



Explaining the characteristics of education in Islamic mysticism based on the anecdotes of mystical texts

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Abstract

The famous elders (Sheikhs) of Islamic mysticism are prominent masters of spiritual journey and each of them has raised many students and approached to the highest levels of knowledge. In most mystical texts, there are anecdotes that show mystics knew the spirits of their students and nurtured them with great insight. Analysis their education system can answer two basic questions; First, what are the outstanding features in the educational methods of elders of mysticism who have guided tens or even hundreds of eager disciples and seekers in the path of spiritual journey? And second, how the educational characteristics of the elders (Sheikhs) of mysticism are reflected in the anecdotes of mystical texts. The achievements of the research show that the observance of good temper, maintaining the sanctity of the ancient masters and current students, simplicity and humility, acting on his words, accepting criticism and most importantly, having effective methods of verbal and non-verbal communication; especially the question and answer method has had a great impact on the education of students in the path of spiritual journey. According to the anecdotes and sayings quoted in mystical texts, there are several ways for question and answer method, and the mystics used these methods to express mystical teachings.

Keywords: Islamic mysticism, Mystical texts, Education, Elders (Sheikhs) of mysticism



Introduction

One of the prominent axes in Islamic mysticism is the coherent system of education and the characteristics of a sheikh or elder in the position of a coach or master for the seekers of truth path. In Islamic mysticism, there are coherent and purposeful plans from the first stage of spiritual journey which is the awakening or spiritual transformation of the individual to reaching God and perishing in the sight of God. Regardless of some of the differences arising from differences in theology and religious and theological ideas or slight differences in some definitions, most mystical educational texts have clearly described the stages of the seeker's journey from themselves to God. In some works, such as the Qushayriyah Treatise, the author, in addition to defining and explaining the preliminaries, conditions, results, signs and symptoms of each stage of spiritual journey and how to go through them, raises important points about the etiquette of education in Islamic mysticism in a separate chapter as in the will of the disciples. The seeker must follow his elder and master step by step in the dangerous path of journey; because, as Abu Ali Daqaq used to say:

«درخت چون خود برآید، بی آنکه بکارند، برگ بیارد؛ ولیکن بار ندهد؛ همچین مرید چون وی را استادی و امامی نبود که طریقت از وی فراگیرد، نفس وی پرستنده هوا بود و در راه فرمایش نشود»

(Qushayri, p. 603).

Abu Ali Saghafi was also thought that:

«اگر مردی همه علمها حاصل کند و طریقهای مردمان بدانند، به جایگاه مردان نرسد، الا به ریاضت پیری یا امامی یا مؤدبی که نصیحت کنند و هرکه ادب نه از استاد فراگرفته باشد که عیبهای وی به وی نماید و رعونات نفس او را معلوم کند، به وی اقتدا کردن روا نبود در درست کردن معاملات»

(Ibid., p. 86).

The spiritual journey begins with a spiritual transformation which is called awakening and vigilance. At this stage, the person wakes up from negligence and realizes that everything he has done so far has been due to negligence and ignorance and he decides to enter a new path of life by compensating for the past. At this stage, the person needs a perfect sheikh and master familiar with the facts to accompany him on this unknown path. Mystical journey really begins from this stage. The seeker repents with the guidance of the sheikh and seeks to make up for his past mistakes. Then step by step under the direct supervision of the master, goes through the stages of spiritual journey to reach the destination, become one of the elders and masters of mysticism, and teach the newly arrived seekers. Due to the importance and position of Sheikh and master in guiding seekers in Islamic mysticism, it is essential to study and analyze the personality characteristics of famous mystics according to mystical texts and for a more detailed explanation, it is necessary to examine each of the works separately from this perspective; in particular, "one of the important indicators for distinguishing the two mystical traditions is their upbringing and education system. The upbringing system of any mystical tradition is based on purpose and also the method in which the followers of each mystical tradition can achieve the goal predicted in their tradition (Qushayri, Introduction to the correctors). In this research, Attar Neyshabouri's Tazkirat al-Awliya has been studied by descriptive-analytical method and the personality characteristics of prominent mystics with the focus on the educational system of mystics have been explained by Attar in order to clarify what outstanding features did the prominent mystics have in the field of education until the time of Attar? And be specified how Attar Neyshabouri, who is one of the elders of



Persian mystical literature and a scholar of the school of mysticism, has described the personality characteristics of the masters of Islamic mysticism; Also where necessary, other mystical sources have also been cited for better analysis of the issues.

