



Question:

Please explain about the Irfan of Imam Ali and the Household of the prophet. What does the Nahjul-Balaghah consist of regarding Irfan and how much has the Imam's saying had influence/effect on Arefs across time?

Are there echoes of IrfanMysticism or Tasawof in the Nahjul-Balaghah? Have ArefsMystics across throughout time referred to the Nahjul-Balaghah for guidance regarding the path of Tazkiyahspiritual purification or other IrfanMysticism related issues?

Answer:

The Irfan that Imam Ali and the Household of the prophet present does not contradict Islam or the Quran, but rather the soul/spiritual manifestation/spiritual resemblance/kernal of Islamic rulings. As a result the same way Islam's rulings cover all aspects of one's life, whether its social or personal affairs, so does the teachings of Irfan. Based on such an interpretation of Irfan we cannot assume that only some parts of the Imams sayings have to do with Irfan while others don't, knowing that the Imam has emphasized on Irfan at all times and when dealing with different issues. Because all social and personal problems of human beings stem from the fact that they do not truly have Irfan (knowledge) towards Allah, and true Irfan is the only way out of such difficulties for humankind. Imam Ali, as the most learned individual compare to all other figures of Irfan has had the most effect and influence on Islamic Irfan. Even the greatest of mystics/Arefs of the Muslim Ummah conceived him as the Qotb (), and this effect was not confined to the time period after the compiling of Nahjul-Balaghah. Nahjul-Balaghah has always remained a rich source that consists of various theoretical and practical Irfan teachings/issues and scholars across time have scrutinized it to conceal the valuable truths it contains. Due to the fact that all parts of Nahjul-Balaghah contain teachings about putting aside desire and love for this world, by just reading this valuable book one's Taqwa will increase towards Allah and this itself is a vital requirement for one start the journey of Irfan.

Detailed Answer:

In order to explain the answer to this question in an organized manner we will explain the answer in three different categories:

1- The IrfanMysticism of the Household of the Prophet

Briefly, one can say that the IrfanMysticism of the Ahlul-Bayt is the soul/spiritual manifestation/spiritual resemblance/kernal of the Islamic law (the Shariah) which is based on the character of the Imam is the core of Islam and its law that circles around the character of the Imams, with Imamate essentially being the complete individual which is the manifestation of divine names and qualities. The Imam is the Complete Human which is manifestation of Allah's names and features. The IrfanMysticism of the Ahlul-Bayt covers all aspects of human life and is considered the straight path to become Allah's khalif on earth is the straight path of the spiritual journey of man which culminates in the vicegerency of Allah in this world. Islamic Irfan is based on the two factors of love and knowledge. In order to tell apart the IrfanMysticism the Ahlul-Bayt speaks of from the false IrfanMysticisms we see today, we need to explain the fundamentals of Islamic Irfan. All we need to know is what the Imams'

mysticism is not. The irfan or mysticism of the Imams is one based on love and understanding. In this school of thought, metaphysical and extraordinary things happen, but they are never the ultimate objective. Thus the Imams were always against false mysticisms that existed even in their time and gave them no value whatsoever. One of the most important differences between the two Irfans is that even though one who acts according to the teachings of Islamic Irfan may be blessed with the power to communicate with other worlds and explore the unseen, but possessing such powers has never been conceived as a purpose of learning Irfan, unlike false Irfan teachings that see the possessing of these powers as a goal/aim, and this is why the prophet's household have always sharply opposed such Irfans at their time. The oneness union of Shariah, Tarighah (the path) and Hagighah (the truth) is another fundamental principle of Shia IrfanMysticism, meaning that IrfanMysticism is nothing but the soul core and perfection of the Shariah (Islamic law). From the perspective of Irfan not only should a Gnostic act upon the simple rulings of Islam like praying and fasting, but he conceives them as deep and valuable rulings. In this mysticism, laws and worship take on more richness and depth and their true essence becomes manifest, not that the Shariah is put aside and loses all value for petty excuses.. In fact true Irfan shows the truths that these acts and worships consist of, unlike other Irfans that put away the rulings of Islam for petty excuses and under evaluate the Shariah. Another element that makes Islamic IrfanMysticism significant is that those who follow the IrfanMysticism of the Ahlul-Bayt try hard and strive to help the community move towards Allah. They also feel extremely responsible about what takes places in the society. The highest level of this IrfanMysticism is a status known as of "Shahadah", and one who follows the true IrfanMysticism that comes from the Imams is considered a living "Shahid" (Martyr). A comprehensive discussion on true Islamic mysticism is beyond the scope of this article, all that can be said is an introduction to it so that those interested know what to do and where to go. There have been several many great ArefsMystics throughout the history of Islam who have explained issues that revolve around Irfan. engaged in these discussions. Also, for regarding the practical IrfanMysticism there one needs to be an in touch with an individual who has mastered the IrfanMysticism the Imams promoted in practice and can lead those who seek IrfanMysticism to the right path.

