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A STUDY ON THE TERM "TIME" IN SEVEN MYSTICAL PROSE BOOKS

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ABSTRACT

"Time" ("Waqt") is one of the mystical terms, and it is a state that occurs to the mystic and separates him from the past and the future, and empowers him being in the present, and this is caused by an unseen presence into the mind and soul of the mystic. The category of Time is rooted in the Prophet's tradition and way of life, as the Prophet (PBUH) said: I have a Time with God (li ma'a Allah waqt) such that no Angel close to God and no apostolic Prophet can come between us. Many factors confuse Time or take it from the mystic, and the mystic loses his Time at that moment, and if Time is lost and wasted, it cannot be compensated or returned in any way; factors such as preoccupation with the past and future, not knowing and understanding the Time involved, caring for others, material belongings, and such other matters. The mystic also has duties in this regard, such as: obeying the ruling of Time, adapting to Time and preserving Time, and fulfilling the duties of that Time. Time, depending on the mystic's station, can be effective on the mystic or be influenced by him and change his existential nature, or the Time itself can be affected according to the mystic's situation and station, and Sufi becomes Ibn Al-Waqt or Abul Al-Waqt. Knowledge, Sama, litanies, prayer and stations are among the categories that are directly related to Time.

Keywords: Mysticism, Time, Sufism, Spiritual state

INTRODUCTION

For a long time, in Islamic mysticism and Sufism, one of the topics that are referred to is the category of Time, which has led passionate Sufis to grief or joy and different moods, and has guided them to a good time. This issue has been so desired that if we look at the early books written in Sufism, we will find that the first and most elementary discussion in the definitions of the terms of the terms of this sect is the discussion of Time, but with all the importance and sensitivity that the Sufis attached to this issue, to the extent that they called the Sufi the child of Time (Ibn Al-Waqt), it is quite surprising why the great researchers in this field neglected to address and investigate this important issue, and no detailed research has been done in this regard.

People like Forouzanfar, Green, Zarrinkoob, Reynold A. Nicholson, Shafiei Kadkani, Javad Nurbakhsh, William Chittick, and Evgenii Eduardovich Bertels, from ancient times to today, although they have done detailed research on Sufism, they have never had a private discussion about this category, and they have limited themselves to finding material from this category in the definition and list of references. Therefore, because I felt the lack of material in this regard, I tried to collect materials, however scattered, and put them in the form of a scientific research,

the principle and basis of my thesis, and because the subject was of a mystical category and our epistemological understanding was insufficient, we had to use a lot of quotations and references; because it was not possible to describe and interpret the depths of this category from the perspective of a short-sighted mind and from a human point of view, and criticize it or praise and explain it. So, I reached for seven books, which are the basis and intellectual foundation of Sufism, each of which had a special atmosphere and helped me in this research in some way. These books include: translation of al-Risala al-Qushayriyya, Kashf al-Mahjub by Hujwiri, Tamhidat, Tazkirat al-Awliya, Awaraf Almaaref, Mersad-al-Ebad (The Path of God's Bondsmen: From Origin to Return), and Misbah al-Hidaya. Besides these books, I also used other books that, if it were not for the use of these books, the research would have resulted in a sense of not satisfying the reader's mind; books such as Al-Luma fi l-Tasawwuf, Al-Ta'arruf li-Madhahab Ahl Al-Tasawwuf, Sharh-al-Ta'arruf, A Description of the Baba Tahir's Kalamat-e Qesaa (Aphorisms) by Ayn al-Quzat, Manazil al-Saareen by Kashani and Tabadakani interpretation of it, Khwaja Abdullah Ansari's Interpretation, Meybdi's Interpretation and A Glossary of Sufi Technical Terms by Abdul Razzaq Kashani. Of course, referring to all of these was successful, and it was right, because the contents were mentioned in the studied books and there was no extensive explanation and interpretation in the books in this category. Accordingly, the aim of the present research is to examine the term Time in seven mystical prose books.

Statement of Time in the meanings of period, age and fortune

A- Al-Risala al-Qushayriyya

And Abd Muhammad Sahl Ibn Abd Allah Al Tustari was from this tribe, he was one of the imams of the people at that time, and a middleman narrates from him: every time God wants to humiliate a servant, he will throw him into the *jifgan*, that is, in the speech of children (Al-Risala al - Qushayriyya, 78).

"And among them was Abu al-Qasim Ibrahim Ibn Muhammad al-Nasrabadi, who was the elder of Khorasan in his time" (Al-Risala al-Qushayriyya, 78).

