



**Spiritual Journeys in
Symbolic Language (A
Study of the Differences
and Similarities of
Spiritual Journeys in
Sohrevardi's Treatises and
Attar's Mosibatnameh.)**



SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS IN SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE (A STUDY OF THE DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES OF SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS IN SOHREWARDI'S TREATISES AND ATTAR'S *MOSIBATNAMEH*)

VIAJES ESPIRITUALES EN LENGUAJE SIMBÓLICO (UN ESTUDIO DE LAS DIFERENCIAS Y SIMILITUDES DE LOS VIAJES ESPIRITUALES EN LOS TRATADOS DE SOHREWARDI Y MOSIBARNAMEH DE ATTAR)

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Fecha de recibido: 2019-12-22

Fecha de aceptado para publicación: 2019-12-29

Fecha de publicación: 2019-12-30

Abstract

In most of mystical works, the wayfarer of the Path of Truth is in one stage of the journey. Human spirit or rational soul, after becoming conscious of its own loneliness in the world of darkness and the prison of body as well as its occidental exile visits to heavenly principle, which is the guiding angel, becomes aware of the obstacles in its way back to the Orient and its own existential origin. Four Journeys is one of those issues which has been taken into account in the works of great sages like Avicenna and renowned mystics. The current study was an effort for conducting a comparative study of the stages of Four Journeys in Sohrewardi's treatises and Attar's *Mosibatnameh* in view of their differences and similarities via a descriptive method. Through this study, it was intended to cast light on the importance of man's knowledge of universe and himself focusing on acquired knowledge and external senses and inner perceptual faculties. The main hero of Sohrewardi in all of his treatises in guidance of man is intellect which emerges in the guise of a Spiritual Guide in order to guide the wayfarer. While in Attar's *Mosibtanameh*, despite intellect, the role of prophets and particularly the Holy Prophet of Islam is highlighted in the guidance of man and his reaching to the destination of the journey. In fact, intellect in the views of both thinkers is Active Intellect or Tenth Intellect whose place is in human heart and Sohrewardi has used the beautiful term "Red Intellect" to refer to it.

Keywords: Sohrewardi, *Mosibatnameh*, Treatises, Four Journeys, Symbol, Intellect.



Resumen

En la mayoría de las obras místicas, el viajero del Camino de la Verdad se encuentra en una etapa del viaje. El espíritu humano o el alma racional, después de tomar conciencia de su propia soledad en el mundo de la oscuridad y la prisión del cuerpo, así como de sus visitas al exilio occidental al principio celestial, que es el ángel guía, se da cuenta de los obstáculos en su camino de regreso a Oriente y su propio origen existencial. Four Journeys es uno de esos temas que se ha tenido en cuenta en las obras de grandes sabios como Avicena y místicos de renombre. El estudio actual fue un esfuerzo para llevar a cabo un estudio comparativo de las etapas de Cuatro viajes en los tratados de Sohrewardi y Mosibatnameh de Attar en vista de sus diferencias y similitudes a través de un método descriptivo. A través de este estudio, se pretendía arrojar luz sobre la importancia del conocimiento del universo sobre el hombre y sobre sí mismo, centrándose en el conocimiento adquirido y los sentidos externos y las facultades perceptivas internas. El héroe principal de Sohrewardi en todos sus tratados en la guía del hombre es el intelecto que emerge bajo la apariencia de un Guía Espiritual para guiar al caminante. Mientras se encuentra en el Mosibtanameh de Attar, a pesar del intelecto, el papel de los profetas y particularmente del Santo Profeta del Islam se destaca en la guía del hombre y su alcance al destino del viaje. De hecho, el intelecto en los puntos de vista de ambos pensadores es el intelecto activo o el décimo intelecto cuyo lugar está en el corazón humano y Sohrewardi ha utilizado el hermoso término "intelecto rojo" para referirse a él.

Palabras clave: Sohrewardi, Mosibatnameh, Tratados, Cuatro viajes, Símbolo, Intelecto.

