



Philosophical Analysis of Space and Time In Ibn Arabi's Teachings

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Abstract: *This article analyzes the philosophical views on the concepts of time and space as contemplated by Ibn Arabi. The main goal is to examine the essence of time from Ibn Arabi's sufistical perspective, its role as a means of connection with the Divine, and its relationship with the movement of the universe. The article discusses the interconnection between the concepts of time and space, as well as the link between time and quantity. Ibn Arabi defines the relative and dialectical characteristics of time by explaining its continuity, circular movement, and the movement in existence. Additionally, the value of time in sufism, its inseparable significance in human life, and the necessity of understanding the immeasurable nature of time are highlighted.*

Keywords: *Sufism, Religion, Theology, Humanity, Methodology, Spirituality, Philosophy, Wisdom, Teachings, Literature*

Introduction

The general forms of existence in the world are movement, space, and time. Space expresses the arrangement, scale, and scope of the objects and their constituent points that make up the world, while time represents the sequence and duration of events and processes occurring in the world. Philosophers have proposed various ideas about space and time (Ali, 2020). This philosophical category is explored in sufism through the concepts of space and time.

Space is a system of relationships that describes the extent and relative positioning of objects. Time is a system of relationships that describes the continuity and sequence of processes.

Any object, thing, or event always exists alongside other objects and events in the universe, possessing the characteristic of extent. Additionally, they alter their internal and external states relative to each other, occurring at different speeds, rhythms, rates, and durations in various situations (Barghouti, 2020). The collection of these indicators, which may be seen individually as unique, provides us with an understanding of time. Space and time function as forms of infinite existence in their diversity. Throughout all times, humanity has reflected on the nature of the time and space in which it exists, striving to

understand the peculiarities of time and space. Thinkers and sufis of every era have attempted to unravel the mysteries of time, the moment, and similar concepts (Hidayat, 2023).

Methodology

This article examines Ibn Arabi's sufistical views on time and space, analyzing their philosophical and religious significance. The research methodology includes a variety of scientific approaches, with analytical, comparative, and explanatory methods taking a prominent place (Lala, 2023).

Firstly, through the analytical method, Ibn Arabi's views on time and space were deeply analyzed. It was studied how these concepts are shaped in his works and what role they play in sufistical thinking. Within the framework of Ibn Arabi's doctrine of "Wahdat al-Wujud" (Unity of Being), time and space are linked to the human spiritual state, and the way they manifest in sufistical experience and their impact on practice were explained (Carrión, 2020).

Secondly, by applying the comparative analysis method, Ibn Arabi's views were compared with those of other sufis and philosophers. This method highlighted the similarities and differences in the concepts of time and space across various philosophical schools. In particular, Ibn Arabi's understanding of time as a relative concept and the compatibility of this view with the sufistical perspective were described.

Using the explanatory method, Ibn Arabi's concepts of time and space were explored not only through his philosophical views but also his religious and sufistical practices. This method revealed the unparalleled significance of time and space in sufism. Ibn Arabi's sufistical approach to time, and its importance in understanding truth and attaining closeness to Allah, was thoroughly explained.

Furthermore, through the philosophical method, Ibn Arabi's views on time and space were subjected to deep philosophical analysis. This approach helped create a clearer understanding of the unity of time and space in his works, as well as their impact on life and the human spiritual state.

Finally, through the classification method, Ibn Arabi's thoughts on time and space were divided into specific categories, and their interconnection and meaning were clarified. This method allowed the systematic presentation of Ibn Arabi's sufistical conceptions of time and space in the article.

With the help of this methodology, the article provided a comprehensive and thorough analysis of Ibn Arabi's sufistical views on time and space (Rajabi, 2023). The significance of these concepts and their place in human life were explored from philosophical, religious, and sufistical perspectives.

Result and Discussion

In philosophical literature, movement is a philosophical category that expresses the changeability, the essential inseparable characteristic of existence. Movement is the fundamental mode of existence. Any change is considered movement, and it occurs in a specific space and time (Kars, 2022).

