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An Analysis of the Compositional System in the Paintings of Sultan Muhammad and Its Mystical Implications Based on Ibn Arabi's Theory of the Wahdat al-Wujūd (Unity of Being)

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Abstract

Persian miniature painting is one of the most significant artistic domains in which mystical concepts are manifested within Islamic art. In this tradition, visual structures function not merely as decorative elements but also as carriers of profound semantic and philosophical meanings. Among Persian miniature painters, Sultan Muhammad, the eminent master of the Tabriz School during the Safavid period, occupies a distinguished position in the history of Iranian art due to the complexity of his compositions, structural coherence, and rich symbolic content. Although numerous studies have examined the aesthetic, historical, and literary aspects of his works, the relationship between the compositional system of his paintings and mystical concepts has rarely been investigated within a coherent theoretical framework. Accordingly, the present study aims to analyze the compositional system in Sultan Muhammad's paintings and to elucidate its mystical implications based on Ibn Arabi's doctrine of the Unity of Being (Wahdat al-Wujūd). Ibn Arabi's theory of the Unity of Being is founded on the principle that true existence is singular and belongs exclusively to the Divine Essence. At the same time, the multiplicity of the world represents manifestations and epiphanies of that single reality. Within this perspective, the universe is regarded as the arena in which the Divine Names and Attributes are revealed, and the relationship between unity and multiplicity constitutes one of the most fundamental concepts of Islamic mysticism. Based on this theoretical framework, the present research seeks to demonstrate how the relationships among visual elements, the spatial organization of the image, the arrangement of figures, and compositional patterns in Sultan Muhammad's paintings may reflect the mystical concepts of unity, manifestation, multiplicity, and the return to unity. In terms of purpose, this study is fundamental research, and in terms of methodology, it adopts a descriptive-analytical approach. The data were collected through library and documentary sources. The research sample comprises selected major paintings by Sultan Muhammad, chosen through purposive sampling, and analyzed in terms of compositional components and the theoretical principles of Ibn Arabi's mysticism. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the structural relationship between compositional organization and the mystical concepts of the Unity of Being, in contrast to previous studies that have primarily concentrated on the historical, stylistic, or iconographic aspects of Sultan Muhammad's works. Furthermore, the study attempts to explain the visual mechanisms of meaning production within the context of Islamic mysticism. The findings indicate that the compositional system in Sultan Muhammad's paintings facilitates the representation of mystical concepts through the creation of unity among diverse elements, the hierarchical organization of space, the centralization of semantic focal points, and the interconnection of dispersed visual components. Moreover, many of the visual structures in these works can be interpreted through the framework of the relationship between unity and multiplicity in Ibn Arabi's thought. Consequently, composition in Sultan Muhammad's paintings should not be regarded merely as an aesthetic device; rather, it functions as a meaningful system through which the fundamental concepts of Islamic mysticism are articulated and manifested in visual form.

Keywords: Sultan muhammad, Persian miniature painting, composition, Islamic mysticism, Wahdat al-wujūd, Ibn Arabi, Safavid art.

1 | Introduction

In Persian miniature painting, the image has always functioned not only as a means of representing literary, historical, and religious narratives but also as a medium for the manifestation of philosophical ideas, mystical concepts, and the artist's worldview. [1] In the tradition of Islamic art, the artwork often functions beyond

mere representation and becomes a field for the manifestation of truth, meaning, and spiritual experience. From this perspective, the study of Persian miniature painting is not limited to the analysis of formal, aesthetic, and stylistic elements, but also requires an examination of the underlying intellectual and mystical layers embedded within the structure of the work. Among the prominent painters of Iran, Sultan Muhammad of Tabriz holds a distinguished position. His works, regarded as some of the most significant examples of the Tabriz School during the Safavid period, are characterized by unique compositional arrangements, spatial organization, diversity of pictorial elements, harmony of colors, and structural complexity. Many scholars consider Sultan Muhammad's paintings to represent the peak of the integration of technical mastery and artistic thought in Persian miniature painting. However, most existing studies on his works have focused on historical, stylistic, literary, and iconographic aspects, with less attention given to the relationship between compositional structure and mystical concepts. On the other hand, Islamic mysticism is considered one of the most important intellectual foundations of Iranian-Islamic art. Within this framework, Ibn Arabi's theory of the Unity of Being (*Wahdat al-Wujūd*) is regarded as one of the most influential mystical systems in Islamic thought. According to this theory, true existence belongs exclusively to the Divine Essence, and all beings and phenomena in the world are diverse manifestations of that single reality.[2] In this view, multiplicity is not considered in opposition to unity; rather, it is understood as its manifestation and expression. Accordingly, concepts such as unity-in-multiplicity, theophany (*tajallī*), manifestation (*zuhūr*), the hierarchies of existence, and the return of multiplicity to unity are regarded as some of the fundamental principles of Ibn Arabi's thought. Given the importance of mysticism in Iranian culture and the semantic capacities of Persian miniature painting, the question arises as to whether the compositional system in Sultan Muhammad's paintings can be interpreted beyond a purely visual organization and analyzed within the framework of Ibn Arabi's doctrine of the Unity of Being (*Wahdat al-Wujūd*). In other words, can the relationships among pictorial elements, the organization of space, the centralization of compositional components, and the interconnection of multiple elements carry mystical implications and reflect a worldview grounded in the Unity of Being within the structure of the artwork? Accordingly, the main problem of this study is to examine the relationship between the compositional system in Sultan Muhammad's paintings and the mystical concepts of Ibn Arabi's theory of the Unity of Being. This research seeks to determine how the visual organization of Sultan Muhammad's works can be interpreted within a mystical framework and what relationship exists between compositional structure and the representation of unity, multiplicity, manifestation, and theophany. In this regard, the sub-questions of the study are: What are the main characteristics of the compositional system in Sultan Muhammad's paintings? What mystical implications can be derived from the compositional structure of his works? To what extent does the compositional system in Sultan Muhammad's paintings correspond to the concepts of unity, multiplicity, manifestation, and appearance in Ibn Arabi's doctrine of the Unity of Being? Can the composition of Sultan Muhammad's works be interpreted as a visual mechanism for representing the mystical doctrine of Unity of Being? The main objective of this research is to analyze the compositional system in Sultan Muhammad's paintings and to explain its mystical implications based on Ibn Arabi's theory of the Unity of Being. The secondary objectives include identifying structural components of composition in selected works, analyzing the organization of visual elements, examining the reflection of mystical concepts within pictorial structure, and explaining the relationship between artistic form and mystical thought in Persian miniature painting. Based on theoretical considerations and preliminary studies, this research hypothesizes that the compositional system in Sultan Muhammad's paintings does not function merely as an aesthetic device but rather as a meaning-making structure. Through the creation of unity among diverse elements, the hierarchical organization of space, the connection between dispersed visual components, and the guidance of the viewer's gaze, it represents the fundamental concepts of Ibn Arabi's doctrine of the Unity of Being. To test this hypothesis, the present study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach based on library and documentary research, examining selected works by Sultan Muhammad. In this process, compositional components such as spatial structure, distribution of elements, visual focal points, interrelationships among parts, and overall pictorial organization are identified and then analyzed within the theoretical framework of the Unity of Being. It is expected that the findings of

this study will reveal new dimensions of the relationship between Persian miniature painting and Islamic mysticism and provide a framework for the semantic interpretation of artworks based on mystical principles.