Introduction

Preface

Four Journeys feature the stage after the occurrence of consciousness in the spirit; a stage in which an attraction has been created and an effort has been started, which states the bird of spirit and embarks upon the path of a journey. The course of this journey is from the earth to the heavens. Since the spirit is from the heavens, it is essentially interested in joining its origin and experiencing that world but what prevents it from this journey is the sensory concerns and worldly attachments. It is possible to have a temporary access to the celestial world and after death this access becomes permanent. However, there is also a path to touch this celestial world when we are awake and it is the path of self-discipline that leads to volitional death. This death implies dying from the attachments and deliverance from bondages. Avicenna stated that "Sages have argued that there are two types of death, i.e. volitional death and natural death. Volitional death denotes one's effort for killing the carnal desires and refusing from making oneself busy with them while volitional life refers to one's effort for eating, drinking and devoting oneself to the carnal desires. Meanwhile, the eternal prosperity of the soul is contingent upon taking advantage of sciences and refusing from insistence on worldly affairs. Thus, Plato suggested that "die on your will and become alive by nature" (Avicenna, 52). The mission of all mystical works in various eras is leading man to the main destination of spiritual wayfaring, i.e. union and knowledge of the Beloved. The present essay was an effort for studying the similarities and differences of



the stages of Four Journeys in the works of Sohrewardi and Attar's *Mosibatnameh*, which has been prepared based on a comparative-descriptive method and content analysis.

Research Background

The review of the literature showed that no independent study has been conducted so far regarding the comparison of mystical journey in *Mosibatnameh* and the mystical and spiritual journeys in Sohrewardi's treatises. Anyway, the following relevant studies can be referred that have been conducted in similar fields:

- A- "Paradise and Hell" by Abu Al Ala is one of the masterpieces of Arabic literature and has been published for the first time in the Journal of Modern World, no. 10-12, 1968.
- B- Mohammad Reza Shafei Kadkani in his introduction to Attar's *Mosibatnameh* has conducted a comparative study of the Spiritual Travelogues of such mystics as Bayazid Bastami, Muhyaddin Ibn Arabi, Sanaei, and Najm Al Din Kubra and this study helped in conducting the current study.
- C- The book that Professor Furuzanfar has published in 1961 on the biography and analysis of the poems of Attar considers the general plan and plot of Attar's *Mosibatnameh* to be influenced by one of the sections of *Uns Al Taebin* by Sheikh Jam.
- D- *Uns Al Taebin* by Ahamad Jam edited by Dr. Ali Fazel published in 1989 is an outline of a spiritual journey.
- E- *Al Isharat va Al Tanbihat* by Avicenna (1996) along with Khajeh Nasir Al Din Tusi's annotations.

Theoretical Foundations

Mystic is always struggling to escape the material world and become united with the Divine Presence and see His Beauty. The great Sufis as a result of their adventurous journey and undergoing through hardships and dreadful stations in particular moments of illumination and nearness to the world of intuition, have experienced an enthusiasm that bespeaks of the union with the Beloved.

The problem of spiritual travelogues in Iranian culture and Islam has an ancient background and there is no doubt that in international literatures there are a number of masterpieces in this field. Four Journeys of Avicenna, Travelogue of Bayazid Bastami, Muhyaddin Ibn Arabi, Sanaei, Najmaddin Kubra and numerous mystical journeys in the treatises of Sohrewardi including *Risalah Al Tayr* and *Mosibatnameh* by Attar, are among the spiritual travelogues which have taken effective steps towards man's ideas for deliverance from the bondages of the worldly life and his ascension to his original homeland. There is no doubt that religious ideas are the most effective factors in the creation of transcendence and spiritual journeys. Every religion has a series of specific ideas regarding the world beyond nature and the world after death that always attracts human imagination and thought towards journeys in the world of imagination and spirits.

Four Journeys

The main themes of spiritual journeys include the existential aspects of man; man has two aspects: 1- external body which is known as physical body; it is composed of water and



mud. 2- Innermost nature, which is called soul, spirit, life and heart. The truth of spirit is not from this world contrary to the physical body which perishes and lasts forever and after death it returns to its original abode. According to the verse, "*Verily man has been created in the best form*", God is beautiful and from Him, nothing appears but beauty. Wherever there is beauty, love emerges.

At the dawn of universe a beam of your beauty radiated/ love emerged and set the whole world on fire (Hafez, 1988: 101);

God created man in his own form; love also belongs to God. According to the Divine Words, "*He loves them and they love Him*", both God is in love with mankind and the humans love the Lord. In the words of Rumi,

The lover is the whole and the whole itself is Him/ the lover is a closed one and the love searches for the closed one

The universe is the mirror of the Divine Beauty. Given the fact that mysticism is the knowledge of self, creatures and God; true wayfarer should take the first step by journeying from the creatures towards Allah. Creatures include the man and the world of existence and the whole things created by God. Then, in order to reach the knowledge of Truth, which is the goal of wayfaring, every single particles of the universe should be seen with the eyes of the heart so that the manifestation of God can be detected in them and the statement "whoever knows his own , he surely knows his Lord" can be reached. In the *Alchemy of Happiness*, Al Ghazali stated: "knowledge of Divine Presence and observation of the Beauty of God are the property of spirit and an obligation for the latter ... Its main mine is the Divinity and it has its roots there and it will return there" (Al Ghazali, 2003: 11).

