Survey of Mystical Stages from the Perspective of Qur’an and Nahjalbalagheh

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ABSTRACT
In this study, the author tries to derive the definitions and explanations from stories and individuals in order to reconcile the mentioned features and attributes of mystic such as repentance, piety, trust, righteousness, meditation, austerity and his superficial and internal states to the verses of Qur’an and narratives and an individual can achieve to high degree of humanity by controlling the inputs and outputs of his body and soul and also by following verses and lifestyle of Imams. Abstinence and practices of asceticism agree with patience and contentment in Qur’an and are not in conflict with Qur’an verses and are proven by holy Qur’an. Conduct of mystics complies with law and verses of Qur’an and is not in conflict with them. Mystic’s perception and understanding is hearty and he has theological (mystical) science and it is not expressible in the form of argument. There are implications in the previous observed literature to each of mystics’ states and stages but still there is not a comprehensive reference. In the present paper, we prove that the main sources of Islamic mysticism are holy Qur’an, tradition and lifestyle of Imams and Imams are typical role models of real mystics. This study is further prepared to meet the uncertainties on the characteristics of mystic and introducing him in Islamic texts, particularly in holy Qur’an and Nahjalbalagheh. Looking at mystical verses, all of Qur’an’s verses have spiritual interpretations regarding to their deep concepts and all are mystical. But we mention some practical verses that have simple and understandable interpretations in order to recognize the character of a mystic.

INTRODUCTION

Regarding to this fact that the features of mystic were not reconciled to holy Qur’an comprehensively in previous texts, the author considers it essential to examine all of the mystics’ states and stages and to represent the related verses and narratives. Believing mysticism is one of the main principles of mystical knowledge without which no one can be a real mystic. In a sense, Islamic mysticism reveals the inner side and internal layers of Qur’an verses that perception of this internal knowledge implicates passing existential and humanity degrees corresponding to Qur’an recommendations. Matching the degrees of compilation book (Qur’an) to the book of creation (universe) and also the introspective book shows that the only way in Islamic mysticism that ensures traversing sublime mystical stages is known as (statesmanship) that resorting to the roadster of affection and love or abstinence and self-control involves mystic’s journey in Divine names, annihilation in God’s great names and ultimately his survival to the realities.

Human’s greatness mentioned in Qur’an:
A. People should know that God has inspired great truths and sublime stages of development to their father, Adam. This training also includes his children in order to be the answer of angels’ question about Adam’s creation.
B. Adam has been worshiped by angels.
C. Human is the vicar of God.
D. God has granted holy book and wisdom to humans by prophets.
E. Hearty belief (faith). “Heart of believer is the empyrean of God. Neither earth nor sky embraces me; my existence is in the faithful heart of pious real believer”.

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F. God questions human about the intention and motive he holds in his heart. “God will not ask you because of your perjuries but because of breaking the oaths that you took”, since the purpose of what heart has acquired is intention. God is forgiving and patient that will not ask you for your perjuries.

G. Benefitting of God’s mercy. God’s mercy encompasses all things. God’s mercy definitely would be for someone who is trying to reform himself.

H. Achievement to heaven. “And we revealed the heaven to Ibrahim”.

I. Gentleness of spirit. “And I blow in his soul from my own”.

J. Movement in the path of righteousness by following prophet’s method in an entirely clear way.

K. Superiority of human on angels. God inspired all his names to Adam.

L. Meeting God. “Anyone who hopes to meet God should deal to good actions”.

M. God is the first, the last, surface, inside and the absolute mercy. “He is the first and the last of all in universe, the only hidden and evident existence and only he knows all the aspects of reality.

N. Pacifying hearts by recitation. Hearts would be pacified only by prayer.

O. Releasing self from other natural belongings and departing toward the original self.“Hey Reproaching Soul, come back to your God who is satisfied of you.” “We are from God and all will return to him”.

P. Knowledge is necessary for practice and practice is the requisite of knowledge. “Those who strive in our path, we surely lead them to our way”.

Q. If prayer, resurrection and Qur’an become the product of human mind and dominant waves of his mind become Qur’anic beliefs, then he would be another person. “We attribute them the quality of pure thought.”

R. Reception of knowledge from God via mysticism. : And everyone who has been given wisdom has been given great goodness”.