Research background

Safaei et al. (2013) have analyzed the methods of indirect education in Tazkirat al-Awliya. Mirbagheri Fard and Mohammadi (2017) have analyzed the phrase and references in the mystical language. Dehqan (2019) has examined the methods of education on the basis of mystical principles in Sanai's Hadiqat; but so far, the characteristics of educating mystics have not been analyzed according to the anecdotes of Attar Neyshabouri's Tazkirat al-Awliya.

Text

1. Appearance characteristics and social status of mystics

In mystical works and anecdotes related to mystics, unlike lyrical poems or fictional works, the apparent features of mystics are not well described; but Attar, in the position of a biographer, wherever necessary, in order to acquaint the reader with the text, expresses some outward features of the mystics; especially if the events of the anecdote are directly related to some of the apparent characteristics of the mystic wanted by Attar. Attar writes about Fuzail Ayaz:

«و اول حال او چنان بود که در میان بیابان مرو و باورد خیمه زده بود و پلاسی پوشیده و کلاهی پشمین بر سر و تسیح در گردن افکنده و یاران بسیار داشت، همه دزد و راهزن»

(Attar, p. 89).

With these apparent descriptions, Attar was able to create an image of Fuzail Ayaz, who was a bandit before his repentance in the audience's mind and encourage him to continue reading Fuzail's biography. Ibrahim Adham was also the king of Balkh before his repentance and wore delicate robes; but after the spiritual transformation and repentance, he gave his fine robes to a shepherd and took the shepherd's felt and hat and put it on (see: Ibid., p. 104). Attar also writes about Yusuf ibn Al-Hussein:

«عظیم صاحب جمال بود»

(Ibid., p. 382).

and

«در چشم او سرخی ای بود ظاهر از غایت بی خوابی»

(Ibid., p. 387); Attar also refers to the social status of many mystical elders, before and after Sufism. Ibrahim Adham was the Emir of Balkh; But after repenting and entering Sufism, he turned to low and difficult occupations, such as thorn picking and gardening, and gave the dervishes a small income from it (see: Ibid., p. 115). Khair Al-Nasaj was knitting (see: Ibid, p. 546) and Abu Hafs Haddad was a blacksmith (see: Ibid., p. 391); however, expressing the esoteric and spiritual characteristics of mystics for Attar has been more important than their physical characteristics and social status.

2. Spiritual characteristics of mystics

1-2. Good temper



The observance of good temper is one of the first teachings in the stage of spiritual journey; as far as, some consider the principle of Sufism to be good temper.

«محمد مرتعش می گوید: تصوف، حسن خلق است»

(Attar, p. 517).

Katani also believed

«تصوف، خلق است. هر که از تو به خلق زیادت تر، از تو صوفی تر»

(Qushayri, p. 372).

Bayazid Bastami also believed

«هر که قرآن بخواند، اما به جنازه مسلمانان حاضر نشود و به عیادت بیماران نرود و یتیمان را نپرسد، مدعی است»

(Attar, p. 182);

Marouf Karkhi was also very humble when he died (see: Ibid, p. 329). Jami writes in Nafhat Al-Ons about the moral characteristics of the elders of mysticism:

«ایشان کسانی هستند که به لطافت زبان و حسن اخلاق و تازه رویی و سخای نفس و قلت اعتراض و پذیرفتن عذر هر که عذر خواهد و شفقت بر همه خلق شناخته می شوند»

(Jami, p. 570).

Mohammad Ghazali also considers good temper as one of the important conditions of companionship in kimiyaye saadat.