2| Theoretical Foundations of the Study

2.1| The Theory of the Unity of Being in Ibn Arabi's Thought

Speculative mysticism ('Irfān-e Naẓarī) in Islamic civilization is regarded as one of the most significant intellectual systems for explaining the relationship between God, the universe, and human beings. Within this framework, Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn Arabi (560–638 AH) is considered one of the most prominent theorists of Islamic mysticism, who profoundly influenced Islamic philosophy, mysticism, literature, and art through his formulation of the concept of the “Unity of Being” (Wahdat al-Wujūd). According to this theory, true existence belongs exclusively to God, and all beings in the world are manifestations and theophanies of that single reality. In this view, the multiplicity of beings does not imply a plurality of existence, but rather refers to diverse manifestations of a single truth that appears at different levels of being. Ibn Arabi considers the universe as the field of manifestation of the Divine Names and Attributes. Every existent is a reflection of the Absolute Reality, and no phenomenon can be understood as independent of that singular existence. From this perspective, the world is not a collection of separate and isolated parts, but rather a network of interconnected relations, all of which ultimately return to a single origin. [3] Therefore, one of the fundamental concepts in Ibn Arabi's mysticism is the relationship between “unity” and “multiplicity,” a relationship in which multiplicity is not the negation of unity but rather its manifestation. The concept of *tajallī* (theophany or divine self-disclosure) also holds a central place in Ibn Arabi's thought. According to this concept, the Divine Reality is manifested at different levels of existence, and the world is a continuous series of manifestations of that single reality. Consequently, every sensory phenomenon can be regarded as a sign pointing toward a reality beyond itself. Such a worldview provides a theoretical framework for understanding Islamic art, an art that is often not concerned with the mere representation of appearances, but rather seeks to point toward spiritual and transcendent dimensions through material forms. Alongside the notion of *tajallī*, the concept of the “Perfect Man” (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*) is also one of the key pillars of Ibn Arabi's thought. The Perfect Man encompasses all levels of existence and serves as the complete mirror of the Divine Names and Attributes. This concept is reflected in many works of Islamic art, particularly in the depiction of sacred figures and spiritual heroes, and can also be employed in the semantic analysis of Persian miniature paintings.

2.2| Unity and Multiplicity in Islamic Art

One of the most important characteristics of Islamic art is the effort to establish a balance between unity and diversity. In architecture, calligraphy, illumination, and miniature painting, multiple visual elements are organized within a coherent structure, forming a harmonious whole. Many scholars have interpreted this feature as a reflection of the monotheistic and mystical worldview of Islamic culture. In Islamic art, unity does not merely refer to symmetry or formal harmony; rather, it signifies the presence of an overarching order underlying the multiplicity of the world [4]. From this perspective, the artwork can be regarded as a reflection of the structure of existence, a structure in which diverse and varied elements, despite their differences, belong to a unified whole. Such an approach is consistent with Ibn Arabi's theoretical framework of the Unity of Being, as in both cases multiplicity is understood as the diverse manifestations of a single reality. In Persian miniature painting, this principle can also be observed in various forms. The multiplicity of figures, the diversity of colors, the complexity of spatial arrangements, and the abundance of pictorial details are all organized within an overarching order. For this reason, the visual structure of the miniature is not merely a formal arrangement, but can also carry philosophical and mystical significations.

2.3 | Composition in Persian Miniature Painting and Its Semantic Function

Composition is one of the fundamental structural elements in the visual arts and refers to the organization of visual components within the pictorial space. In Persian miniature painting, composition is not merely a tool for achieving visual balance; rather, it plays a decisive role in the formation of meaning and in guiding the viewer's perception. Iranian painters typically employed techniques such as centralization, dynamic balance, circular or rotational movement of the gaze, repetition of elements, the integration of different pictorial layers, and hierarchical spatial organization. These characteristics ensure that the viewer, when engaging with the artwork, is not confronted with a simple visual narrative but instead participates in a process of meaning discovery and visual experience. In the works of Sultan Muhammad, bold circular and radial compositions reach a peak of complexity and coherence.[5] The multiplicity of human, natural, and architectural elements, along with the precise relationships among their components, gives rise to a structure in which each element, while maintaining a relative independence, simultaneously forms part of the overall unity of the image. This characteristic is worthy of consideration from a mystical perspective, as it recalls the relationship between unity and multiplicity in Ibn Arabi's thought. Accordingly, the present study regards compositional systems not merely as aesthetic devices, but as meaning-generating mechanisms. The fundamental assumption is that the relationships among pictorial components, the distribution of elements, spatial structure, and the overall organization of the miniature can carry significations related to the concepts of unity, manifestation, theophany, and the return of multiplicity to unity. Therefore, analyzing Sultan Muhammad's works based on the theoretical framework of *Wahdat al-Wujūd* enables a deeper understanding of the relationship between visual structure and mystical worldview. Based on the theoretical framework of the study, an analytical relationship is established between key concepts of the Unity of Being and elements of miniature composition. For instance, unity in Ibn Arabi's thought may be reflected in the overall coherence of the image and the interconnectedness of its multiple components; multiplicity is manifested in the abundance of figures, spaces, and visual elements; theophany (*tajallī*) can be observed in the emergence of a central meaning or visual focal point among diverse components; the hierarchy of existence may be traced in the spatial organization and structural ordering of elements; and the return of multiplicity to unity can be studied through the viewer's visual journey from dispersed elements toward the coherent whole of the composition. Accordingly, the analytical model of the research is composed of two main levels. The first level includes the visual and structural components in Sultan Muhammad's paintings, namely: spatial organization of the image, arrangement of figures and elements, visual focal points and centrality, compositional balance and coherence, repetition and variation of elements, relationships between pictorial components, and the viewer's visual path. The second level consists of mystical concepts derived from Ibn Arabi's theory of the Unity of Being, including: unity, multiplicity, manifestation, hierarchical levels of existence, the relationship between the apparent and the hidden, and the return of multiplicity to unity. In the analytical process, selected paintings by Sultan Muhammad are examined based on these two levels. First, the compositional features of each work are identified and described; then, their possible significations are interpreted in light of the concepts of *Wahdat al-Wujūd*. Thus, the analysis is not based on purely formal similarities, but on the relationship between visual structure and mystical concepts. The analytical model is grounded in the principle that the greater the coherence among the multiple elements of the image, the greater the potential for representing the concept of unity-in-multiplicity. Furthermore, the more the structure of the work is directed toward a coherent whole through centralization, spatial hierarchy, and systematic relationships among its components, the more it can be associated with the mystical foundations of the Unity of Being. Accordingly, the primary aim of this analytical model is to reveal the mechanisms through which the compositional system in Sultan Muhammad's paintings becomes a medium for the manifestation of mystical concepts and the representation of the unity-oriented worldview of Islamic mysticism.

