

## THE ISSUE OF TIME IN IBN ARABI'S VIEWS

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**Annotation.** This article examines the views of the great medieval sufi scholar Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi on "time", one of the most important issues in philosophy and mysticism.

**Introduction.** At all times, humanity has been thinking about the essence of the time and place in which it lives, looking for answers to questions such as about time, how to spend it, what should be man's place in time, and trying to understand the specifics of time. Progressive thinkers of all times tried to solve the mysteries of time, period, moment, and so on.

**Keywords:** Time, murid, Sufi, glory and beauty, period, universe, mystic.

Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi (1165-1240), a great mystic and sufi of the early Middle Ages, known as Shaykh al-Akbar (The Great Sheikh), who made a worthy contribution to the development of mystical sciences, also sought a solution to this secret phenomenon. He wrote a separate work on the subject. He called this work "Risalatul wakt wal an" ("Treatise on Time and Moment"). Although this pamphlet is small in size, it is of great importance in revealing the content and essence of time.

Ibn Arabi, as a sufi, knew the value of time very well. He explains time from a mystical point of view, and no doubt bases his opinion on the verses of the Qur'an and hadiths. The pamphlet begins with praising Allah and blessing the Prophet, and then begins with an address to a sufi who is a reader of the book:

اعلم أيها الأخ الموفق السعيد، بعناية الله الحميد المجيد، أن مدار طريق أهل الله، وهم السادة الصوفية الموصل إلى الله تعالى، على حفظ الوقت، والقيام بحكمه ومرسومه، وهذا الوقت الذي وقع عليه اصطلاح الصوفية، من الأمور الدقيقة الغامضة التي لا يتنبه لها، إلا المؤيد بنور البصيرة القدسية، والمنصور بعناية الحضرة العلية، والحقيقة الإلهية

“O brother who has achieved happiness by the grace of Allah, who is worthy of praise. Know that the vigour of the greatest sufis who have attained the company of Allah is through strict observance of time, strict adherence to its rules and regulations. Time is a term widely used among sufis, and it is a very complex and delicate matter. Only those

who enjoy the light of holy insight and are supported by the supreme grace and divine truth will be aware of it” [1: 225] (This and subsequent translations are ours. A.B.).

From the above, it is clear from Ibn Arabi's view that only sufis who have reached the Truth can understand the essence of time and see it as a means of communicating with Allah. They are also the ones who value time and follow its mystical procedures. So, for the representatives of mysticism, members of the sect and saliks (who follow mystical practices), there were specific criteria of time, and they strictly obeyed them.

Ibn Arabi goes on to say that for a sufi, time is the means and interval that leads to Allah. He describes the meaning of the time he discovered himself as follows:

وقد كشف لنا الحق في الوقت أمراً جليلاً، إن الوقت واحد المشهد، لكنه يختلف باختلاف المقامات، والمقصود  
ها هنا ذكر وقت المرید الصادق فهو برزخ بين الجلال والجمال

“We have discovered that time is one of the great things. Time is a "mashhad", that is, an appearance, but as the status changes, so does it. Here, the aim is about the time of the murid, and this time is barzakh, a interval between the Jalal and Jamal of Allah” [1: 225].

Ibn Arabi's statement, "Time is a mashhad," means that there are countless such mashhads. This is because his conclusion, "But as the status changes, so does it". As a person increases his level of maturity, his understanding of time also changes. Since this is a separate subject, Ibn Arabi focuses on the main subject, trying not to confuse the reader, saying, "The point here is about the time of the murid." In order to understand the meaning of "there is a gap between the Jalal and Jamal of Allah," one must be somewhat aware of mystical terms. "Jalal and Jamal" is one of the attributes of Allah and is widely used in the science of kalam and mysticism. In his *Risalai Qudsiya*, which he heard from his teacher Bahauddin Naqshband and compiled into a book, Hoja Muhammad Porso quotes Bahauddin Naqshbandi's views on the importance of the attributes of " Jalal and Jamal " for the saliks who entered the path of the sect as follows: “Let them take care of the quality of Jalal and Jamal in salik. Let Jalal be Jamal to him, and let Jamal be Jalal to him. Let there be rajo when danger invades, and danger when rajo wins. As the quality of Jalal is revealed, let him be able to convert it into Jamal. Thus, if a sufi embraces two qualities at the same time, it means he reached the Truth” [2: 37].

So, the time used by the murid is a corridor between these two attributes of Allah. He calls this interval "barzakh." Although “barzakh” means interval, it is also a religious term that refers to the place between the world and the hereafter after a person dies. Time is also the interval between the attributes of Allah’s Jalal and Jamal, and a salik must value

the advantage of every moment of it, not to allow even a small amount of interval, and to understand this in its entirety. He explains it this way:

فالمريد الصادق محتجب في الوقت من أجل المؤقت، بالقيام بحق العبودية للحق على الحضور، وهو في عين ذلك الوقت ملاحظاً لنعته الجمال واللفظ، ولنعته الجلال والقهر على السواء. فأما كونه ملاحظاً لنعته الجمال واللفظ، فهو من كونه مخصصاً في عين ذلك الزمن الفرد بالوجود، الذي اقتضى الحق منه القيام بالعبودية فيه، التي أوجده لها، ويشهد ذلك من لطف الحق به، ومراعاته إياه، وحسن توجهه إليه، في عين ذلك الزمن الفرد

“Because of the Lord of time, a murid who is faithful to the path of Truth is covered in time to follow divine rules, to find the truth, and to be present in it. It is through that time that he should reflect on the qualities of Jamal and grace, as well as Jalal and wrath. He was created particular to a certain span of time as a sign of his existence. This requires him to pray at this span of time, because he was born at that time and enjoyed the grace of Allah, and witnessed the care shown to him” [1: 226].

This means that according to Ibn Arabi, a person in the sect should pray for the Lord of that given span of time, and perform obedience in return for taking care of him during that time, because it is clear that this time was lent to him and he will be asked how he spent it. He writes:

فإن وجود الكائنات كلها، إنما هو ثوبٌ معارٌ عليها بتخصيصٍ من الحق، ينزعه مالكه إذا شاء بأسرع وقت

“Indeed, the existence of the whole universe is a loan given to it, and Allah created this deliberately. The debtor can take off the clothes whenever he wants” [1: 226].

He goes on to comment on the wise saying, "A Sufi is the son of his time," which is widely used among Sufis:

لهذا قلنا لك إن وقت المرید الصادق برزخ بين الجلال والجمال، فهو لا يشهد في الزمن الفرد العالم فيه لله بالعبودية، إلا مسألة الجواز بين وجوده وعدمه في عين ذلك الوقت، وإلى ذلك الإشارة بقولهم "الصوفي ابن وقته

“That is why we tell you that the time of a murid who is faithful to the path of Truth is the interval (barzakh) between the Jalal and Jamal qualities of Allah. He is able to see only the existence and non-existence that is allowed to him during the given span of time, while serving Allah. "The Sufi saying, 'A Sufi is the son of his time,' is an implication of that"[1: 226].

In this pamphlet, Ibn Arabi cites a number of hadiths and verses from the Qur'an that reveal the essence of time, period and place, and urges the murid in the sect not to waste his time. And he emphasizes that he should also know that time is precious during prayer.

These include, "If you pray, pray as the last prayer you have," "Pray to Allah as you see Him, and if you do not see Him, do it as He sees you," and "The most fortunate one of people is the one who does not forget the grief of grave, considers himself among the dead and is not adamant to have one more day." Quoting these hadiths, he believes that these should be the manual for a murid. He also says that not only these hadiths, but also verses from the Qur'an, such as "We have sent you only as a mercy to the worlds" (Anbiya: 107), "No, they doubt that they will be recreated" (Qaf: 15) also imply to time.

As Ibn Arabi concludes his treatise, he addresses the murid:

فاعلم أيها الأخ السعيد، واحفظ الوقت المشار إليه في قوله تعالى {بَلْ هُمْ فِي لُبْسٍ مِنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ}، فإن السرّ كله في حفظ الوقت، والقيام بحكمه ومرسومه

"O blessed brother! Preserve the time indicated in the verse, "No, they doubt that they will be recreated." All the secrets are in saving time, obeying its orders and following its rules" [1: 228].

It should be noted that although Ibn Arabi mentions several times in this treatise on the necessity of following the rules and procedures of time, he does not talk about what those rules and procedures consist of. From this it is clear that this work is dedicated to ones who already belong to the sect, follow the instructions of their master and his instructions on how to spend time, that is, the work belongs to the group of works that are general counsel and dissemination.

This work of Ibn Arabi is an especial religious-mystical work written about time that has fascinated mankind, and is still of interest among sufis and philosophers.

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