The Arab philosopher Al-Kindi divided movement into six types:

1. Emergence
2. Annihilation
3. Extension
4. Contraction
5. Change
6. Displacement.

Any movement occurs within a specific period of time. Time consists of the speed or slowness of movement and connects the past with the future. Matter also has a form, and it is through this formal distinction that one object differs from another. Al-Kindi also acknowledged the spatial attribute of existence. He stated that space is the area that contains a body, the surface outside the body (Tsurkan, 2019). He asserted that space and the thing filling it are interconnected. If there is space, there must be something to fill it, and vice versa, if there is something filling the space, there must be space.

Today, it is clear that there is a connection between the past and the future. Time always transitions from one form to another, encompassing three states of existence – the past, the present, and the future. We are accustomed to thinking that time moves only in one direction – from the past to the future. In the universe, time is both the longest enduring and simultaneously the shortest entity, and it cannot be stopped or reversed. Time, after all, is a dimension (Volokhova, 2020).

Ibn Arabi paid special attention to the issue of space and time, which are attributes of existence. The sufi wrote a separate work titled “Risalat al-Waqt wal-On” (“Treatise on Time and the Moment”). Although this treatise is small in volume, it plays a significant role in revealing the meaning and essence of time (Haekal, 2021).

As a sufi, Ibn Arabi deeply understood the value of time. In explaining time, he approaches the concept from a sufistical perspective. Relying on Qur’anic verses and hadiths, he supported his views. The treatise begins with praise for Allah and blessings for His Prophet, followed by an address to the sufistic reader: “O, brother who has achieved happiness through the grace of Allah, worthy of praise. Know that the key to the greatest sufis who have reached the Divine presence lies in preserving time strictly, adhering to its rulings and principles. Time is a term widely used among these sufis, and it is a very complex and delicate matter. Only those who have benefited from the sacred light of insight, supported by supreme grace and divine truth, are aware of it” (Arabi, 2004).

In all creatures, including the animal and plant worlds, there is a very precise discipline of time. That is, all processes occur within strictly defined time intervals. Everything is created and destroyed by Time. While we may not know how this works in

the universe, on Earth, there is no being that does not account for Time. The infinite essence of time is given to beings in the form of "life" as its limited particles.

According to Ibn Arabi, only those sufis who have reached the Divine presence can truly understand the essence of time, and they regard it as a means of connection with the Divine. Sufis value time and adhere to its sufistical rules and regulations. Thus, for the representatives of sufism, the followers of the path, and the seekers, time has specific criteria for practice, and they strictly observe these principles (Kirzhaeva, 2024).

In Ibn Arabi's doctrine of Wahdat al-Wujud, when discussing the Cosmic existence acquired by Man, he explained in his work *Haqiqat al-Haqa'iq* that in the created world, the existence of Man is the original (principle), while the existence of other beings is the derivative (branch, part). He elaborated: "Indeed, the world was created for Man, and Man (his creation) is the primary purpose". In his humanism, which intertwines with the philosophy of Wahdat al-Wujud, the Perfect Man is the best of humans, a being higher than the limits of time and space, with both inner and outer virtues.

We do not know the future, and thinking about what is unknown is a mistake. The most valuable thing is the time given to you between the past and the future. It should not be wasted, said the sufis.

Sufis experience two types of time:

- *Faqd* – the state of losing time.
- *Wajd* – the state of being within time, mastering it.

The sufis said that time is reality, it exists outside of our control, and there is no freedom to choose it. Whether we like it or not, time exists. We cannot buy time from the market, nor can we exchange it for anything, and even by giving our lives, we cannot retrieve time. A person cannot bring time closer to themselves or push it away (Afifi).

The sufi's statement, "It is an intermediary between the majesty and beauty of Allah", also carried a sufistical-philosophical meaning. "Jalal and Jamal" are attributes of Allah, widely used in the sciences of theology and gnosis. In his work *Risalai Qudsiya*, Khwaja Muhammad Porso explains the significance of the attributes "jalal and jamal" for those following the path of the Naqshbandi order, citing Bahauddin Naqshband: "The seeker should nurture the qualities of jalal and jamal. Let jalal be jamal for him, and let jamal be jalal for him. When fear dominates, let hope prevail, and when hope dominates, let fear prevail. At the moment when the quality of jalal manifests, he should also be able to turn towards the quality of jamal" (Porso, 2020).