«که از بدخوی سلامت نبود و چون آن خوی بد او بجنبید، حق تو فرونهد و باک ندارد»

(Ghazali, p. 306).

The most prominent manifestations of good temper in the biography of the mystics of Tazkirat al-Awliya, which were influential in their education system, are:

1-1-2.Maintaining the sanctity of the ancient masters

One of the important characteristics of the elders of mysticism was the respect they had for their masters. Junaid Baghdadi, the great mystic of the third century AH and the leader of the Baghdadians, considers his progress in the path of spiritual journey as a result of struggle in the presence of his master, Sari Saghati.

«از او پرسیدند که بدین درجه به چه رسیدی؟ گفت بدان که چهل سال بر آستان سری سقطی به قدم مجاهده ایستاده بودم»

(Attar, p. 423).

Respect for the master is as important as that Attar considers the curse of Amr ibn Uthman Makki, the master of Hallaj, on the right of his unfaithful student as one of the reasons for the murder of Hussein ibn Mansour Hallaj:

«پیران گفتند هر چه بر حسین آمد از بلاها، از دعای او بود»

(Ibid, p. 452).

The elders of mysticism used to respect the right of their masters even after death:

«نقل است که شبلی یک روز بر سر خاک استادش، جنید، ایستاده بود. یکی از وی مسئله ای پرسید. جواب نداد و گفت: بزرگان را حال حیات و ممات یکی است. من شرم دارم که پیش خاک او جواب مسئله گویم؛ چنان که در حال حیات شرم داشتم»

(Ibid., p. 451).

Abu Ali Daqaq, the elders of mysticism and the master of Abolghasem Qushayri (famous mystic of the fifth century and author of Qushayriyah Treatise), said: I never went near



Nasrabadi until I took a bath (See: Qushayri, p. 456). Qushayri also seriously respected her master Abu Ali Daqaq:

«و من هرگز نزدیک استاد بوعلی نشدم، آلا که روزه داشتمی و نخست غسل کردمی و به مدرسه شدمی و بسیار وقت بودی که به مدرسه شدمی و باز گشتمی و درنشدمی، از حشمت وی»

(Ibid, Qushayri, p. 456)

2-1-2. Respecting students and providing their progress field

Mystics, just as they were very committed to preserving the sanctity of their masters, they also respected to their talented students and were humble in front of them. Sari Saghati, the master of Junaid Baghdadi, constantly provided the conditions for him to speak in the presence of elders and he even believed that Junaid is superior to him.

«روزی از سری پرسیدند که هیچ مرید را درجه از درجهٔ پیر بلندتر باشد؟ گفت: باشد و برهان آن ظاهر است. جنید را درجه بالای درجهٔ من است»

(Attar, p. 417).

In other mystical works, there are examples of respect for the disciple or his superiority over himself. Shams Tabrizi used to say:

«سخن چنان است که مولانا می گوید... آخر من مرادم و مولانا مراد مراد»

(Shams al-Din Mohammad Tabrizi, p. 172).

3-1-2. Equality of promise and action

One of the salient features of masters and elders of mysticism is that in the first step, they are the agents of their words.

«سری سقطی یک روز در صبر سخن می گفت. کژدمی چند بار او را زخم زد. آخر گفتند: چرا دفع نکردی؟ گفت: شرم داشتم. چون در صبر سخن می گفتم»

(Attar, p. 340).

In Golestan, Saadi also criticizes a scholar who does not practice his science and compares him to the blind man who holds a torch but does not see its light; but others are guided by that light:

«عالم ناپرهیزکار، کور مشعله دار است. یهدی به و هُو لایهتدی.»

بی فایده هر که عمر درباخت
چیزی نخرید و زر
بینداخت»

(Saadi, p. 170).

4-1-2. Seriousness and perseverance



The elders of mysticism used their best efforts to observe the conditions of spiritual journey, and their seriousness and perseverance continued until their deaths. Even illness and old age did not stop them. Junaid says about his master, Sari Saghati:

«هیچ کس را ندیدم در عبادت کامل تر از سری که نودوهشت سال بر او بگذشت که پهلو بر زمین نهاد، مگر در بیماری مرگ»

(Attar, p. 331).