"And among them was Abu Abdullah Ahmad Ibn Ata al-Rudbari, who was an elder of Syria in his time" (Al-Risala al-Qushayriyya, 78).

He said: It was the evening prayer time when he passed out.

B- Kashf al-Mahjub

"The claimant of Mujahidat (fighting on behalf of the faith or the Muslim community), standing in the place of observation, Muhammad Ibn Wassi, may God be pleased with him, who in his time, there was no one like him" (Kashf al-Mahjub, 46).

"And until the time of his death, none of the people of Egypt knew his good inner condition" (Kashf al-Mahjub, 46).

C- Tazkirat al-Awliya

And all the time, his words made my heart happy. He said: Beware of the talk of five people, first, the liar, and always treat him with pride (Tazkirat al-Awliya, 24).

Second, the fool who acts at your loss the Time that wants your benefit is at your loss.

"You went out during the first prayer, and after the prayer, you came back to sleep".

"Now is the time for Hajj, go and carry out Hajj"

"When he became ill, he desired to eat meat" (Tazkirat al-Awliya, 24).

D- Mersad-al-Ebad

"For some time, a group of aspirant scholars and true disciples, whenever they were weak with lack of wealth and lack of authority, they begged a group of Persians" (Mersad-al-Ebad, 15).

Khwaja, peace be upon him, once said:

"A drop of friend and a hundred thousand favors I'm waiting for the time to come"

"If ever a calamity comes to us from this person, it could be from this position"

"That was the heart, that at all times, Let nothing come into except God"

E- Misbah al-Hidaya

"Perhaps most of the population will leave at this time of observation; it is based on sensual reasons and the fortunes of nature" (Misbah al-Hidaya, 227).

"There is a famous story that once a person approached a beautiful woman and expressed his love".

"Because a sincere lover, whenever there is an opportunity of happiness to meet and the possibility of a state of intercession with the beloved"

"And he does not delay being alone, except when he is confident in the habit of self-awareness".

F- Tamhidat

"And if you don't believe, listen to the speech of Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who said: Mustafa - peace be upon him – was speaking to Abu Bakr, that I heard and I understood, and there were times when I heard and did not understand, and there were times when I did not hear and did not understand" (Tamhidat, 7).

"Because when the time comes, he will say: I will show you My signs, so do not be hasty"

"Our sheikh was praying one day and when he reached the stage of becoming nothing, he said: I became an infidel and tied the Zunnar (a distinctive belt)".

G- Awaref Almaaref

And they asked the servant of al-Shibli - Quds Allah Ruha - At the time of death, what strange behavior did you see from him? (Awaref Almaaref, 23)

"And in that Time, he did not neglect tradition"

"However, there may be times when a mystic manifests an behavior or a situation due to the abundance of knowledge for the purpose of consensus of virtues or for the transformation of morals, which the superficial and short-sighted observers think it as hypocrisy, and that will be the summary of the mystic's situation".

"And at the time of donning the cloak, the sheikh should tell the conditions of the cloak face to face".

Regarding the meanings of age and fortune, in the section on Time combinations, where the example of Imam of Time or Elder of Time or the like is mentioned; this meaning can be found, and if it is observed, in some cases. Time can be interpreted in both ways, i.e. both mystical and



apparent in the meaning of period. But in some cases that are mentioned in the books, including the books that have widened the scope for the introduction of Sheikhs, Time has been used in a completely mystical sense in their introduction, for example, some examples of *Kashf al-Mahjub* by Hujwiri are referred.

"And also: the colonel of the young men, and the sun of Khorasan, Abu Hamed Ahmed Ibn Khadrouye Al-Balkhi, may God be pleased with him, was in a great mood and honored Time".

"And among them: the ship of trust and satisfaction and the seeker of the path of annihilation (in God), Abu Saeed Ahmed Ibn Isa al-Kharraz, may God be pleased with him, who was the language of the disciples' conditions and the proof of the times of the aspirants".

Qushayriyya:

1- And among them was Abu al-Fayḍ Dhul-Nun al-Misri... and he was the best mystic of his time in the language of this tribe (*Kashf al-Mahjub*, 25).

2- And among them was Abu Abdullah Harith Ibn Asad al-Muhasibi, who was unparalleled in his time.

