic philosophy, *kalām*, and mysticism. His book, based on his dissertation about the thought of Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1641), was designated the 21st "International Book of the Year" in 2012 in Iran.[1] *Sufi Metafiziği*, dedicated to Todd Lawson, is a compilation of eight articles published in various international refereed journals between 2005 and 2013 that concentrate on the Sufis' views of knowledge and existence throughout history. This book, the first one of the author's to be published in Turkish, is also the second compiled study in Turkish on the metaphysics of Sufism, after Ekrem Demirli's *İbnü'l-Arabī Metafiziği*.[2] Rustom's study is, however, wider in its historical scope than Demirli's, which focuses on Ibn al-ʿArabī and al-Qunawī. The inclusion of a theoretical and comprehensive introductory chapter would have been a great help in grasping the book's main frame, for it would have explained why the six individuals, who lived at some point during the period from the fifth/eleventh century to today, were gathered in this compiled work, what precisely was meant by Sufism as a metaphysical discipline, and what sort of contribution this book could make to contemporary thought.

In the first article, the views on the kinds of gnosis were treated based upon the commentary of Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021) on the opening *sūra* of the Qurʾān (Sūrat al-Fātiḥa). If we disregard the commentary attributed to Sahl b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Tustarī, al-Sulamī's *Ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr* is the first mystical commentary to

cover the entire Qur'ān. What distinguishs *Ḥaqā'iq al-tafsīr* from al-Tustarī's commentary is its synthetic style. In his commentary, al-Sulamī presents the comments of earlier Sufis on the verses and almost never conveys his own comments directly. The author points out this state of affairs by saying that "Sulamī's voice is seldom heard throughout his commentary of the *Fātiḥa*" (14). On the other hand, Rustom claims that al-Sulamī constructed an original commentary with a gnosis-centered view, instead of making a synthetic presentation in his commentary on the *Fātiḥa*, taking the cue from some of the expressions that could be safely attributed to him. He suggests that this originality can be assessed by a method he calls the "polysemic approach." According to Rustom, al-Sulamī considered the verses' expressive, allusive, subtle, and real senses while synthesizing the comments of the other Sufis in a style that would allow us to detect his original construction.

In the author's opinion, al-Sulamī emphasizes three forms of gnosis in his commentary on the *Fātiḥa*: the gnosis of constant witnessing, gnosis in the sense of God's praise for Himself, and gnosis in the sense of annihilation and bewilderment. Making full use of the contemporary literature on Sufism's early history, the author also appends the translations of certain sections of al-Sulamī's commentary to the end of his article. However, the article's most important aspect is the proposed method on how to treat the Sufi classics. Earlier Sufi authors like al-Sarrāj, al-Kalābādhī, and al-Qushayrī, as well as al-Sulamī in the commentary, usually assumed a "synthetic" style in their works, which makes it harder to distinguish the said authors' original approaches. Following Rustom's proposal, we can view the first mystic works as "commentary" rather than compilation, provided that we can determine which principles authors like al-Sulamī, al-Sarrāj, and al-Kalābādhī picked up the sayings of earlier Sufis.

In the second article, which focuses on Ibn al-ʿArabī's (d. 638/1240) understanding of proximity (*qurb*) and distance (*buʿd* [from God]), the author stresses the distinctive aspect of his thought on these two issues as compared to that of the mystics before him. Analyzing the 260th and 261st sections of *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, Rustom detects that Ibn al-ʿArabī, in contrast to the early Sufis, understood *qurb* not only as a quality of God, but also as a quality of the believer (48). In fact, it is related to one of the consequences of the Unity of Being: the correspondence of activity and inactivity between God and the world or the human. According to Rustom's point of view, this can be applied to all Sufi states. As a result, the nature of this dynamic relation between God and the human can reach a more intelligible framework.