Of the most important issues in practical mysticism are prayer and sage of conduct (sheikh). The relation of religion with conduct and reality would be examined. Stages and levels are other related issues to this field. It is stated in some other arguments of practical mysticism that the dressing of Sufis is a special kind of dressing that distinguishes it from other groups and classes of society. This particular dressing is called as cloak. Every sect of Sufism owns his specific dressing that distinguishes it from other sects. Furthermore, each of stages and ranks has a particular cloak and the ultimate stage of cloaks is the perfect cloak of humanity.

Monastery is the temple of Sufis. Monastery was the place of sheikh’s preaching, God’s recitation, prayer and warping. Other mores also were done in monastery, so monastery has been the place of Sufis residence. Hearing is revolution and a particular movement that Sufi does for internal ecstasy and mirth and requests Divine grace and mercy from God in the most cases, mystics tries to purify themselves in the period of forty days (warping) and to protect their ego. Warping was one of the mores of mystics. Some of the mystics had such an effort and motivation that underwent forty warping and were in warping for lengthy years.

Love: love is one of the main issues of practical mysticism and there are several writings in this field such as Abharalasheghin written by Rozbehgan Boghli Shirazi. In the mind of mystics, love is two types: true love and virtual love. True love is the love to God’s nature and virtual love is love to saints of God that lead human to true love. Here, there is not any argument about sensual (worldly) love. Mystic believes that sensual love is not virtual love but it’s a fake love. It is not a true love, since it doesn’t guide the person toward divine love.

Piety: In mysticism, the argument is sometimes piety and is sometimes love and sometimes both of them are discussed together. In Islam, piety is a particular school that its initiator is Hassan Basrias Rabee Odvoyeh is known as the initiator of love school. Some of Qur’an’s verses are also the precursor of piety in world and not loving the transient world. “And worldly life just deceives human”. “Benefiting from this world is low and hereafter is better for one who has piety”. “Properties and children are the ornaments of material world, and enduring goodness are better to God in respect of reward and hope”. The narratives of Imams also contain spiritual themes and sublime mystical concepts. The origin of mysticism and Islamic Sufism is Qur’an’s verses, prayers and prophetic narratives and tradition which have stood behind several years of growth and transformation. Purification is from other topics of practical mysticism which includes journey, marriage, and isolation and it’s noteworthy to mention that some of listed practices (mores) like wearing cloak, and monastery are special for Ul-Ghani sects and are not accepted or approved by Holy Qur’an or hadith of Household of prophet By self-purification, Sufis reaches to a degree that are able to perceive the facts which others can’t and this is not an individual effort but is a kind of inner or mystical science that God grants them. Estehsan in Sufism is known as practices and mores that Sufis consider them essential for conduct, however these practices were not common in the time of holy prophet, Mohammad, and were not seen in his tradition such as wearing cloak, monastery, warping and solitude and many other deals of this type which are especial for Sufis of Kabbalistic mysticism known as kabbalah. Finally, we conclude that Islamic mysticism is an independent identity and its origins can be found in the profound mystical narratives and hadith prayers of saints. Muslims and among them, Iranians, had much readiness for accepting mysticism and Sufism and this requirement causes to emerge this knowledge among Muslims. Qur’an’s verses know this continuity beyond the casual (cause and effect) relationship as philosophers explain and holy Qur’an considers God as the permanent companion of human. “He is with you wherever.” Whichever way you turn, there is God”. “God is the light of the heavens and
the earth. “It means that God is light, the inside and truth of heaven and the earth is light. In fact, God is the light of heaven and earth and this is the unity between surface and symbol which is discussed in mysticism. Qur’an has described the relation between God and universe from another aspect that is the issue of closure. ““We are closer to him than his veins”. “Be aware that God intervenes between human and his heart”. “Everyone who knows God, he knows himself.” Discoveries through hearing play a substantial role in the forming of superficial discoveries of hearing. For instance, the prophet (PBUH, HP) heard voice of Gabriel in the time of inspiration. Qur’an knows the creatures God. “The septet skies and earth and everyone who settle in them worship God and there is nothing unless they worship God but you don’t understand their prayer and indeed God is patient and blessing. ”Whenever human receives the worshipping sound of creatures by his hear, a hearing discovery has happened to him. Discoveries by inspiring: some of superficial discoveries are gained by smell. Prophet Jacob smelled the scent of Joseph from far distances.

Human Stages: as mentioned, human in descending bow traverses some stages in order to reach to world and in ascending bow traverses the stages to achieve to God closure. The perquisite of passing these stages is having special human degrees. Mystics consider stages for human.