First Journey: Journey from the Creatures towards Allah

The most important stage of the journey is the stage in which the wayfarer delivers himself from everything but God. Thus, he devotes himself to demolishing his own arrogance and selfishness and egoism in order to become pure and reach an enlightened and limpid nature so that to be able to reflect the Beauty of Divinity. In this journey, the wayfarer pays continuous and deep attention to the Lord and through more contemplation and self-discipline, ensures fast and safe wayfaring. Most of the stations "Stations of the Wayfarers" belong to this journey. The probability of danger and gradation in this stage of the journey is pretty high. The wayfarer passes through the levels of nature, soul, heart and spirit and then the second journey begins and he becomes annihilated in the level of "Mystery" in the One Essence and becomes united with Allah.

Second Journey: From the Truth towards the Truth by the Truth

The second journey is "by the Truth" because the wayfarer at the end of his first journey has reached the station of "saintly leadership" and his existence is truth-informed. The mystics believe that wayfaring towards Allah implies the wayfarer's effort to know God and when he knows the Lord, this stage comes to end and wayfaring in Allah starts and the wayfarer continues his wayfaring to the point where he has already understood all Divine Attributes, Names and Actions and because the Attributes and Wisdom of God are bottomless, there is no final end for this journey (Khomeini, 1999).



In fact, the wayfarer begins with the Essence and experiences its perfections one after another. He reviews all Names and he has just remained deprived of the “Name of Hidden”. In this stage, three levels of mystery, hidden and most hidden reach to their end.

After reaching the station of “*Passing Away from Passing Away*”, the wayfarer has reached eternity and the third journey starts.

Third Journey: From the Truth towards the Creatures by the Truth

The wayfarer in this journey loses his inebriation and reaches “complete sobriety” and by reaching the stage of “eternity”, returns to consciousness from the intoxication and journeys through the worlds of sovereignty, spirituality and corporeality and observes all these worlds with their requirements. He knows God, His Names and Attributes because he is pure-hearted as described in the verse 160 of Chapter Al Safat: “*Glory to Allah! (He is free) from the things they ascribe (to Him)! Not (so do) the Servants of Allah, sincere and devoted.*”

Journey from the Creatures towards the Truth in the Creatures by the Truth

At the end of the third journey, which takes place in the arc of descend, the wayfarer observes the details of creatures, their effects and requirements. He understands their harms and interests. He knows the quality of their return to Allah. He knows the prosperity and misery of everyone and the paths for reaching them and can help the wayfarers of the path of nearness and knows how to lead them towards the union with the Truth.

Investigating the Stations of Wayfaring in the Treatises of Sohrewardi

Among the works of Sohrewardi, there are a number of symbolic treatises in Persian which have symbolic language. The goal of these treatises is showing the journey of spirit towards the union with God and human natural enthusiasm for the acquisition of knowledge.

Risalah Al Tayr

Sohrewardi in his rewriting of Avicenna’s *Risalah Al Tayr*, using the language of birds, alluded that how the faculties of a man who is conducted towards the intelligible world, obstruct the spiritual journey and acquisition of illumination. In this work, he described the dangers of wayfaring: “O’ Brothers of Truth! Shed your skin like the snake that changes its skin.” In other words, you have to come out of your body; change and push away the vicious properties from yourself. “Take an ant as your example in wayfaring”. To put it otherwise, in wayfaring, one must be avaricious like an ant. “No one should ever hear the sound of your steps”. This is to say that wayfaring should not be a show off. “Drink the poison, may you find beauty; love the , may you find eternal life and if you fly forever, take no determinate nest”.

The goal of Sohrewardi is providing a set of practical rules for the first journey. He alludes to deliverance from the bondages of worldly attachments and carnal desires and also paying attention to volitional death in the sense of dying from the attachments and deliverance from the bondages. He considers having no nest in the condition of wayfaring and this is the symbol of refusing from accepting attachment and being detached from the world. “All birds are taken from the nests” (Sohrewardi, 1993: 199). Sohrewardi continues to describe the obstacles impeding the first journey which are the obstacles of dark veils of



the physical world by the language of the birds. These veils like the states of mind, words and intentions impede flying and reaching the union with God.

“Every single element in this universe is perishable and it is only the Divine Essence who lasts forever”.

At the end of Risalah Al Tayr we read: “And we asked them to open the chains on our feet so that we could enjoy that station. Then, he answered that your chains can be broken just by the one who has set them at first. I’ll delegate someone with you to force them to open your chains and the owners shouted that we should return and we have returned from the king and now we are in our way back to the king with the delegate of the king” (Sohrewardi, 1993: 204). At the end of this wayfaring, we see that the intellect, which is the first authority, cannot be a trouble shooter alone and this is why God has delegated the second authority, i.e. prophets and divine leaders, to assist the mankind. This second authority is supposed to force the intellect to help the man and deliver him from bondages on his feet and let him to fly towards his own origin and become united with the Holy Spirit of the Divine Presence.

Treatise of *Loneliness of the Occident*

In the treatise of *Loneliness of the Occident*, like other treatises as well as *Mosibatnameh (Book of Grieving)*, *Spiritual Guide and Mentor* has a special place: “As I saw a hoopoe coming out from the hole, while it was hailing in the night, it was enlightened by the moonlight and a letter in its beak...” and this continues as follows: “then the hoopoe fled ahead and the sun was on the top of our head”. Here the *Spiritual Guide* is depicted as a hoopoe. In the *Loneliness of the Occident*, which is the highly symbolic and mysterious work of Sohrewardi, the story of fall of human spirit or rational soul and her becoming imprisoned in the chains and bondages of this world and cage of the body and the soul’s struggle for overcoming the obstacles and reaching the Mount Sinai the Temple of Father and meeting Him is related. Up to this point of the story, the *First Journey* comes to its end with the Soul’s meeting with the Father, which is the symbol of the Truth (cf. Sohrewardi, 1993: 342).

The soul by delivering herself from the bodily and worldly concerns and joining the Higher Plenum tastes the spiritual pleasures and enjoys Sacred Teachings. Sheikh Eshraq in most of his treatises including *Partownameh* has mentioned this: “... When the concerns are lifted, the one who is of spiritual perfection reaches an infinite pleasure by the observation of the Necessary Being and the Higher Plenum and turns to a Luminous Intellect and joins the Arch Angels and he will never remember this vicious dusty place” (Sohrewardi, 1993: 70-71).

The wayfarer through self-discipline and joining the world of angels, can acquire knowledge in an immediate fashion but this knowledge includes truths that cannot be perceived and learned through intellect and the senses rather only via the eye of heart and intuition and immediate knowledge and a number of spiritual journeys are required for the acquisition of this knowledge (cf. *ibid*: 235).

The soul’s consciousness of the fact that soul and spirit has a heavenly origin and has become imprisoned in the cage of the body and the dungeon of this world is the first stage and level of self-consciousness. Thus, spirit by knowing her own nature and spiritual origin understands that it has been exiled from the Orient of Light to the Occident of Darkness.



Overcoming the sense of loneliness requires presence in the main homeland of the spirit. In the story of Loneliness of the Occident, Sohrewardi alludes to this sense and consciousness of loneliness. “They caught us and chained us and threw us into the dungeon with a well, the depth of which is infinite” (Purnamdarian, 1988: 385).

Mesopotamia or the Orient is a symbol of paradise and the original abode of man while the Occident is a symbol of this world where we are condemned to be imprisoned in the body. These chains represent the worldly dependencies of the material world, body and soul and for delivering oneself from them and flying towards the Oriental World, we are faced with a journey and wayfaring. In this treatise, like the *Risalah Al Tayr*, Sohrewardi enumerates obstacles and bondages and leads the wayfarer towards the Water of Life, which is a symbol of the knowledge of Truth and union with it. This story continues as follows: “They also became delighted by seeing us and I climbed the mount and visited our father. A Great Spiritual Guide approached and the heavens and the earth were rifted by the radiation of light” (ibid: 386). This Spiritual Guide is the Universal Intellect; the same common element that has been reminded in all treatises of Sohrewardi under different titles and Mount Sinai is a symbol of heart, the abode of Tenth Intellect. We see that the ultimate destination of the journey of Loneliness of the Occident is the destination which has been outlined for the wayfarer in the *Mosibatnameh*, i.e. heart. In Quran, God stated: “Verily this Book is a remembrance for the one who has a heart (i.e. intellect)” (37/50). Attar by a mystical and subtle perspective refers to the intellect as heart, while Sohrewardi writes the words of Intellect which is Great Spiritual Guide as follows: “At the top of Mount Sinai, my father and your Great Grand Father live and I am not attached to Him rather it is Him who let me to get attached to Him. There are other Great Ancestors for us to the point where stands the Grand Great Father and all Nobility and Highness belong to Him and He is the Light of Lights and everything is exposed to annihilation but His Pure Essence” (Purnamdaryan, 1988: 387). The Great Grand Father alludes to the Holy Essence of the Lord based on the Divine Words, “First Thing Created by God was Intellect” (ibid: 387). We see that the wayfarer has finished the first Journey and by becoming annihilated in the Divine Attributes while passing through the second stage, he started the Third Journey and is brought back to the Creatures.