3 | Literature Review

Research on the relationship between miniature painting and mystical concepts has a considerable history within Islamic art studies; however, the examination of the compositional system in Sultan Muhammad's

works within the theoretical framework of Ibn Arabi's doctrine of the Unity of Being has received relatively little attention. Among the relevant studies is Seyyed Hossein Nasr's work, *Islamic Art and Spirituality*. [6] In this book, Nasr regards Islamic art as the visual manifestation of a monotheistic worldview, arguing that artistic structures in Islamic civilization reflect metaphysical and mystical concepts. He emphasizes the connection between divine unity and the visual organization of artworks; however, he does not specifically analyze the paintings of Sultan Muhammad. Similarly, Titus Burckhardt, in his works *Sacred Art in East and West* and *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning*, [7][8] presents the visual structures of Islamic art as manifestations of the principle of unity in multiplicity. Burckhardt demonstrates how order, balance, and harmony among elements in Islamic art can reflect a monotheistic worldview. However, his studies adopt a more general approach to Islamic art, rather than focusing on a case study of Safavid miniature painting. In the field of Persian miniature painting, Sheila Canby, in her book *Persian Painting*, [9] examines the works of Sultan Muhammad and his position within the Tabriz School. She analyzes features such as the complexity of composition, the dynamism of pictorial structure, and the spatial coherence of his works, considering him one of the most prominent painters of the Safavid period. However, Canby's focus is primarily on historical and stylistic aspects, and the mystical implications of compositional structures in his works have not been addressed. In another study, Oleg Grabar, in *The Mediation of Ornament*, [10] examines the role of visual structures in conveying cultural and semantic meanings in Islamic art. His findings suggest that visual elements are not merely decorative but actively participate in the construction of meaning. This perspective provides a theoretical framework for the semantic study of miniature painting; however, it is not directly related to the theory of the Unity of Being or to the works of Sultan Muhammad. A review of previous studies indicates that, on the one hand, numerous works have been conducted on Islamic mysticism, Ibn Arabi's doctrine of the Unity of Being, and the semantic foundations of Islamic art. On the other hand, Sultan Muhammad's works have been examined from historical and aesthetic perspectives. However, studies that specifically investigate the relationship between the compositional system in Sultan Muhammad's paintings and the mystical concepts of Ibn Arabi's theory of the Unity of Being are relatively scarce. Accordingly, the originality of the present research lies in its integration of Persian miniature studies with Ibn Arabi's theoretical mysticism and in its analysis of the mystical implications of the compositional structures in Sultan Muhammad's works.

4 | Research Methodology

The present study is fundamental in terms of purpose and qualitative in nature, and it is conducted using a descriptive-analytical approach. The main objective of the research is to analyze the compositional system in Sultan Muhammad's paintings and to explain its mystical implications based on Ibn Arabi's doctrine of the Unity of Being. Given that the subject of the research is situated within an interdisciplinary field encompassing art, Islamic mysticism, and visual semiotics, and seeks to understand the structural and semantic layers of artworks, a qualitative method was deemed appropriate for achieving the research objectives. Data collection was carried out through library and documentary research. In this regard, sources related to Persian miniature painting, the life and works of Sultan Muhammad, Ibn Arabi's theory of the Unity of Being, studies on Islamic art, and issues of composition and visual semiotics were examined. In addition, visual materials and authentic reproductions of selected miniatures by Sultan Muhammad were collected from academic sources, published manuscripts, and specialized databases of Islamic art. The research population consists of well-known works by Sultan Muhammad, including: *The Court of Kayumars* from the *Shahnameh* of Shah Tahmasp (928 AH), *The Court of Sam Mirza* from the *Divan* of Hafez Cartier (936 AH), and *The Ascension of the Prophet* from the *Khamsa* of Nizami (946–950 AH). These works were selected through purposive sampling, meaning that miniatures were chosen based on their high degree of compositional complexity, diversity of visual elements, spatial organization, and potential for mystical interpretation in accordance with the theoretical framework of the study. In the data analysis stage, a qualitative image analysis method was employed. Accordingly, the main compositional components of each miniature—namely spatial organization, arrangement of figures and elements, visual focal points and centrality, compositional balance and coherence, repetition and variation of elements, relationships between pictorial components, and the viewer's visual path—were first identified and described. These components were then interpreted within the theoretical framework of Ibn Arabi's concepts

of the Unity of Being, such as unity, multiplicity, manifestation (tajallī), hierarchical levels of existence, and the return of multiplicity to unity, and were used as analytical categories to clarify how visual structures may carry mystical significations. The analytical framework of the study is based on the assumption that a meaningful relationship exists between the visual organization of miniature painting and the mystical worldview. Therefore, the analysis is not based on superficial similarities, but on structural relationships between pictorial elements and mystical concepts. In this process, efforts were made to avoid subjective interpretations, and all inferences were grounded in visual evidence and established theoretical foundations. The validity of the research was ensured through the comparison of findings with credible theoretical sources, the cross-analysis of multiple samples, and the use of a clearly defined conceptual framework. Finally, the results of the analysis are presented interpretively in order to demonstrate how the compositional system in Sultan Muhammad's paintings can function as a visual mechanism for representing the concepts of the Unity of Being.