Septet spirits: due to multiplicity of human, mystics consider seven spirits for human. First spirit: the stage of ego. Ego is the protector of worldly life and its mean ornaments. The following verse bodes on this stage. “The affection to various desirable things from women, boys and abundant wealth of gold and silver that are adorned for human are the enjoyment of material world while a good destiny is to God.”In fact, those who loves material world and are in the stage of ego would not benefit from hereafter and truth. As God says:” people say: God, grant us goodness in this world. “Second spirit: stage of wisdom. Wisdom is eager for enduring joy and seeks for pleasures in world and hereafter. About this stage, we can document to the following verse:” and some of them say: God, grant us goodness in both world and hereafter and distance us from hell.” Third spirit: stage of soul. In this case, the wayfarer hushes with God. Forth spirit: human mystery. In this stage, wayfarer removes the world attachments and becomes aware of his weakness and extreme need to God. In this case, wayfarer finds another insight and rebirths. Sixth spirit: hiding stage. Wayfarer traverses in the symbols of quality manifestations. He has a comprehensive heart in this stage. A hadith of holy prophet states: “human cannot see him by eyes but hearts watch him by faith”. Seventh spirit: the stage of natural manifestation. This stage is the supervisor of existence unity. In this stage, the wayfarer is the owner of Mohammadian reality and then he is a perfect man.

Hearty intuition: a real mystic is one who has achieved to intuitional cognition of God. Intuitional, mystical and personal matter and con not be transmitted to others. Therefore, no one can recognize whether he is a mystic or not except himself. We can only find some signs and symptoms. People who have achieved to the true essence of mysticism are not hypocrite. Because of this, it’s not recognizable for common people. I move based on a certain reason of God and a direct way recommended by the prophet and I step in to a clear way and I find it among various ways and then choose it.

Septet gentleness: a mystic has some stages that are interpreted as” septet gentleness”.1. Gentleness of spirit that is sometimes known as “mastoork book”. 2. Gentleness of ego that is called as the “book of confirmation”. 3. Gentleness of heart or” book of safe tablet”. 4. A gentleness known as soul or the first wisdom. 5. The gentleness of mystery.5. Hidden gentleness known as the unity stage of human.7. Gentleness of Ekhfaieh. The stages of mystic: the mysteries and true seekers consider seven steps for stages and their arrangement according to “Allamee” book written by Abonasr Seraj are as follows: repentance, piety, asceticism, poverty, trust, patience, contentment and power of spirit reconstruction. “God has granted to human the power to reconstruct his soul after ruining it by commitment to sin by means of repentance.” In 118th verse of Tubeh sura, God states:” then God let them to repent; undoubtedly God is repenting and merciful.” This verse indicates that human’s repentance is between two repentance of God. The first part of this verse indicates that God gives chance to human to be able to repent and second part implies that merciful God is repenting which shows the second repentance of God. The addition of the adjective “merciful” after “repenting” implies that God’s second repentance is due to his special mercy and he complement his attribute of “repenting” with his special mercy. “Those who believe God, repent to God”. Mystics have considered three stages for piety that we elaborate them briefly. The first stage of piety is to avoid religious disapproved but not forbidden things. Mystics refer to various verses about piety. These are limitations of Divine rules, so do not approach to them even when you have doubt. Therefore, piety is gained when heart is lean of any impurity and evil in the field of religion.

Asceticism in Qur’an and Nahjulbalagheh: asceticism is freedom from material world and moving toward hereafter, a spiritual and mystical virtue containing an excellent meaning that is introduced as a stage of devotion and is mentioned in holy Qur’an. A man asked from the prophet: “what is asceticism?” he replied: “asceticism is ten things, the highest degree of asceticism is the lowest degree of piety and the highest degree of piety is the lowest degree of certainty and the highest degree of certainty is the lowest degree of contentment.” Imam Ali stated: “indeed, hearts of ascetics cry, yet they laugh superficially and they are so sad as they laugh and they struggle with their cardinal soul, though people are jealous to them because of the gifts God has granted to them.” Elsewhere, imam Sadegh said:” they always were living with hungry stomach and pale lips
and their hearts are full of love, compassion, patience and knowledge and they are recognized by monasticism and quitting world.” You should get help of piety and endeavor for stamina and endurance.”