Terminological definitions of Time from a mystical point of view in these seven books

1- Al-Risala al-Qushayriyya

In Qushayri's definition of Time, a category of Time is referred to as Time being occasional, not always and permanent; and in the meantime, he uses illusory and real incident to explain Time and gives an example and says: for example, imagine that you say to someone that I will come to you on the first day of the new month. Your coming is an illusory incident, which means you may or may not come. Both cases are possible, but the new month is a real incident, which means that this new month will definitely come; in the sense that the real incident is Time. For the illusory incident, that is, if you come, your time, which was an illusory incident, becomes the time of coming, and if you do not come, the time of coming will not be realized for you. For a researcher, the truth of Time is an incident that comes to illusion as a result of an real incident; the real incident is Time, the illusory incident as if the first day of next month is coming close to you, the coming is illusory, coming and not coming was permissible, and the first day of next month is a real incident that is inevitable [when this month passes, it will be another month]. The first day of next month is an incident that is realized, it is the time to come (*Al-Risala al-Qushayriyya*, 88).

2- Kashf al-Mahjub

In the view of Hujwiri, Time means that the servant's heart finds its way to the aggregate station through a medium from the side of the almighty God and gets rid of the division of the past and the future, and his existence becomes settled and integrated in the present. Meanwhile, the mystic is happy with the almighty God and with the Time being with the almighty God, and there is no mention of the past and the future, because the thought of yesterday and tomorrow creates distraction for the mystic and wastes Time (*Kashf al-Mahjub*, 56).

"It was Time for the servant to be freed from the past and the future, as if an intermediary of almighty God entered his heart and made him busy and integrated in it; as in discovering it,



there is no mention of the past or the future. The important issue in this regard is that he considers Time to be the station of secret, which he has said, and integrated into it".

Also, in relation to the knowledge of the owners of Time, it is mentioned that the knowledge of the owners of Time is not surrounded by the past and the future, and it cannot perceive. Now, this optional or forced non-understanding that the resulting Time demands it is not very clear, but since Time comes to involve him, and it is a gift, not earned, and this incomprehension should be considered compulsion of Time, not the discretion of seeker in this case.

3- Tamhidat

There is no comprehensive and scientific definition of Time in this book.

4- Tazkirat al-Awliya

In this book, there is no definition that is equal to the scientific definition of Time, and only among the anecdotes and sentences of the mystics, there are some things that will be investigated in the future. The only definition of Time comes from Abu Ali Daqqaq, and it is in the appendix to Tazkirat al-Awliya and it is similar to what is mentioned in Al-Risala al-Qushayriyya (Tazkirat al-Awliya, 22).

And he said Time is where you are. If your Time is being in the world, you're alive. And if your Time is not being in the world, you will die, and if it is happiness, you will be in happiness, and if it is sadness, you will be in sadness.

5-Awaref Almaaref

The author of Awaref Almaaref also sees Time as a medium into the heart of the mystic without acquiring him, which has captured the existence of the mystic and whatever he decides, the mystic is condemned to act according to his decree. In this station, there is no existence and identity for the mystic, and there is no ego left, and it is all about the honor of God and it is almost similar to the Hadith Qurb al-Nawafil. And among the hints is Time. Time is like a cutting sword, and its striking lightning and gusty wind is a medium that suddenly reaches the servant's heart, without acquiring him, and take possession of his existence and rule over him. As they say: that person is at the discretion of Time. That is, there is no ego left from him, it is because of the annihilation in the almighty God (Awaref Almaaref, 41).

6- Mersad-al-Ebad

There is no comprehensive and scientific definition of Time in this book.

7- Misbah al-Hidaya

The author of Misbah al-Hidaya uses Time in three meanings for Sufis and explains and defines it in their eyes. First of all:

A) It is a description that prevails over a servant, such as numb, expansion, sadness and joy.

The possessor of this Time, due to the dominance of the present and the filling of his existence with this dominant characteristic, it is impossible for him to perceive another state, and his possession of the existence of others is also proportional to the state that prevails over him, and due to the fact that he measures the inside of another person with his own Time and matches and compares it with agreement with its current situation, considers another person's Time disturbance to be the opposite of that person's Time to his own Time, and from this, there is a



Our sheikh said: Time is your breath between two breaths, one in the past and one yet to come. He said: Yesterday passed. Where is tomorrow? The day is today. Today is this hour, and this hour is your breath, and this breath is Time.

A Description of the Baba Tahir's Kalamat-e Qesaar by Ayn al-Quzat

"What is meant by Time in Sufi terminology is what is given to the servant by almighty God and which he passes by his wisdom and for this reason it is said: Time is like a sword".