Such a master, nurtures a student like Junaid who says:

«اگر من هزار سال بزیم، از اعمال یک ذره کم نکنم»

(Ibid., p. 421).

This perseverance is also seen in the education of students; in such a method that the masters of mysticism did not abandon their erring disciples and tried to bring them back to the path of spiritual journey.

«نقل است که جنید را مریدی بود. روزی نکته‌ای بر وی گرفتند. از خجالت برفت و باز خانقاه نیامد. تا یک روز جنید با اصحاب در بازار می‌گذشتند. نظر شیخ بر آن مرید افتاد. مرید از شرم بگریخت. جنید اصحاب را بازگردانید و بر عقب او برفت. مرید بازنگریست. شیخ را دید که می‌رفت. گام گرم کرد و می‌رفت، تا به جایی رسید که راه نبود. روی به دیوار باز نهاد از شرم شیخ. ناگاه شیخ بدو رسید. مرید گفت: کجا می‌آیی؟ شیخ گفت: جایی که مرد را پیشانی به دیوار آید، شیخ آنجا به کار باید. پس او را به خانقاه بازبرد» (همان، ص ۴۲۴). در باب توبه نیز حکایتی درباره توبه ابوعمرو نجید در مجلس بوعثمان از رساله قشیریه نقل شده است. ابوعمرو پس از توبه دچار فتور می‌شود و از بوعثمان «همی گریختی و از مجلس باز ایستاد. روزی بوعمرو بوعثمان را پیش آمد. بوعمرو از راه بگشت و به راهی دیگر بیرون شد. بوعثمان از پی او بشد و گفت: یا پسر، با کسی صحبت مکن که تو را جز معصوم دوست ندارد. بوعثمان تو را در چنین وقتی سود دارد. بوعمرو توبه کرد و با سر ارادت آمد و کارش پیش رفت»

(Qushayri, p. 152).

5-1-2. Having insight and knowing the spirits and the level of understanding of the disciple

In Islamic mysticism, the relationship between disciple and master is much deeper than superficial education and master must have full knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of his students and offer deep mystical teachings to each of them according to their understanding. This point is important to the extent that most mystical works have devoted a chapter or a detailed discussion to it. In the culture of Sufism, elder and master should use compassion and politics in educating the students according to their situation; like «طیب عالم بر» who uses both medication and abstinence to treat his patient (see: Al-Abbadi, pp. 39-41). The feature of the elders of mysticism is sometimes associated with the subject of "insight". Qushayri writes about the insight of his master, Abu Ali Daqaq:

«و چون بنشستمی، واقعه‌ای که مرا بودی، بی سؤال من فراگفتن آمدی و بسیار وقت یاد دارم که هنوز ننشسته بودمی که شرح واقعه من به گفتن گرفته بودی. هر چه در دل من بودی، همه بگفتی و چندین بار این معنی از وی عیان دیدم»

(Qushayri, p. 456).

The elders of mysticism even when gathered for lectures, they could recognize a true student was present with insight.

«نقل است که یحیی بن معاذ یک روز به منبر برآمد. چهارهزار مرد حاضر بودند. بنگریست نیکو و از منبر فرود آمد و گفت:



آن کس که ما برای او به منبر آمده‌ایم، حاضر نیست»

(Attar, p. 362).

It is clear from this anecdote and similar examples that the audience has an important place in mysticism and the teaching of mystical thoughts is not commensurate with the monologue and the unity of the speaker. Mystics offered their teachings to students who were true seekers and if they did not find the true seeker in the crowd, they refused to speak; as far as can be said one of the reasons for dividing the language of mystical texts into phrases and allusions and expressing some mystical topics cryptically has been to pay attention to the position of the audience. In mystical works, reasons have been given for concealing a secret or expressing secret words. "Attention to the levels of reception and perception of the audience" is one of the reasons, and "different types of audiences are the basis of expression diversity in the mystical texts" (Mirbagheri Fard and Mohammadi, p. 199).