5 | Analysis of the Painting “The Court of Kayumars” by Sultan Muhammad



Fig. 1. Sultan Mohammed. Kayumars' Court. Miniature, detail. "Shahnameh" by Ferdowsi. 1525-1535. Geneva, Collection of Sadrudin Aga Khan.

The painting “The Court of Kayumars” is one of Sultan Muhammad’s most renowned works and stands as one of the most distinguished miniatures in the Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp. This work is significant not only in terms of technical mastery, chromatic richness, and compositional complexity, but also due to its unique spatial organization and the relationships among its pictorial elements, which provide a strong potential for mystical and semantic interpretation. In this study, the painting is analyzed based on compositional components and within the theoretical framework of Ibn Arabi’s doctrine of the Unity of Being (Wahdat al-Wujūd).

5.1 | Spatial Organization and Overall Structure of the Image

The overall structure of the painting is formed on the basis of a multi-layered and hierarchical composition. The pictorial space extends from the lowest part of the mountain landscape to its highest point, and human, animal, and natural elements are arranged across different levels of the composition. The arrangement of figures, positioned sequentially and symmetrically on both sides of the image, creates a circular and spiral (helical) movement that surrounds the entire scene.[11] The peak of beauty and visual self-display can be observed in the rocky formations of Sultan Muhammad’s painting. These coral-like rocks, with their wave-

like movements, surround the entire pictorial space. They are rendered with remarkable detail, and some of them take the form of demons, animals, and fantastical creatures. These rocks appear alive and animated, possessing a sense of spirit and vitality, flowing upward in a continuous movement. Moreover, the colors in this painting are exceptionally vivid and pure, and the use of color contrast further enhances its brilliance and visual richness. In contrast to the natural perspective of Western art, the pictorial space is organized in a vertical and ascending structure, in such a way that the viewer's gaze is guided from the peripheral areas toward the center and then toward the uppermost point of the composition.[11] This vertical structure can be associated with the concept of the "hierarchies of existence" in Ibn Arabi's mysticism. In his thought, existence is composed of multiple levels, and beings occupy different degrees in the manifestation of the Ultimate Reality. Likewise, the spatial organization of the painting evokes a movement from multiplicity toward centrality and transcendence, recalling the ontological journey from lower levels of existence toward unity. In this sense, the ascending structure of the composition may be interpreted as a visual expression of the mystical progression through the various stages of being toward the realization of the One.

5.2 | Visual Focal Point and Centrality

The most important visual focal point of the painting is the figure of Kayumars, who is positioned at the highest point of the composition. His elevated and central placement causes the viewer's gaze, after wandering through the numerous details of the image, to ultimately converge upon this point. [11] The use of distinctive colors, unique attire, and a privileged spatial position further emphasizes the visual importance of this figure. From a mystical perspective, this centrality may be interpreted as a symbol of the principle of unity within multiplicity. Just as, in the doctrine of the Unity of Being, all levels of existence ultimately return to a single Reality, and the multiplicity observed in the world is not evidence of independently existing realities but rather the result of diverse manifestations of one unique Truth, so too the compositional structure of the painting directs the viewer from the plurality of visual elements toward a single central focus. This central focal point thus serves as a visual expression of the metaphysical unity that underlies and encompasses all multiplicity.[2] Ibn Arabi maintains that the universe is like a mirror in which the Divine Names and Attributes are manifested, and that every being represents a particular mode of this manifestation. Thus, although we encounter different levels of beings, forms, and phenomena in the outward world, at a deeper level they all belong to a single source. This perspective leads to an understanding of multiplicity not as the opposite of unity, but as the very mode through which unity reveals and discloses itself. A similar logic can be observed in *The Court of Kayumars*. Although the numerous human, animal, and natural elements each possess an independent visual identity, they are ultimately organized within a coherent and harmonious whole. As a result, after moving through the diverse layers of the composition, the viewer arrives at an awareness of the work's structural unity a unity that may be interpreted as a visual reflection of Ibn Arabi's idea that all levels of existence ultimately return to a single Reality. Likewise, in this painting, all visual elements are ultimately directed toward a central focal point. In this sense, Kayumars may be understood as a symbol of spiritual centrality and the unifying axis of the composition, serving as the point through which the multiplicity of forms is gathered into a harmonious and meaningful whole.

5.3 | Arrangement of Elements and Figures

Human figures, animals, rocks, trees, and vegetation are distributed throughout the pictorial surface; however, this distribution does not result in disorder or chaos. Each element occupies a specific position and acquires meaning through its relationship with the other components of the composition. The visual relationships among the various elements create a sense of internal order, which is reinforced through directional lines, the gaze of the figures, and the balanced use of color.[5] This characteristic can be closely associated with the concept of "unity in multiplicity" in Ibn Arabi's thought. The numerous elements of the painting, despite their apparent diversity, are organized within a coherent and integrated whole, and no component exists independently of the overall structure of the work. Just as the multiplicity of beings in Ibn Arabi's mysticism is understood as the manifestation of a single Reality, the diverse elements of the miniature are likewise subordinated to and unified within the overall coherence of the composition. In this way, visual diversity does

not lead to fragmentation; rather, it contributes to the expression of a deeper underlying unity that governs the entire image.

5.4 | Balance and Compositional Coherence

One of the most significant characteristics of this painting is the complex balance established among its various elements. The visual density in one area of the composition is counterbalanced by elements in other sections, ensuring that no single part disrupts the overall coherence of the work. This balance is achieved not through strict geometric symmetry but rather through a dynamic equilibrium among the components of the image. From a mystical perspective, such coherence may be interpreted as a reflection of the cosmic order, an order in which the diverse elements of the universe, despite their differences, are harmonized within the totality of existence. [8] This interpretation corresponds closely with Ibn Arabi's doctrine of the Unity of Being, which views the world as a harmonious ensemble of manifestations of a single Reality. In this sense, the compositional balance of the painting may be understood as a visual expression of the underlying unity that sustains and organizes the multiplicity of existence.