In sufism, the concepts of time and space are presented as interconnected and unified. Andoqi, a disciple of Yusuf Hamadoni, considered the elements of *ixvon* (the place of spiritual gathering), *mako* (space), and *zamon* (time) to be essential for the life of the sufis. The Yassavi dervish link the development of individuals to these elements of time, space, and *ixvon*, stating: "The progression of beginners, the unfolding of sufis, and the manifestation of the advanced are all dependent on these four foundations:

1. Space
2. Time

3. *Ixvon*
4. Connection with the Sultan"

Developing these ideas further, Mahdumi A'zam also aligned with them and presented the four principles of the order (*tariqat*):

- ***Khan*** – Ensuring the effectiveness of the order's activities depends on the rulers, and it is their primary responsibility.
- ***Ixvon*** – Members of the order must be compassionate, empathetic, like-minded, and united in their actions.
- ***Makon*** – A suitable environment (such as a place of residence, *khanqah*, mosque, etc.) is necessary for the members of the order to fulfill their duties.
- ***Zamon*** – Time, moments, and opportunities are the essence of valuing every breath and living in mindfulness.

In Ibn Arabi's view, time is the command of Allah upon you, something that has been imposed upon you. Time is the existence that stands between two non-existences, the present moment in which you are situated.

The sufis have defined time according to the individual's relationship with it. Being in time, understanding the opportunity within it, living in the present moment – in the span between the past and the future – and focusing on enhancing the productivity of time have been given serious attention (Hayati, 2024). Thus, for the sufis, time is not an abstract concept, but one intricately connected to the human being, representing an objective reality that can lead a person to the happiness of both worlds. Just as time connects humanity to eternity, a person can also make time immortal and eternal. The issue of time has been investigated and analyzed by Ibn Arabi from the perspectives of philosophy and *kalam* (Islamic theology).

In his views on time, the sufi stands apart from previous philosophers, theologians, and sufis. According to him, time is a relative concept, arising from Adam (non-existence), stretching in the imagination, and actually only consisting of the present moment – that is, the very now. We divide past time into what has passed, and the time that will come into the future. It is constant, continuous, and constantly renewed. Time is not something that belongs to existence. Time arises when the question "when" is asked (al-Namri et al, 2007).

Ibn Arabi's philosophy suggests that the wisdom behind Allah's creation of creatures lies in linking time with the movement of the universe. This movement is continuously renewed and embraces one present moment after another. Each moment passes within the current instant. Since time is a cyclical circle, the movement follows it in a circular manner, continuing infinitely without a beginning or end. The world undergoes constant and eternal changes, both known and unknown to us. The results of visible movements manifest in years, measurements, and numbers, and these movements transition from one place to another. Ibn Arabi wrote: "There is no stillness in the world. Indeed, it is constantly and eternally shifting from one state to another – whether in this world or the hereafter, visibly or invisibly, known or unknown – there is always movement" (Jawhar, 2003).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the world is full of mysteries and secrets. A person must first understand their own inner secrets. As the Greek philosopher Democritus once said: "In this world, either nothing is truly real, or we cannot perceive what is truly real".

Therefore, the most important thing for a person is to find blessings in their life. The length or shortness of one's life is not within their control. From the perspective of youth, life seems like an endless future, whereas from the perspective of old age, it feels like a very short past. Every moment of life is precious – like gold – and should be used wisely. Moreover, in the end, you will forget everything, and in turn, everyone will forget you.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above:

1. *The essence of the category of time* in Sufism teachings is revealed for the first time through systematic, historical, logical, and comparative analytical methods.
2. *In Ibn Arabi's teachings*, it is revealed for the first time that time is closely related to quantity, and its manifestation in existence is determined by the quantity of time.
3. *Time's dialectical connection to the movement of the universe* is explained through the concepts of moment, instant, movement, the continuous renewal of movement, and the existence of cyclical and eternal motion.
4. *The priceless and unique value of time* is highlighted from the perspective of human life, showing its importance as a crucial and irreplaceable resource.
5. *The absence of stillness in the universe*, where existence, whether visible or invisible, known or unknown, is always in motion, is substantiated.
6. *In Ibn Arabi's teachings*, both the past and the future are subject to the judgment of the present moment in time.

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