6-1-2. Having effective methods to communicate with students

Mysticism is one of the schools of thought and special cultures of education. In this culture, there are different methods of communication between teacher and student to transmit the teachings. These methods can be divided into direct and indirect categories.

1-6-1-2. Indirect teaching

There are various methods in mystical anecdotes for indirect teaching (See: Safaei et al., P. 83). Sometimes the mystic uses a natural event to make the story more tangible for his disciples:

«نقل است که وقتی شبلی لختی هیزم تر دید که آتش در زده بودند و آب از دیگر سوی وی می‌چکید. اصحاب را گفت: ای مدعیان، اگر راست می‌گویید که در دل آتش داریم، چرا از دیده‌تان اشک پیدا نیست؟»

(Attar, p. 622).

This method is often used by Shibli Baghdadi and increases the effectiveness of education; because it forces the audience to reflect on the natural event and to think more deeply about their inner state. In this method, the educational point is recorded with an effective image in the minds of students and is not forgotten. Attar has also arranged Shibli's educational method in an anecdote:

همی شد در بیابان یا به کوهی	شنیدم من که شبلی با گروهی
که از بادِ وزان می‌کرد فریاد	به ره در کاسهٔ سر دید پُر باد
بر او دید ای عجب خطی نوشته	گرفت آن کاسهٔ سرگشته گشته
که او دنیا زیان کرد آخرت	که بنگر کاین سرِ مردی



هم	پُرغم	است
بزد یک نعره و آشفته درماند	چو شبلی آن خط آشفته برخواند	
سر مردی است از مردان درگاه	به یاران گفت این سر در راه	چنین
نگردد در حریم وصل محرم	که هر کاو درنبازد هر دو عالم	
چنان کان مرد از مردان اوئی	تو هم گر هر دو عالم ترک گویی	

(Attar, p. 125).

2-1-6-2. direct teaching

In the method of direct teaching, the sheikh communicates directly with the disciples and teaches them through methods such as lectures or reciprocal dialogue.

1-2-6-1-2. Lecture

One of the most common methods of expressing mystical topics is lecturing or speaking in public. The sheikh is the sole speaker and listeners are not allowed to speak during the sheikh's speech in order to be polite. Given that the expression of deep content and pure mystical experiences sometimes required that the speaker's mind not be disturbed, one of the important etiquettes of the disciple and the master was the silence of the disciple in the assembly of the master.

«نقل است که جنید سخن می گفت. مریدی نعره ای بزد. شیخ او را از آن منع کرد و گفت: اگر یک بار دیگر نعره زنی، تو را مهجور گردانم. پس شیخ با سر سخن شد. آن مرد خود را نگه می داشت؛ تا حال به جایی رسید که طاقتش نماند و هلاک شد. برفتند و او را دیدند، میان دلق خاکستر شده»

(Attar, p. 423).

This anecdote may seem exaggerated at first glance, but it shows the profound impact of Junaid's words on the hearts and souls of his audience. In mystical anecdotes, one of the characteristics of Junaid is considered to be expressive and effective speech; as much as he



spoke every time, at the end of the assembly, several people fainted from the impact of his speech. This power and effect of the word was first found and developed by his master, Sari Saghati.

«و جنید هفت ساله بود که سری سقطی او را به حج برد و در مسجدالحرام مسئله شکر می‌رفت، در میان چهارصد پیر و چهارصد قول بگفتند، در شرح و بیان شکر. هر کسی قولی. سری جنید را گفت: تو نیز چیزی گو. جنید گفت: شکر آن است که نعمتی که خدای عز و جل تو را داده است، بدان نعمت در وی عاصی نشوی و نعمت او را سرمایه معصیت نسازی. چون جنید این بگفت، هر چهارصد گفتند: احسنت! یا قرة عین الصدیقین و همه اتفاق کردند که بهتر از این نتوان گفت. سری گفت: زود باشد که حظ تو از خدای، زبان تو بود»

(Ibid., p. 418).