Treatise of Sapiential Words:

In the treatise of Sapiential Words we read: “Know! O’ My spiritual brothers – May God assist you by the light of monotheism – that the profit of incorporeality is the fast return to the main homeland and being connected to the World of Majesty and when the Holy Prophet says that “Love of Homeland is Part of Belief” he is referring to this idea and likewise, the Divine Word of Holy Quran, where it is the note “O’ You! Trusted Soul! Return to your Lord as Satisfied and Safe” (Surah Fajr, 89/28), refers to the same fact. Then, when you know the meaning of your homeland, according to the verse 4 of Surah Al Nisa, “Leave the village the people of which, are oppressors” (Sohrewardi, 1993: 462-463). This departure implies the beginning of the agonizing journey of passing through the world and deliverance from the bondages and embarking upon the path of initiation and wayfaring and moving towards the Truth while darkness is a symbol of ignorance and the origin of all vices as light is the symbol of reason, knowledge and consciousness that finally lead man to the Beloved. We see that in this valuable work, Sohrewardi expresses the path of reaching Truth.



Treatise of *Red Intellect*:

In the treatise of RED INTELLECT, the hero of the story is a falcon that when its eyes are opened and it finds the truth of existence, it seeks after an opportunity to break the chains on its wings and fly up in the sky. These chains are the symbols of the worldly instincts and bondages. The falcon is chained but even the slightest chance sieged by it, allows it to lamely escape to the desert and this is the beginning of the first journey towards the Truth. In its way, it sees a man with a red beard and face who is its guide and it calls him the Spiritual Guide. This spiritual guide is the Universal Intellect which is referred to in religion as the prophet and is the first creature of God. The falcon speaks of what it has seen and heard with the spiritual guide and listens well to the words of the Guide, so that it can overcome the hardships. The Red Intellect has led it to the discovery of the Pond of Life which is in the darkness. It is said that if it wayfarers, no matter towards which direction it will certainly find what it seeks after. "I asked the Guide, where is the Pond of Life? He said that it is in the darkness. If you want it, you have to put on your shoes like Khidhr and put your trust in God so that you can find your path through the darkness. I said that in which direction should I go? He told no matter in which direction you go, if you move you'll find" (Sohrewardi, 1994: 237). God stated: "Trust God if you have a faith" (6/23). The Pond of Life is a common notion that can be seen in other treatises of Sohrewardi and is a symbol of the union with the Divine Presence and acquisition of eternity through dying from all attachments of the material world. We need Trust in God for reaching this eternal life and Trust in God means that we should surrender all of our affairs to the Lord and trust in his vicegerency and this station is one of the toughest stations for the laity; because they still love themselves and the worldly affairs and are in love with them and live in ignorance. Then, it is hard for them to put their Trust in God. However, in the eyes of special chosen people putting one's trust in God, it is the easiest thing that one can do because they know that everything belongs to God. The noblest men on earth have been addressed in the following words: "There is nothing in this world that would belong to you" (3/128). There is nothing for you to control and since they know that man has no control on anything, nothing remains to surrender to God because they do not own anything to surrender to God. Then, they are pure servants of God.

Treatise of the *Song of Wing of Gabriel*

The treatise of the Song of Wing of Gabriel also alludes to a spiritual ascension which has occurred in the state of sleep. He depicts the stages of this wayfaring in a symbolic language. The wayfarer in the first stage of his journey heads towards the Truth; in the course of the stages of wayfaring as deemed by Sheikh Eshraq, the highest stage is the stage of intuition in which the lover is absorbed in the beauty of the beloved and has lost his consciousness and in the second stage of his journey begins where the annihilation has turned to reality and there is no space for selfishness, will and volition. In this treatise, intellects play a key role and in the guise of a spiritual guide, the questions of the wayfarer are answered. "When I turned my eyes, I saw ten handsome spiritual guides who were sitting on a stone bench ... The spiritual guide who was beside the stone bench answered me that we are incorporeal entities and we are coming from nowhere from far away where no thumb can show its right place" (Sohrewardi, 1993: 210). In this treatise, Sohrewardi referred to the intellect as the inner authority and touchstone that undertakes the guidance of mankind. Imam Mohammad Baqer is quoted to have said: "God has given two authorities (touchstones) to the people, i.e. inner authority and external authority; the