In the term of Sufism, Time refers to states that reach the heart of a seeker and a mystic from the side of God, and he should act accordingly, and for this reason, they say that Time is a sharp sword.

Time, in the Sufi terminology, comes from God to the servant, and he passes it by his wisdom, such as numb, expansion, prestige, gentleness, and master of the Time, as for a weak person in whom he disposes of Time and owns it, it is for his Time, and this is a description of the one who wants in his Time and his condition is that he takes his share from God, and his time becomes a veil that prevents him from the Truth (God), as his coldness distances him from it; the strongest person disposes of Time in his possession, so the Time is his, and it is the veil of time that prevents him from disposing of it through obstruction....

That believes that there are two types of people who have Time, one is a weak one who is affected by Time and distracts him from his purpose, and at that Time he only asks God to receive his pleasure and happiness, and one is strong, who is a seeker, takes over the Time and in fact, he becomes the veil of Time and Time is under his control.

In another place, he defines two types of Time as general and specific, and in another sense, he considers Time as a container in which the present flows and in another sense, he considers Time to be the present itself. Time is essentially a container of time, as he said: Time is an ongoing circumstance, i.e. conditions occur, and it is also applied to the state occurring in it if it is predominant in the general connection at times and in the specific at other times. For every state that prevails over a servant, coming from the Truth or other, such as numb, expansion, sadness and joy, then it is its Time according to the general description, and every state in which it is predominant from the imports of Truth, such as numb and expansion, is its Time according to the specific description. And almighty God has made the Times according to His wisdom (Description of the Baba Tahir's Kalamat-e Qesaar, 558).



Circumstances of current conditions therein

The word Sufism (Sheikh al- 'Ishraq)

Time: for them, it is not merely an expression of pleasure or light, but rather an expression of the form of causation that necessitated the attainment of a form for the rational soul that occurred with its emergence and disappeared with its disappearance; they said: Time is a cutting sword, and the Sufi, the son of Time, approached his appearance immediately without much astonishment, and it did not bring much gain. And it is according to what the owner of Sharia said: Indeed, your Lord has in the days of your eternity signs of His mercy, so be exposed to them; Times give rise to whiffs.

Commentary on the Sufi Paradoxes (Sharh al-Shatahiat)

He said: Time is between the past and the future. From the time of meditation, the truth is what is found in the heart from the subtleties of the unseen world. Junayd said: Time is dear, if it is lost, there is no return.

"Meditation is the attack of the soul, the scents of right path"

Manazil al-Saareen by Kashani

So they received it in the terminology of the people until the time of the appearance of a certain condition and one of the specific manifestations.

A Glossary of Sufi Technical Terms by Abdul Razzaq Kashani

Time: Whatever comes to you immediately; if it is a matter of exercising the right, then you must be content and surrender until you are in the rule of time and nothing else comes to your mind. If it is related to your earning, then stick to what concerns you. Do not attach your mind to the past or the future, for it is possible that you will not reach it and you have missed the time. That is why it is said: the Sufi is the son of Time.

Interpretation of Manazil al-Saareen by Tabadakani (Tasnim)

Time is a name for the creation of objects; that is, Time means the period in which something testifies to the formation of the right from the unseen. And in folk science, it is special for the Time of emergence, a state of certain states and the appearance of special manifestations.



Time in Manazil al-Saareen and Tasnim-Al Moqarrabin

But there is a more detailed discussion in Manazil al-Saareen and Tasnim-Al Moqarrabin about the degrees and meanings of Time, and because it was important, we will discuss this in a separate issue.

The authors of these two books, Shams al-Din Mohammad Tabadakani Tusi and Kamal al-Din Abd al-Razzaq Kashani explain and interpret Time in three levels: beginning, medium or middle, and ultimate. A) In the beginning: it comes from ecstasy, in which there is no slander, suspicion and doubt, and this ecstasy is issued from several categories:

- 1- Or from seeing the light of God's grace.
- 2- Or it is the attraction of hope that hope is meeting the Truth.
- 3- Or from witnessing forced injuries that are caused by the fear of separation and deprivation.
- 4- Or it is the kindling of the fire of desire to meet God, which has been attracted by a sincere and flaming and ever-increasing love.

b) In the medium or middle: it is the name of the path of the seeker who walks and behaves in in the midst of wealth and prosperity, but his desire and attention is towards wealth and he behaves according to the needs of the current situation while he is also interested in knowledge. Sometimes science keeps him occupied with observing appearances in order to make progress, and sometimes it steals his present mood so that he dwells in evolution, and his misfortune comes from this movement in the world of variegation and submission, with the predominance of the

present. This misfortune sometimes makes him drink the wine of observation, and sometimes, for the sake of knowledge, it covers him with the clothes of zeal; which is the zeal of seclusion; because the remnants of existence still remain and he is meant by the insight.