2-2-6-1-2. Reciprocal dialogue

In the biography of the mystics of Tazkirat al-Awliya, there are several examples of teaching mystical topics through reciprocal dialogue. These conversations also explain the prominent features of the elders of mysticism's education and also transmit the Attar's rhetorical power as the author of a mystical literary text to the audience. Given that the use of questions is one of the most widely used verbal methods which mystics have used in mystical texts to teach mystical topics, in continuation of this research, some examples of question-based conversations are analyzed:

1-2-2-6-1-2. Expressing a mystical point by elders using a news sentence in response to the question of the disciples

This method has been used frequently by mystics to teach mystical topics. Bayazid Bastami was asked that

«بنده به درجه کمال کی رسد؟ گفت: چون عیب خود را بشناسد و همت از خلق بردارد، آنگه حق او را بر قدر همت وی و به قدر دوری او از نفس خود به خویش نزدیک گرداند»

(Ibid., p. 197).

Yusuf Ibn Al-Hussein was asked about love. Said:

«هر که خدای را دوست دارد، خواری و ذل او سخت تر بود و شفقت و نصیحت او خلق خدای را بیشتر بود»

(Ibid., p. 388).

In this method, the elders of mysticism considering the level of comprehension level of questioner as well as the appropriateness of the topic, responded in such a way that the educational point, while short, was expressive and eloquent; for this reason, this way of communication, unlike lecturing, is not detailed and one-way, and also allows students to ask further questions.

2-2-2-6-1-2. Expressing a mystical point with reciprocal questions and answers

There are examples in the mystical texts that the master prepares his students to receive mystical points by asking questions of them.

«نقل است که مریدی آمد و گفت: خواهیم که خرقه پوشم. شیخ ابوالحسن خرقانی گفت: ما را مسئله ای است. اگر آن را جواب دهی، شایسته خرقه باشی. اگر مرد چادر زنی در سر گیرد، زن شود؟ گفت: نه. گفت اگر زنی جامه مردی درپوشد، هرگز مرد



شود؟ گفت: نه. گفت: تو نیز اگر در این راه مرد نه‌ای، بدین مرقع پوشیدن مرد نگردي»

(Ibid., p. 668).

It should be noted that mystics have used question versus question in different ways. Sometimes, as in the previous example, the mystic asks the audience and presents its education according to the response of the audience; but sometimes the question is asked for a purpose other than receiving an answer and through secondary purposes which is very effective in preparing the audience's mind to accept education. For example, Rābia was asked:

«اگر گناهکار توبه کند، قبول کند یا نه؟ گفت: چگونه توبه کند؟ مگر خداوندش توبه دهد و قبول کند؛ که تا او توبه ندهد، توبه نتواند کرد»

(Ibid., p. 69).

Rābia, in response to the questioner, first with a question that is intended to surprise, arouses the audience's attention; then introduces to express an educational point with an essay sentence in the method of hope; after that transmits his education to the audience with a news sentence in the conditional method.

A noteworthy point in the rhetorical features of mystical conversations such as Attar is his effort as a literary writer and not only the narrator of mystics' sayings; because by comparing similar sayings in the texts before Attar, which were often among his sources, it turns out that the origin of these sayings is shorter and are less common in terms of rhetorical features. The recent dialogue between Rābia and the questioner in the Qushayriyah Treatise lacks this rhetorical value.

«مردی رابعه را گفت: گناه بسیار کردم. اگر توبه کنم، پذیرد؟ گفت: نه؛ ولیکن اگر توبه دهد، توبه کنی»

(Qushayri, p. 156).

In Qushayri's narration, the short and clear answer of Rābia reduces the effectiveness of the educational point and the hope of Attar's narration is not seen in it.