2- ArefsMystics and Imam Ali (pbas)

Despite the fact that Nahjul-Balghah has always been a great source of knowledge regarding IrfanMysticism, but we should know that the immense effect Imam Ali has had on ArefsMystics comes mostly from his personal characteristics and features and his own

individual personality and mystical character. Moreover, there are a large amount of teachings of IrfanMysticism we have inherited from the Imam and that do not exist in the Nahjul-Balaghah. For example, Imam Ali's answer to Komeil when asked about 'truth in this world is incredible/unbelievable/ amazing/astonishing the truth' is astonishing. But because it is not considered one of the Imam's Sermons it cannot be found in Nahjul-Balaghah. There are many other examples like Dua Komeil and the Imam's prayers and supplications to Allah that have not made it in to their way into the Nahjul-Balaghah. Therefore, it must be noted is necessary to remember that the Nahjul-Balaghah consists of those of the Imam's Sermons that are mostly related to warning people that could barely take tolerate the Justice of the Imam about the hereafter, let alone seeing the Imam him as a great mystic and spiritual mentospiritual teacher that could explain the teachings of Irfan. However, although on some certain occasions the Imam has explained his mystical status the status he possessed in terms of Irfan so that the people would have no excuse about not understanding the greatness of his individual personality,. Over the these sayings have seldom been recorded course of or gathered over the centuries the teachings of Irfan Imam Ali had explained were not compiled due to Taqiyyah or potential opposition or Tagiyyah. Even those who rarely did so were accused of being Ghalies (exaggerating about the status of the Imam). Therefore, when speaking about the Irfanmysticali teachings of Imam Ali we must also pay attention to the course the history of Islam has taken throughout the centuries and how such thoughts were extremely criticized and opposed amongst Muslims. When examining the lives of the Imams we find that all of them have had "Ashabe Sierr" (secret students companions whom they would tell their secrets to) which were taught Irfani teachings. They would teach them things that have played great roles in the formation of mysticism. These individuals have played a vital role in establishing Islamic Irfan. Most Irfan chains (a group of Urafa that followed the footsteps of their teachers to reach the truth) have been students of these individuals almost all chains of mystics eventually trace back to one of these companions of the imams. Therefore, even though the Nahjul-Balaghah has always remained a rich source that consists of various theoretical and practical Irfanmystical (نظري و عملي) teachings/issues and scholars across time have scrutinized it to conceal unveil the valuable truths it contains, but the Imam has had an impact effect on the Urafa mystics even before its compilation of Nahjul-Balaghah, not to mention that after its compilation, the Imam's influences on mysticism aren't limited to what is in this book.. As well as after compiling Nahjul-Balaghah the effect was not confined to this valuable book. For example, Ibne Arabi is one of the Urafa mystics that was impressed by the Imam and his IrfanMysticism, to the

extent that he believed the Imam was to be the soul and core of all prophets. In this respect as the Imam himself says:

معرفة الله عزوجل و معرفة الله عزوجل معرفتي بالنورانية و هو الدين الخالص

In a hadith considered very important in Islamic mysticism. This hadith is considered one the most important ahadith regarding Irfan. Jalaluoddin Ruoomi (Mowlavi), the famous Muslim ArefMystic, believed that Shams Tabrizi was the manifestation of Imam Ali for him, and that it was by the will of the Imam that he had met Shams Tabrizi. He has mentioned this belief in different poems of his:

Attar has also quoted a sermon of Imam Ali (as) from Ibn Abbas that speaks of similar issues regarding the Imam. ترجمه شعر مولانا He also explains this in another poem of his:

Similarly "Attar", the famous Iranian poet, explains a hadith Ibne Abbas has narrated from Imam Ali through a poem:

In most of his books works and especially in "Mathharol E'ejabAja'ib", the book which he claims to have written due to the Imam's command, Attar, the famous Iranian poet and mystic, explains deep IrfanMystical teachings that are considered the inner and core issues of Imamateh. The Urafa's perspective regarding Imam Ali and the effect he has had on them is not confined to the books of these UrafaThe mystics' understanding and familiarity with Ali (a.s.), and the impact he has had on them is beyond books and hadiths, and naming these three Islamic ArefsMystics was only to give a few instants examples,. Otherwise there are so many other ArefsMystics that have either directly or indirectly stated that they viewed the Imam the same way Attar, Jalaluoddin Rooomi and Ibne Arabi did. Certainly the Imam never had the chance to expose this knowledge and the people of his time did not seek these teachings, in fact as was said before, they could not even tolerate his justice, but the presence of this magnanimous soul has always had its affect throughout the ages and all mystics, . But in some way associate themselves with him and his teachings. On the contrary this figure of Islamic Irfan has always been effective across time, all Urafa ...

3- IrfanMysticism and the Nahjul-Balaghah

Many of the Imam's sayings that were narrated relate to Irfanmystical sayings have been narrated from the Imam and only a portion of them are compiled have been gathered in the Nahjul-Balaghah. But Of course we must keep in mind that separating the Irfan the Ahlul-Bayt speak of from other aspects of religion is not correct putting a difference between mystical teachings and other teachings of the Imams is wrong, because this the IrfanMysticism they promote results in the oneness unity of Shariah, Tarighah (the path) and Haghhighah (the truth) and covers all three aspects [in contrast to other forms of mysticism

that put a difference and separate all these dimensions]. In any event, the sayings of the infallibles can be classified into different categories, their mystical sayings and teachings being very special and of a profound status. The instead one should conceive all the sayings of the Imam in the same way, meaning that they all convey the same truth, but some do so through deep meanings and these ahadith are known as the Irfani ahadith, like the ahadith that explain "Mareftollah" (knowledge about Allah) and the path to it. Nahjul-Balaghah is full of teachings that call people to put away love and desire for this world. Just reading this valuable book can help increase one's Taqwa towards Allah and this itself is a vital requirement for one who looks to start the journey of IrfanMysticism. But other than that the Imam has explained very deep Irfanmysticali teachings in the Nahjul-Balaghah which relate to Tohid, Knowledge, of the Hereafter, the Day of Resurrection, and etc. In this respect one of the most notable ahadith in this regard is the first Seurmon of the Nahjul-Balaghah which is viewed as the greatest hadith of "Tohide IrfaniMystical" (The oneness of Allah from IrfanMysticism's point of view).

Credits: www.IslamQuest.net

To find out more about Imam Ali's sayings regarding practical and theoretical Irfan you can refer to عرفان نظري و عملي در نهج البلاغه

Ref: www.hajj.com

The opinions expressed in this text do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher