

Analyzing the wonders and supernatural things in the view of Ibn-e-Sina and Qushayri

Mahmood Baharvand *
Sayyed Hossain Vaezi **

Abstract

From the perspective of Islamic mysticism, a spiritual seeker who has reached the advanced degrees of mysticism is capable of doing extraordinary deeds by the permission of God. These deeds are interpreted as "wonders"; although, scholars of natural sciences have considered such things impossible or against nature. In his book "Isharat va Tanbihat", Ibn-e-Sina has tried to prove these deeds through rational and philosophical view. Relying on his medical and philosophical information, Ibn-e-Sina believed in the interplay of body and soul on each other and in this way he has likened the saints' wonders and the mystics' unordinary deeds to the ordinary affairs and he has proved them. He believed that the mystics have a spiritual knowledge with which they reach the Truth and discover the realities. In mysticism, this is called "wonder".

Unusual deeds of some people in Ibn-e-Sina's view:

abstaining from food for a long time, reporting on the unseen, interfering in nature

Abstaining from food for a long time:

Ibn-e-Sina has considered abstention from eating for a long time as a possible deed because of some reasons such as illness or some mystical states. Remember that when the natural powers within us abstain from digesting good quality materials and start digesting low quality materials, then the high quality materials are used less and they need not to be replaced. In such a case, the person can survive without food for such a long time that is impossible for a human to survive in ordinary states even for the one tenth of that duration without food. The same state is possible in mystical states. He says: In other than particular mystical state, the person cannot tolerate hunger even for one tenth of that time duration. The human can also tolerate hunger in febrile illnesses or in time of fear for a long time. For instance, there are materials which should be disposed in time of sickness and the body does not accept food unless these materials are disposed. Also, the mystic cannot digest food because of intuition and presence as the situation that happens for the lovers; happiness and joy can also prevent food digestion.

* Ph.D. Student of Theology, Islamic Philosophy and Discourse Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan), Iran. (Responsible author) baharvand5050@yahoo.com

** Associate Professor, Department of Theology, Discourse Islamic Azad University, Isfahan (Khorasgan), Iran. sh.vaezi@khuif.ac.ir

Received: 25.02.2017

Accepted: 09.10.2017



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

Ibn-e-Sina refers to the interaction between body and soul as he states: The mystic pays attention to the sacred world with their entire entity and as a result their physical powers follow their soul and refrain from some physical acts such as eating, digestion, passion and so on. As a patient does not need to digest too much food, the mystic is the same with the difference that firstly: there is no fever to cause the loss of body moisture. Secondly: there is no illness in the body of mystic. Thirdly: the mystic has physical inactivity which reduces their need to food. Therefore, the mystic can refrain from food for quite a long time and they are the best in doing this.

Reporting on the unseen:

The reason is that the man can achieve the unseen and inform others. Ibn-e-Sina says: If you hear that the mystic reports on the unseen and the good news or warning turns up to be true, then believing them should not be difficult for you because it has certain causes in the laws of nature.

For proving this issue, Ibn-e-Sina first deals with the issue of sleep and he says: people are aware of the unseen while they are asleep, so otherwise their knowledge of the unseen is not improbable. Experience and argumentative analogy is the evidence of knowing the invisible because the information appears from two ways: first hearing from others; and second from the person's self knowledge. These two ways are possible in the mentioned issue because we have heard from others that they have experienced the unseen in sleep and we ourselves have repeatedly experienced foreseeing dreams, unless the person's imagination power has slept. He has also stated: Firstly, the image of details has been generally designed in the world of intellect before they really occur. Secondly, the human soul can depict in itself whatever is designed in the world of intellect under two conditions: one is the talent and the other is removal of obstacle.

According to the conflict between carnal powers, Ibn-e-Sina believed that one of the conditions of having access to the unseen is the cancellation of the external senses and focusing on inner senses. In other words, the soul must take the facts to depict them in the imagination. In such a case, thoughts must be put aside to calm down the soul in order to be able to perceive facts of intellectual worlds; such a state happens at the time of withdrawal from occupations whether in the time of awakening or sleeping. So when the human tangible occupations decrease and they can be released from imagination, they can achieve occult knowledge. True dreams are the evidence of this issue. Therefore, the prophets and saints' knowledge of the unseen is the result of that.

According to Ibn-e-Sina, when human tangible occupations reduce then the soul finds the opportunity to be connected to the sacred world through dreams or sickness; because imagination frails due to two things: one due to disease and the other through shrinking of its instrument. Therefore, when imagination weakens, the soul is freed and easily soars toward the sacred realm. He believes that imagination of the unseen reports appears in different forms: sometimes it happens in the form of imaginary illumination such as what is revealed to the prophets and sometimes it is the result of useless hallucination or perverted fantasies in patients. So in this regard, divine saints are more meritorious than patients. According to Ibn-e-Sina, reporting from the invisible world and proving it verbally is not possible. He believes that the existence of these reasons can be proved only through intellect and insight.