5.5 | Repetition and Diversity of Elements

In the painting, one can observe the repetition of forms such as rocks, trees, vegetation, and groups of human figures. However, no two elements are entirely identical, and each repetition is accompanied by subtle variations. This characteristic creates visual rhythm and dynamism within the structure of the image. From a mystical perspective, this feature may be associated with the concept of *tajallī* (divine manifestation). In Ibn Arabi's theory, the One Reality appears in multiple forms, and each manifestation represents a new disclosure of that same Reality. Accordingly, the repeated yet varied elements of the painting can be interpreted as visual expressions of a single underlying principle that reveals itself through diverse forms without losing its essential unity. This interplay between repetition and variation reinforces the notion that multiplicity is not separate from unity, but rather constitutes the very mode through which unity becomes visible and perceptible.[2] Therefore, repetition accompanied by variation in the painting may be understood as a visual reflection of the concepts of *tajallī* (manifestation) and *zuhūr* (appearance). In Ibn Arabi's thought, *tajallī* refers to the revelation and disclosure of Divine Reality through the various levels of existence. Ibn Arabi maintains that the Divine Essence, in its state of absolute hiddenness (*ghayb al-muṭlaq*), transcends direct human perception and knowledge; however, it becomes manifest in the world through its Divine Names and Attributes. Consequently, all beings in the universe are regarded as diverse manifestations and appearances of the single Divine Reality, each reflecting an aspect of that truth according to its existential capacity.[3] From Ibn Arabi's perspective, *tajallī* (divine manifestation) is a continuous and ongoing process, such that the world is renewed at every moment through a new disclosure of the Divine Reality. Therefore, the multiplicity of beings does not indicate separation from the Absolute Reality, but rather represents diverse manifestations of a single unified existence. Within this framework, observing the world is equivalent to witnessing the signs and manifestations of the Divine, and every outward form can serve as a pathway toward understanding the inner truth and the underlying unity hidden behind multiplicity.

5.6 | The Viewer's Visual Path

The viewer's gaze in this work does not follow a linear trajectory; rather, it moves circularly among the numerous elements of the composition. The eye passes through different parts of the mountains, vegetation, animals, and groups of human figures, ultimately arriving at the figure of Kayumars. This rotational and gradual movement creates a contemplative visual experience of the artwork.[11] This process can be understood as a visual equivalent of the movement from multiplicity toward unity. The viewer is first confronted with the diversity and dispersion of elements, but gradually comes to perceive the coherent and integrated whole of the composition. Such an experience corresponds to one of the fundamental concepts in Ibn Arabi's mysticism, namely the return of multiplicity to the One Reality. From Ibn Arabi's perspective, the universe is composed of countless forms of multiplicity; however, these multiplicities do not possess

independent or separate existence. Every being, every form, and every phenomenon is a manifestation of the single Divine Reality, revealed at a specific ontological level. For this reason, the mystic's path of knowledge begins with the observation of diversity and multiplicity in the world, but ultimately leads to the realization of the unity underlying these multiplicities. Ibn Arabi describes this process as a movement from appearance (zāhir) to inner reality (bāṭin), and from multiplicity to unity—a journey in which the seeker realizes that all diverse forms in the world are manifestations of a single, unified Truth. A similar structure can be observed in the visual experience of *The Court of Kayumars*. The viewer's gaze moves among the numerous details of the composition, shifting from one section to another. However, with continued observation, the viewer gradually recognizes that these dispersed elements are not chaotic, but are organized within a unified and coherent structure. As a result, perception moves beyond isolated parts toward an understanding of the whole. In other words, the viewer is guided from the multiplicity of elements toward the unity of the composition. This process can be interpreted as a reflection of one of the fundamental principles of Ibn Arabi's mysticism. Just as the mystic, in the spiritual journey, moves from witnessing the multiplicity of the world toward the realization of the Unity of Being, the viewer, in this visual experience, moves from observing diverse and scattered elements toward the perception of a unified whole. In this reading, *Kayumars* is not merely the central figure of the narrative, but can also be understood as a symbol of centrality and unity around which all elements of the composition acquire meaning.[12] From this perspective, the composition of the work is not merely an aesthetic arrangement, but an epistemic and semantic structure that recreates an experience analogous to the mystical movement from multiplicity to unity. Therefore, the viewer's visual trajectory in the painting "*The Court of Kayumars*" can be understood as a visual embodiment of the idea of unity in multiplicity, a concept that constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of Ibn Arabi's doctrine of the Unity of Being.

5.7 | Analytical Conclusion

The analysis of the painting "*The Court of Kayumars*" demonstrates that its compositional system functions beyond a purely aesthetic organization. The hierarchical spatial structure, the centrality of the figure of *Kayumars*, the coherence among diverse elements, repetition combined with variation, and the guidance of the viewer's gaze toward a single focal point can all be interpreted within the framework of Ibn Arabi's doctrine of the Unity of Being. Accordingly, the painting "*The Court of Kayumars*" is not merely a representation of a mythical narrative; rather, through its visual language, it also reflects concepts such as unity, multiplicity, manifestation (tajalli), and the hierarchies of existence. In this sense, it stands as a significant example of the interrelation between artistic structure and mystical worldview in Persian miniature painting.

Table 1. Analysis of the Painting "*The Court of Kayumars*" Based on Ibn Arabi's Theory of Wahdat al-Wujud (Unity of Being).

Analytical Component	Visual Features of the Painting	Mystical Interpretation Based on Ibn
Spatial Organization	Vertical and multi-layered structure with an upward movement	Representation of the ontological hierarchy and the journey from multiplicity to unity
Visual Focus	Placement of <i>Kayumars</i> at the highest and most central part of the composition	Symbol of the centrality of Truth and the unifying axis of existence
Arrangement of Elements	Orderly distribution of humans, animals, and natural elements	Manifestation of the principle of unity within multiplicity
Balance and Cohesion	Harmony among numerous elements without visual disorder	Reflection of cosmic order and the unity of being
Repetition and Variation	Repetition of natural forms with subtle differences	Expression of manifestation and the diverse appearances of a single reality
Viewer's Gaze Movement	Circulation of the eye through details and return to the center	Epistemological movement from multiplicity to the witnessing of unity
Final Mystical Significance	Overall coherence of the pictorial structure	Visual representation of unity in multiplicity and the levels of existence

6 | Analysis of the Painting The Court of Sam Mirza by Sultan Muhammad.



Fig. 2. Sultan Muhammad, *The Court of Sam Mirza (Eid Celebration)*, from the Cartier Hafez Divan, 936 AH / 1530 CE.

The Court of Sam Mirza is among the most distinguished works of Sultan Muhammad, demonstrating his mastery in the complex organization of space, the harmonious arrangement of numerous elements, and the creation of balance among pictorial components. While the painting depicts a courtly scene, its structure transcends a merely historical or royal narrative and, through its compositional strategies, allows for a mystical interpretation. In this analysis, the visual structure of the painting is examined through its compositional elements and in light of Ibn Arabi's theory of Wahdat al-Wujud (Unity of Being).