Rustom also notes the three forms of *qurb* following the statements of Ibn al-ʿArabī, whereby activity belonged to God on one aspect and to human on an-

other in all the three forms: *qurb* gained by knowing God through observation and proof, *qurb* as a consequence of knowing God by witnessing, and *qurb* gained by performing the mandatory and supererogatory rituals in line with their apparent and hidden requirements (51-52). However, *bu'd* is particular to humans because they are, by their very nature, distant from God. At this juncture, the relation that Rustom recognized between *'abd* (slave, believer) and *bu'd* (distance) is noteworthy (56-57). The author writes that this is why Ibn al-'Arabī thought that the acts of worship themselves established a distance between God and humans, which he expressed as "to gain distance in order to close in." Hence, the following conclusion was reached: The paradoxical form of the states of proximity and distance between God and humans was interpreted by Ibn al-'Arabī in such a way that it did not enervate the liabilities and responsibilities of humans (57-61). One must point out that the paradoxical idiom employed by Ibn al-'Arabī was an attempt to resolve the ancient quandary of in what sense we could use the term "will" about God and humans, as well as a correction of the early mystics' elaborate styles, which centered on the "theory of acquisition" and was dependent upon Ash'arite theological thought.

In the third article, Rustom contends that the Unity of Being cannot be regarded as a pantheistic thought and examines the main principles on which Ibn al-'Arabī's view of ontology was based. Accordingly, in his thought God is a necessary existence, and everything that exists has only a relative existence because it is dependent upon God's existence. What differentiates God's existence from that of other beings is explained by Ibn al-'Arabī's concepts of "hidden (*bāṭin*) being" and "apparent (*ẓāhir*) being." While the former signifies the particular being known only by God Himself, the latter marks its aspect by emerging due to God's names and being known by other beings. In this regard, contingent beings reside in an isthmus (*barzakh*) between God's absolute being and the absence of absoluteness, which Ibn al-'Arabī calls impossible and was considered to be the opposite of the absolute being. To be in this isthmus meant to be equidistant to existence and non-existence.

In other words, the contingent beings were known by God before gaining existence in the external realm and only emerged after God bestowed existence upon them. These "things" in the knowledge of God that gained existence in the external realm were called archetypes (*al-a'yān al-thābita*). Ruston stressed that these archetypes cannot be regarded as Plato's forms, for when they gain existence in the external realm they turn into a locus of the emergence of God's names. "The names are innumerable since the existent things, as objects of God's knowledge, are also infinite" (72). Thus, one can only speak of God's being and its manifestations.

After this general framework related to the Unity of Being, Rustom scrutinizes the historical background of pantheism and explains the relationship(s) among pantheism, panentheism, and monism. In his opinion, a defense of Ibn al-'Arabī's thought against those who describe it as pantheistic also accords with the allegations of panentheism and monism levelled against him. Rustom exemplifies those individuals who regard the Unity of Being as pantheistic or monist by drawing upon the modern influences of the debates on Ibn al-'Arabī since the Middle Ages. In his opinion, those who regard the Unity of Being as pantheism are not versed in the depth of Ibn al-'Arabī's thought and thus remove it from the context of its terminology and worldview and have been misled by assessing it according to the conditions of the modern age.

On the other hand, in Ibn al-'Arabī's parlance pantheism only emphasises God's immanence and therefore neglects its transcendence. However, perfect knowledge about God is the knowledge between immanence and transcendence according to the Unity of Being. Moreover, God's sublime and immaculate conception means that He can be only "one and the same thing," neither with the world nor with any existent being. Consequently, Rustom not only lists the main principles of Ibn al-'Arabī's ontological thought in a clear and concise manner, but he also underscores that these principles should be considered a point of departure as regards modern accusations against the Unity of Being.