Interfering in nature:

Regarding the supernatural things, Ibn-e-Sina believes: If it is said that the mystic has done a wonder for instance their prayers or imprecations have been answered or they have repelled

cholera or a wild animal has become tame in front of them or a bird has become familiar with them and it has not escaped, you should not immediately deny such things, because these affairs have causes in the nature that you may find. Also, he believes that answering the prayers is not against nature but its cause is the human powerful soul that can interfere in other affairs; and intellect, religion and the logic of revelation and mysticism are compatible in proving its effects.

Ibn-e-Sina believes that supernatural things have natural causes and it is possible to interfere in the objects by the creative power of the human soul; because, firstly, the rational soul is self-existent and deals only with physical issues. Secondly, some sensual moods such as joy and sorrow are effective in the body and stimulate it. One might criticize that the rational soul cannot give to others whatever it lacks. In response, it should be said that each heater should not be hot itself or each cooler should not be cold itself. So it is not unlikely that some souls have the power to affect other objects.

Ibn-e-Sina believes that the extraordinary acts of the souls are the result of austerity, worship and uprightness. For distinguishing between the miracles of the prophets, wonders of the saints and the magic of the magicians, he has stated: What happens for powerful souls sometimes persuade the human to goodness and purification and it is called the miracle of the prophets or wonder of the saints; and sometimes what happens for strong souls impels the human to evil and wickedness that is called magic.

Keywords : "Mysticism", "Wonders", "Ibn-e-Sina", "Qushayri"

Bibliography

- Azizi, N. (2004). Analyzing Ibn Sina's allegorical epistle. Tehran: Article Collection of Ibn Sina's International Conference.
- Corbin, H. (2008). Ibn Sina and the mystical allegory. Translated by Enshallah Rahmati. Tehran: Nasher Nei Publications.
- Dehkhoda, A. A. (Ed.) (1958) Dehkhoda dictionary. Tehran: Siros Publications.
- Gohrein, S. S. (1988). Description of Sufism Terms (Vol. 10). Tehran: Zavar Publications.
- Hasanzadeh Amoli, H. (2012a). Dorouse Sharh ol-Esharat va Tanbihate Ibn Sina (Namat 8) (S. Tajoldini Ed.). Qom: Ayat Eshraq.6
- Holy Quran. (2007). (N. Makarem Shirazi, Trans.). Qom: M, Alhadi publication.
- Ibn Sina, H. Al-Isharat wa al-Tanbihat, (c.d). Qom: Computer Research Center of Islamic Sciences. Albalage Publications
- Ibn Sina, A. (1985). Al-Isharat wa al-Tanbihat, Description of Khajeh Nasiroddin Tusi (S. Donya Ed. Vol. 3). Beirut: Nu'man institution.
- Ibn Sina, H. (2002). Awakend alive. Translated by Badiozaman Forouzanfar. Tehran: Cultural and Scientific/ Elmi Farhangi Publications.
- Jan Nesari, N. (2001). Mystical tendencies of Ibn Sina. Paper presented at the International Conference on the Memorial of Ibn Sina, Hamedan.
- Kaviani, M. (1994). Kabbalistic rituals (Jewish mysticism and philosophy). Tehran: Nay Publication.
- Malekshahi, H. (1996). Tarjomeh Al-Isharat wa al-Tanbihat. Tehran: Soroush.
- Qushiri, A. (2012). Resale Ghushireyeh (A. Osmani, Trans. B. Frozanfar Ed.). Tehran: Elmi, Farhangi Publications.
- Naderi Nahzad, Z. (2004). Mysticism and gnostic from the viewpoint of Ibn Sina. Tehran: Article Collection of Ibn Sina's International Conference.

- Nekoonam, M. R. (2009). *Mysticism and levels. Describing, interpreting, and criticizing of both 9th and 10th chapter of Isharat and tanbihat*. 1st Ed. Oom: Zohour Shaafaq Publication.
- Seyed Mazhari, M. (2015). A critique Of Avicennas Account Of Mystical Precept *Journal of Islamic Sufism*, 11 .(۴۳)
- Seraj Tossi, A.N. (2007). *Allama fi Tasouf* (G. A. Khayatan & M. Khorsandi, Trans. R. A .Nicholson Ed.): Semnan University.
- shirazi, S. (2006). *Al-shavad Al-roboubiyeh* (J. Mosleh, Trans.). Tehran: Soroush Publications.
- Yasrebi, S. Y. (1993). *Theoretical Mysticism*. Qom: Publications Center for Islamic Propagation Office of Qom Seminary.
- Yasrebi, S. Y. (2006). *Hikmat al-Ishraq of Suhrawardi*. Qom: Institute of Book Bustan
- Zarinkoub, A. H. (2004). *Iranian Sufism in its historical perspective*. Tehran Sokhan publications.

Archive of SID