external authority is the prophets and Imams while the inner authority is the intellect” (Koleini, vol. 1: 19). We see that the main light of guidance in most treatises of Sohrewardi is kindled by the intellects but it is noteworthy that the wayfarer succeeds to visit these ten guides when he has broken the chains of attachment to the women and the children. Most of the commentators and those who have studied the mysteries of this treatise believe that these states have occurred in sleep as Sohrewardi himself noted, “one night we had a dream while we were sleeping” (Sohrewardi, 1993: 209). However, since this story is believed to be symbolic, some argue that it refers to the darkness and ignorance that has embraced him. By taking advantage of the light of a candle, he heads towards the Khanqah of the Father where the intellect resides and there he asks his questions from the greatest of these spiritual guides. At the end of the story, the dawn of day at the Khanqah of Father is noted which is a symbol of enlightenment and vision that has been acquired as a result of thinking and keeping the company of handsome intellect. We see that if these nights and days are understood as symbols, the possibility of interpreting this revelation to have happened in dream, is completely refuted. Particularly, in the world of dream, the use of thinking and intellect is refuted because the spirit has temporarily left the body. The wayfarer is depicted in this treatise as continuing his spiritual journey through the first journey towards the Truth; in the course of the wayfaring the highest stages are levels of intuition where the lover is absorbed in the beauty of the beloved and loses his control over himself and the second stage of the journey from the Truth by the Truth has just begun and the stage of annihilation has come to end and there is no room for selfishness, will and volition. In the *Garden of Mystics*, Khajeh Abdullah Ansari stated: “Observation (intuition) implies the total lifting of the veil and the Eternal Essence is revealed” (cf. Ansari, 1994: 278). The wayfarer after the revelation, which is the first step for intuition, reaches the station of annihilation in the Divine Essence which requires the annihilation of the attributes of the servant in the attributes of Divine Presence because the existence of the attributes without the essence is impossible.

Treatise of One Day with a Group of Sufis

In this symbolic treatise, regardless of the content which contains the Ptolemaic astrology, the adventures of the mystical wayfaring and spiritual transcendence are told. This treatise contains novel phrases and similes and in it, self-discipline and denial of vicious attributes and deprivation of vices are discussed. In this treatise, in the gathering of wayfarers, each one of them speak of their Sheikh who is the symbol of intellect and Sohrewardi speaks of his own Sheikh: “One day I had sat with a group of Sufis in a Khanqah and everyone was describing the spiritual states of his own Sheikh. When it came to me I said: when I was in the presence of my Sheikh, I addressed my Seikh as follows ...” (Sohrewardi, 1993: 242). Throughout this treatise, Sohrewardi related the guidance of the Sheikh of intellect to his own friends: “If you do this, the eyes of your heart would be opened up and he conveyed the stages of the knowledge of universe and self and he divided human into three groups: 1- Those who see with the eyes on their head and they are the laity and this is also the case with the animals; 2- Those who see the sky as a phenomenon and they are astrologists; 3- Those who see with the eyes of their heart and the spiritual guide advise the wayfarer that for acquisition of a position in the third group separate yourself from the community for forty days and after it, eat something soft so that you can vomit and have your eyes opened. If this didn’t work, you have to repeat these forty days. You need to accomplish this with putting your trust in God” (cf. Sohrewardi, 1993: 248).



This act of eating something soft is a symbol of denial of vicious attributes which is the basis of the journey towards the Truth. When the eye of heart is opened, the path of knowledge of universe and self is created and then the ground is paved for the knowledge of Truth.

Treatise of *On the State of Childhood*

One of the other treatises of Sohrewardi which has a major difference with his other treatises and at the same time has a clear similarity to *Mosibatnameh*, is the treatise entitled *On the State of Childhood*. This treatise by the expression of stories related by the Spiritual Guide, makes the understanding of philosophical and mystical problems easy. Throughout this treatise, the wayfarer asks questions from the spiritual Guide in 20 stages and the Sheikh who is the Mentor, by the expression of sweet stories, delineates the stages of self-purification and the journey towards Allah like purity, trust in God, etc., and guides the wayfarer in the first stage of his Four Journeys. "I told the Sheikh if there is anyone who is free from the bondages of whatever he has? Sheikh answered: This is true for someone. I asked him again how will he manage his life without his things? He said that if someone has such a concern, he would never give anything but if someone gives things, he would never think of this. The world of Trust in God is a beautiful world and it is not that everyone is interested in it" (ibid: 259).

The emphasis of Sohrewardi on the guidance of intellect by the Spiritual Guide who adds to its worldview and provides the ground for initiation, is considerable. In this treatise, the impact of the companion in the spiritual wayfaring and refusing to share the truths with the strangers are insisted. At the end of the story, the Spiritual Guide considers maturity as the cause of sapience and enthusiasm which is the secret of becoming perfect and embarking upon the path and this perfection takes place when the wayfarer has finished his own first journey and is at the beginning of the second journey towards the annihilation in the Divine Attributes. This indescribable sapience and enthusiasm is maturity.