6.1 | Spatial Organization and Overall Composition

The spatial structure of the painting is based on a multi-layered organization of visual elements. Architecture, figures, decorative motifs, and environmental components are distributed across different pictorial planes, creating a complex yet orderly space. Unlike the naturalistic and three-dimensional space characteristic of Western art, space in this painting is presented expansively and simultaneously before the viewer, allowing multiple spatial levels to be perceived at once.[13] In this work, unlike Western art, the primary objective is not to create the illusion of a realistic three-dimensional space. Rather than adhering to the principles of linear perspective, the composition is structured according to a spatial and multidimensional perspective. The size of figures and objects is not necessarily determined by their distance from the viewer; instead, more significant figures may be depicted on a larger scale. Likewise, architectural structures and interior spaces are represented

in a simultaneous manner, allowing a greater number of details to be visible at once. This multilayered structure can be related to the concept of the hierarchy of existence in Ibn Arabi's thought. In the doctrine of Wahdat al-Wujud (Unity of Being), existence consists of multiple levels of manifestation, each representing a distinct disclosure of the One Reality. The multiplicity of spatial planes within the painting may therefore be understood as a visual representation of these various ontological levels that, while differentiated, remain interconnected within the unified totality of the composition. [2]

6.2 | Visual Focal Point and Centrality

The most important visual focal point of the work is the figure of Sam Mirza, who occupies a central position within the courtly structure and is placed in a privileged location. The arrangement of figures, the direction of their gazes, and the architectural organization of the space all guide the viewer's attention toward this point. As in the painting of Kayumars, the centrality of the main figure ensures that all visual relationships within the image are ultimately organized around a single axis. From a mystical perspective, this centrality can be interpreted as a symbol of the principle of unity within multiplicity. Just as, in Ibn Arabi's thought, all levels of existence ultimately return to a single Reality, the various elements of this painting are likewise organized in relation to a central point. Therefore, the central position of Sam Mirza is not merely a narrative necessity; rather, it may be understood as a reflection of the unifying structure governing the whole composition.

6.3 | Arrangement of Elements and Figures

One of the important characteristics of the painting is the multiplicity of figures and the diversity of architectural and decorative elements. Despite this abundance, no individual element is detached from the overall composition, and each component acquires meaning in relation to the others. The figures are arranged in organized groups, and the relationships among them are established through gaze direction, bodily posture, and spatial positioning. [14] In the doctrine of the Unity of Being, the multiple entities of the world, despite their apparent differences, are all manifestations of a single Reality. In a similar manner, the numerous figures present in the painting are organized within a coherent whole, and an inner unity is established among them.

6.4 | Balance and Compositional Coherence

In this work, Sultan Muhammad establishes a balanced structure through the use of relative symmetry, chromatic equilibrium, and a calculated distribution of elements. The visual density in one section of the image is compensated by elements in other areas, resulting in an overall sense of harmony throughout the composition. [14] From a mystical perspective, this coherence can be understood as a reflection of the governing order of the universe. Ibn Arabi considers the world to be a harmonious ensemble of divine manifestations that, despite their diversity and difference, are situated within a single unified system. [12] In the painting as well, the order among the components enables the viewer to move beyond the mere perception of dispersion and to apprehend the coherent and unified whole of the work.

6.5 | Repetition and Variation of Elements

In the painting, recurring patterns can be observed in architecture, figures' attire, ornamentation, and spatial arrangement. However, each element retains its unique characteristics, and repetition never leads to monotony. This generates a visual rhythm and dynamism within the structure of the work. From Ibn Arabi's perspective, the manifestation of Divine Reality in the world occurs through multiple yet non-identical forms of appearance.[3] Each being is a unique expression of the single Reality. Therefore, repetition accompanied by variation in this painting can be understood as a visual reflection of the concept of *tajallī* (divine manifestation), a condition in which unity becomes apparent through diverse forms of appearance.

6.6 | The Viewer's Visual Path

The viewer's gaze in this work begins with the architectural details and groups of human figures and is gradually guided toward the center of the composition. The visual path moves among various elements, yet

ultimately returns to the central figure. This process allows the viewer to first experience multiplicity and then arrive at an understanding of structural unity. Such an experience aligns with one of the fundamental concepts in Ibn Arabi's mysticism, namely the return of multiplicity to the One Reality. Just as the mystic, in the spiritual journey, moves from witnessing the diverse manifestations of the world toward the realization of unity, the seeker at the beginning of the path perceives the world as composed of various phenomena and beings, with attention directed toward multiplicity and apparent differences. However, as the mystical journey progresses, it becomes gradually clear that these multiplicities are manifestations of a single Reality. In other words, the seeker moves from multiplicity toward unity and perceives, behind the diversity of beings, the presence and oneness of the Divine Reality. The ultimate goal of the seeker is not merely the recognition of worldly objects, but the attainment of an intuitive awareness of the unity underlying all phenomena. [12] This movement from multiplicity to unity is considered one of the most fundamental concepts in Islamic mysticism. In this painting as well, the viewer, through the process of observation, is guided from the diversity of elements toward the perception of a coherent whole, ultimately attaining an intuitive understanding of the latent unity within the work.

6.7 | Analytical Conclusion

The analysis of the painting “The Court of Sam Mirza” shows that its compositional system does not merely serve the representation of a courtly scene, but rather forms a meaning-generating structure that allows for a mystical reading. The multilayered spatial organization, the centrality of the main figure, the coherence among diverse elements, repetition combined with variation, and the gradual guidance of the viewer's gaze toward a single focal point can all be aligned with the fundamental concepts of Ibn Arabi's doctrine of the Unity of Being. From this perspective, “The Court of Sam Mirza” can be understood as a visual representation of the relationship between unity and multiplicity—a relationship in which numerous pictorial elements are brought together within a coherent whole, providing the viewer with an experience of order, harmony, and unity.