The fourth and fifth articles are devoted to the metaphysical elements in Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī's (d. 672/1273) thought. In the first one, the author analyses al-Rūmī's ideas on love (*ʿishq*) based upon some couplets cited from his *Mathnawī*. In the author's opinion, love is a state that cannot be enclosed by human thought in al-Rūmī's imagination, and he therefore employs the metaphor of ocean (*daryā*) in order to express it. This metaphor means the ocean of life (*daryā-yi ḥayāt*) from a divine perspective and the ocean of non-existence (*daryā-yi ʿadam*) from a human perspective, because love, as an all-embracing ocean, is synonymous with having existence and life. Thus God, the Alive and Giver of Life, has to possess the object of love in particular in order to be in love. According to Rustom, this approach discloses al-Rūmī's views on the sacred hadith known as "the hidden treasure (*kanz-i makhfī*)" and thus the origin of creation. Since al-Rūmī presents God as creating the world out of His desire to be known, the world exists because of divine love and *mohabba*. Thus, love and *mohabba* reside at the centre of the reciprocal relation between God and human.

Rustom notes this relation by examining the paradoxical situation in which God is both the goal and the means to that goal (85). On the other hand, he points

out that in al-Rūmī's opinion, one has to transcend the limits of bounded reason and annihilate one's ego in God's existence in order to attain divine love. For this to happen, the heart, which is the seat of love and *mohabba*, must be "purified." With this proviso, love is the *ocean of non-existence* in the sense that it terminates the effects of bounded reason and ego and annihilates one in the infinite and the universal. Thus, the author calls attention to the concept of love in al-Rūmī's thought as being another name for the mystical training process (86-93).

The fifth article, which seconds the author's views expressed in the fourth, is centred on al-Rūmī's ideas of the heart. Rustom notes that he views the heart as a "mirror" that reflects divine manifestations, following such earlier mystics as al-Ghazālī and Aḥmad al-Samʿānī. While everyone has the capacity to reflect the divine manifestation because everyone has a heart, as a matter of fact very few people can effectuate its activity by perfecting their soul. In this sense, al-Rūmī asserts that the heart that wholly mirrors the divine manifestations is the heart of the perfect human and that the Prophet is the perfect human. At this juncture, Rustom examines al-Rūmī's views on mirror, illusion, and reality and identifies the heart of the perfect human with God in one regard, with respect to Ibn al-ʿArabī's thought (100-106).

Nevertheless, it has to be noted that both articles tackled one aspect of the views of Sufis in general, and of al-Rūmī in particular, concerning love and the heart. Considering al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī's (d. 243/857) *al-ʿAql* and al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's (d. 320/932) *Bayān al-farq*, we see that Sufis regard the states concerning love and heart as an epistemological topic from the very beginning, and that al-Rūmī underscores this matter in some of his couplets. In this framework, while love means "strong faith," the heart represents a faculty of supra-perception that includes the capacities of bounded reason and regards the passivity of the human before God as a measure of its perfection in knowledge. In other words, Sufis view the heart as being at the station of "greater reason." Although Rustom mentions the relation between love and reason, or between the heart and intellect/soul in passing, it is possible that both articles would make sense vis-à-vis this relation in consideration with the Sufis' views on the close relation between love and gnosis.

In the sixth article, the biography of Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350) and his views of *al-ḥaqīqat al-Muḥammadiyya*, Rustom claims that al-Qayṣarī's commentary on the Seal of the Unique Wisdom in the Word of Muḥammad in *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* does not simply convey, but rather displays, an original thought. In his opinion, al-Qayṣarī's *al-ḥaqīqat al-Muḥammadiyya* is identical with the First Intellect (120) which, in Islamic thought, is a main concept that enables the explanation of the

beginning of creation. That is why, the identity al-Qayṣarī established, Rustom supposes, shows that he thought the creation began with the Prophet and ended with him. Providing examples for al-Qayṣarī's cosmological understanding centred on *al-ḥaqīqat al-Muḥammadiyya*, the author stresses this individual's differentiation of "spiritual throne" and "objective throne" for the station that Ibn al-ʿArabī called "throne (ʿarsh)" (122). In this context, the spiritual throne is another name for the first intellect, which is identical with *al-ḥaqīqat al-Muḥammadiyya*, whereas the objective throne is identical with the celestial sphere of Atlas that spreads grace to the world. Pointing out the link between the divine name of al-Raḥmān and the throne, Rustom suggests that al-Qayṣarī uses this differentiation to explain both *al-ḥaqīqat al-Muḥammadiyya* as the first designation from the divine realm, and the spread of divine grace to the entire world (124).