3-2-2-6-1-2: Question versus news sentence

The anecdotes of Tazkirat al-Awliya are not limited to expressing the educational points resulting from the question and answer between the master and the student. Sometimes in the presence of the mystic, mystical points are raised in the context of news and the mystic uses the question tool to express his opposite opinion against the content of the previous sentence. Rābia al Adawiya has used this method many times in Tazkirat al-Awliya:

«صالح مُرّی بسی گفتی که هر که دری کوید، عاقبت باز شود. رابعه یک بار حاضر بود. گفت: تا کی گویی که باز بخواهد گشاید؟ کی بسته است تا باز گشاید؟»

(Ibid., p. 69).

Rābia expresses her opposition to Salih Marry's speech by asking two questions with surprise and increases the emphasis and impact of his speech with positive interrogation with a negative implication; To the extent that Salih Marry also admits his ignorance:

«صالح گفت: عجب! مردی جاهل و زنی ضعیفه دانا»

(Ibid)

4-2-2-6-1-2. Giving students the opportunity to answer each other's questions



The elders of mysticism sometimes left the answers of some questions to the disciples. This method, in addition to showing the master's respect for the students, encouraged them to find answers and made the educational atmosphere more passionate.

«نقل است که یک روز جوانی از در خانقاه درآمد و بنشست. گفت: اگر کسی را اندیشه معصیتی به خاطر درآید، طهارت را هیچ زیان دارد؟ استاد ابوعلی دقاق گفت: سؤال این جوانمرد را جواب گویند. یکی از شاگردان پاسخ داد: طهارت ظاهر را خلل نکند؛ اما طهارت باطن را بشکند»

(Ibid., p. 651).

4-2-2-6-1-2. Expressing the teachings with consecutive questions

«نقل است که یکی عصابه‌ای بر سر بسته بود. گفت: چرا عصابه بر سر بسته‌ای؟ گفت: سرم درد می‌کند. گفت: عمرت چند است؟ گفت: سی سال. گفت: در این سی سال بیشتر تندرست بودی یا بیمار؟ گفت: تندرست. گفت: هرگز در این مدت عصابه شکر بر سر بسته‌ای که به یک درد سر که تو را هست، عصابه شکایت برندی؟»

(Ibid., pp. 69-70).

5-2-2-6-1-2. Answers to common questions appropriate to the mystical circumstances

Sometimes disciples or the common people would ask questions about ordinary affairs; but the mystic prepared the mind of the audience to receive mystical teachings with an answer appropriate to his circumstances.

«بزرگی پیش بایزید رفت. او را دید، سر در گریبان فکرت فرو برده. چون سر برآورد، گفت: ای شیخ، چه کردی؟ گفت: سر به فناء خود فروبردم و به بقای حق برآوردم»

(Ibid., p. 182). This method is widely used in Bayazid Bastami's education system.

«مریدی شیخ را دید که می‌لرزید. گفت: یا شیخ، این حرکت تو از چیست؟ شیخ گفت سی سال در راه صدق قدم باید زد و خاک مزابل به محاسن باید رفت و سر بر زانوی اندوه باید نهاد تا تحریک مردان بدانی. به یک دو روز که از پس تخته برخاستی، خواهی که بر اسرار مردان واقف شوی؟»

(Ibid)

In other mystical texts, this feature of Bayazid Bastami is also mentioned. In this way, Bayazid himself would sometimes ask a question and enter the realm of mystical discussions upon hearing the answer of the audience.

«و مشهور است که یکی از مریدان ذوالنون قصد بایزید کرد. چون به در صومعه رسید و در بزد، بایزید گفت کیستی و که را خواهی؟ گفت: بایزید را. گفت: بویزید که باشد و کجاست و چه چیز است؟ من مدتی است تا بایزید را جستم و نیافتم»

(Hojviri, p. 370).

Sometimes the mystic's answer surprises the audience and encourages them to receive a mystical point.

«از ابویزید پرسیدند که عمر تو چند است؟ گفت: چهار سال. گفتند این چگونه باشد؟ گفت: هفتاد سال است تا در حجاب دنیایم؛ اما چهار سال است تا وی را می‌بینم و روز حجاب از عمر نشمرم»

(Ibid., p. 486).

Rābia al-Adawiya also answered the usual questions about the issues of his life in the same way.