Table 2. Analysis of the painting “The Court of Sam Mirza” based on Ibn Arabi's doctrine of Wahdat al-Wujud (Unity of Being)

Analytical Component	Visual Features of the Painting	Mystical Interpretation Based on Ibn Arabi
Spatial organization	Multilayered structure based on architecture and hierarchical arrangement of figures	Manifestation of the levels of appearance and ontological revelations
Visual focal point	Visual emphasis on Sam Mirza at the center of the court scene	Symbol of the principle of unity within the multiplicity of elements
Arrangement of elements	Organization of human groups around the central figure	Manifestation of unity within the multiplicity of beings
Balance and coherence	Color and spatial balance among components	Reflection of cosmic harmony as a manifestation of divine order
Repetition and variation	Repetition of architectural patterns, attire, and ornaments with subtle variations	Diverse manifestations of a single Reality
Viewer's visual movement	Movement from the periphery toward the center of the court	Return of multiplicity to the One Reality
Final mystical implication	Centrality and coherence of the courtly structure	Visual representation of unity within social and spatial multiplicity

7 | Analysis of the painting “The Prophet's Ascension (Mi'raj)” by Sultan Muhammad



Fig. 3. Sultan Muhammad. The Prophet's Ascension (Mi'raj). Folio from the Khamsa of Shah Tahmasp. Held at the British Museum. 946–950 AH.

The painting “The Prophet's Ascension (Mi'raj)” is one of Sultan Muhammad's most distinguished works, which, in addition to its aesthetic value and technical mastery, also possesses profound mystical and spiritual dimensions. The theme of the Mi'raj in Islamic tradition has always been regarded as a symbol of the ascending journey of the human being from the realm of multiplicity toward the Absolute Truth. According to Islamic belief, the Prophet, in a miraculous night journey, was first taken from the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca to the Masjid al-Aqsa, a part of the journey known as the Isra. He then ascended through the heavens in what is called the Mi'raj. During this journey, the Prophet passed through various celestial realms, met earlier prophets, and witnessed signs of divine power. Ultimately, he reached an exalted station described in Islamic texts as the highest proximity to God. In Islamic culture, the Mi'raj is not merely a physical or spiritual journey, but a symbol of spiritual transcendence, closeness to God, and the possibility of human ascent from the material world to higher levels of knowledge and truth. [15] Therefore, analyzing the composition of this painting within the framework of Ibn Arabi's doctrine of the Unity of Being can reveal new dimensions of meaning. In this work, the spatial structure, arrangement of elements, visual movement, and overall organization of the image all serve to represent an experience that is transcendent and beyond the material world.

7.1 | Spatial Organization and Overall Structure of the Image

The spatial structure of the painting is organized on the basis of an upward and vertical movement. Unlike many courtly or narrative miniatures, which rely on horizontal spatial expansion, all elements in this work are arranged in a way that evokes a sense of ascent, transcendence, and movement toward higher levels of existence. The figure of the Prophet, angels, swirling clouds, radiant flames, and other pictorial elements are composed within a spiraling, upward-oriented structure that guides the viewer's gaze toward the elevated realms of the image. This ascending structure is directly connected to the concept of the “hierarchies of existence” in Ibn Arabi's mysticism. [16] In his thought, existence is constituted by multiple levels, and the seeker, in the path of knowledge, moves from the sensory world toward higher degrees of spiritual vision. The spatial organization of the painting can thus be understood as a visual representation of this ontological movement—an ascent that begins in the world of multiplicity and extends toward higher levels of divine manifestation.

7.2 | Visual Focal Point and Centrality

The most important visual focal point of the painting is the figure of the Prophet of Islam, who is positioned at the center of the pictorial structure and surrounded by a ring of light and angels. This privileged placement, together with the use of luminous halos and the convergence of visual lines around him, continually draws the viewer's gaze back to this focal point. In a mystical reading, this centrality can be associated with the concept of the "Perfect Man" (*al-insān al-kāmil*) in Ibn Arabi's thought. Ibn Arabi regards the Perfect Man as the comprehensive manifestation of all Divine Names and Attributes and the most complete locus of divine self-disclosure. In his mystical system, the Perfect Man represents the highest level of human existence and the mirror of divine attributes. According to Ibn Arabi, God has dispersed His Names and Attributes throughout the universe, but only in the Perfect Man do these attributes appear in a fully integrated and harmonious form. The Perfect Man functions as an intermediary between God and the world and as the axis of the cosmic order, through whom the coherence and meaning of existence are maintained. [17] From this perspective, the Prophet at the center of the painting is not merely the main narrative figure, but the axis connecting the realm of multiplicity to the unifying divine Reality. All surrounding elements acquire meaning in relation to this center, and the entire composition is organized around this unifying axis.

7.3 | Arrangement of Elements and Figures

Angels, clouds, flames of light, and other pictorial elements are organized in a circular formation around the central figure. No independent element exists outside the overall orbit of the composition, and all components function in a dynamic and coherent relationship with one another. This arrangement enables the viewer to experience an organic sense of unity throughout the work. From the perspective of the doctrine of the Unity of Being, this organization can be understood as a reflection of the relationship between unity and multiplicity. [3] The angels and various pictorial elements correspond to the multiplicity of the world, which is gathered around the single Reality. Each element possesses an individual identity, yet ultimately finds its meaning within a unified whole. For this reason, the composition presents a harmonious multiplicity that serves to reveal underlying unity.

7.4 | Balance and Compositional Coherence

Despite the density of elements and the complexity of the visual structure, the painting exhibits remarkable coherence and balance. The balanced distribution of figures, the harmony of colors, and the organized movement of lines ensure that no part of the image dominates another. This equilibrium is not based on geometric symmetry, but rather on a dynamic and living balance. In Ibn Arabi's thought, the universe is a manifestation of divine order, and every being, in its proper ontological station, contributes to the harmony of the whole. The coherence observed in the painting can be understood as a reflection of this cosmic order, a structure in which diverse and multiple elements are interconnected within an overarching unity.

7.5 | Repetition and Variation of Elements

One of the prominent features of the painting is the repetition of swirling clouds, radiant flames, and angelic figures. Despite these repetitions, no two elements are entirely identical, and each possesses its own specific visual characteristics. This creates a fluid rhythm and dynamism throughout the composition. This feature is closely related to the concept of *tajallī* (divine manifestation) in Ibn Arabi's mysticism. Ibn Arabi holds that the Divine Reality is manifested at every moment and at every level in a new form, and no manifestation is identical to the previous one. [2] From this perspective, repetition combined with variation in the painting can be understood as a visual reflection of this principle, namely, the multiple manifestations of a single Reality in diverse forms.