In the seventh article, Rustom is drawn to Mullā Ṣadrā's views on psychology, eschatology, and imagination following from his commentary on the following ḥadith: "Humans are asleep; they awaken once they die." According to Rustom's thesis, Mullā Ṣadrā's explication successfully juxtaposes Islamic philosophy's eschatological ideas and theoretical mysticism from the fourth/tenth century to the eleventh/seventeeth century. Composed of two sections, the article first details the relation Mullā Ṣadrā established among illusion, mirror, dream, and reality, all of which are metaphors for describing the link between real and relative existence that have been used since the time of Ibn al-ʿArabī. Following Mullā Ṣadrā's formulations, Rustom remarks that the images in dreams and mirrors are simultaneously both real and unreal and convey what Mullā Ṣadrā defines as what "the earthly existence consisted of [was] a sleep and the life herein a dream," and the existence *per se* as "God's dream" with reference to Ibn al-ʿArabī (129-130). In Rustom's opinion, Mullā Ṣadrā's assessment of the imaginal world and the awakening of the human soul after its departure from the body appears to be congruent with Ibn al-ʿArabī's perspectives, but contrary to the psychological theory developed by Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037).

In the second section of the article, the author mentions the parties engaged in the time-honoured debate concerning resurrection and emphasises that Mullā Ṣadrā defends the bodily resurrection, in the line of Ibn al-ʿArabī, by analysing how he treats the views of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1292), after presenting the opinions of philosophers like al-Fārābī and Avicenna (134-141).

In the last article, Rustom takes up the imagination of soul and world by William Chittick, who "approaches the contemporary issues by looking through the lens of the intellectual lineage of premodern Islamic thought." According to Chit-

tick, in the modern era cosmology is circumscribed by scientism, which approaches the world as a concrete and objective phenomenon and thus spoils the dynamic relation between it and the human. Instead, Rustom proposes the perspective that Chittick dubbed "anthropocosmic vision" (149), according to which the soul and the world are a single continuum. Since there is no absolute opposition between object and subject, humans can know the world inasmuch as they can know about themselves (*macrocosm* and *microcosm*).

The human's recognition of the truth of both itself and of the world is possible only through the knowledge of the divine names. On this point, Rustom underlines the necessity of submitting to divine guidance to acquire knowledge of the divine names, for otherwise the human would turn into a measure and create its own names. However, this human attempt to name will always remain incomplete, and we would lose the equilibrium in our nature. For this reason, Rustom, as stated by Chittick, stresses that we have to actualize the divine names if we are to recover our equilibrium. That is, we have to be in harmony with them and live in accordance with our theomorphic nature. By doing so, we can see the world and ourselves as a continuum (154).

Sufi Metafiziği attests to Mohammed Rustom's deep knowledge of and familiarity with the literature of Sufism and Islamic philosophy, both classical and modern. His book is an important contribution to contemporary studies of Sufism, especially with respect to its close attention to the classical texts in assessing the metaphysical perspectives of the Sufis who lived during various periods. However, it cannot be said that the publishers paid the same amount of attention. This is especially true as regards the apparent faults in the translation of certain concepts and errors of transcription, both of which are so widespread that it is almost impossible for readers who are versed in Islamic thought to enjoy the book. Therefore, substantial editorial reworking has to be undertaken before the book can be reprinted.