Treatise of *On the Truth of Love*

This story is one of the symbolic works of Sohrewardi, the main hero of which, is beauty, love and grief which are personified and express the obstacles of reaching to the province of spirit. Love provides a symbolic exposition of the province of spirit and then the passage of the wayfarer through the obstacles in the path is made possible. The gate of this province is under the control of a spiritual young guide known as the *Perennial Sophia* who journeys and is a guard. He knows the Book of God and is eloquent. In this story, we see that Sohrewardi pays attention to intellect and this is also highlighted at the beginning of the book: "You should know that the first thing that Lord God has created is a luminous substance the name of which, is intellect. This substance has three attributes: one is the knowledge of Truth; the other is self-knowledge and finally the knowledge of someone who did not exist then came into existence ... All these three, emerge from the same origin and they are brothers of each other" (ibid: 268).

Exploring the Stations of Wayfaring in Attar's *Mosibatnameh*

Mosibatnameh is an exposition of the initiation of spirit in the solitude of spiritual thinking and the spirit concerned with wayfaring in natural and spiritual world is depicted as an intellectual wayfarer who submits to the Mentor like a pupil and follower and tries to think by the assistance of this Guide. In this way, he undergoes through forty stations and



reaches the knowledge of self which is the starting point of knowledge of God (cf. Ritter, 1998: 23). We see that in all of these stages, the obstacles of the first journey are explored and the veil on its ambiguity is torn so that the wayfarer can start the second journey, i.e. the journey from the Truth towards the Truth.

In *Mosibatnameh*, the existence of the spiritual Guide from the first station to the end of the fortieth station is visible and the guide opens all knots of every station for the wayfarer and is his mentor. The spiritual Guide in *Mosibatnameh* like Sohrewardi's symbolic treatises is a symbol of intellect which is the light of the path in discovering the truth. Perhaps this is why one hour thinking in Islamic teachings is considered to be better than a thousand year of devotion.

There should be a Perfect Man with a wonderful spirit/ so that he could swim in this deep sea (Attar, 13);

The existence of this spiritual guide in *Mosibatnameh* can be seen as the Perfect Intellect. The wayfarer after each station goes to this Spiritual Guide and asks for help.

Wayfarer came to the Guide and told his secret/ he told all his states to the Guide/ the Guide told him that the one who is the Michael/ giving grace and livelihood is good (Attar, 2009: 181);

In the words of Attar, the wayfarer who journeys through the terrestrial and celestial worlds is human thought and the man not with the physical step rather by the wings of the thought is flying throughout the universe; thus, the wayfarer is stable from the physical perspective while his thought is undergoing through a spiritual journey:

The wayfarer is wayfaring through his thought/ a thought that is derived from his invocation of God (ibid: 909);

This cordial or meditative thinking based on the Divine Words "Hearts become secure by invocation to God" has its origins in the remembrance of God and emerges from the heart and starts its descending journey from the World of Nobility and Angels and after passing through the throne, slate, and pen, it touches upon paradise and hell. It continues its journey in the heavens via the sun and moon and later with the four elements and comes to the mountain and sea and the inanimate creatures. Attar states the ineffable in the symbolic language. It finally comes to the Satan, Jinn and man and man leads it to Adam and the latter also takes it to other prophets and the wayfarer after returning from every station, turns to the First Authority and the inner prophet, i.e. Universal Intellect, for guidance. The wayfarer of the thought, after passing through the stage of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and Jesus comes to the station of Prophet Mohammad who teaches him the stages of soul from the sense to the spirit. Thus, the wayfarer becomes submerged in the sea of spirit and understands that spirit had been his desirable destination. We see that Attar in *Mosibatnameh* has paid a special attention to the second authority, i.e. external prophets, along with the first authority, i.e. inner prophet, who are in charge of awakening and enlightening the inner prophet. In this way, he becomes mindful of the third and fourth stages of the Four Journeys.

Since there was no end for the properties of the path/ I could no longer say anything in this regard



Attar belongs to an Islamic era in which religion and philosophy have reached their fruition in every respect and with such a great intellectual and Sapiential wealth and extensive information concerning wisdom and philosophy, exegesis, medicine, pharmacology, astrology, and consciousness of the teachings of religions and philosophical beliefs away from all types of prejudices, he has expressed mystical doctrines and invited everyone to oneness and mystical thought and problem of God and man and world.