Conclusion

In the two books *Mersad-al-Ebad* and *Tamhidat*, there is no mystical scientific discussion of Time. In the book *Tazkirat al-Awliya*, if there is any material, it is quoted from the sayings of the great Sufis, and attention is paid to this category in the sentences and words and biographies of the lives of these elders, and since these books were not in any way written for the purpose of teaching the mystical path and conduct, therefore it is void of scientific education and research and explanation of these mystical issues in a scientific manner; but in other studied books, we have the most complete definitions in *Al-Risala al-Qushayriyya* and *Misbah al-Hidaya*; In *Misbah al-Hidaya*, the three aspects of the definition are mystical, and Time is at the peak of the seeker's conduct, but in *Al-Risala al-Qushayriyya*, it draws only one aspect in its mystical meaning, and the other three aspects explain a customary and philosophical meaning in the mind.

In *Al-Risala al-Qushayriyya*; Qushayri's own opinion is a philosophical one because he considers Time as an incident that is the result of a real incident. This is the first opinion. Qushayri then discusses the opinion of Abu Ali Daqqaq, who considers Time to be the place where a person is located, from this world to the hereafter and from happiness to sadness. Every category of these matters is considered as the Time of that person. The third opinion considers Time as the period between the past and the present. The last opinion, which we trust, is the opinion of a group of mystics who consider Time to be a possession of the Truth that this possession is the result of an inner mediation from the Truth (almighty God), in which the free will is taken away from the mystic, and the mystic is placed under the rule of Time. This latter is the highest definition found in *Al-Risala al-Qushayriyya* and is similar to the definition of *Kashf al-Mahjub* and *Awaref Almaaref* of Time.

But in *Misbah al-Hidaya*, the lowest limit of Time is a description that prevails over a servant, from numb and expansion, sadness and joy. In this state, which arises due to the predominance of the present situation in the mystic, the mystic measures the Time of others with own Time, and if the Time of others is not the same as his, he considers them to have a Time disturbance; this is the general meaning of Time, which includes seekers and non-seekers.

In the third sense, which is the highest order of Time, Time is the state in which the mystic is. Regardless of the past and the future, at this time, the mystic is the owner of Time and occupies it as he considers it appropriate, and Time is under the control of the seeker, and that is why he is called *Abul Al-Waqt*, meaning the father of Time. While in the second meaning, he was called *Ibn al-Waqt*, which means the son of Time. Another point is that Time is a gift, not earned. According to the definition of Time by all the owners of these seven books, in the sense that it is an inner entry (mediation), it is a gift, not something to be acquired; and in the sense that it is achieved during the *Mujahidat* of the mystic, so, another side of it is the acquisition and *Mujahidat* of the mystic.

Only in *Misbah al-Hidaya*, in the third definition of Time, where the mystic become the father of Time, one can see a form of acquisition, it is not in the acquisition of the principle of Time, but in the consumption of Time in the first place; that is, Time enters without acquiring the



mystic; then the mystic spends it according to the first and foremost. Regarding the eternity of Time, different opinions have been quoted in the studied books, which, although they seem different in terms of appearance, but if we look closely, they all refer to the same principle and meaning, and that is that if Time is when the mystic is in the station of annihilation in God, it becomes eternal and perpetual for him.

Qushayri, citing his teacher Abu Ali Daqqaq, brings up the hadith of the handshake of the angels and the hadith of *li ma'a Allah waqt*, and considers this hadith to indicate the non-continuity of Time, and the specificity of this category to a specific period and a specific state; in this way, if it is carefully considered, Time cannot last, but according to the words of another group of mystics, pointing out that the hadith of the angels is related to the people of beginning level and that the hadith of "*li ma'a Allah waqt*" (I have a Time with God) was narrated by the Prophet according to the listener's understanding; he solves this problem and says that the one whose every state is dependent on the almighty God and based on submission and presence, his Time is always "*li ma'a Allah waqt*". According to Qushayri's point of view, the obedience station makes Time last.

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