Stages of asceticism: asceticism also has stages that we mention them briefly. The first stage of asceticism is in similarity that a purified heart is created. Second stage is asceticism in virtues that anxieties leave the heart and heart becomes pacified by God’s recitation. In this case, the ascetic avoids all vices and unnecessary gifts of life. The last stage is asceticism of asceticism, meaning that after all stages of asceticism, the wayfarer should refuse his asceticism also in order to give up material world completely and to annihilate in the manifestations of Divine light. In this point, the ascetic wayfarer does not show any interest to nothing except intuition of God.

Contentment, poverty: mystics have referred to some verses in Qur’an and also hadith to explain this stage, that its clear example is the fifth verse of Fater sura:” you people need God while God is needless and honorable. “The use of word “people” indicates that all people whether faithful, pagan or heathen are addressees of this verse. The word poor imply the weakness and poverty of human nature. Poverty means emptiness and not possessing. In other words, this verse intend to state this point that the reality of human’s weakness and poverty and only by referring to God, human’s essence finds reality and truth. Only God is the absolute rich is worthy of praise. As mystics say, the mentioned poverty in this verse is the fourth stage in mystical stages. Furthermore, mystics hint to the prophet hadith: “poverty is the reason of my pride.” Thereupon, in the perspective of mystics poverty means that human is possessor of nothing and the real possessor of universe is God. Poverty also has stages. First stage of poverty is ascetic poverty. In this stage, poor mystic give up the world and worldly attachments. He also doesn’t speak of world luxuries and never try to have them. Second stage of poverty is return of eternal background. In this stage, the poor becomes aware because of poverty, he can see the real face of others’ actions and he knows human talents.” Hey man, since you see your own independent existence, you are plagued by guilt and sin and you must repent.” In short, human should not assume an independent existence for himself and whenever human reaches to this state, he himself is a sign which is poverty. The attainment to real stage occurs when mystic considers every rule and command as God’s command. In this position (real poverty), he disclaims absolute will and does not consider any name or official state for himself. This is a kind of mystical poverty which belongs to mystics. “Hey people, all you need God and only he’s the only honorable and rich. Contentment is one of the moral attributes that is considered as advantages of virtuous man that does not have any greed to wealth and position and they are content in their life to the necessary extent. Contentment is satisfaction of having necessity of life in small amount. In Qur’an outlook, the honor is for people who trust on God and never demean themselves to other people. “The glory is only for God, his messenger and believer but hypocrite people do not know.” “They prefer others on their own, while they are in extreme poverty.”

Patience and abstinence in Qur’an: whenever the person controls himself because of God existence and does not complain to others, such a person is the owner of patience stage and is known as a patient person. Evident of patience are some samples of prophets’ life in Qur’an. For instance, somewhere God praises Prophet Jacob as this:” we know him as a patient one, what a good repentant person.” “Remember our messenger, Jacob, who said to u that Satan has afflicted me to torment.” Therefore, God praises him as a patient and righteous believer, while elsewhere mentions Jacob’s complain to God. As a result, there is not any conflict among the stage of patience and complaint.

Emphasis on religious abstinences: achievement to ultimate maturity and happiness is not possible without abstinence, hard physical and mental exercises and refusing of some of sensual desires and passions. Holy Qur’an states that no one can achieve to eternal welfare unless by avoiding worldly attachment and scarringify his favorite affairs……. This is a kind of abstinence itself. This is emphasized also in narratives that best affairs are ones that person obliged himself to do them, meaning that he does not any internal willing to do them, even they may be in conflict with his internal desires, but he obliged himself to do them. This is also abstinence. The question is that whether we can reach to this aim by doing non-religious actions? Whether abstinence has mores and stages? It’s clear that abstinence has an instrumental value not an ultimate one. We cannot take advantage of every instrument to achieve to the goal. Fasting in other months except Ramadan, vigil and silent are abstinences that few people has managed to do them and these are the best ways of true abstinence. Real mystics also undergo mortification in this way and they never do any action contrary to God’s agreement for closure to God. Late Bahari explains about some non-religious abstinence of claimants of mysticism as this:” unless religious abstinences are few for subduing the soul, like vigil, being hungry day and night and walking far distances that some undergo mortification in non-religious ways.”