Evaluation of Similarities and Differences of Spiritual Journeys in Sohrewardi's Treatises and Attar's *Mosibatnameh*

The key to happiness in both worlds is the knowledge of soul because if man succeeds to know his own soul, he can reach the happiness of knowledge of the Lord. According to the Divine Words "They Said Yes", the knowledge of God is primordial and innate. This is why in all mystical, philosophical and religious works, one single common objective is hidden. In the words of Rumi,

Days I think, and all nights I say/ why I am ignorant of my heart's affairs/ where have I come and for what?/ where do I go? why don't you show my homeland?

We see that man by his nature, seeks after the acquisition of the main objectives of the creation which is a requirement of knowledge as a whole. Some, by taking intellect as the central theme, have sought to provide a rational and philosophical interpretation of religion, while some others by the denial of the interference of intellect in understanding Sharia, seek to offer an alternative rational notion of religion. The substructure of servitude is true knowledge which is hierarchical. The Holy God has let the whole gamut of universe to be in the service of man for reaching this objective and by the creation of intellect and prophets, as two key elements that lead the man in his search for knowledge, assists man to reach this primordial notion. In all mystical works, human wayfaring for reaching knowledge has been depicted and this is one of the key similarities of the treatises of Sohrewardi and Attar's *Mosibatnameh*. The second common point in these works is the existence of a spiritual guide who is vital for the guidance of mankind in the sphere of wonder.

The third common point, which can be found in the works of Sohrewardi and Attar's *Mosibatnameh*, is the enthusiasm of a wayfarer, who for finding the answer of his innate question and the lost one inside himself, is struggling within the darkness of bodily cage to find an aperture to reach the light.

But among the differences of this evaluation, one can refer to the emphasis that Sohrewardi lays on the first authority, i.e. intellect, for the acquisition of self-knowledge and the knowledge of creatures and God and the insistence of Attar on the second authority, i.e. prophets and particularly the Holy Prophet of Islam. In all works of Sohrewardi, the spiritual guide is the Active Intellect and with the Tenth Intellect in the guise of a Sheikh and Mentor proceeds to enumerate the wonders of creation for the acquisition of empirical knowledge. In no work, this spiritual guide has been attributed to the prophets or the Prophet of Islam but Attar in *Mosibatnameh* not only endorses the vital role of intellect to which the intellectual wayfarer refers to it, rather he pays a special attention to the prophets in general and the Prophet Mohammad in particular and finally it is the problem of



mediation of prophet that has served as a complementary element in the exposition of the integrative role of intellect and prophecy in leading the wayfarer towards the Garden of Spirit. In fact, this sense refers to the sensory, intellectual and conscientious perceptions without which no mysticism is acquired.

Conclusion

- A- The stages of Four Journeys are not in fact more than one and we just use the quadruple division in order to delineate the features of every stage;
- B- Interrelations of journeys: first and third journeys are completely contrary because their origin and destination are different;
- C- Difference of first journey with other journeys: first journey is volition and based on the wayfarer's will; there is also the motive of success and the leadership of eternal attraction but other journeys are not volitional because the will of the wayfarer is absorbed in the will of God and God chooses and wills for him and it is possible that God wills the management of the creatures as it is quoted from the Imams that "our heart is the bearer of the Divine Will" (cf. Mulla Sadra, 1981: 13).
- D- In all treatises of Sohrewardi, the main role of guidance of man is undertaken by the Universal Intellect and the Spiritual Guide in most of the treatises is intellect.
- E- In Attar's *Mosibatnameh*, not only the role of intellect is highlighted rather an emphasis is also laid on the role of the prophecy in the guidance of mankind towards the abode of spirit.
- F- Intellect in the treatises of Sohrewardi and Attar's *Mosibatnameh* is the Active Intellect or Tenth Intellect whose abode is heart and Sohrewardi uses the beautiful term Red Intellect to refer to it. In fact, Universal Intellect is nothing but the heart which is the platform of the Lord. In the words of Sheikh Bahaei:

Everyone is praising you with a certain language/ the nightingale with an ode and the pigeon with a song;

- G- In the works of Sohrewardi, the attention is paid more to the first and second stages of Four Journeys and acquisition of empirical knowledge and the fourth stage of the Four Journeys is not seen in any of the treatises, while in Attar's *Mosibatnameh*, not only a discussion is provided for the importance of the first journey, rather a special attention is also paid to the second, third and fourth journeys. The Shia Muslims pay a special attention to the Fourth Journey, which exclusively belongs to Prophet Mohammad.
- H- In both works, the main attention is paid to the human knowledge of universe and self in view of the acquired knowledge, which is not reached through education rather it requires to be achieved via sensory sense and inner faculties based on the conditions in the outside world which is called science in philosophy.

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