7.6 | The Viewer’s Visual Path

The movement of the viewer’s gaze in this painting, unlike many narrative works, is not linear or direct. The eye passes through angels, clouds, and flames of light, following a circular and ascending path toward the luminous center of the composition. This gradual movement creates an experience analogous to spiritual journeying and ascent. In a mystical reading, this visual trajectory can be understood as a symbol of the seeker’s movement from the sensory world toward the Absolute Reality. The viewer is first confronted with multiplicity, but gradually, through these manifold forms, is guided toward the center of unity. Such an experience corresponds to one of the fundamental principles of Ibn Arabi’s mysticism, namely the movement from multiplicity to unity and the perception of ultimate Reality behind the diverse manifestations of the world.

7.7 | Analytical Conclusion

The analysis of the painting “The Prophet’s Ascension (Mi’raj)” shows that its composition does not merely serve the representation of a religious narrative but rather forms a deeply mystical structure. The ascending spatial organization, the centrality of the Prophet’s figure, the harmonious arrangement of angels, the repetition with variation of elements, and the viewer’s visual trajectory can all be interpreted through the fundamental concepts of Ibn Arabi’s doctrine of the Unity of Being. In this painting, the Mi’raj is not only a physical or narrative journey, but also a symbol of the ontological journey of the human being from the realm of multiplicity toward the One Divine Reality. Accordingly, it can be said that Sultan Muhammad, through the organization of visual elements, reconstructs concepts such as tajalli (divine manifestation), the hierarchies of existence, the Perfect Man, and unity within multiplicity in a pictorial language. Thus, the painting “The Prophet’s Ascension” becomes a prominent example of the interconnection between artistic structure and mystical worldview in Persian miniature painting.

Table 3. Analysis of the painting “The Prophet’s Ascension (Mi’raj)” based on Ibn Arabi’s doctrine Wahdat al-Wujud (Unity of Being)

Analytical Component	Visual Features of the Painting	Mystical Interpretation Based on Ibn Arabi
Spatial organization	Ascending, spiral, and vertical structure	Symbol of the ontological journey from the material world to higher levels of existence
Visual focal point	Placement of the Prophet at the center of light and the ring of angels	Manifestation of the concept of the Perfect Man (al-Insān al-Kāmil)
Arrangement of elements	Arrangement of angels and luminous elements around the center	Gathering of multiplicity around the One Reality
Balance and coherence	Harmony between light, movement, and pictorial elements	Reflection of the order and harmony of the divine cosmos
Repetition and variation	Repetition of clouds, flames, and angels with visual variations	Expression of the principle of continuous divine manifestation (tajalli)
Viewer’s visual movement	Spiral and ascending movement toward the luminous center	Mystical wayfaring and movement from multiplicity to unity
Final mystical implication	Ascendant and light-centered structure of the work	Representation of the Perfect Man’s ascent toward the Absolute Reality

Conclusion

The present study was conducted to analyze the compositional system in the paintings of Sultan Muhammad and interpret their mystical implications based on Ibn Arabi’s doctrine of the Unity of Being. The main research question was whether the visual structure and compositional organization in Sultan Muhammad’s miniatures can be interpreted beyond aesthetic considerations, as a framework for representing mystical concepts. Accordingly, three key works—The Court of Kayumars, The Court of Sam Mirza, and The Prophet’s Ascension (Mi’raj)—were examined using a descriptive-analytical approach within the conceptual framework of wahdat al-wujud (Unity of Being), divine manifestation (tajalli), hierarchies of existence, and the Perfect Man. The findings indicate that composition in Sultan Muhammad’s works is not merely a tool

for arranging visual elements, but actively participates in the production of meaning and the transmission of mystical concepts. In all three paintings, spatial organization, arrangement of elements, visual focal points, rhythmic composition, and the movement of the viewer's gaze are designed in a way that guides the observer from the experience of apparent multiplicity toward the perception of structural unity. This feature corresponds to one of the fundamental principles of Ibn Arabi's mysticism, namely, unity within multiplicity and the return of all levels of existence to the One Reality. The analysis of the Court of Kayumars revealed that its multilayered mountainous structure, together with the centrality of Kayumars, forms a visual model of the hierarchies of existence. The orderly dispersion of humans, animals, and natural elements across the image, while maintaining overall coherence, exemplifies the realization of unity within multiplicity. In this painting, the viewer's visual movement from dispersed elements toward the center reenacts a mystical journey from multiplicity to unity. In The Court of Sam Mirza, the hierarchical spatial structure and the concentration of elements around the central figure demonstrate a unifying order among diverse components. Although the subject appears courtly and worldly, the organization and coherence of the pictorial structure enable a mystical reading. Here, unity is achieved not through the elimination of multiplicity, but through its harmonization and organization. The analysis of The Prophet's Ascension (Mi'raj) showed an even stronger connection to Ibn Arabi's mystical concepts. The ascending composition, the centrality of the Prophet's figure, the presence of angels and luminous elements, and the spiral movement of the viewer's gaze all signify spiritual ascent and ontological elevation. In this painting, the Prophet can be interpreted as a visual embodiment of the "Perfect Man" (al-insān al-kāmil), who in Ibn Arabi's thought represents the most complete manifestation of Divine Reality. Furthermore, the study of all three works demonstrates that the concept of *tajallī* (divine manifestation) is one of the key shared foundations between Ibn Arabi's worldview and Sultan Muhammad's visual language. The repetition of elements with subtle variations, the diversity of forms within overall coherence, and the recurrence of similar visual patterns in different compositions all reflect the idea that a single Reality can manifest in countless forms without losing its essential unity. From this perspective, Sultan Muhammad's miniatures can be understood as a visual field for the manifestation of mystical concepts—concepts that are conveyed not only through subject matter but also through compositional structure itself. It can therefore be concluded that there is a meaningful relationship between the compositional systems of Sultan Muhammad's paintings and the foundational concepts of Ibn Arabi's doctrine of the Unity of Being. The visual structures of these works function not only as representations of historical, literary, or religious narratives but also as meaning-producing systems that articulate concepts such as unity, multiplicity, divine manifestation, hierarchies of existence, and the Perfect Man through the language of image. The main innovation of this research lies in shifting focus from purely narrative or stylistic analyses of Sultan Muhammad's works toward an examination of the relationship between compositional structure and Ibn Arabi's theoretical mysticism. This approach suggests that analyzing visual elements and spatial organization in miniature painting can open new horizons for understanding the relationship between art and Islamic mysticism. It is therefore recommended that future research adopt interdisciplinary approaches to examine other works of the Tabriz school and conduct comparative studies between Ibn Arabi's thought and other mystical traditions in Islamic art, to further uncover the complex relationship between image, meaning, and mystical experience.

Reference