Trust on God:” faithful people should trust on God. God’s love is for trusting people and the condition for having trust is to have strong determination and will.” “When you make decision, trust on God. God loves trusting people. “Praise and worshipping God is the reason of trusting on God. Trust should be on a living one who never dies”. “The absolute sufficiency of God is for trusting person and he knows any benefit, mercy or harm comes from God, no one can prevent it.” “Say only God is sufficient for me, trusting people only trust on God.” In relation to trust, Qur’an states:” God is sufficient for him, but if he trust on someone except God, God is not sufficient for him.” Besides, other men cannot be sufficient for him, hence such people never feel.
sufficiency. This is a mystical view of trust, being safe with God and not hoping to what people have. Since what people have is from God and people should hope only to what God grants them and then he achieve to the stage of trust in this way. Trusting person entrust his affairs to God, since he is the real owner and God of all universe. The only duty of human is effort and whatever the result will be left to God. In the mind of Khajeh Abdullah Ansari, trust has three stages: the first step is demand. In this condition the trusting person seeks for daily sustenance but he knows God as the real provider of his daily bread. In the second stage, trusting person detach his heart from what exists except God. Such a person doesn’t try to earn living and to supply his sustenance but he only trust on God to supply his portion.

Satisfaction: the stage of satisfaction has been derived from this verse of Qur’an:” hey reproaching soul, back to God as you are pleasing to God and satisfied. The lowest degree of soul is soul of lasciviousness. The reproaching soul is in a higher rank and Divine soul is in the highest stage. The addresssee of this verse is the reproaching soul.

Mystic’s states: the most sensitive stage of mystic is constantly worrying about himself. Meditation: in this stage, human cares about his behavior after the oath that he took.” Real believers are faithful to their promises and pledges.” And elsewhere in a narrative, it’s stated that: “Dedication to people’s affairs is from the strict recommendations of Islam that is the center of true mystics consideration.” A true mystic is never silent against to ugliness and injustice of his fellow. In a hadith, the prophet stated that the most favorite people to God are who care about the affairs of other people. Elsewhere holy prophet introduced the height of wisdom and intellect after piety is kindness, love and compassion towards all beings whether good or bad. And also he said that kindness to others is the half of half of wisdom.

It’s noteworthy to mention that mystics’ kindness to others is not just verbal but it exists in both verbal and non-verbal behavior. True mystics try so hard to meet others’ needs. These people are safe in resurrection day. It is quoted about the life of Ibrahim Adham that one night he went to masque for pray with some of his fellow. After some prayer, they fell asleep but Ibrahim Adham stood on doorway till morning to exclude more cold in to the masque. His friends asked:” why did you do that?” he said: the weather was so cold, so I stood in doorway for you to feel the cold whether less.” It is narrated from Seri Saghati one of the great Sufis that:” it is thirty years that I repent for one thanksgiving. Others asked: why? He said: bazar of Baghdad burnt except my store. When I was informed I told: thanks God. I repent because I prefer myself to my Muslim brother a thirty years that I repent for one thanksgiving. Others asked: why? He said: bazar of Baghdad burnt except my store. When I was informed I told: thanks God. I repent because I prefer myself to my Muslim brother and I praised the world.” True mystics love all creatures of God such as plants, animals, what exists on earth and sky. Since they are creation of their beloved and loving the creation of beloved equals to loving the beloved himself.

Fear is fear of God that human has in his heart constantly. Fear of God is gained by knowledge and whatever human’s knowledge of God increases, his fear of God increases also. On the other side, God describes saints as this:” be aware that God’s friends would not have any fear and they do not become sad.” Fear is arisen from the grief of future and past while saints are free from such a grief. In mysticism two kinds of fear are introduced: black fear and green fear. Black fear is the fear of material attachments that never happen in mystic’s heart and green fear is fear of God that is cheery and pleasing that causes closure to God. “The person who fears of standing against God and prevents his soul from lust, his place is in paradise.”

Another feature of real mystic is that they have a kind behavior to others and to the extent they are worry about their welfare, they are worry about other’s welfare. When prophets faced to people objection and denying for accepting God, they said to God:” oh God, guide my nation, since they are not aware.” Dedication to people’s affairs is from the strict recommendations of Islam that is the center of true mystics consideration.” A true mystic is never silent against to ugliness and injustice of his fellow.

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Distancing fear and grief from mystic: God eliminates grief and fear of mysteries’ hearts and people who step in evolutionary way to God. “Afraid of God and God will inform you.” Reality: real mystic constantly considers himself in God’s presence and recites God all the time. The first stage of verbal recitation, next stage is mental recitation, hearty recitation is a higher stage and the highest is existential recitation as all speeches and behaviors of mystic become Godly. Achievement to certainty stage: “you will surely see the hell and the real f

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