«نقل است که حسن رابعه را گفت: رغبت شوهر کنی؟ گفت: عقد نکاح بر وجودی وارد بود. اینجا وجود کجاست که من از آن من نیم. از آن اویم و در سایه حکم او. خطبه از او باید کرد»

(Attar, p. 79).

3-6-1-2. Written conversation

There are examples in mystical works that show that questions and answers were also done in writing among mystics. Abu Othman Hiri wrote a letter to Mohammad Fazl that

«علامت شقاوت چیست؟ گفت: سه چیز. یکی آنکه حق تعالی او را علم روزی کند و از عمل محروم گرداند؛ دوم آنکه عمل دهد و از اخلاص محروم گرداند؛ سیوم آنکه صحبت صالحان روزی کند و از حرمت ایشان محروم گرداند»

(Ibid., p. 88).

In addition to presenting mystical teachings, written questions and answers clearly and precisely influenced the permanence of these teachings and their uninterrupted transmission to future generations. Some of these written conversations have the color and smell of pride and also adorned with prominent rhetorical features. These characteristics are not usually seen in the oral conversations of educational texts.

«نقل است که یحیی معاذ رازی نامه‌ای نوشت به ابویزید که چه گویی در حق کسی که قدحی خورد و مست ازل و ابد شد؟ بایزید جواب نوشت که اینجا مرد هست که در شبان روزی دریای ازل و ابد درمی کشد و نعره هل من مزید می‌زند»

(Ibid., p. 169).

Again, Yahya wrote a letter to Bayazid that

«ما را با تو که بایزیدی، سرّی است؛ لکن میعاد میان من و تو بهشت است، در زیر سایه طوبی».

Yahya sent a loaf of bread with a letter, which was made with Zamzam water. Bayazid replied:

«آنجا که یاد حق باشد، هم بهشت است و هم سایه طوبی و ما آن قرص را به کار نبردیم؛ از آنکه فرموده بودی که از آب زمزم سرشته‌ام؛ اما نگفته بودی که از کدام تخم کاشته‌ام»

(Ibid., p. 170).

This method of Bayazid's response caused Yahya Moaz Razi, who is one of the leaders of Malamatiyeh, eager to meet Bayazid, hurry to meet him and continue their conversation orally. Attar emphasizes that

«یحیی مبتدی بود و بایزید منتهی»

(ibid); for this reason, he raises questions that anger Bayazid.

«گفت: ای شیخ، چرا معرفت نخواستی که ملک الملوک است و گفته است که هرچه خواهی، بخواه». بایزید نعره‌ای بزد و گفت: خاموش ای یحیی که مرا به خود غیرت می‌آید که او را بدانم؛ که من هرگز نخواهم که او را جز او بداند. جایی که معرفت او بود، من در میان چه کاره‌ام؟ خود خواست او آن است ای یحیی که جز او کسی او را نداند»

(ibid)

Conclusion

According to the examples mentioned about the educational methods of mystics in Attar Neyshabouri's Tazkirat al-Awliya, the most obvious features of mystic masters can be



enumerated as follows:

The observance of good temper, maintaining the sanctity of the ancient masters and current students, simplicity and humility, acting on his words, accepting criticism and most importantly, having effective methods of verbal and non-verbal communication; especially the question and answer method in educating students. According to the anecdotes and sayings quoted in *Tazkirat al-Awliya*, there are several ways for question and answer method, and the mystics used these methods to express mystical teachings. Some of the most common question and answer methods in *Tazkirat al-Awliya* are: expressing a mystical point by the elders using a news sentence in response to the question of the disciples, expressing a mystical point with reciprocal questions and answers, question versus news sentence, giving students the opportunity to answer each other's questions, expressing the teachings with consecutive questions, answers to common questions appropriate to the mystical circumstances; mystical teachings were also offered in the form of written questions and answers and such conversations were more illustrated. A comparison of the common conversations between *Tazkirat al-Awliya* and the mystical texts before him also shows that Attar has tried in various ways to bring the conversations into *Tazkirat al-Awliya* with a more rhetorical value.

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